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TITLE

The South African Township Funeral: A 'Site of Resistance' of HIV and AIDS that Promotes Leading Causes of Life

Declaration

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I have used the Turabian Convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in, this paper from the work(s) of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

This paper is my own work.

I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his/her own work.

Signature: Mary E. Baars

They all died of TB too
Then I started coughing
Skinny as a broomstick
With black spots.
My sisters' children
Coughed and died.
My brother coughed and died.
I was coughing and dying.
The enemy was in our bodies,
Making us cough and die,
Eating us like worms.
But some of us
Still made love,
Still kissed
And made each other cough and die.

She died of TB,
That was me
Whispering it at funerals
Because nobody ever said AIDS.

We all died
Those who used to tap
With a Black Label in one hand
Those who used to sing
Like superstars
Whether we wore rouge red glossy lips
Whether we wore khaki brown
And beat the kaffirs in the prisons
Whether our faces were covered with soot
From the mines
Even if we were old grannies
With our men living in Jozi
Even if we were just born.

We all died,
Coughed and died.
We died of TB
That was us
Whispering it at funerals
Because nobody ever said AIDS.

by Eddie Vulani Maluleke
(excerpt from *Nobody Ever said AIDS)*

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List of Acronyms:

Leading Causes of Life- LCL
Generalized Resistance Resources- GRR
Sense of Coherence- SOC
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome-AIDS
Human Immunodeficiency Virus- HIV
African National Congress- ANC
Treatment Action Campaign- TAC
Antiretroviral Drugs- ARVs
Gay and Lesbian Organization of the Witwatersrand- GLOW

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Abstract

Is a South African township funeral a 'site of resistance' to HIV which provides communities with a means for achieving a telos of health? Could the funeral embody the *leading causes of life* (a theory used to develop the analysis) needed to create and sustain life in the midst of illness and death? This study will seek to answer these questions through a close look at the J L Zwane Church and Community Centre, a faith based community in Gugulethu, South Africa. By exploring township funerals of the apartheid past in relation to funerals resulting from the AIDS epidemic, despite what many construe as decay and death, ample evidence of resiliency and life will be demonstrated.

Introduction

In recent years, thousands of studies have focused on various aspects of the AIDS epidemic and its impact on different regions and populations. Despite the worldwide effort poured into researching HIV and AIDS, the full consequences of additional deaths and burials on those persons affected are not totally understood. In 2003, a report was released by the United Nations which concluded that about one in eight South Africans, or 5.3 million people, were infected with HIV at the end of 2002. In addition to this statistic, the report also said that about six hundred people die each day of AIDS-related diseases.[1] A few years later, another report was released which estimated that seven hundred South Africans die each day from HIV and AIDS.[2] Finally, another study which focused on the South African province, KwaZulu-Natal, projected that there would be an increase of 419 burials a day by 2011 because of HIV and AIDS, from 224 each day to 643 each day.[3] As these various reports indicate, HIV and AIDS deaths have continued to increase throughout South Africa. These rising deaths have meant that numbers of funerals have also increased.

In order to understand the full impact of funerals related to AIDS deaths, the role of the funeral, including its role in the community and its history, must be explored. Ultimately, one discovers that the funeral is a unique aspect of contemporary black South African and township society and culture which has a meaning much beyond death or traditional funeral rites.

Over the years, South African township funerals, whether for young or old, have stood in the midst of death as a place to celebrate and promote life. In the vibrancy of township communities, despite an environment often marked by violence, illness, and death, new life continues to come into being and thrive. Finding evidence of the generation of life requires one to look closely at the

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[1] Alan Morris, "A Decade of Post-Apartheid." *Safundi,* Vol. 5, No 1, (2004): 1-13

[2] Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, "Popular Responses to HIV/AIDS and Policy." *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol. 31, No. 4, (Dec. 2005): 845-856

[3] John Stover and Lori Bollinger. "The Economic Impact of AIDS in South Africa." *The Policy Project*, (Sept 1999): 1-16

practices which are common within the community, the everyday behaviors and movements which contribute to daily living. Through examination of the bereavement practices found within township communities, particularly the J L Zwane Church community in Gugulethu, it becomes clearer that funerals and all they encompass are more about creating life and for those left living than they are about the dead. Furthermore, over the years funerals have provided an important platform for resisting those things which prevent or destroy life, like the system of apartheid and political violence associated with it, and promoting those things which encourage the creation and sustaining of life whatever the circumstances.

Theoretical Framework: Salutogenesis

In order to articulate and describe the presence of life within the context of the funeral, I will explore an idea coined by Gary Gunderson and Larry Pray called *Leading Causes of Life.*[4] This theory was influenced by sociologist Aaron Antonovsky and his research on survivors of Nazi concentration camps, which addressed why certain individuals who had been through some of the worst ordeals still found a way to have a healthy, hopeful outlook on life. Despite overarching research which considered "stressors" as purely negative in a person's life, Antonovsky argued that both disease and stress are constantly occurring. Yet, with total exposure to these threats, organisms and humans manage to survive.[5] If stressors and chaos are normal occurrences, then why do some, nonetheless, live and thrive?

Instead of studying this question from the standpoint of pathogenesis, meaning what detracts from health, he wanted to understand salutogenesis, what causes health.[6] His research was grounded

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[4] Gary Gunderson and Larry Pray. *Leading Causes of Life*. Memphis, TN: The Center of Excellence in Faith and Health, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, 2006. This term was originally coined by Gunderson and further explained in this book along with many other articles and journals. There is presently work and scholarship being created which takes many of these concepts even further.

[5] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom. "Contextualizing Salutogenesis and Antonovsky in Public Health Development." *Health Promotion International,* Vol 21, No 3, (May 2006): 240

[6] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom (2006): 241

in this method of approaching health and health-promoting behaviors. It gained momentum in the aftermath of World War II when many around the world strove to create a global community which was safe and healthy for all persons.[7] With this approach in mind, Antonovsky developed a new term called Sense of Coherence (SOC), which has deeply influenced the theory of *Leading Causes of Life*. As a result of his research, he began to describe health as movement on a spectrum between two ends, ill health (dis-ease) and total health (ease).[8]

In order to address the question of how an individual moves toward or away from dis-ease or ease on this continuum, Antonovsky used language formed from his SOC model, based on the principles of comprehension, manageability, and meaningfulness and the generalized resistance resources (GRRs). These are resources which aid or detract from an individual's ability to manage stress and challenging circumstance.[9] These principles address how an individual understands his or her situation. Specifically, GRRs might refer to " money, knowledge, experience, self-esteem, healthy behavior, commitment, social support, cultural capital, intelligence, traditions and view of life."[10] When these resources are readily available, there is a better chance that an individual can constructively deal with the challenges of life. GRRs rely not only on the resources that are available but, more importantly, on an individual's ability to use and re-use these resources to move in the direction of health.

As he developed his theories of SOC and GRRs, Antonovsky emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of salutogenics.[11] Through identifying commonality between varying disciplines, from medicine and health to sociology and religion and beyond, he emphasized that

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[7] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom. "A Salutogenic Interpretation of the Ottawa Charter." *Health Promotion International,* Vol. 23, No. 2, (Mar 2008): 190

[8] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom. "Glossary: Salutogenesis." *J Epidemiol Community Health,* Vol. 59, (2005): 440

[9] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom. (2008): 190

[10] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom (2006): 241

[11] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom. (2005): 440

there is a web of factors which must be studied and considered when answering the question of what creates health. A major strength of salutogenesis is its adaptability and universal relevance.[12] It can apply to any person in any situation because it focuses on the resources which are available in a given context, and it encourages thinking and acting in that given context, with meaning, manageability, and coherence in mind. As Antonovsky says,

> A global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement.[13]

The SOC model gives individuals and communities a life orientation which relies heavily upon problem solving within a particular environment. The principle of comprehensibility refers to perception of both internal and external factors emerging out of an environment and the consistency with which these factors come into play. These are the resources which individuals trust or not, depending on their outlook and attitude. The second principle, manageability, addresses how an individual understands and uses the given resources which are available. Finally, the principle, meaningfulness, refers to an individual's ability to make sense out of the life events, and see the value of investing time and energy in problem solving.[14]

The three principles of SOC are a means of empowering all people, regardless of the particularity of their circumstances, to move continually toward a praxis of health. Furthermore, the SOC model has been adapted into a tool for practitioners in various spheres and has had calculable success.[15] Each of these examples further demonstrates the importance for individuals and organizations addressing public health issues throughout the world, to consider and implement

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[12] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom (2005): 440

[13] Aaron Antonovsky. "*Unraveling the mystery of health. How people manage stress and stay well*." San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987

[14] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom (2005): 441

[15] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom (2005): 442

salutogenic approaches in their work. This recognition is connected more broadly to the question of human rights, giving all persons, regardless of background, opportunities for active participation in creating healthy life situations. Health workers and their subjects are a part of a mutual process meant to uphold and empower all parties involved. As Eriksson and Lindstrom argue, "The role of the professionals is to support and provide options that enable people to make sound choices, to point at the key determinants of health, to make people aware of them and able to use them."[16] Part of this responsibility pertains to health professionals and community members alike, recognizing the assets which are available and not only focusing on the problems and deficiencies found in struggling communities. Strengthening local communities through utilization of the particular assets which are readily available empowers individuals to take ownership of their lives and future health.

The term "health assets," as coined by the World Health Organization European Office for Investment for Health Development, refers to "the resources that individuals and communities have at their disposal, which protect against negative health outcomes and/or promote health status. These assets can be social, financial, physical, environmental or human resources (e.g. education, employment skills, supportive social networks, natural resources, etc)."[17] While assets impact individuals, communities, and organizations, this paper will focus primarily on the impact of community assets on the health of individuals, keeping in mind that community health is only realized when those individuals who make up the community are healthy. Examples of a community health assets are networks of family and friends, intergenerational connection, community cohesiveness, faith based groups, and other networks of people who are bound by a common bond. These kinds of assets exist in any context, whether the context is saturated with material resources or not.

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[16] Monica Eriksson and Bengt Lindstrom (2006): 241-242

[17] Antony Morgan and Erio Ziglio. " Revitalising the evidence base for public health: an assets model." *Promotion & Education,* Vol 14, No 17, (2007): 18

A New Theory: Leading Causes of Life

Taking an assets based approach to health issues is central to the theory underlying the *Leading Causes of Life.* The LCL principles demonstrate from a salutogenic standpoint that the mystery of healthy living is impacted by more than one's physical state. Healthy, full life is also connected to the presence of the five LCL principles which promote a totality of health. They enable individuals and communities who may not have resources for traditional healthcare or even basic needs not only to survive but actually thrive. Theses causes, *connection, coherence, agency, hope, and intergenerativity*,[18] work together, ensuring that life, rather than death, has the final word. The *Leading Causes of Life* draw from Antonovsky's three SOC principles but also expand into new territory, addressing two additional concepts which contribute to an individual's movement along the spectrum of health. These new principles, *hope* and *intergenerativity,* bring broader understanding of how and why, perhaps, humans are able not only to cope in the face of chaos and stress, but also live lives seeped in meaning and purpose.

In a new book in which a chapter further explores the *Leading Causes of Life,* co-directors of the African Religious Health Assets Program (ARHAP), Gary Gunderson and Jim Cochrane, address many of the questions which Antonovsky brought to the forefront of discussions pertaining to public health. Through detailed application of what causes life, they demonstrate how these five LCL principles make a significant contribution to the field of salutogenesis.

