

**POST - APARTHEID VETERANS' SEARCH FOR
CLOSURE: A PASTORAL CARE CHALLENGE**

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BACKGROUND

The political changes in South Africa since the announcement of F.W. de Klerk, former president of South Africa, on 2 Feb 1990 stating that Nelson Mandela would be released from prison and negotiations between the former enemies will be initiated, had a long-term effect, both negatively and positively, on political stability in South Africa. After a time of instability and political unrest during the transitional period before the elections in 1994, the political situation in South Africa changed and has since stabilised. Much of this stability can be attributed to transformation in the Security Forces in South Africa before and after the elections. Members of the former *Statutory Forces* and *Non-Statutory Forces* (NSF) were successfully integrated into the new South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The terms “statutory” and “non-statutory” refer to the organisation of the forces according to an acknowledged code of law (Bredenkamp & Wessels 2012:242). The *Statutory Forces* (NF) consisted of the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the former “independent” homelands' (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, also referred to as the TBVC countries) Defence Forces, which were part of the apartheid system. The *Non-Statutory Forces* consisted of uMkhonto weSizwe (MK), the Azanian Peoples' Liberation Army (APLA) and Azanian Liberation Army (AZANLA), the military wings of the liberation movements (ANC, PAC and AZAPO) (Bredenkamp & Wessels 2012:243). Since 1994 the unification of these forces has largely come about.

During the armed struggle the military wings of the liberation organisations were supported in their struggle against the Republic of South Africa (RSA) by their local communities, neighbouring states in southern Africa and internationally. The RSA was seen as the last remnant of colonialism in Africa. The “comrades”, as the soldiers are referred to, made significant sacrifices during the liberation struggle and expected recognition for that and support from the South African Government. They expected to be integrated into the defence force and re-integrated into South African society. However, only some of the ex-combatants, namely those with proof of formal military training, were integrated into the SANDF in 1994. Those without proof of military training and who had been mainly involved in internal operations, were not integrated into the Defence Force or regarded as military veterans.

Negotiations between the opposing forces in South Africa started in 1990, after the end of both the Border War in Namibia and Angola and the Cold War. On the one hand the liberation movements claimed victory and regarded the armed struggle as having been successful. On the

other hand the political struggle ended in 1994 with a negotiated settlement between citizens of the same country. To a certain extent this marked the end of a "civil war" where no clear battles were decisively won or lost. Not one of the parties could really claim victory. This unresolved contradiction became a challenge for reconciliation between the veterans of the different groups. To a certain extent the experiences of SADF members at the end of the South African Border War, were similar to experiences of veterans of the Vietnam War of the United States. Soldiers returning from the war were caught up in political conflict that should have been resolved before their lives had been put at risk (see Hermann 1997:71). Consequently they often felt re-traumatised when they returned home to encounter public criticism and the rejection of a war they had fought and lost (Lifton 1973:31).

As part of the former SF, National Service Conscripts (NSCs) had received significant support from their communities and the pre-1990 government. For them the political change in the country signified a negotiated settlement rather than surrender. They were, however, seen by the majority of society as an integral part of the oppressive system of apartheid and since 1994 they were not socially and officially supported as "military veterans". The members of the permanent forces of the SF were integrated into the SANDF but the approximately 600 000 former NSCs and part-time forces were left without any support from the new government. They were not sufficiently prepared for the emotional and psychological impact of the process of transformation in South Africa.

While the NSCs were still adapting to political change, they were confronted with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which focused on the atrocities perpetrated by some members of their own group. Most of them were not aware that such atrocities had been perpetrated by people with whom they had associated themselves. Due to the political changes in South Africa these soldiers received no recognition from the South African society as a whole for what they regarded as their contribution to the country. The names of SADF soldiers who died during the Border War were not included on the Wall of Names of the post-apartheid memorial at Freedom Park. The justification of Wally Serote, founding CEO of the Freedom Park Trust, was that SADF soldiers had fought to "preserve apartheid and not freedom and humanity" (Baines 2007:5). Gary Baines (2007:5-6) points out that this snub was regarded by former NSCs as "further testimony that their neglect by the National government would continue" and that they would remain marginalized in the "new South Africa". He continues that NSCs were seldom given the opportunity to come to terms with their traumatic and "life

transforming” experiences and are not likely to heal or attain closure until they have received therapy.

It was only after the promulgation of the Military Veterans Act of 2011 that former NSCs were included in the official definition of military veterans. The Military Veterans Act, no 18/2011 reads as follows:

A military veteran is any South African citizen who rendered service to any of the military organisations, statutory and non-statutory, which were involved on all sides of South Africa's liberation war from 1960 to 1994; or served in the Union Defence Force before 1961; or became members of the new SANDF after 1994; and has completed his or her military training and no longer performs military service, and has not been dishonourably discharged from that military organisation.