The first cause of life they explore is *coherence.* With parallels to Antonovsky's meaningfulness, this cause of life accounts for how individuals comprehend their lives and understand events, whether positive or negative, as being more than random or haphazard. *Coherence* gestures to the notion that life in its every detail is purposeful, even when it is painful or difficult. Viktor Frankel, Jewish psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, also gestured to this idea in his

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[18] The fifth element of the *Leading Causes of Life* was originally called "blessing" but has since evolved to the new term "intergenerativity."

work when he argued that "meaning of life is found in every moment of living, and that life never ceases to have meaning."[19] Because *coherence* is linked to every moment of life, it is not surprising that a sense of incoherence can have violent and often devastating consequences, particularly where religion is concerned. If an individual or group find coherence in a religious system and that system of belief is ever threatened, more than religious ideals are at stake. Knowing that religion or other galvanizing forces can produce either healing coherence or destructive incoherence is an important idea to consider. This is also why *coherence* as a cause of life does not stand on its own, but is woven with four other causes which together provide necessary support.

The second cause of life is *connection.* The idea of *connection* is impossible to envision outside of community. To understand an individual is not only to consider the singular person, his or her likes and dislikes, talents and intellect, but also to follow the connecting links from that individual to family, friends, and community. No man is an island, so says poet John Donne, therefore that which is connected to an individual has significant impact on that person's ease or dis-ease. Gunderson and Cochrane argue, "Healthy generative human communities are connected in ways that enable them to adapt to changing threats and opportunities as a whole."[20] Studies, such as the Roseto community study in the 1960-70's which addressed heart disease, have proven that by looking past individual health success to the present social structures one often finds significant cohesiveness, support, and strong family networks. These networks encourage respect for persons of all ages as well as the continual refashioning of old and new into the fabric of daily community life.[21] One key factor to keep in mind is that life-giving community and connections contribute to health, nevertheless there is another side to this coin. Some community and connections are not healthy and recycle dis-ease. Because the community health assets stemming from *connection* are

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[19] Gary Gunderson and James Cochrane. "*Leading Causes of Life: Pathology in its Place*." Chapter 4 (forthcoming in 2010): 4-10

[20] Gary Gunderson and James Cochrane (forthcoming in 2010): 4-12

[21] Stewart Wolf and John S. Bruhn. "*The Power of Clan: The Influence of Human Relationships to Reduce Heart Disease.*" New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1993

not static but ever evolving, they should never be taken for granted. Instead they must be cherished and nurtured, upheld as life-blood with the potential to sustain health.

Agency is the third cause in the LCL model which has clear relevance to the ways public health is approached by professionals and organizations addressing needs and services for communities and individuals facing some form of stress or dis-ease. Human life is full of movement. The ability to have control over those things which impact well-being makes a difference in an individual's state of mind. The idea of *agency* has become a major topic of concern in a world which seems to be moving toward polar opposites, the developed powerful world, and the developing powerless world. Zygmunt Baumann, as a part of the Gifford Lectures, spoke of the new class divide between those who are mobile, who can exercise their *agency,* and those who are not, and who are kept away from power, influence and, therefore, *agency*.[22] Despite this global movement, many individuals who are in marginalized situations, still find ways to act, to create solutions which help alleviate the problems they encounter. There are many examples of problem solving from the ground up. For instance, countless African grandmothers have found ways to sustain the orphaned children in their midst with very little material resources. Their efforts should be celebrated and supported rather than dismissed. Where grassroots *agency* is respected, the problem of fostering harmful, dependent relationships with those who are powerless is avoided. Ultimately, honoring *agency* ensures that human rights are respected, and an individual is empowered to be an active participant in setting the course of his or her future.

The fourth cause of life is *hope.* This is a word used often, sometimes even to the point of misuse or overuse. Gunderson and Cochrane define *hope* with an important adjective. They argue that the kind of *hope* which is a cause of life is *informed hope*. This *hope* is not based in wishful thinking or shallow optimism.[23] In many cases, particularly in the contexts pertaining to this paper,

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[22] Zygmunt Bauman. "*Globalization: The Human Consequences.*" Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998

[23] Gary Gunderson and James Cochrane (forthcoming in 2010): 4-14

this *hope* is grounded in a theological tradition which claims that there will be a brighter future for a now broken creation. This belief forms a deep anticipation of renewal which stems from these eschatological promises. While this idea of anticipation is theological, it has also been shown to be scientific as well. Schachter et al argue in numerous studies that an anticipatory consciousness is also tied to neurobiology. They say, "Imagining the future depends on much of the same neural machinery that is needed for remembering the past."[24] Therefore, the practice of *hope* must be conceived in light of the human ability to anticipate tomorrow. Where *hope* is present, then anticipation may also be influenced by an imagination for a better, more healthy future. As Gunderson and Cochrane powerfully summarize in their section on *hope*, "The immensely powerful capacity to imagine something that does not exist (a possibility) and to devise ways to bring it into being (an actuality) marks our life as human and not merely biological .... We invent, we make, we create what did not exist. We are able to transcend what is given to us."[25]

The final cause of life is *intergenerativity,* the capacity to continue adapting throughout one's life, finding ways to create life even in the final stages of life. Is it possible to participate in active life when death is eminent? Gunderson and Cochrane look specifically to some processes of dying which often include story-telling often to family, hospice care givers or religious leaders. They argue that even in the end of life, it can be a time in a person's life journey when he or she is able to rediscover coherence and make connections with both young and old, finding peace about those things done and left undone. *Intergenerativity* cannot happen with an individual but requires the presence of others to listen and take part in what might be described as a life review. Though this process takes community members coming together, opportunities of *intergenerativity* are very significant to the individual subject. The sense that one's story and memory remain intact, even after death, is, simply, a further generation of life. The impact of intergenerational community,

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[24] Daniel L. Schacter, Donna Rose Addis, and Randy L. Buckner, "Remembering the Past to Imagine the Future: The Prospective Brain," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience,* Vol. 8, (2007): 657

[25] Gary Gunderson and James Cochrane (forthcoming in 2010): 4-16

present in families as well as church congregations and other groups of people, has meaning for young and old alike. Gunderson and Cochrane say, “It not just from the old to the young, but the other way, too; not just between generations that can see and touch each other, but across the span of those whose lives influence each other over time and space.”[26] Because memory is a powerful tool, capable of both health and harm, it should not be underestimated.

The *Leading Causes of Life* are palpably present in communities around the world, providing the tools and assets needed for sustaining life in the midst of challenging circumstances. Putting all energy for public health into short term, triage efforts treats problems only once they have occurred. Focusing on the LCL causes and community assets already present and working across the globe better aids in creating long-term, holistic strategy and policy interventions which are sustainable. Research, specifically the Acheson Report on Inequalities, continues to recognize that solving major public health crises from HIV and AIDS to mental health, requires a multidimensional action plan.[27] Morgan and Ziglio emphasize, “These problems require interventions which cut across sectors to take account of the broader social, cultural, economic, political and physical environments which shape people’s experience of health and well-being.”[28] Other studies have even gone so far to argue that communities with strong cohesion and tight social networks, have high chances of maintaining and sustaining health, even in difficult circumstances. These examples should encourage policy makers and advocates to look more closely at the practices of healthy living, which are born in seemingly unhealthy places.[29] How do these community practices, these health assets, move persons toward a telos of health? Furthermore, what is there to be learned from these community practices, which might impact the health of the public in other contexts.

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[26] Gary Gunderson and James Cochrane (forthcoming in 2010): 4-17

[27] Antony Morgan and Erio Ziglio (2007): 19

[28] Antony Morgan and Erio Ziglio (2007): 19

[29] Antony Morgan and Erio Ziglio (2007): 20

Where the *Leading Causes of Life* exist, vibrant life is always emerging, even in the least expected places, like in the site of the funeral. This paper will explore the township funeral. It will look specifically at its role in the community, both historically by focusing on funerals during the apartheid era and also presently, by looking at funerals taking place now during the HIV and AIDS epidemic. This paper will demonstrate how the township funeral is a community health asset as it continues to help and empower individuals who face challenging circumstances from apartheid violence to the HIV and AIDS crisis. Finally, this paper seeks to answer the question of whether, as a community health asset, the township funeral can be construed as a 'site of resistance' to HIV and AIDS which provides communities with a means for moving toward a telos of health. By exploring the resistance efforts at funerals, birthed during the time of the apartheid struggle, a parallel between funerals that resisted apartheid, and funerals which may also resist the spread of HIV and AIDS, will be made. Ultimately, this paper will argue that the *Leading Causes of Life* are palpable causes of the re-creation of life in South African townships, as viewed throughout history, taking place each week Saturday around the grave.

Chapter 1: Township Funeral Culture

Funerals as Social Events

Understanding the unique elements of the township funeral is an important step toward understanding how this ritual could be construed as a 'site of resistance' to HIV and AIDS. First and possibly foremost, funerals within the township community have a very real social element. In fact, they are "the main 'social' activity for many township residents."[30] People in townships attend funerals for many various reasons. The result of this high attendance is that churches and cemeteries have become a place to see and be seen, to access information about the community, and to maintain ties with the community itself. The majority of township funerals take place on Saturdays, therefore many township residents spend Saturday after Saturday, going through this burial process in a very public arena. For those individuals who are employed, it is on Saturday when they are connected to township life, instead of being pulled away from the community due to work responsibilities. Because there are so many funerals which need to take place as well as a cultural expectation that most funerals will happen on a Saturday, the cemeteries are flooded with people within short spans of time.

Donald Donham, a social anthropologist looking at issues of gender and sexuality in South Africa, reported on a funeral which demonstrated the vast concentration of funerals and, particularly, how they are situated within local communities. It is important to note, also, that his experience took place in the late nineties, before the real escalation of funerals for those infected with HIV and AIDS. Nonetheless, his description of the experience shows the centrality of the cemetery in township life. He says,

> The several hundred people present boarded two very large transport buses hired for the occasion and probably 20 private automobiles to go to the cemetery. Because there are so many funerals in Soweto on the weekend (probably 200 at Avalon cemetery alone) and

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[30] Alan Morris (2004): 1-13

> because the cemetery had only one entrance (the better to control people), the roads were clogged and it took us an hour to go a few miles.[31]

Donham makes it clear that the cemetery, and ritual connected with it, are at the heart of life within the community that he visited. Furthermore, because the majority of funerals take place on Saturdays, often both at the same time and the same place as most other funerals, the cemetery becomes a community thoroughfare facilitating every aspect of society from the religious rites of a burial to an opportunity for social networking. This reality has had, over the years, both positive and negative ramifications.

The centralized location of the funeral, and specifically the cemetery, has given many local leaders space and opportunity to bring key information to masses of people in short spans of time. Community members know that the event of the funeral will typically happen in the same place and time each week. Therefore, if an individual is seeking information, he or she does not have to go far on a Saturday to find a viable source. On the other hand, especially during apartheid years, the police also knew how to easily locate hundreds of people at the same place and time each week. Often, this played against local communities and their attempts to disseminate information and galvanize grassroots support.

Street Committees and Burial Societies

Another element of township community is the way that individual homes and streets are grouped together geographically, aiding in cohesiveness of the whole as well as a flow of information throughout the community. Township areas are generally broken into smaller sections and throughout these areas, local (often informal) governing bodies exist to deal with the various challenges and issues in the community. Street committees are a major vehicle for organizing the community and ensuring that households are connected to the greater community body. They play a

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[31] Donald L. Donham, "Freeing South Africa: The 'Modernization' of Male-Male Sexuality in Soweto." *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (Feb., 1998): 5

very strong role, handling everything from petty crime to organizing funerals and other public forums. In many ways, the street committee is the most effective means for keeping the area safe. Individuals living in the street all contribute to patrolling the street for crime prevention and punishing minor offenses like drunkenness, violence, and residential conflict, which would likely fall through the cracks of the legal system. Street committees organize community cleaning efforts to ensure that the street is free from debris, since many township areas do not receive municipal services like trash collection. Street committees also play a major role in the organization of funeral collections, ensuring that when community members die, they will have enough funds either to be transported to their place of origin or to be given a proper burial in the area where they currently live.

Informal committees, whether they originate from the street or through church congregations, help families to manage the different challenges and issues which they face. One example of these kinds of informal organizations is found among the residents of Indawo Yoxolo, a post-apartheid National Reconstruction and Development Programme designated area. A study was commissioned which looked at this newly built area and collected data pertaining to the life of the community. Burial societies, as well as neighborhood credit organizations, were established rapidly in Indawo Yoxolo and became very popular. In one of the surveys of the Indawo Yoxolo area, the report stated:

> "Forty-five percent of the respondents belonged to a burial society, while one out of three respondents belonged to at least one informal saving or credit group, often established among neighbors. It was not uncommon to meet people who had joined up to three or more of these organizations. Faced with poverty, many used these groups to control the flows of money within the wider kinship and neighborhood networks."[32]

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[32] Erik Bähre, "Reluctant solidarity: Death, urban poverty and neighborly assistance in South Africa." *Ethnography*, Vol. 8, No 33, (2007): 38-39

Burial collection is particularly helpful for most families during times of bereavement, and it is a major advantage of living in the community. The involvement of the burial societies with individual families encourages accountability for saving each month for future funeral expenses. This method ensures that if there is a death in the family, there will be resources available. Not only do street committees collect money on a regular basis, but they also provide other, more hands on services, like cooking and cleaning for the funeral, as well as supporting the family through daily visits.[33]

On the whole, informal committees provide an imperative sense of community and support directly to families. Nonetheless, there are other problematic examples of abuse stemming from street committees and burial societies. Because they are more informal means of governing the area, there is less recourse for individual families if some injustice has taken place on the street committee level. When interviewed about the role of street committees in the communities, some individuals indicated that they were punished if they did not hand over the appropriate funds when the committee came to collect them. Some even reported that "persistent offenders were handcuffed with wire to a tree near the chief's shack, where they were variously taunted by their enemies and taken pity on by their friends, one of whom would eventually come forward to make the payment so that the prisoner would be released."[34] The threat of being punished contributed both to fear in the community as well as to general resentment of these mandatory collections. The severity of the kinds of punishments was particularly stark given the fact that so many of the affected persons were unemployed, underemployed, or living on government grants. Often, many people literally did not have the money which was asked of them. In addition to this, there have even been cases of

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[33] A more detailed description of the bereavement process will appear later in the paper, providing further explanation of the significance of the community in taking part in funeral activities.

[34] Campbell and Mzaidume, "Grassroots Participation, Peer Education, and HIV Prevention by Sex Workers in South Africa." *American Journal of Public Health,* Vol 91, No. 12, (Dec 2001): 1980

individuals paying in money for funerals of fictitious people.[35] This kind of corruption and abuse is not unusual.

Yet, despite the occasions of abuse which some individuals and families undergo, there is no doubt that much of the informal organizing which takes place in the townships is used as an effective tool for combating poverty and dealing with challenges present in the community. In fact, it could be argued that without the existence of street committees and burial societies, these areas would face markedly more chaos, and many families would not be able to successfully pull off a funeral. These street committees are part of the strength of the township and enhance the very tangible ways that the community promotes life in the midst of difficult challenges.

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[35] Campbell and Mzaidume (Dec 2001): 1980

Chapter 2: Strength of the Community

Neighborly Care

There is an isiZulu saying within many township communities, a saying that was often repeated throughout my interviews, which says, "Izandla ziya gezana." In English this is translated as "One hand washes another."[36] The principle behind this saying encourages practices of help-in-kind and reciprocity. The idea of helping each other in times of need still strongly exists throughout township communities. Neighbors are often viewed as important as family, and in some cases they are the first individuals, because of geographic proximity, to respond to a crisis. One speaker at an Eastern Cape funeral who had traveled all the way from Cape Town to show her support as a neighbor said, "It [our presence] shows that you were neighbors; you eat together and cry at the same place. You should know everything about your neighbor. If there is no neighborhood, then there is no burial. You need unity and love between neighbors."[37] During times of emergency, and in particular for the funeral event, contributions from neighbors take many forms including cooking, baking, and lending the bereaved family dishes and pots during funerals. In some instances, cash is also donated to the family because of the long distance to the cemetery and the high cost of transport, especially if the funeral is taking place in a home village and away from the place of death. Those who can afford to make small monetary donations help in this way.

While burial societies still exist, they are often less formal than they were in the past. Even when these kinds of initiatives are informal or left to street committees or church zones to handle, community members often know which households can afford to pay for the funeral, and which families cannot. Most community members also know which families have a good record in helping

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[36] Both the isiZulu quote and English translation were mentioned in countless interviews as well as in various articles about community support and intervention.

[37] Erik Bähre (2007): 48

others when there is a funeral and which ones have not shown their support of the bereaved. As reported in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, "Households that are known for helping others often get more support from the community when they are in need, compared to households that are not often helpful. Who helps and who does not, often results in minor conflicts in the community or between neighbors."[38] On the whole, communities do strive to help all those who are in need. However, there are cases where families and individuals who have not participated in their community practices of generosity, do not receive the same level of intervention.

In some important examples, churches are responding both to the community's social and material challenges which impact quality of physical life, as well as continuing to be sources of emotional and spiritual support for many community members. Across many of the well-known denominations, including the Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics, churches have adopted a new strategy of 'healing, community building and teaching', especially around the issues of HIV and AIDS. While other churches have opted not to talk of HIV and AIDS or have taken to actively discouraging individuals from seeking medical treatment or any kind of care other than prayer, churches in some communities are deciding to break the silence and educate their congregations. The examples of these kinds of churches, churches willing to risk their reputations in order to increase education and awareness of HIV and AIDS, are few. Nonetheless, their courage to begin the process of disclosure within churches which, in some cases, were the most vehemently in denial of the truth of HIV and AIDS, gives hope that the deadly silence previously sanctioned by the church will lessen until it is virtually extinguished.

It is also important to note that some of the most significant community support, provided by religious institutions, has been through women's organizations within the churches. One example is the manyano, a women's group found within many township church structures. These organizations consist of mainly older women who do things for each other, such as home visits to

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[38] Sarah Mosoetsa, "Compromised Communities and Re-Emerging Civic Engagement in Mpumalanga Township, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, (Dec., 2005): 870

care and pray for and with the sick and their families, as well as visiting homes where there is a funeral to offer comfort and support for the bereaved family.[39]

Example 1: Sex workers in community

A poignant example of community support in township areas is of a group of sex workers who, in their daily practices of neighborly care, embody relationships of reciprocal help and support. Though individuals who participate in sex work may have good reason not to trust the intentions of others, there are many stories of reciprocal help and support between sex workers. Examples of this include lending one another money for funeral collections and other needs, visiting each other in the hospital or in the home, providing food and washing the sick individual, and also lending money to the women who recently had babies and were not in a position to work.[40] Among this group, individuals often referred to their neighbors, and even some of the wider community members, as surrogate family members. Relationships within informal settlements often constitute an important source of support. Campbell, the director of this particular study, reported that there were even incidents of "landlords and landladies treating their resident sex workers with kindness and generosity."[41]

This kind of finding further demonstrates the vitality of community which is often found in township areas. Though landlords within the township community often have their own financial struggles, the fact that the study showed a willingness to offer help and support, indicates the impact that community practices of support often has on individuals and their behavior toward those in need.

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[39] Sarah Mosoetsa, "The Legacies of Apartheid and Implications of Economic Liberaliszation: A Post-Apartheid Township." *University of the Witwatersrand Crisis States Programme development research centre*. (July 2004)

[40] Campbell and Mzaidume (Dec 2001)

[41] Campbell and Mzaidume (Dec 2001): 1981

Example 2: Teachers in Langa

Another example of radical community support and care took place within a group of teachers in Langa, a township on the outskirts of Cape Town. In a study of these teachers and their practices of UBUNTU indicated the different ways that colleagues were committed to helping each other deal with challenges such as illness, funerals, and family problems.[42] Some of the teachers who were interviewed expressed the feeling that the only people who were reliable during times of crisis and emergency were the other teachers within their school community. One teacher said, "When my colleague has a problem, I must be there for her or him."[43] The support network which many of the teachers in the school experienced was a critical aspect of positive community and a reason that so many teachers continued to invest in their working environment.

Another aspect of support and care which arose in this particular community was the possibility of closure. In many ways, closure is only possible when it takes place through a shared emotional connection which transpires between individuals who have gone through a similar or shared experience. For instance, when teachers and students attend a memorial service together, if a student or staff member from the school has died, those connected with the community who come together to mourn, contribute largely to the process of closure. Often many who attend the funerals are not necessarily relatives or friends of the deceased, but instead individuals who attend the funeral in order to uphold the family and affected community. As Collins-Warfield emphasized, in her report of the teaching community in Langa and their response to the death of one of the students named Sandile, "A major occurrence such as a memorial service also relates to the shared significant event element of emotional connection. The teachers of Sandile have faced numerous challenges together... These shared significant events unite the teachers together through common

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[42] Amy E. Collins-Warfield, "'*Ubuntu' -- Philosophy and practice: An Examination of Xhosa Teachers' Psychological Sense of Community in Langa, South Africa*." Masters Thesis: Bowling Green State University (2008): 58-59

[43] Amy E. Collins-Warfield (2008): 58-59

experience, building a shared emotional connection."[44] Through attending Sandile's funeral as a school community, both students, teachers and even family were able to find a sense of closure that would have otherwise been difficult to achieve.

In the Langa community, support during difficult times extends even beyond student needs and is also apparent between colleagues who practice ubuntu toward one another. By and large, there are two areas in which teachers express their welfare toward one another: support during periods of bereavement and aid during times of financial difficulty.[45] When one of the teachers lost her husband, she was supported by the school community with money and food. The whole teaching staff came to her house to show their support, and some teachers even went with her to the Eastern Cape to attend her husband's funeral. After returning home from the funeral, the teachers visited her at her house, cooking as well as providing other material needs.

These kinds of support, both the material help as well as the reminder, through home visits, that one never goes through a difficult experience alone, all contribute to a great sense of ubuntu within the community. The teaching community in Langa is one of many examples of deep care and concern. This involvement is often present in township communities, and, in many cases, is the only support that an individual receives in times of difficulty or need. It is through examples of radical community involvement, like the sex workers who support one another, or the teaching community in Langa, that the practices of community are better understood.

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[44] Amy E. Collins-Warfield (2008): 78-79

[45] Amy E. Collins-Warfield (2008)

Chapter 3: Resistance to Apartheid

Radical practices of community and support are also seen in the different ways that the township community responded to the political violence of the apartheid struggle. During the years of the political struggle, funerals in the townships became a place of resistance against apartheid. Because political meetings and group gatherings were largely banned within black communities, the funeral was one of the only times when individuals could voice their resistance to the government. The township funeral and its unique elements and practices also contributed to the success of the struggle movement as a whole. Many black communities used the funeral site as a place of bringing the whole community together, galvanizing a diverse spectrum of individuals to resist the oppression and injustice of apartheid.

As Robert Thornton of the University of Cape Town explains, "Funerals, especially of those who have been killed in the course of political struggle, have acquired in South Africa a special cultural importance and range of meanings which depend on, but also considerably extend and transform, the 'traditional' Christian and autochthonous meanings they previously had."[46] Because of the transformation of the funeral during the political struggle, it is important to look closely at the implications of this new meaning associated with funerals within the township communities. Furthermore, if funerals did gain a new purpose during this time, is it possible that this deeper meaning became a permanent fixture in township communities. If galvanizing resistance to apartheid and the injustice associated with it was achieved at funerals during this time of political instability, could funerals be a 'site of resistance' to other kinds of injustices and challenges.