The former NSCs consist of white Afrikaans speaking South Africans and white English speaking South Africans. The focus of this study will be on the experiences of white Afrikaans speaking South Africans. They will be referred to as White Afrikaner National Service Veterans (WANSVs). These veterans are white South African citizens who rendered national military service to the SADF from 1967 to 1994, who no longer perform military service and have not been dishonourably discharged from the SADF.

Other than the structural merger of the permanent forces of the SANDF, no process of reconciliation between the various veteran forces has been initiated by the Government. During his first address to the South African Provincial Synod in October 2011, the Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, successor to Desmond Tutu, made an appeal that the experiences of SADF conscripts be heard and acknowledged in the Anglican Church and South African society as a whole. He argued that, until such time, the matter will remain unresolved (see Edlmann 2012:271). Even though several veteran organisations exist, many veterans experience isolation, also from their respective communities. Many of them are still searching for closure and are attempting to find meaning with regard to both past events and current political developments. Since 1994 these veterans have experienced the following challenges:

- cultural fragmentation in society due to the influence of the transformational process in South Africa and the search for a new South African identity;
- disillusionment due to expectations raised by politicians before 1994 but not met by the subsequent government;
- the psychological impact of PTSD;
- the failure to be diagnosed or treated;
- the suffering of families and communities as a result of the non-treatment of PTSD among veterans.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Directorate of Military Veterans (DMV) and the Military Veterans Act (2011) have provided some measure of *structured* support to veterans. This has not, however, provided the greatly needed *personal* support. Such personal support cannot be rendered by official structures and therefore has to be provided by more informal networks that are closer to their personal lives. Two such networks that can be looked to for support are, for instance, the communities to which the veterans have returned and, if they are Christian believers, the faith communities in which they are involved. In faith communities both the personal support of fellow believers and the pastoral support of trained practitioners can be provided. The study focuses specifically on the contribution of the faith community and pastoral care to alleviate the problem of the lack of support for some military veterans in South Africa. It will investigate practical theological and pastoral therapeutic models in order to identify those that would be best suited to the pastoral support of veterans. If necessary the existing models can be adjusted or a new model can be developed.

Post-conflict reintegration is a complex long-term process. It is the process of veterans and their dependants settling into their communities (social reintegration), becoming part of the decision-making process (political reintegration), engaging in sustainable civilian employment and livelihood (economic reintegration). It also includes adjusting their attitudes and expectations to the new realities of the country and their lives and to deal with war-related trauma (psychological healing and integration) (see Dzinesa 2008:5). Pastoral care can and should be part of an integrated multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary network of support for veterans in their contexts and communities. This study aims to utilize insights with regard to holistic support

from other disciplines in order to enrich a pastoral care approach to military veterans in South Africa.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Many wars are taking place across the continent of Africa, which leaves many African people traumatised (see Njenga et al 2003:4-7). Most of the countries in southern Africa such as South Africa, Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe were involved in armed conflict between 1960 and 1990. To stabilize these countries, post-conflict the Disarmament, Demobilisation and the Reintegration (DDR) of former combatants was implemented under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) in Angola, Mozambique and Namibia and in Zimbabwe (see Dzineza 2007:73). In South Africa the process was owned and operated locally, assisted by the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) (see Motumi & Hudson 1995:112).

Most of the past conflicts in Africa, such as the wars in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, were unconventional guerrilla and liberation wars against colonialism. The nature of these conflicts is reflected in African literature which focuses mostly on the role of ex-combatants and the effect of the DDR processes in post-conflict areas (Dzineza 2007; Luckham 1994; Motumi & Hudson 1995; Kriger 2003; Musemwa 1995). Most of what is discussed in the existing literature differs from the South African situation because of the different context of the South African conflict. The South African situation was that of an *armed struggle* in South Africa and Namibia and a *semi-conventional war* in Angola. This southern African conflict which took place in South Africa, Namibia and Angola, is the theme of most of the South African literature on the topic (Mogapi 2004; Lephophotho & Mokalobe 2003; Heinecken & Bwalya 2013; Leite 1996).

The South African literature gives an indication of the different viewpoints on the war and how the South African political reality has been internalised and personalised by individuals and groups (see Cock & Nathan 1989:275). Koornhof (1989:275) categorises this as *Grensliteruur* ("border literature"), written by Afrikaans and English authors. This "border literature" comprises a different category to the *avante garde* narratives written by academics. According to Koornhof (1989:275) the "literature wants either 'to tell it like it is' or otherwise to give expression to the vague and uneasy sense of constant violence that is prevalent in every South African's life".

The turning point in the border war was the intense but indecisive semi-conventional battles at Cuito Cuanavale in Angola in 1988. This caused a stalemate and signifies the beginning of serious negotiations to end the war. The name Cuito Cuanavale became part of the ANC struggle rhetoric during the negotiations that started in 1990 and thereafter. It was used among others by Nelson Mandela in 1991 and Ronnie Kasrils (see Williams 2008:101, 111,123-124). The way in which Cuito Cuanavale is still used from time to time for political ends, can be seen as having a detrimental effect on the attempts to forge unity and bring about reconciliation in South Africa.