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[46] Robert J. Thornton. "The Shooting at Uitenhage, South Africa, 1985: The Context and Interpretation of Violence." *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 17, No. 2, (May 1990): 217-236

Physical Sites of Funerals

The physical spaces where the funeral took place--churches, homes and cemeteries--became a literal site of struggle against apartheid. As the government made community gatherings and meetings illegal, churches and congregations transformed from purely religious bodies and locations to multipurpose centers which also encompassed a political element. Sermons and prayers were lined with political speeches and slogans, transforming the ritual act of the funeral rite into a place which advocated for the liberation of all South Africans. Thousands, and on some occasions, tens of thousands, came together to protest apartheid and honor those who were victims of police and army bullets, death squads, and prison torture. For example, in 1985, 30,000 people attended the funeral of a murdered trade unionist, Andries Raditsela.[47] Hymns and prayers were followed by freedom songs and speeches, and the ANC flag and colors were present, draped over the coffin or hanging at the front of the church. Nkosi Sikilele'i (God Bless Africa), a song which was considered by the government to be threatening and violent and ultimately illegal to sing, was sung nonetheless.[48]

David Chidester, professor of religious studies at the University of Cape Town who focuses extensively on the importance of physical space as it pertains to religion and power, writes about the ways that the cemetery was transformed into a site of political activism:

> Frequently, the sacred space of the cemetery became a battlefield, as police tried to enforce legislation prohibiting flags, banners, placards, pamphlets, or posters at funeral services. For example, at the 1987 funeral held in the Cape Town Coloured neighborhood of Bonteheuwel for political activist Ashley Kriel, who had been assassinated by the police, the service was disrupted by police ripping an African National Congress flag from the coffin and shooting tear gas at the mourners and clergy in attendance (Chidester, 1992b: 104). As political funerals developed into a kind of

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[47] Peter Walshe, "South Africa: Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 29 (1991): 27-60

[48] Peter Walshe, (1991): 27-60

> regular ritual cycle, services were increasingly held for people who had been killed at previous funeral services.[49]

Because of the developing religious and political ritual, cemeteries, as well as other funeral landmarks, were recast as sites of resistance to the apartheid government and its injustice and oppression. When individuals attended events at cemeteries, whether burials or memorial services, they came to understand that gathering in that space was about more than the individual who had died but about the greater struggle for freedom.

Diversity of Attendees

Funerals raised awareness of the apartheid struggle efforts for the general public in ways that had not previously been accessible to all people. When individuals attended a funeral, whether or not it was their intention, they became active participants in the struggle against apartheid and were subsequently drawn into efforts of political resistance. From the youngest members of the community to the elders, a deeper political consciousness was developed as a result of the funeral process every step of the way, from the prayer vigils to the church service and finally at the actual burial in the gravesite. As one political activist noted,

> The night vigils were very significant. You will remember that after June 16 until 1978, virtually every weekend there was a political funeral. And, at that time, we did not only attend political funerals, we went to night vigils. Night vigils were a place where we met leaders of the Black Consciousness Movement who knew about these particular things. And they would come and give a perspective to us.[50]

Because the funeral process occurred throughout the week, over a period of time, with many people attending multiple events, there was ample opportunity for resistance to be instilled and built up throughout the ranks of the attendees no matter how much or little experience these individuals had

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[49] David Chidester, "Mapping the Sacred in the Mother City: Religion and Urban Space in Cape Town, South Africa." *Journal for the Study of Religion,* Vol 13, (2000): 12

[50] Ali Khangela Hlongwane, "Commemoration, Memory and Monuments in the Contested Language of Black Liberation: The South African Experience." *Journal of Pan African Studies,* (2008): 144

previously. As the individual's will against injustice was strengthened, the community as a whole become more equipped to resist oppressive government policy.

There was great diversity in those individuals who attended township funerals. Many who attended both vigils and funerals were not actively political nor did they seek obvious means of being involved with the struggle efforts. Many persons came to the funeral strictly to mourn the dead and fulfill their responsibility toward the family who was facing loss. Most people who were present also had their own personal experiences of violence associated with apartheid injustice or at least had loved ones who had suffered. As Hlongwane notes,

> To many it was a moment to express collective grief and resilience; many still had fresh memories of being tear-gassed and assaulted by the police; of seeing people shot at under cruel circumstances; of losing a brother or a sister, a close friend or a relative; and knowing of people languishing in prison or having left the country to an unknown world of exile.[51]

Therefore, funerals accomplished a whole spectrum of ends. Those who lost loved ones felt the support of the community while supporters also benefitted from collective mourning of the greater community. All present for these funerals, young or old, political or not, had a heightened awareness of the complex political situation which was continually unfolding around them.

Religious Leadership

Precisely because most individuals in the community had experienced some kind of suffering associated with political violence, funerals were extremely traumatic for the bereaved. Furthermore, many clergy struggled to minister to angry, grieving crowds who were continually harassed, bullied and even harmed by South African military and police. As one scholar of this era reports, "At this time too, sweeping restrictions were placed on funerals. Hymns, songs, and sermons were forbidden, and tickets were issued by the police to severely limit attendance. This heavy dose of further repression closed off the last remaining outlets for non-violent protest - other

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[51] Ali Khangela Hlongwane (2008): 143

than through the churches and ecumenical organizations."[52] Yet, these difficult circumstances were a breeding ground for encouraging and training new religious leaders who would be able to galvanize the masses and speak out prophetically when necessary, straddling both the religious and political realms.

Conflating elements of Christianity and the struggle for freedom had been taking place for some time. Many who entered into ministry saw preaching and church leadership as an extension of their political work and were prepared to be on the front lines of political resistance in the name of religion.[53] Religious leaders often donned both roles at the same time, professing God's sense of justice and the eradication of oppression while also applying these ideals to the sphere of national and international politics.

One example of this bringing together of religious and political issues was a charismatic figure named Mokoena, an activist who was, at one stage, accused of treason by the South African government and sent to trial. Besides his work as a political activist, he was also a part-time preacher who often spoke at mass rallies and at funerals, including the funeral of seven alleged ANC guerrillas gunned down in Gugulethu, Cape Town. Mokoena would lead hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people who were in attendance, in singing mourning songs, such as "Thina Sizwe."[54] After a period of singing, Mokoena would request that the song drop down to a hum, and he would proceed to speak about fallen martyrs, leaders languishing in jail, and those forced out of the country into exile, all the while using wording and phrasing which sounded more like preaching

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[52] Peter Walshe (1991): 55-56

[53] In Peter Walshe's article, he gives an example of the conflation of religion and politics, citing the clergy's involvement in the launching of the Defiance Campaign in 1988, and their role in maintaining intense pressure on the Government throughout the next few years.

[54] This is a song that was often sung in the 1970s, particularly when Nkosi Sikilele'i Afrika was banned from public events. The English translation of its chorus is: "We, the African nation. We cry for our country that was taken by the white people."

than another form of speech. In these ways, he would combine his political interest with his skills as a preacher to a religious crowd, prepared to listen to a moral leader.[55]

Mokoena would also take the opportunity at funerals and other major gatherings like rallies or church hall meetings to use poetry to energize and influence the audience. Below is an example of a poem which he often gave as a part of his motivational preaching.

> Ig - nor - rant
> I am ignorant
> I am ignorant
> I have been fortunate
> In the business of ignorancy
> I am South African
> Without residency
> I can read,
> I can write,
> However ignorant I may be
> I know Mandela is in Pollsmoor jail
> Though I do not know why.
> Oh people of Afrika
> Help me before it is too late
> Emancipate me
> From my ignorancy.
> Mzwakhe breaks the rhythm, stops, leans into the
> microphone, and
> whispers:
> For freedom is getting rusty
> On the pavements of oppression[56]

As evidenced in this form of preaching, Mokena, as well as others like him, highlighted political themes and grievances during a religious occasion which created a conflation of sacred and secular. It is through these kinds of tactics, that many political activists attempted to skirt the apartheid bans and laws which sought to keep the opposition quiet.

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[55] Jeremy Cronin, "Even under the Rine of Terror: Insurgent South African Poetry." *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (Spring 1988): 12-23

[56] Jeremy Cronin (Spring, 1988): 12-23

Havoc at Funerals

Because the religious realm remained a comparatively free space, individuals who were otherwise closely watched, often found windows of opportunity to preach with political undertones and therefore reinforce their anti-apartheid ideas. One resident of Gugulethu suggested that the sheer masses of people attending funerals made it impossible for the police to keep track of who was banned and who was not. She said,

> During apartheid people used the funeral as a meeting place. If they were banned from attending gatherings, they still attended funerals because there were so many people. In 1977, I was arrested at the cemetery on N.Y. 5 for singing Nkosi Sikilele'i. We kept singing when they said to disperse. After the second warning, they came down on us. I thought I would be safe if I stood next to the white, Catholic priest, but then they arrested us both. We were banned for five years, not to attend any gatherings. I kept going to meetings and gatherings because they didn't know me. I wasn't afraid. I forgot about the ban.[57]

Funerals, and the events surrounding them, wreaked total havoc throughout the township communities. Funerals for well-known freedom fighters and comrades often ended in chaos, with police resorting to violence even in churches and other sacred spaces. Incidents of violence often spurred a range of community response. When tensions rose in local communities, individuals, especially members of the youth, engaged in different forms of retaliation.

One significant incident of police brutality took place in the township of Alexandra. A funeral for an active youth member was attended by 11,000 people, and the funeral ended up sparking a six day civil war between youth members from the Alexandra community and the South African Defense Force and Police. When the police used tear-gas to disperse the attendants, many mourners fought back, resulting in many more related injuries and deaths.[58] This funeral snowballed into days of fighting between the youth and the police and military forces, a small scale

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[57] Community Interview, 11 March 2010

[58] Karen Jochelson, "Reform, Repression and Resistance in South Africa: A Case Study of Alexandra Township, 1979-1989." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 16, No 1, (Mar 1990): 7-8

skirmish known as the Six Day War. During a funeral for seventeen people killed during this 'Six Day War,' the community and its leaders acknowledged that the youth should not resort to this kind of rampant violence. They made a strong plea for a more strict use of street committees which might help direct the youth's enthusiasm for the struggle against apartheid toward methods that would, instead, be life-giving. These street committees had the job of "preparing residents 'to forget about our past differences and to prepare ourselves for the future.'"[59] One aim of street committees during this time was to uphold certain principles of democracy and justice which had the potential to give hope for an equal South African society in the future.

On the other hand, the speakers at the funeral acknowledged that the situation in the aftermath of the Six Day War was highly volatile, particularly when the police interfered with funerals. One of the funeral speakers said, "An army is supposed to fight a foreign enemy. The South African army is killing our children inside our country. Remember this: it cannot be a people's army that kills the children of the people."[60] One main message that emerged from these funeral speeches was the deep desire for freedom and justice and the preparedness of most community members to be killed to achieve it. A pamphlet about that six day war, produced to spread the word about the incidents, captured the funeral messages, saying, "Our people want FREEDOM now. They want to govern themselves and determine the destiny of their country TODAY not TOMORROW ... They have therefore SHED ALL FEAR OF DEATH because the word TO LIVE has acquired the same meaning as the words TO BE FREE."[61] As demonstrated by these speakers and the actions of the Alexandra community in the aftermath of violence, the community braced itself and its members for a struggle which would continue until it brought about the justice and freedom which was deeply desired, no matter the cost.

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[59]Karen Jochelson (Mar 1990): 7-8

[60] *Sunday Times*, London, England (9 March 1986)

[61] 'Alexandra Massacre: Mass Funeral of the Seventeen Victims in the Alexander Massacre', (Pamphlet), 5 March 1986

Police hostility and brutality only encouraged the resistance effort to expand into more creative and innovative arenas. New forms of literature and media were disseminated to the masses through various community networks, most of which were largely untouchable by the government. One example of media production was Johannesburg's Silkscreen Training Project which created all forms of media and advertisements. One of its biggest challenges was trying to get its products to the public for meetings and funerals before the government declared it illegal. This constant battle to disseminate media spurred the creation of freedom songs, T-shirts, hats, bumper stickers, political graffiti, and even a method of putting placard-bearing dummies on lamp-posts and park benches, where they were seen by hundreds of passers-by before being confiscated.[62] Political issues and conflict led to new waves of media production and purpose which also bolstered the funeral efforts. Often it was at funerals where these products were on display, from ANC flags and uniforms to the more obscure slogans and paraphernalia of smaller, less-known groups.

As much as certain media was used by the resistance movement to educate the people living through the township communities, the mainstream media available to South African citizens through national broadcasting, twisted the facts pertaining to funerals. This effort reinforced the growing fear that both funerals and church leaders were inflammatory and inciting violence. At one political funeral, religious leaders who were well known in the struggle efforts were shown to the South African public as incendiary. In an article by Cradock and Frederikse, they report,

> Leaders of the South African Council of Churches, Beyers Naude and Allan Boesak, were both filmed so that they appeared to be speaking under the banner of the banned South African Communist Party, although in fact they were on a podium draped with scores of anti-government banners. There was no sound as the ministers spoke; the impression left was that they were being inexplicably inflammatory.[63]

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[62] Julie Frederikse, “South Africa's Media: The Commercial Press and the Seedlings of the Future.” *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 9, No. 2, (Apr 1987): 638-656

[63] Julie Frederikse, (1987): 646

Through such efforts, the general public in South Africa was led to believe that the ritual of the funeral had been totally hijacked by dangerous politics which only resulted in further violence and chaos.

Danger at the Funeral: Uitenhage

As the struggle against apartheid continued and further intensified, attendance at funerals, whether an attendee was a political activist or an innocent bystander, became a dangerous activity. In many cases police bullying and brutality resulted in bodily harm and emotional trauma, and quite a number of funerals during the apartheid ended in near mass slaughter.

One well-known example was a shooting which took place on the road between Uitenhage and Langa in the Eastern Cape province on 21 March 1985. At least twenty people died because of this shooting, and most of the victims were on their way to a funeral which had been previously banned by the government.[64] During this time, funerals were often made illegal, therefore one had the choice of burying their dead or abiding by the law. In this incident at Uitenhage, those who were walking to the funeral had made the choice to defy the funeral ban in order to uphold their bereavement responsibilities, both to the deceased as well as the family which had been impacted by death. In many ways, the shooting incident at Uitenhage has been used as a symbol of the unnecessary violence which transpired at the hands of the military and police.

While there is some question about what exactly happened on the road to the funeral and who said what words, Robert Thornton, scholar and historian, has captured the opening dialogue between a member of the police during the incident and an activist traveling with the group to the funeral.

> Pentz claimed that he stopped his Casspir and asked the crowd in Afrikaans why they were there. A man whom Pentz (or someone--the evidence is not clear on this point) called a "Rastafarian" answered him in Afrikaans--but in words recalling Antigone's

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[64] Robert J. Thornton, " The Shooting at Uitenhage, South Africa, 1985: The Context and Interpretation of Violence." *American Ethnologist,* (1990)

> challenge to the unjust decree of Creon, King of Thebes, in Sophocles' tragic dramatic sequel to Oedipus Rex: "Ons gaan begrafnis toe" ("We are going to the funeral"). When Pentz told him that funerals had been banned, the Rastafarian replied, "Ek weet dit....]ulle sal ons nie keer vandag nie" ("I know that .... You will not stop us today").[65]

Clearly, the group of mourners on the road were determined to go through with the funeral, even if their decision had dire consequences. Prior to this incident, Captain Goosen of the Security Police had sought an order to ban all funerals over the weekends as this was the most popular time for funerals to take place. Thornton reports, "The order was issued under the Internal Security Act and banned all funerals on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays and public holidays; it was aimed at limiting popular participation in funerals because the police feared they would become foci for political organization."[66] Reserving the weekends for funerals allowed community members who worked during the week the ability to attend.

Nonetheless, abiding by this new law, the community arranged a funeral on a Thursday for a group of young men who had been killed earlier by the police. This particular Thursday was a date that also held political significance because it was the anniversary of Sharpeville Day, another shooting incident with political roots. For this reason, Captain Goosen appealed again to the magistrate to attempt to ban the funeral because he believed that funerals on Sharpeville Day "were likely to provoke 'unrest.'"[67] The investigation of this incident further indicated that there was general confusion about whether or not this funeral was legal, as it was in accordance with the original ban. Yet, the dead needed to be buried, so the residents of the community decided to proceed with the funeral despite the knowledge that they were potentially breaking the law.

The back and forth, continual law-making and funeral banning, coupled with the continual turning over of these laws as they pertained to funerals, further violated the basic human need to put the dead to rest. The attitude of the police toward funerals carried an underlying threat of violence

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[65] Robert J. Thornton, (1990): 219-220

[66] Robert J. Thornton, (1990): 220

[67] Robert J. Thornton, (1990): 220

or harm which could befall those who were involved with the funeral in any way. The climate created by the police possibly contributed to the violence which ensued. Justice D. V. D. Kannemeyer, investigator of this case, concluded about the actions of the police chief,

> It would seem that Capt. Goosen used section 46 of the Act for a devious purpose. Having obtained a prohibition against holding a funeral on, inter alia, a Sunday because a funeral held on a Sunday would be likely, seriously, to endanger the public peace, he proceeded to obtain an order that the funeral could only be held on a Sunday because, if held on a weekday, work would be boycotted, leading to disruption of sources and industry which is not a ground for a section 46 order.[68]

From the outset, multiple aspects of this situation had the potential to erupt into violence and unrest. In addition to the funeral banning, the facts surrounding the deaths of these young men also intensified the political significance. Because these young men had been killed by police for political reasons, it was doubly painful that the families were forbidden from laying these individuals to rest. The families and mourners were put in an impossible position. They had a duty to have a funeral for the dead but were not enabled by law to fulfill this duty. Anthropologist Gregory Bateson names this kind of phenomenon a "double binds." He says, “Double binds frequently act to focus attention on the event that is "doubly bound" and in so doing heighten its sociological and psychological significance.”[69] Because of these many factors, emotions were running especially high and could have contributed to the multifaceted devastation which took place in Uitenhage.

While significant political meaning grew out of the shootings at Uitenhage, it is important to also garner from the complexities of this event, the commitment which this particular township community had for fulfilling their burial duties. Despite the threats of violence, both explicit and unstated, members of this community would not be deterred from their responsibility to the dead and their living family members. As terrible as the day ended up for those who were massacred on

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[68] Robert J. Thornton (1990): 232

[69] Robert J. Thornton, (1990): 233 (Cited by Robert J. Thornton and Bateson, Jackson, Haley, and Weakland 1956; Bateson 1979)

the road, their dedication to attending the funeral also displayed their deep resilience and ability to persist despite risk or danger. In many ways, it is this spirit, highlighted in the example of Uitenhage, which was also present in township communities throughout South Africa, and contributed in significant ways to successfully resisting the injustice of apartheid. As violence during apartheid came to an end, the funeral continued to play a pivotal role in the community. Without the need to fight the political injustice of apartheid, would the unique characteristics of the township funeral remain intact and available for resisting other challenges in the future?

Chapter 4: Post-apartheid Resistance Efforts at Funerals

In the post-apartheid era, there are also examples of funerals being used as platforms for important issues like homosexuality and HIV and AIDS resistance, utilizing some of the principles and tactics of those involved with the struggle against apartheid. What remains to be seen is if these isolated examples of resistance have the potential to be multiplied and increased throughout communities, particularly in light of the issues of HIV stigma. While most residents of townships were supportive, either directly or indirectly, of the different efforts of struggle against apartheid, many have been slow to face the reality of HIV and AIDS or openly support the efforts for education and treatment which have been taking place in the recent years throughout the country.

There is also a difference between fighting an unjust political system and a human immunodeficiency virus which has left health professionals perplexed. Apartheid was propagated by persons with a sinister agenda, while HIV and AIDS is spread through bodily fluid most often associated with sexual intercourse, a reality which has caused discussion around issues of moral responsibility. Despite these debates and the community's overall resistance to dealing openly about HIV and AIDS in public forums, this general unwillingness has not prevented individuals and organizations from envisioning the funeral site as an appropriate and useful place for education and ultimately resistance to AIDS. With these individual efforts, there has been a slow but increasing receptiveness to HIV and AIDS education at funerals.

Example 1: GLOW

One early example of this kind of effort, indirectly related to AIDS resistance but more specifically pertaining to gay rights, was through an organization called the Gay and Lesbian Organization of the Witwatersrand (GLOW). As a part of a research study, anthropologist Donald

Donham observed the funeral of a gay man. In the week leading up to the burial, he spent time with GLOW members, observing their involvement in the funeral, which promised to have political significance.

One of his first observations had to do with their level of participation with the planning of the funeral, despite resistance from the deceased family. He reported, “There were rumors that there might be an open confrontation between the family and GLOW.”[70] Because homosexuality is not widely accepted in township communities, it is not a surprise that the family had objections to this funeral and GLOW’s attempt to use it as a platform for gay and lesbian rights. Nonetheless, members of GLOW were not deterred and made preparations for the funeral. As is typical of a large funeral, this one was held in a community center so that there would be more room than in most churches or homes for all who wished to attend. The standard funeral elements were in place from the men’s association members dressed in their uniforms and sitting behind the podium to members of the women’s group also in uniform and sitting as a cohesive unit in the audience. The coffin was placed in front of the podium. Apart from the standard funeral happenings and placements, Donham reports,

> I was surprised to see, behind the coffin, in front of the podium, a GLOW banner being held by two members. There were flowers on the coffin and around it. Throughout the service, including the sermon, the two GLOW members holding the banner changed periodically. From the back, two new people marched up through the ladies in white to take the place of the two at the banner. Then those who had been relieved came back through the congregation to the back of the church. One GLOW member videotaped the funeral from the back. About six or seven of the members who had come were white. It was hard to tell exactly, but there were probably 10 or 15 black members. Quite a few, both white and black, wore GLOW T-shirts (the back of which said, "We can speak for ourselves").[71]

In addition to the GLOW members in attendance with their t-shirts and banners, some of the funeral speakers were also gay activists. One named Simon Nkoli was one of the first black gay activists in South Africa, founder of GLOW and member of the ANC. During Nkoli’s speech he

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[70] Donald L. Donham (Feb 1998): 5

[71] Donald L. Donham (Feb 1998): 5

focused on gay activism in South Africa and the contributions that the deceased man had made throughout his life. Just like the funerals during the apartheid era, at different points in his speech, Nkoli sang aloud lines of hymns, at which point the congregation immediately joined in. As Nkoli was not the only speaker, elders and ministers also spoke, bringing in religious themes such as God's forgiveness of all sins and the notion that the deceased had now returned home to God. One minister even attempted to ameliorate tensions between GLOW and the family when he began the reconciliation process between Linda's father and GLOW for offending the group earlier in the week.[72] Finally, at the end of the funeral service, members of GLOW and others who wished to be in solidarity with them sang an English song beginning with the phrase, "We are gay and straight together." The coffin was carried out of the church to the hearse by both GLOW members wearing their activist t-shirts and leaders from the church dressed in their special uniforms.[73] These kinds of resistance and struggle songs have distinct parallels with the apartheid songs of struggle and play a similar role in raising cohesiveness of the crowd.

Another distinctive parallel to funerals during the apartheid era was the *toi toi* dance, the distinctive and unique movement that South Africans developed during anti-apartheid demonstrations. At this funeral, members of GLOW participated in *toi toi* alongside the bus as the funeral party waited to enter into the cemetery. Furthermore, the police were in attendance, just as they have been present since apartheid. A giant Casspir, an armored tank-like vehicle which the South African police use in the townships, transported police personnel who had arrived to help control the masses of people present at the gravesite. Donham reports, "There was something about the routinized way that so many people had to bury their dead and leave (others were waiting) that brought home to me, in a way that I had not anticipated, what apartheid still means in many black

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[72] Donald L. Donham (Feb 1998): 3-21

[73] Donald L. Donham (Feb 1998): 3-21

people's lives."[74] The presence of the police along with the songs and *toi toi* are all reminiscent of the funeral culture born out of the apartheid era.