From 1968 to 1990 the SADF was fighting a war about which the broader South African society knew very little. Secrecy was maintained by means of government control over the media, the soldiers and even over most of society. Military literature by senior SADF members on the role and experiences of elite units in battle can be seen as an attempt to “set the record straight”. This has been done regarding other controversial battles all over the world. In the case of South Africa such literature can furthermore be seen as a reaction to the adversarial relationship between the SADF and the TRC (see Van der Waag & Visser 2009:130; Edlmann 2012:167-168). Military literature by, for example, authors such as Willem Steenkamp (1989), Fred Bridgeland (1990) and Helmoed-Römer Heitman (1990) from the context of the semi-conventional and counter-insurgent war of the SADF in Namibia and Angola against the liberation movements, introduced a new trend in literature about the Border War. Although this and other literature written since 1988, falls outside of the domain of this study, it reflects the social and political context of the border war at that time.

Literature from the perspective of the liberation armies is very scarce. The work of Ronnie Kasrils (1993), *Armed and Dangerous: My undercover struggle against apartheid*, is a solitary example. The work of Twala & Benards (1994), *Mbokodo inside MK: Mwezi Twala - a soldier's story* is a reflection on ANC/MK actions in Angola. According to Leopold Scholtz (2013:xii), access to Angolan, Cuban or Namibian archives to find resources on their liberation struggles, is currently a challenge. This scope of this study is limited to the experiences NSCs. The so-called *Grensliteratuur* is available and will be utilized.

Other than the popular work of *Grensliteratuur*, some academic studies on the topic have been completed and are available as resources. In her doctoral thesis Theresa Edlmann (2014:162-

183) provides an overview of border literature published from 1970 to 2013. She points out that research conducted during the apartheid era has been inevitably shaped by the political context. Researchers usually position themselves as either in support of or in opposition to the SADF and the Government. She points out that the volume and diversity of historical and psychological works increased dramatically during the late 1980s. This was precipitated by the heightened public debate about the system of apartheid and a growing awareness of the social and psychological costs of the prevailing violence in South Africa (see Edlman 2014:162).

A proliferation of border literature on conscripts' experiences in the 1980s was followed by a wave of academic theses about conscription in the 1990s (see Edlmann 2014:164). Edlmann (2014:165) describes the work *War and society*, edited by Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan (1989) as "a timely catalyst in shifting the memory fields within which the social, political and psychological dimension of conscription could be narrated". In this work Laurie Nathan (1989:67-78) investigates the experiences of SADF troops in the townships during the period 1984-1987 and Diane Sandler (1989:79-89) investigates the psychological effect of the experiences of white conscripts in the black townships. These studies filled a research gap, since the experiences of the soldiers in the townships had, at the time, not been well documented. This perspective is especially significant since the experiences of these conscripts differed from those of the NSC soldiers re-deployed after previous border duty to urban townships. According to David Williams (2008:98-99), many SADF soldiers were reluctant to be deployed in the townships. Formerly fighting units on the border, they were obliged in the townships to be neutral and to support the police. They generally experienced much psychological stress and even trauma during their deployment in the townships (Sandler 1989:79-89).

One of the first individual soldiers to tell the border story from personal experience was Barry Fowler (1995; see Van der Waag and Visser 2009:137), a trained clinical psychologist. His work was entitled *Pro Patria*. Another such contribution is Clive Holt's 2005 work, *At thy call we did not falter*, in which he describes his severe PTSD. The writing the book formed part of his rehabilitation process and psychological healing (Holt 2005:185). Holt's account of his struggles with PTSD related symptoms, breaks taboos about the subject, inviting other conscripts to do likewise (see Edlmann 2014:175). Another contribution on personal experiences of the Border War is the account of Anthony Feinstein (2011), a trained psychiatrist who relates his experiences as a medical officer in the SADF in the early 1980's. According to Edlmann

(2014:181) a comparison of Feinstein and Holt's work reveals some interesting shifts and counterpoints over the period spanned by their works. Since the mid-2000s, there has been an explosion of popular and academic publications that focus on the experiences of SADF conscripts. Edlmann (2014:175) attributes this to the work of Jacqui Thompson: *An unpopular war*. She points out that this work was not only a success because of the way it was compiled but it also represents "a moment of signification in how memory fields that shaped narrations of conscription were shifting" (Edlmann 2014:176). The shift, according to Edlman (2014: 166), can be attributed, in part, to how the TRC highlighted the importance of personal narratives about the apartheid era.