Example 2: Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)

In some ways, GLOW was a precursor to another important organization which has also used the site of funeral as a place of HIV and AIDS resistance and education. Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) led the charge against the government in the late 1990s when HIV and AIDS was not being handled openly and honestly. TAC was officially launched on December 10, 1998, which was International Human Rights Day. From the earliest moments, its main objective has been to campaign for greater access to HIV treatment for all citizens of South African by raising public awareness and understanding about issues surrounding the availability, affordability and use of HIV treatments. TAC's strategies mirrored resistance efforts at funerals demonstrated during apartheid as well as AIDS activists who participated in the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the 1980s. Zackie Achmat, the founder and leader of TAC, was an ANC activist during the apartheid struggle. TAC deliberately engages with politics of race and class and how these issues pertain to HIV and AIDS. They have often utilized songs written in the style of "struggle" songs as well as *toi toi* at marches, demonstrations and funerals, gesturing to an earlier age of resisting. Along with these grassroots resistance methods, they also use conventional methods of raising awareness for their causes like press releases and conferences, website information dissemination, television documentaries, and national and international networking.

In many ways, TAC's methodology for political engagement has been a more "sophisticated refashioning of 1980s modes of political activism, drawing on the courts, the media, and local and transnational advocacy networks, along with grassroots mobilization and skillful negotiations with

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[74] Donald L. Donham (Feb 1998): 6

business and the state."[75] All of these methods combined to make a deep, lasting impact on South African government policy toward treating all citizens who are HIV positive and in need of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs).

In many ways, TAC has stayed squarely within the local community. Even during TAC's legal battles with the South African government, fighting to make ARVs affordable and available to all citizens regardless of their ability to pay high priced pharmaceutical bills, TAC always recognized the importance of grassroots and community involvement. While TAC acknowledges the importance of public interest litigation as an important tool of social change, Jonathan Berger, in his article about litigation strategies used by TAC toward opening access to treatment for HIV and AIDS, argues, "It [TAC] also believes that the use of law should be limited and strategic, that the lawyer plays an important albeit limited role within a broader social movement, and that a comprehensive understanding of the political and economic context informs the manner in which the law is used to further the aims of the movement."[76] Because TAC uses a multifaceted approach to their movement, they are able to leverage their local, regional, national, and international clout to push issues and challenge the status quo in radical ways. The kind of activism that TAC advocates results in a climate which is more collectivist in its response to HIV and AIDS as well as its various forms of treatment.

TAC attempts to address some of the major issues pertaining to HIV and AIDS education and prevention, chief among them in this discussion is the act of disclosure and the unfortunate fact that many are still unwilling to be open about their status. Furthermore, any attitude against disclosing one's status only contributes negatively to the problem of stigma. One scholar notes, "Whereas public health practitioners report that most of their HIV/AIDS patients wish to retain anonymity and invisibility at all costs, TAC successfully advocates the transformation of the stigma

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[75] Steven Robins, "'Long Live Zackie, Long Live': AIDS Activism, Science and Citizenship after Apartheid." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3, (Sep., 2004): 651

[76] Jonathan M. Berger, "Litigation Strategies to Gain Access to Treatment for HIV/AIDS: The Case of South Africa's Treatment Action Campaign." *Treatment Action Campaign,* Vol 20, No 3, (2003): 598

of AIDS into a "badge of pride" that is publicly displayed on T-shirts at township funerals, demonstrations, workshops and other public spaces."[77] Part of TAC's strategy is to blur the lines between those who are HIV-positive and those who are HIV-negative. All persons who support TAC's cause are encouraged to wear the TAC logo which states, "HIV-positive." This T-shirt is worn both by HIV positive and negative activists not only from the township areas, but also by all activists in South Africa and throughout the international community, who support TAC and its mission. The logo on the T-shirt, "HIV-positive," obscures the divide between the infected positive and the uninfected negative, undermining the stigma which has maintained strong in most communities.[78]

By blurring the lines between positive and negative, substantial inroads have been made in reconnecting these two groups of people. Furthermore, it is through these activist methods that TAC has made a significant contribution to bringing life to those individuals who once believed that they were dying. Through teaching society to revere honesty pertaining to HIV status and by encouraging those who are HIV positive to speak out, social reintegration and reconnection of previously isolated and stigmatized community members who were forced to suffer alone with their disease now have the potential to be linked with a caring community.

As noted, one of TAC's major strengths is that they have always been grounded in a localized understanding of and approach to politics. No matter their status or popularity, TAC has placed an emphasis on the local community and its integral role in activism, and a bulk of its support has always been situated within pertinent communities. In part, this grounding may be due

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[77] Steven Robins, "Rights passages from "near death" to "new life": AIDS activism and treatment testimonies in South Africa." *Institute of Development Studies*, Brighton, England (October 2005): 4

[78] Katarina Jungar and Elaine Salo, "Shop and Do Good?" *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol.2, No.6 (September 2008): 92-102

to the TAC leadership team, individuals "who cut their activist teeth during the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1980s."[79]

These multifaceted approaches continue to empower TAC because in a way TAC is constantly returning to the community and being reinvigorated by the energy and challenges found on the grassroots level. In addition to an overall spirit of leadership which is found throughout the ranks of TAC, South African leaders, particularly from the ANC, have often used TAC as a platform for voicing support of ARVs and better national policy for resisting and fighting HIV and AIDS. As mentioned earlier, Simon Nkoli was of a figure who straddled a career with the ANC while also advocating for the rights of those infected and affected with HIV and AIDS as well as homosexuality; he died in December 1998. At his funeral, members of TAC appealed to the South African government and specifically to ANC leader, Mosiuoa Lekota, then Chairperson of the National Council of the Provinces, hoping to persuade the government to join in a partnership with TAC in order to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of people with AIDS.

While many of the speakers at Nkoli's funeral advocated for AIDS treatment, it wasn't until the funeral of ANC leader and TAC activist, Edward Mabunda, in April 2003, that a leader from the ANC disclosed that death was caused by an illness related to AIDS. Mabunda had been a respected ANC leader in the early parts of his life. Unfortunately, when he was adamant about disclosing his HIV status in the public sphere, the ANC attempted to shut him out. Because of the way the ANC treated him, he simply used TAC's platform of disclosure and honesty in order to further express his agenda.[80] Over a thousand people attended Mabunda's funeral which happened to take place during the TAC Civil Disobedience campaign. During this time, TAC produced media

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[79] Steven Robins and Bettina von Lieres, "Remaking Citizenship, Unmaking Marginalization: The Treatment Action Campaign in Post- Apartheid South Africa." *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 38, No. 3, (2004): 582

[80] Mark Heywood, "The Price of Denial" *INTERFUND* "Development update: From disaster to development: HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa." *Development Update,* Vol 5, No 3, (2005): 2-27

which was disseminated throughout the community, to galvanize solidarity within its base of supporters. Heywood reports some of the details of their various education efforts, saying,

> TAC's 'HIV-Positive' T- shirts, posters of the Minister of Health declaring 'Wanted for Failing to Stop 600 Deaths a Day' and posters of Mabunda proclaiming 'Why Civil Disobedience is Necessary' flew alongside ANC flags. ANC, COSATU and TAC leaders addressed the funeral service. Despite this formal rapprochement, after Mabunda's body was lowered into the grave, ANC Youth League members made threats of violence against TAC activists as they were leaving the township.[81]

Despite the massive energy devoted to education, many have struggled to accept TAC's purposes and methodologies. For as much as TAC has made progress in local communities, the organization continues to battle with individuals and government alike to promote openness and honesty about HIV, pushing society as a whole toward a place where disclosure is normative.

. One TAC activist who has been involved with TAC in Cape Town areas since 1999 talked about the different ways that their community workers approached families who were dealing with illness and death. Part of TAC's strategy is helping the family understand the importance of honesty at the funeral of one who has died from an AIDS related illness. Often, even, there is a conflict of interest and opinion between the family and the deceased. In our interview, TAC activist, Mandla Majola said, "Most of the time, when a person is on their death bed, he will say, 'When I die, organize a big funeral for me with HIV-positive t-shirts and a banner on the coffin.' Sometimes I will call a parent or someone from the family, so they can see it was the wish of the person to be open and honest."[82] Members of TAC approach the family before the funeral in order to deal with questions and concerns. When the family does agree for TAC to be a part of the funeral, typically between a hundred and two hundred activists attend, wearing t-shirts and holding banners as well as passing out pamphlets with information about HIV and treatment. He says, "We are always trying to raise awareness and encourage acceptance and challenge the community to continue to resist and

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[81] Mark Heywood, (2005): 19

[82] Interview with TAC activist Mandla Majola, March 27, 2010

fight against this disease."[83] Because of these strategies, many more funerals are being opened up to honest communication about HIV and AIDS and more families are comfortable admitting that the deceased was HIV-positive.

Typically, when TAC is involved in a funeral, elements of their involvement mimic the strategy used during the funerals of the apartheid years. Besides wearing T-shirts and flying banners, TAC has also come up with a series of struggle-like songs which address the plight of one living with HIV and AIDS as well as protesting the political stance of the government (see appendix B). These songs, like struggle songs of the apartheid years, express the pain which many people have experienced, and point to a future that is free from these hardships. Part of the purpose of these particular songs, is also education about HIV and AIDS as well as different treatment options for those who are ill. But, always, at funerals where TAC is involved, there is an accommodation for church songs and hymns. TAC has historically used funerals to educate local communities, and part of the reasoning behind TAC's decisions has to do with "dispelling myths around death and stopping gossip."[84]

The openness TAC fosters in funerals aims to prevent the spread of false and often harmful information while making room for good, correct education. These benefits are enhanced by another unique reality of the funeral, the idea that everyone, all kinds of individuals from every kind of background, are present. As Majola says, "In a funeral you get everybody. You get old and young, rich and poor, heathens and Christians."[85] Because of the diversity of the funeral population, there are multifaceted reasons and benefits to education in this particular venue. Another AIDS educator who is often asked to speak about AIDS education and the importance of disclosure at funerals says,

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[83] Interview with TAC activist Mandla Majola, March 27, 2010

[84] Interview with TAC activist Mandla Majola, March 27, 2010

[85] Interview with TAC activist Mandla Majola, March 27, 2010

> A funeral is a great place for education because it is where you get all ages and groups. You get youth and parents. Everybody is there at that time. Many who have died from are still young so the funeral becomes a chance to tell their friends that this person was HIV-positive at this young age. They will realize that this is all very real. Some don't believe that HIV is really there or that it kills. Talking about it openly makes people face the reality of HIV and what could happen without proper treatment... death.[86]

Because funerals either take place at churches or have some connection to a religious institution, TAC recognizes the importance of working with churches. Helping churches to raise factual awareness of HIV and AIDS has been part of TAC's goals. Churches responses to HIV and AIDS have been varied and have traversed the spectrum since the beginning of the epidemic. Despite some inroads that have been made, there are churches which continue to fuel cycles of misinformation and stigma.

In fact, Majola reports that many long standing members of churches are struggling because of the ways that religious institutions have responded. He says, "They, the women who sit in the front of the church, feel ashamed to have children who have passed away from AIDS, as if they have not educated them enough. They are trapped. They don't want to offend the church or stigmatize the family name. They don't want to talk about it, but as long as there is secrecy, people will die because of a lack of understanding."[87] There have even been instances where families have been open to using the funeral as a means of education, but the church leadership has refused. Often, churches will allow some HIV and AIDS education but will emphasize that there can be no talk of condoms or treatment apart from prayer and belief. He says, "There are churches that say you are HIV-positive because you don't believe enough in God. They encourage their members to get rid of the ARVs and pray harder. If a person prays enough and believes enough, then God will take away their illness."[88]

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[86] Community Interview #23, (22 March 2010)

[87] Interview with TAC activist Mandla Majola, March 27, 2010

[88] Interview with TAC activist Mandla Majola, March 27, 2010

Majola, as well as many others, agree that church cooperation is a key element to creating a space where individuals can access helpful information and have the courage to change perceptions and ideas which have previously caused further harm and done very little to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Chapter 5: Funeral Critique

While multiple elements of the township funeral are causes of life and contribute to the overall well-being of bereaved families, the sheer numbers of dead who are in need of being buried have put enormous stress on family units who have very little by way of material resources. In South Africa's 2005 State of the Nation address, it was reported,

> The stresses of the [AIDS] epidemic pervade the daily lives of the majority of the country's population. Stigma and discrimination are widespread. Impoverishment of families as a result of the cost of caring for sick members is widespread. The burden of care in homes and communities is stretching the emotional and physical resources of individuals and institutions. The burden of funeral costs puts pressure on the extended family (universally, the traditional social security net), and on business of all kinds (for example, increasing demand for compassionate leave, increased costs of recruitment and training to replace deceased employees). Inequality and poverty exacerbate socially destructive behaviors and conditions, ranging from risky sexual relationships to entrenchment of abuse and discrimination against women.[89]

These are all problems which pose great challenge to communities throughout South Africa. In a way, these issues are all interconnected. Illness leads families into circumstances of deeper poverty, and poverty often leads an individual to make choices which result in illness. All of these factors come into play during the process of a funeral. Furthermore, because it is township communities which largely face these particular challenges, poverty and illness, both of which may contribute to dis-ease, these communities are most likely to experience the highest numbers of funerals. The strengths of the township funeral culture, for instance the idea that all who attend are given a meal to share, have had, in some cases, a negative impact on families because most of the affected families do not have large amounts of disposable income to pay for such an event. Even those who have funeral policies, depending on circumstances, don't have enough to cover all of the funeral costs.

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[89] John Daniel, Roger Southall, and Jessica Lutchman. "*State of the Nation: South Africa 2004-2005.*" Cape Town, South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2005: 242

In addition to the increases in overall costs for the household, from costs associated with the burial to the lost wages the employed face while taking time off from work to attend funerals, these major increases in deaths each day have meant a greater demand for cemetery plots,. In order to better handle these growing demands, there has been growth in the funeral business. With this growth, there have also been some alarming practices linked to this industry which have also transpired. The *Journal of South African Studies* reports,

> Stories of competition for corpses have emerged, with reports of shoot-outs on the doorsteps of public hospitals as drivers contest their right as designated transporters of bodies to particular state mortuaries. High death rates have prompted companies such as Nampac, a leading producer of paper products, to develop inexpensive coffins using laminated cardboard.[90]

Despite the economical savings, these coffins, which average R200 to R500, have not proven to be popular. Since 2000, some hospital mortuaries have been forced to deal with a constant overflow of bodies which are often left unclaimed in the hospital for weeks. 'One-stop' funeral shops have emerged in many township areas and are extremely popular. In one of these shops near Pinetown, everything that is required for a funeral, from the coffin, flowers, and animals for slaughter, to the hiring of tents, chairs, sound system, caterers and a dressmaker to sew outfits for the occasion, are all available for purchase.[91]

Church Involvement

Many churches have become aware and concerned by the enormous amounts of money spent on funerals, particularly because many families face major financial difficulties each day. Over the years, some individuals have come to expect a kind of lavishness at a funeral which is not

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[90] Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala. " Popular Responses to HIV/AIDS and Policy." *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol. 31, No. 4, (Dec. 2005): 846

[91] Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala (Dec 2005): 847

really sustainable to families who are faced with multiple funerals in shorts spans of time. Yet, even still, there is great pressure from society that the "right" elements be accounted for throughout the funeral process otherwise the funeral is not considered "proper." The financial administrator of the Eastern Cape Council of Churches commented, "Funerals have become like weddings—and if you don't have salads and delicious things, then the funeral is regarded as lousy…And now there are these after-parties where the family feel they have to buy booze for the whole night."[92]

Though some churches have begun to question particular aspects of the funeral culture, a strong enough stand has not been taken when it comes to reform. In fact, some churches have been implicated and even blamed for their negative treatment of poor members. Specifically, church organizations, which also demand that membership dues be paid before church services are offered, do not always take into consideration the economic status of their members when it comes to church contributions. If the dues are not paid on time then the member cannot wear the uniform or may be barred from taking holy communion. Because many families are being supported largely by one government pensioner or one employed individual, church contributions have declined.

For instance, an old woman, who over a time period of two years did not contribute her tithe to the church, expressed her fears of dying. She said, "I have not been paying my dues precisely because I do not have money. I am a pensioner and have my children and grandchildren to feed. I am a sickly old woman and my day is near. When I finally close my eyes, I will not be buried in church like all Christians should but my funeral service will be held here at home. We all want a proper Christian burial."[93] These kinds of fears are not uncommon. Many lifelong church members are finding themselves, in the final stages of their lives, responsible for the well-being of children and grandchildren, particularly because many of their grown children are suffering from illnesses related to AIDS.

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[92] Alan Morris (2004): 7

[93] Sarah Mosoetsa (Dec. 2005): 869

Economic Strain on Families

While employers are not permitted to inquire about an individual's HIV status, many who are HIV positive do reach a stage in their illness when they are too sick to work. At this point, families lose that precious income and are further saddled with caring for another person. It is a double blow to a family network and often children suffer the most, sometimes even being forced to stay home from school in order to care for a sick parent. In other cases, a student's school fees and other school needs may be at stake because the family doesn't feel they can afford to spend the money on school. There have been quite a few studies throughout Southern Africa which have looked at the impact of HIV and AIDS on families and specifically on the children who have been orphaned. In her book, *A Generation at Risk*, Linda Ritcher compiles a few of these studies to show the extent of which illness, specifically AIDS related illness, affects the financial stability of a family. She argues,

> Income in orphan households has been found to be 20–30% lower than in non-orphaned households. Studies in urban households in Côte d'Ivoire, for example, show that where a family member has AIDS, average income falls by as much as 60%, expenditure on health care quadruples, savings are depleted and families often go into debt to care for sick individuals. Other studies have suggested that food consumption may drop by as much as 41% in orphan households. Asset selling to pay for health care, loss of income by breadwinners and funeral costs may deplete all household reserves, as well as savings.[94]

Clearly, the financial burdens within these communities are vast. The extra burden of an expensive funeral is enough to completely cripple a family's financial stability. Furthermore, if more than one funeral is required of a family within a short period of time, fulfilling the financial piece of funeral duties may prove an impossibility.

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[94] Linda Richter, "The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Development of Children." *A Generation at Risk? HIV/AIDS, Vulnerable Children and Security in Southern Africa*. South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2004): 9-10

In 2002, another research study was initiated by the Kaiser Family Foundation entitled *Hitting Home: How Households Cope with the Impact of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic*. This study found that throughout South Africa, an average family spends about a third of its monthly income on health care for sick family members, often being compelled to sell off assets to pay for doctors and medicines. Even if health care is no longer needed when the sick individual has died, the funeral may bankrupt a family and put education for children within the household at risk because of funeral debt. In the study, fifty-five percent of the surveyed families had, in the last year, paid funeral expenses. Fifty percent of those households had paid the entire cost of the funeral, while only thirty-three percent had partial help from funeral policies and a mere fourteen percent used funeral policies to pay for the entire funeral. Finally, on the average, a single funeral cost four times the total household income, between R 5,000-R 40,000.[95]

Though some aspects of the AIDS epidemic are already noticeable, the long-term impacts will not be fully evident for some time. The extent by which future generations will carry the burden of these challenges is not known. Christine Kamwendo, the director of the Malawian Social Action Fund, an organization which funds NGOs and grassroots organizations to empower local communities, claims in *The Lancet* that AIDS is a disaster which impacts an entire society. She says, "Funerals are for days interrupting all productive activities in the villages. The social fabric of communities and families is being overstretched by the number of AIDS orphans; it is very serious."[96] The fact that there are so many funerals means that community members are being pulled away constantly from their weekly responsibilities. While the commitment of community members to attend funerals of family, friends, and strangers alike, on the other hand, the idea that one must attend almost every community funeral, when there are countless funerals each week, is unrealistic. The strength of support found within the community toward the bereaved family and the

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[95] Daniela Gennrich, *"The Church in an HIV positive World: A Practical Handbook."* Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publications, 2004

[96] Katharina Kober and Wim Van Damme, "Scaling-up access to antiretroviral treatment in Southern Africa: Who will do the job?" *The Lancet*, (3 July 2004): 3

dedication to attend funerals no matter the cost has begun to have a harmful impact on the productivity of the community as a whole.

The Problem of Stigma

One major challenge for resisting AIDS both in the public forum as well as in private communities is the stigma associated with AIDS and the challenges stigma poses for disclosure. There are still many people who suffer silently because they fear rejection and prejudice. While there are more individuals who are choosing to be honest and sharing their status, stigmatization of those who are HIV-positive still exists and influences many individuals and families. Even in communities and families where there are examples of love and compassion for persons who are HIV-positive, many times these families never name the illness. Campbell et al report,

> It was often the case that neither the dying person nor family members ever referred to the fact that s/he had AIDS, even when everyone was fully aware of this. One woman said that even after her sister's death, the family colluded in saying she had died of tuberculosis, although everyone knew she had died from a wider range of AIDS-related illnesses.[97]

Even though most community members know when a person is HIV positive, particularly if they die from an AIDS related illness, there is still great hesitancy in naming AIDS as the cause of death in a public forum.

More often than not, when individuals choose to disclose, they may chose an indirect method. An example of stigma and family reported in a journal of public health said, "One man stated that his brother, two weeks before his death, wrote the family a letter disclosing his status rather than telling them face to face. When the man told mourners at the funeral that his brother had

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[97] Catherine Campbell, Yugi Nair, Sbongile Maimane and Jillian Nicholson "`Dying Twice': A Multi-level Model of the Roots of AIDS Stigma in Two South African Communities." *J Health Psychology,* Vol. 12, (2007): 403

died of AIDS, several friends and relatives berated him for 'spoiling his brother's name.'"[98] This response, the idea that being HIV-positive could destroy one's reputation, hits a deep chord. Furthermore, the family members and friends who expressed this opinion may have deterred others from having the courage to be truthful. Stigmatization by family members and close friends, particularly at a funeral or at other times when support is most crucial, is often cited as the most hurtful and damaging form of stigma. It also has dire effects on resisting HIV prevention in the future. As one mamma concluded, "We mothers and grannies play a key role in allowing HIV/AIDS to continue. Our refusal to disclose keeps the disease underground, and feeds into people denying the humanity of [people with AIDS] and their sense that they are no different to animals, with nothing to live for."[99]

The problem of stigma is often accompanied by different forms of denial. Though most communities are faced with increasing numbers of sick as well as weekly funerals of young people who should be in the prime of their lives, when asked about the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in one particular South African community, many informants maintained that there was no AIDS in their community. Furthermore, when a group of high school was interviewed about HIV and AIDS within their community, Campbell et al report that "learners spoke with disgust and disbelief of a young man from the community had disclosed his HIV status while participating in an interview. This disclosure had 'let down the whole community.'"[100] Even those individuals who are more comfortable discussing HIV and AIDS often avoid referring to AIDS by name. Instead many people, including some community health workers, refer to HIV and AIDS as 'this thing,' 'this disease,' or more generally as 'sickness.'