The new trend in the literature since the TRC reflects a new perspective on the border war (see Baines 2008; Gibson 2010; Rauch 2009; Conway 2012; Diedericks 2007; Gear 2002a). These insights regarding how NSC veterans ascribe meaning to the war and its aftermath are of great value to this study. The NSCs also served alongside the South African Police (SAPS) in the South African townships but in the literature and the memoirs of veterans this fact seems to be largely ignored (see Cock & Nathan 1989:67) and there is an notable absence of literature on the presence of the SADF in South Africa's townships (see Edlmann 2014:183). The focus seems rather to be on the more defined "Border War" in Namibia and Angola than on the war within the borders of South Africa.

Documentation on the history of and services rendered by *military chaplaincy* before, during and after the border war contributes to a more comprehensive picture on what spiritual and pastoral care entailed in the SADF as well as in the SANDF (see Potgieter 1971; Van Niekerk 2002; Wessels & Bredenkamp 2009; Bredenkamp & Wessels 2012). The SADF had a policy of "no proselytism". During the border no mention was to be made of specific denominational practices. Chaplains worked inter-denominationally and the cooperation between denominations was laudable. Chaplains in the SADF represented most South African Christian denominations, as well as the Jewish faith. The first Muslim chaplain was appointed in October 1976 and a Hindu chaplain in 1995 (see Bredenkamp & Wessels 2012:246). Chaplains ministered not only to the soldiers themselves, but also to their families. The attendance of church services, at least one per Sunday, and of the chaplains' hour was compulsory (see Wessels & Bredenkamp 2009:321). In the operational area, because of logistical reasons, denominations would often stand in for one another. Though the emphasis was on spiritual ministry, taking care or recreation and the general welfare of the soldiers formed part of the duties of chaplains.

As the political climate in South Africa changed in the 1980s, the more "politically liberal" churches called for the demilitarisation of the chaplaincy services. Tension and distrust prevailed as the details of a new democratic dispensation negotiated between former enemies. From 1990 onwards, military chaplaincy, such as in the SADF, had to adapt to the challenges of socio-political change and transformation. The establishment of the SANDF resulted in greater religious diversity and the restructuring of the chaplaincy (Wessels & Bredenkamp 2009:246). Despite the uncertainties of the period 1990-1994, the Chaplain Service eventually became an integral part of the SANDF (Bredenkamp & Wessels 2012:248). A trauma counselling course for chaplains was introduced in May 2008 at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in order to enhance the skills of chaplains who had to assist people in situations of trauma (Bredenkamp & Wessels 2012:264).

Literature on *psychological support* to soldiers in the SANDF is scarce. According to Jansen (2015) SADF psychologists became aware of battle fatigue and the psychological impact of war during the first cross-border semi-conventional operations in Angola in 1976. A multi-disciplinary team provided guidelines for how to support soldiers who experienced battle fatigue. The Military Psychological Institute was established as part of the South African Military Health Services (SAMHS) in 1977. Its responsibility was to support soldiers who experienced psychological trauma. The Institute made use of studies that had already been done by the Walther Reed Army Institute of Research on the wars in Vietnam, Korea and Israel. Since 1980 the SANDF followed a direct and indirect approach to address PTSD in the SANDF. The indirect approach aimed at preventing PTSD and the direct approach was for intervention where symptoms had already manifested. Although a multi-disciplinary approach was followed and psychiatrists, psychologist and social workers were included, chaplains were not always involved in these processes. Since 1987 a more effective system of support was implemented. However, many soldiers saw consulting a psychologist as a sign of weakness, thought that these services were unnecessary, and underestimated the impact of PTSD (Jansen 2015).

Literature on the post-conflict support of soldiers and veterans who experience PTSD is mainly from the USA, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. This semi-conventional Western type of war is, to a certain extent, similar to the semi-conventional war between South Africa and Angola. Literature on war trauma during these wars and the development of PTSD is based on research done on World War I and World War II as well as the Vietnam and Korean wars (see Flannery

1990:593-611; Grinker & Spiegel 1945; Herman 1994:71; Lessing 1975; Lifton 1973; O'Brien 1990:76.) In the rest of Africa most of the post-conflict literature focuses on DDR processes (see Griffiths 1996; Hanson 2007; Dzinesa 2007). According to Summerfield (1999), a diagnosis of PTSD by Western agencies in Africa, is a "medicalization" of the understandable social consequences of war, in order to bring Western models of management to Africa. On the other hand, Njenga et al (2006) find that the symptoms of PTSD are recognisable in Africa as well and that millions are in need of treatment and interventions such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in order to come to healing and reconciliation.

Since conscription ended in 1993, the current ages of NSC veterans is between 38 and 65. Most of them are in mid-life, retired or close to retirement. Many of these veterans who have not been diagnosed with PTSD, nevertheless experienced stressful events such as work loss, unfulfilled dreams and family challenges. Apart from PTSD, delayed-onset PTSD and late-onset stress symptomatology (LOSS) could be what South African veterans are experiencing in mid-life. Davison et al (2006:109) identify late-onset stress symptomatology (LOSS) as "a unique phenomenon which emerges within the context of normal late-life events". They differentiate between delayed onset PTSD and LOSS and point out that delayed onset PTSD is not linked to normative aging factors but to traumatic events. They argue that LOSS represents a broader construct than PTSD and is unique to aging combat veterans (Davison et al 2006:110). According to King et al (2007:175) LOSS is "a phenomenon observed in aging combat veterans who were exposed to highly stressful combat events in their early adult years, have functioned successfully throughout midlife with no history of chronic stress-related disorders, but begin to register increased combat-related thoughts, feelings, and reminiscences commensurate with the changes and challenges of aging".

According to Leo Shane (2012), retirement could unleash PTSD symptoms in Vietnam veterans. Mental health professionals have pointed out that delayed trauma is not unusual among veterans. It is expected that the influx of Vietnam veterans receiving PTSD treatment will increase. According to Ron Langer (2011:53), PTSD symptoms manifested among World War II veterans especially in midlife. According to Port et al (2001) the most prominent precipitant for PTSD in midlife is retirement. According to Langer (2011:53) other losses such as the deaths of friends, children becoming independent and divorce could also precipitate PTSD. He puts it as follows: "A life without meaning leaves plenty of room for PTSD - as well as other psychiatric disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse - to fill" (Langer 2011:54). Davison

et al (2006) and Horesh et al (2010) concur that delayed onset PTSD does exist and warn that the influence of stressful experiences should be examined through a person's life cycle.

Large sections of the African population have been exposed to war and conflict for many years. Refugees from these conflict regions often report extremely stressful physical and psychological experiences and among them a high prevalence of PTSD can be found. Little is known about the usefulness of psychotherapeutic approaches for traumatized refugees compared to the knowledge of PTSD treatment in Europe, United States, Australia or other industrialised countries. Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET), a short-term treatment based on cognitive-behavioural therapy and testimony therapy is becoming popular as treatment for PTSD. Neuner et al (2004) compare the effectivity of NET in an African in refugee settlement to supportive counselling and psycho-education for the treatment of PTSD. Neuner et al (2014:267) explain that NET "reorganises memory distortions by constructing a life story that includes an autobiographic memory of traumatic events" and point out that this could "with the collective reconstruction of the past, based on diverse individual autobiographical narratives and their translation into education, information and communication, help to reduce trauma symptoms within the larger group".

Many veterans are experiencing existential problems in their search for meaning. Logotherapy, "a meaning-centred psychotherapy" was developed by Victor Frankl (2006:98). This kind of therapy, where the person is "confronted with and reoriented towards meaning of his life", can be appropriate to pastoral care and counselling with veterans in their search for meaning and closure. According to Frankl (2006:100-101), the term "existential" can be used in three ways: "to refer to (1) *existence* itself, i.e., the specifically human mode of being; (2) the meaning of existence; and (3) the striving to find a concrete meaning in personal existence, that is to say, the will to meaning". Logotherapy is a proven intervention for treating military-related PTSD which deserves further investigation as "a structured and effective therapy for the treatment of military-related PTSD" (Smith 2012:9).

RESEARCH GAP

Existing studies with regard to pastoral care with war veterans as well as transformation processes elsewhere in the world, have contributed valuable insights to the topic at hand.

However, the South African context provides some unique challenges. This study proposes to contribute to a deeper understanding of pastoral care with veterans in their communities and faith communities in this specific context. The narratives of South African veterans and the findings of this study can contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychosocial phenomenon of veterans' search for meaning after having experienced and participated in war.

The paradigm of the study is postmodern and the epistemology that of social constructionism. From the perspectives of narrative theory and life history research, a model for pastoral care with military veterans in South Africa in the context of their own communities and faith communities will be developed. The current state of affairs with regard to pastoral care with veterans in South Africa and the effectivity of it will be evaluated and further needs identified. Insights from other disciplines will be appropriated with the aim to enrich pastoral care and contribute to effective holistic support of veterans.

METHODOLOGY

At the end of the armed struggle, the political changes and the transformation since 1990 in South Africa, were not what most of WANSVs expected. This had a negative effect on their identity, mind-set and quality of life. According to Daniel Louw (2012), life as an existential phenomenon evolves around basic human need for intimacy, recognition and human dignity. To live a meaningful life requires empowering and supporting structures and systems (Louw 2012:11). The lack of such structures and support systems can be a reason for the existential problems WANSVs are experiencing. The empirical data gathered for this study will focus on the experiences of WANSVs during the political changes and transformation. This study aims to identify structures and essential resources that can become part of an integrated holistic system of support for these veterans.

To obtain a deeper understanding of the social and contextual realities of the WANSV phenomenon since 1990 and the support given through pastoral care and counselling, a contextual approach to theological reflection is necessary. According to Terry Veling (2005), theology is always addressed to particular situations of human life. The human story is the very "site" of God's revelation and "practical theology is always attentive to the *context* of human culture and human experience in its unique singularity and concrete particularity" (Veling 2005:8). For a person to experience meaning, purpose and healing, social structures and

relationship dynamics should be healed as well. A systematic and holistic approach to the spiritual, mental, psychological, interpersonal and societal aspects of people's lives should form a part of their support structures (Louw 2008:41). The same goes for military veterans. Healing more often than not happens in the context of compassionate care within a holistic approach to caregiving (Dunlap 2012:33). This is the point of departure of the study.

The study will describe the historical context of the South African conflict since 1966 and the duality between the armed struggle and the SADF's "counter insurgency" war, in order to come to an understanding of the influence this has had on healing and reconciliation in South African society. To be aware of one's own culture and to seek a deeper awareness and understanding of other cultural expressions is also crucial to practical theology (Veling 2005:163). An exploration of the insights of Veling (2005:163-174) on contextual theology and liberation theology will be useful in the understanding of WANSV's needs and the role that pastoral care can play.

Dialogue between theological reflection and the context will be facilitated by means of the "pastoral hermeneutic cycle", a term coined by Juan-Luis Segundo (1976) in his seminal work *The liberation of theology*. Segundo (1976:8) defines the "hermeneutic circle" as follows: "It is the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal. 'Hermeneutic' means 'having to do with interpretation'. And the circular nature of this interpretation stems from the fact that each new reality obliges us to interpret the word of God afresh, to change reality accordingly, and then go back and interpret the word of God again, and so on". Segundo's pastoral cycle has been widely used in theological education and other contexts with an influence far beyond its immediate impact within the liberation theology (see Graham, Walton & Ward 2005:188). Based on the movements of Segundo's pastoral cycle, Joe Holland and Peter Henroit (1984:7-14) identify four movements, namely *insertion*, *social analysis*, *theological reflection* and *pastoral planning*. According to South African theologian John de Gruchy (1986:87), the flexible ongoing hermeneutical circle in which these movements interact, is a way in which the prophetic word and deed can become an integral part of the life of the church and its pastoral practice.

Under the movement of *insertion* the experiences of the veterans in the political polarisation of the post-war period will be explored. By means of *social analysis* a more complete picture of the social context of the war will be obtained. This will be done by exploring the relationships

between WANSV members and their fellow soldiers, families and caregivers such as chaplains, psychologists and social workers. The *social analysis* will take into account the historical context of the political, psychological and social context of the border war and its impact on individual soldiers. The third movement of *theological reflection* focuses on the veterans' faith experience and the pastoral care and counselling they received to ascertain how these contributed to their finding closure in post-apartheid South Africa. The final movement of *pastoral planning* consists of the evaluation of data, followed by findings and recommendations for an improved ministry praxis with regard to military veterans in local communities.

An overview of existing literature on their experiences during the border war since 1966 and on support to WANSV will provide insights for a better understanding of the historical context of the phenomenon (see De Vos 2002:127-133). The reasons for the actions of both the individual veterans and their communities will be considered in order to come to a deeper understanding of the search for meaning (see Swinton & Mowat 2006:38). Narrative qualitative research will be utilized to obtain a deeper understanding (see Silverman 2013:103) of how the phenomenon of support to military veterans is constructed in the activities of WANSC. The question that will be investigated is: what is going on with regard to the current pastoral support system to veterans? The meaning underlying the actions of the role-players in this system will be explored in order to ascertain how their own social realities are constructed (see Silverman 2013:107) within this support system or the lack thereof.

Those who are victorious in war and those who have power are the ones to document history. In their accounts their own contributions feature prominently. This then becomes "the facts" of history. The stories of the marginalised and voiceless do not make it into the history books. The lack of recognition of the WANSV's stories, their experiences and contribution to the stability of the country has left them marginalised and voiceless. Through the narrative approach people are encouraged to bring detailed personal perspectives out into the open as part of their co-construction of the social, cultural and political world (Hyvärinen 2008:447). In line with this approach, the veterans who will take part in this study will be invited to tell their stories, which will be recorded, transcribed and processed. In this way their voices can be heard and their contribution can become part of a richer account of "history". Ganzevoort (2012:218) emphasises that the narrative approach can be utilized to help marginalized groups to find their voice. Most of the WANSV were not part of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. The discourse about the "real victors" of the border war and the South African armed struggle and

the current transformational processes of affirmative action have also had a detrimental effect on their search for meaning and closure. Though some have published their stories, the majority of these veterans are not breaking their silence. Not only are they left out of "history", but this silence has a detrimental effect on their mental health which, in turn, affects the well-being of their families and communities. Therefore they should be encouraged to tell their stories and given a safe space to do so. The lives of veterans should be understood against the background of their specific and collective contexts.

To obtain a deeper understanding of the experiences of WANSV data will be collected by means of the Life History Research (LHR) method. In both Narrative Research (NR) and LHR individuals tell their stories but according to Dhunpath (2000:546) LHR taking NR beyond the individual and personal interpretation of stories into a broader social context. Where the focus of NR is on the understanding of the story of the individual, the focus of LHR is the experiences of individuals within the broader context where the individual is living (Cole & Knowles 2001:20). Within LHR the researcher could act as interpretative guide while people share their stories, reflecting on their interpretations and giving them a chance to revise their narrative and construct their own stories (Osmer 2012:51; cf Dhunpath 2000:545).

By means of the "interpretive structure of pastoral care" introduced by Gerkin (1997:35-36) a pastor can offer "caring interpretative leadership" which goes beyond the faith community of Christians. Gerkin's model consists of a *quadrilateral schema* with four nexus areas of care, namely care to *individuals and families*, the *community of Christians*, the *cultural context* and the *tradition* that shapes Christian identity. It also involves attending to issues and concerns in the larger society. Practical theologian Richard Osmer (2008:24) points out that not only individual pastoral care and counselling, but also congregational leadership can involve helping people who experience challenges in life to work through a re-interpretation of self, marriage, work or political commitment.

Current practices of pastoral care with WANSV veterans will be evaluated in light of the insights provided from the stories of veterans as well as those obtained from other relevant disciplines. Graham et al (2005:188) put it as follows: "This involves bringing the 'horizons of social context' (poverty, racism, oppression) into contact with that of theological world-views." According to Ganzevoort (2012:221), narrative perspectives facilitate the understanding of the connections between theology and social sciences with the potential of interdisciplinary communication and

research. A narrative approach to pastoral care and counselling, storytelling and listening to stories has become a useful pastoral strategy and the different narrative perspectives become part of theology reflection (Ganzevoort 2012:218; see Louw 1998:15). So the different perspectives of the narratives of WANSV's and their search for meaning can contribute to theological reflection in the search for meaning. With his book "*The living human document*" Charles Gerkin (1984, 1986, 1997) describes "how the persons we encounter in pastoral care are storytellers, trying to make sense of events in their lives" (Ganzevoort 2012:218). Ganzevoort (2012:218) specifically appreciates Gerkin's *hermeneutic* mode of pastoral counselling. He employs *narrative concepts* such as *plot*, *tone* and *role* in developing a "philosophical grounded structure" for pastoral work.

Despite efforts to unite the different groups and cultures in South Africa, reconciliation between the veterans of the former enemy groups is still lacking and the veterans' organisations are fragmented. In this regard George Lindbeck's (1984) Cultural-Linguistic Model of Pastoral Care (Gerkin 1997:110) will be useful to "invite intercultural dialogue and the opening up of traditional ways of ordering life to new experience". This "model for doing theology" of has the capacity "to provide people with a storied context of ultimate meaning for their lives" (Gerkin (1997:108). According to Lindbeck (1984:32), religions "are seen as comprehensive interpretive schemes, usually embodied in myths or narratives and heavily ritualized, which structure human experience and understanding of self or world". The cultural-linguistic model of pastoral care can assist in facilitating cultural dialogue in order to come to a deeper understanding of different communities, which, in turn, can pave the way for reconciliation between opposing groups.

Against the background of the experiences of civil rights movement, the rise of feminism and the sexual revolution in the USA in the 1960's, the work of Stephen Crites ([1971] 1989), *The narrative quality of experience*, provoked quite a reaction in the theological world (see Graham et al 2005:61). Crites argues that human identity and cultural identity are established differently in different communities. This happens through narratives. His insights on the impact of different stories and the "inner form of experience" as part of a search for personal and societal identity (Crites 1989:69-84) are utilized in this study to come to a better understanding of the actions of veterans during the transitional period in South Africa.

The insights of Paul Ricoeur (1998; see Osmer 2008:149) on "the ways in which human beings create meaning" provide important insights for theological reflection. His "practice-theory-

practice” model of practical theological interpretation is useful for coming to a deeper understanding of WANSV’s search for meaning. His reflection on whether it is possible “to come to terms with the past and envisage a transformed future” (Graham et al 2005:64) can be applied in this study to the WANSV’s search for meaning. According to South African practical theologian, Daniel Louw (1998:84), in a metaphorical approach to pastoral care “the pastor functions as a facilitator and interpreter of meanings through the shared perspective of faith”. Louw (1998:330) sees God-images as “the fabric of a believer’s life story” and these God-images “are linked to parishioners’ experiences of God within specific contexts”. Assessing people’s God-images should be undertaken with care. Louw (1998:331-33) describes the aim of such an undertaking as follows: “The objective of ‘Theo’-logical analysis is to determine how people view God in order to enable the pastor to help them develop from inappropriate God images (infantile faith) towards appropriate God-images (mature faith)”. According to Anderson and Foley (1998:27) “ritual and narrative are analogous to our own existence, which is mediated by body and mind, flesh and spirit, touch and imagination”. They regarded constructing new narratives and rituals as an urgent theological task (Graham et al (2005:69). Insights of Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley (1998) on the fundamental relationship between narrative and ritual could enrich the practice of pastoral care to veterans. Storytelling is not always a liberating activity and the Christian desire to achieve narratives of wholeness and healing can prevent us from encountering God in the midst of extreme circumstances. Sometimes we need to move “towards an appreciation of the power of *poesis* to embody trauma and enable a dark epiphany of the divine “(Graham et al 2005:71). The insights of Heather Walton (2002:3) on what must be done when stories fail are useful to this study since the stories of WANSV are not easily told.

Most of the WANSV were conscripted more than 22 years ago as young adolescent men and are now in their midlife. Practical theologian Donald Capps (1979, 1983) uses Erik Erikson’s developmental theory of the life human cycle to clarify the purposes and goals of pastoral care in the different stages of life. In his work, *Pastoral care: A thematic approach*, Capps (1979) uses Erikson’s life cycle theory to draw attention to the role of pastoral care with regard to personal and institutional change. In his work, *Life cycle theory and pastoral care*, Capps (1983) again uses Erikson’s life cycle theory in his discussion of the role of pastoral care in helping individuals become better orientated to their world in the different stages of life. According to Capps (1995:3), pastoral ministry is grounded in eternal hopefulness. He sees the basic and fundamental role of clergy as being “providers or agents of hope”. This makes them unique among the helping professions. His insights on the nature of hope, what it means to be without

hope, the difference between hope and hopelessness and how to instil hope in other persons can be applied to this study which aims at a model for the pastoral support of military veterans who are rooted in the Christian faith.

To enrich the understanding of pastoral care and counselling with veterans as a “multi-layered multidimensional phenomenon” a multidisciplinary approach will be followed (see Osmer 2008:119). From the field of psychology, theories with regard to Delayed-onset PTSD and Late-onset Stress Symptomology (LOSS) are relevant to the investigation, since these phenomena go hand in hand with war the aftermath of war and the ageing process. Therapeutic models from psychology such as Narrative Therapy (NR), Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) and Logotherapy will be utilized. From the field of sociology theories of Life History Research (LHR) are relevant to the interaction between human experience and the social context in which veterans live.

According to Goodson & Sikes (2001:22), LHR makes use of small samples and only rarely involves a random sample of participants. They could be selected on a *purposive* basis, in other words because they “meet the criteria” of the investigation and on the basis of *convenience*, in other words that “the researcher has easy access to informants” (Goodson & Sikes 2001:24). Participants in this study will be selected on a purposive basis and will be WANSVs who were in the South African Army (SAA), excluding members of the South African Navy (SAN), South African Air Force (SAAF) and South African Military Health Services (SAHMS). Three different groups will be distinguished. The first group will consist of veterans who fought in units such as the 61 Mechanised Infantry Battalion. These are people who were involved in semi-conventional cross border operations in Angola. The second group will be selected from other Motorised Infantry Battalions, who were involved in area patrols in the northern Ovambo area of Namibia. The third group will consist of members of supporting units such as signallers, engineers, logistics and personnel. Two participants will be selected from each group for the purpose of interviewing. In cooperation with the different veteran organisations that represent these units and chaplains from these organisations, volunteers from their units will be invited to participate in the interviews. Out of these volunteers six participants who meet the criteria, are easy assessable and are willing to participate in the rather time consuming process of LHR, will be selected.

According to (Cole & Knowles 2001:26) “to focus on developing the personal and professional qualities of relationality, mutuality, and empathy, as well as care, sensitivity, and respect is, for us, both emblematic of and crucial to life history researching“. I will make use of the “principles and conditions” of the LHR method of inquiry to obtain information about the experiences of WANSV. According to Osmer (2008:64) epiphanies provide special insights into identity narratives and often are interpreted by people as turning-point experiences. Epiphanies or themes identified will be explored further during follow-up interviews. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted and open-ended questions will be asked in order to encouraging interviewees to construct their own responses and meanings (see Osmer 2008:62). Data collected through LHR will include documents and artefacts of various kinds such as journals, dairies, other personal writings and photos. Ideas, thoughts and themes will be identified for further reflection by the participants.

A pastoral care model for the support of military veterans will be developed by bringing the results obtained through LHR interviews into dialogue with insights from appropriate pastoral care approaches and models. A thematic approach to personal and institutional change will be followed. The contributions of other disciplines to broaden the holistic support given to veterans will be integrated into the model. Though this study focuses only on the experiences of WANSV and their specific context, further similar studies can be undertaken with veterans from the other groups.