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[98] Catherine Campbell. "I Have an Evil Child at My House": Stigma and HIV/AIDS Management in a South African Community." *American Journal of Public Health*,Vol 95,No. 5, (May 2005): 809-810

[99] Catherine Campbell (May 2005): 809-810

[100] Catherine Campbell, Yugi Nair, Sbongile Maimane and Jillian Nicholson (2007): 406

One organization which has made inroads in dealing with this challenge is TAC. Through HIV and AIDS support groups throughout affected communities, TAC helps persons infected with HIV to disclose. Even though some individuals are fearful still of disclosing to their families and friends, they are able to find support through others who are also HIV positive. TAC focuses on small steps toward disclosure with the hope that honesty will breed further honesty in the future. TAC also strives to raise awareness of the ways in which stigma and social inequalities increase an individual's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS and undermine the necessary coping skills which may help that same individual have a healthy life despite being HIV positive.[101]

Ensuring that basic information about HIV and AIDS and its methods of transmission is available to all people is an important step towards reducing stigma and denial and moving society toward a culture of acceptance. Achieving these goals has proved to be more complex than mere education. Multiple studies have sought to understand why some regions have been more receptive to information and education than others. As findings have been compiled, one particular factor impacting the success of HIV and AIDS education has become clear. It is not necessarily information which enables the education process to be successful, but instead it is "social spaces in which they feel safe to discuss this information"[102] which contributes to the success of an education effort. One study, completed by Low-Beer and Stoneburner in 2004 and reported in the Campbell et al journal article, argues that:

> One key reason for the relative success of the HIV/AIDS struggle in Uganda, as compared to countries such as South Africa, is that significantly more Ugandans have heard about AIDS through a personal network than South Africans, who are more likely to have heard about it through an impersonal source such as the media. Rather than more didactic information programs, there is an urgent need for participatory initiatives that provide people with the opportunities to discuss the information that they have, to work through collectively their doubts about its truth and relevance in their own lives, and to engage in dialogue about the extent to which it is possible for them to change their behavior or attitudes in the light of this information. Such initiatives should provide people with the opportunities to discuss AIDS with trusted

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[101] Catherine Campbell, Yugi Nair, Sbongile Maimane and Jillian Nicholson (2007): 406

[102] Catherine Campbell, Yugi Nair, Sbongile Maimane and Jillian Nicholson (2007): 409

> peers, and to work towards feeling safe enough to discuss it in their families and communities.[103]

As witnessed in the practices of communities across the most highly HIV and AIDS affected regions in Sub-Saharan Africa, local communities are a major key to the eradication of stigma and to effective education pertaining to HIV and AIDS. These communities have the opportunity to respond to the realities of HIV by either contributing to stigma or assisting in getting rid of it. When communities commit to the creation of open spaces for individuals to safely disclose their status and even get to a point of having honest discussion about HIV and AIDS, despite the fact that for so long it has been regarded as an unspeakable topic, then true education will be facilitated. As Campbell et al emphasize,

> Such spaces would ideally provide contexts within which people could collectively work through their doubts and uncertainties about this new and still unfamiliar disease and its relevance to their own lives. Through a process of dialogue they would ideally work to make this information relevant to their own lives—by processing the information in ways that are compatible with their own pre-existing frames of reference, vocabularies and social practices.[104]

When these kinds of conversation are more of the rule than exceptions to the rule, then education will have a greater impact on society as well as on future transmission of HIV.

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[103] Catherine Campbell, Yugi Nair, Sbongile Maimane and Jillian Nicholson (2007): 409

[104] Catherine Campbell, Yugi Nair, Sbongile Maimane and Jillian Nicholson (2007): 413

Chapter 6: J L Zwane Church and Centre: A Case Study

Methodology and Scope

Over the course of four weeks, I conducted interviews throughout the J L Zwane community.[105] The J L Zwane Church and Centre, which is situated in Guguletu, South Africa (a township outside of Cape Town), has been engaged in fighting the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS for over ten years. Through partnerships with both South African businesses and organizations as well as non-profit agencies and churches around the world, the Zwane Centre has made a significant impact on those persons living with HIV and AIDS in the Western Cape. Through a multifaceted approach including weekly support groups for adults and children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, nutrition programs, education initiatives, weekly prayer groups and opportunities to articulate community and congregational struggles during worship service, the J L Zwane Church and Centre strives to address these issues in a holistic manner.

Because of the longevity of J L Zwane's commitment and the large number of individuals who have benefitted from the work and education at the centre, it is important to acknowledge that the sample of persons[106] interviewed for this case study have all been influenced, in some way, by the mission and vision of this particular institution. Therefore, it is possible that opinions expressed have all been shaped by similar leadership and education and therefore do not represent the totality of opinions found in Gugulethu or any other South African township community.

This study involved a series of interviews with members of the community with ages ranging from 18-85 years. Out of the twenty-six people that were interviewed, every individual had

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[105] All data was collected through one-on-one interviews, often with a translator. Respondents were given the option to talk at the church office or in their home.

[106] The sample of persons were each drawn at random. Information about the respondents, beyond their involvement with the J L Zwane Community, was not known prior to the interview. Care was taken to include a range of age, gender, marital status, church membership, and socioeconomic status. All respondents were approached through word of mouth and given the option to decline participation in this study.

spent some time within the J L Zwane community, some as long standing church members, others as members of the HIV and AIDS support groups, and others as volunteers within the J L Zwane community, working toward fulfilling its mission to give help and aid to those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. While some of the interviewees do not claim active church membership, all expressed appreciation for the J L Zwane church and centre and its commitment to educating the community about HIV and AIDS as well as assisting those infected and affected persons in a variety of ways. While many of the individuals interviewed were open about their HIV status, not all persons revealed their own personal statuses, as this was not one of the questions involved with the interview.

The interview consisted of four different parts: introductory questions pertaining to personal faith and religious tradition, questions about funeral practices, questions about funerals during apartheid, and questions about funerals during the HIV and AIDS epidemic. While the first section of questioning shed significant insight into the background and history of funerals from a faith perspective, particularly the theological significance of the funeral as it is connected to a system of Christian beliefs, this study will not go into detail on these themes. However, it is important to note, and will be further noted, that on the one hand, the sense of life which does emanate from the bereavement process and particularly from the grave at a funeral, is tied closely to the Christian faith tradition. The promise of life after death, found in biblical and sacred tradition, was articulated, on varying levels, throughout many of the interviews. The extent to which the funeral site can be construed as a place where *leading causes of life* are fostered is wedded closely with the belief of life after death which is founded in religious traditions, particularly in Christianity. While the significance of faith is not a specific focus in this paper, the theological development of this community and its impact on individual's attitudes and anticipatory consciousness should not be overlooked.

It is the middle and final sections of the interview which help to address the questions: Is the township funeral a 'site of resistance' to HIV and AIDS, and furthermore, does the funeral promote *leading causes of life* in township areas? In order to begin to answer these questions, it is important to first look at the middle sections of the interview and determine what insight was revealed in these questions. The middle sections of the interview focused on the funeral process as a whole and the significance of the mourning process. In general, the respondents spoke enthusiastically about the process of the funeral and its importance to life in community. Many individuals explained, in great detail, the various parts of the funeral, explaining how each part played a role in the overall bereavement process.

Bereavement Process in Gugulethu

In township communities, when a person dies, a series of events is set in motion. Immediately, the street committee and neighbors begin their work, assisting the family in their preparations. Often neighbors arrive at the home of the deceased within hours, prepared to clean rooms and property and begin getting the home ready for the larger groups of people that will come to sit with the family throughout the period of time between death and the burial. Most funerals take place between 10-14 days after the actual death of the person. This period of time has a few important functions.

First, it gives family members enough time to travel from far distances to get to the family home. Sometimes burials take place in the Eastern Cape homeland, but even if this is the case, the family home in Gugulethu will be visited by hundreds of mourners over the bereavement period. Along with bereavement visits, prayer meetings and memorial services will be held in the home each night, hosted and organized by different groups like the women's or men's association and the youth. Very often, the family of the deceased will not have a church affiliation, but this does not mean that a church is not involved. Respondents frequently mentioned that it was even more

important for them to lead or attend the prayer services in the homes of families not associated with the church because it was a way of welcoming that family into the church community, as well as introducing them to God.

Throughout the daytime, when many are at work, older members of the community arrive in the morning and sit at the home throughout the day. Their presence ensures both that the deceased is honored during the entire bereavement period, and also that the family is never alone. If, for instance, there are no family members available to stay at the home during the day because of work or school responsibilities, neighbors will sit in their place, receiving mourners on behalf of the family. Throughout the interviews there was a sense that the neighbors were as important to the funeral process as the family because they were the first to respond and then would be present long after the family had returned to their homes. Not only do neighbors contribute their time in the funeral process but also pool together resources to assist the family in providing tea and coffee for the mourners who come to the home. On the day of the burial and the big funeral meal, neighbors often play an integral role, cooking for the crowd from the early hours of the morning.

The day of the burial has a few important parts: the arrival of the body at the home, the funeral either in the home or at a church, the burial in the graveyard and the funeral meal. Beginning early in the morning, the body arrives in the home and the family has a time for a final viewing. If the deceased was involved in a church community, then groups from the men's and women's associations also come to the home. Each group is given a chance to pray and sing around the coffin as well as address the family with encouraging words. When all the prayers and songs have come to a close, the body is transported to the church or brought into the tent outside of the home, for the funeral rites to take place.

The funeral consists of a series of speeches and songs which alternate with one another. The speakers address the life of the deceased, reading the obituary, telling stories of the deceased as a young person, talking about how the deceased died, and offering encouraging words to the family.

The songs are led mainly by the women who encircle the coffin, singing and dancing between the speeches. Typically, the funeral will end with the sermon address by a minister or elder of the church, and then the elders will take the body to the hearse. Most older respondents mentioned that using a hearse is a newer phenomenon, and that particularly during the apartheid era, the coffin was transported by foot from the church or community centre to the graveyard.

The burial consists of the internment of the coffin and more songs of praise. Most attendees are transported from the funeral to the graveyard in rented buses or in the few vehicle that are available, since most individuals don't have their own personal transportation. Once at the graveyard, the family is seated directly in front of the grave while the other mourners surround them and the coffin. The ministers and elders stand over the grave for the service and all persons present participate in covering the coffin once it is lowered. In many cases the men from the family both dig the grave and then take turns filling the grave. In these gestures, both the male family members doing the work to prepare the grave and the fact that all attendees help to cover the coffin, contributes to the feeling of community support and involvement. Throughout the entire internment process, as the dirt fills the grave, the women surround the family, singing hymns. If the deceased was a church member, then his or her favorite hymns will be sung by the crowd, as well as other songs of praise. The singing only ceases once the grave is covered, and the family is ready to move to the home for the final meal.

Before any person can cross the threshold into the home, one's hands must be washed, a symbolic gesture that the death associated with the grave is not brought into the life of the home. Whenever a person visits the cemetery, they always wash their hands upon returning, using a prepared bucket placed outside of the house in the yard. All who have attended the funeral are expected to return to the home for the communal meal, washing their hands in the yard before entering the home. This is a time to break bread with one another and is the final part of the bereavement process. The meals are often prepared by the neighbors, street committee, or church

depending on the family of the deceased. One major expectation is that there is meat for every attendee. Because funerals tend to have hundreds of people in attendance, the meal tends to be an expensive part of the funeral. No matter how poor the family is, they are expected to have food for all who have been a part of the funeral. Often, neighbors and churches help those families who are literally unable to afford the funeral, particularly if there was no burial insurance.

Many of the respondents mentioned that funerals have become increasingly elaborate, even though most township families struggle to survive each day. Often, funerals are more ornate and lavish than weddings and in some cases are used as a symbol of status and wealth. People compare the elements of the funeral, for instance the number of buses hired for transport or the kind of meal served, and judge the family accordingly. Some interviewees emphasized this was a new phenomenon. They also acknowledged that this kind of comparison was contrary to the spirit of community and support which had deep roots in their history and tradition, and expressed a hope that the pendulum would swing back in favor of the ways of the past.

Despite criticism, all respondents articulated the importance of sharing a meal, particularly at a funeral. As a few individuals said, families and community members notice when a person does not stay for the meal. If an individual makes a habit of skipping the meal, this practice may be construed as offensive. Overall, the meal is understood as an important element of community living, and represents the life which is still present among the community, even for families which have experienced death. As the meal is the last part of the bereavement process, it serves as a final reminder, after the deceased is mourned and buried, the vibrancy of the community still exists and demands attention.

When asked why so many individuals attend the nightly prayer meetings and memorial services, most respondents emphasized the need to remind the bereaved family that there was a community available to them, offering support in a variety of ways. Most respondents said that they went to funerals to both pay their respects to the dead as well as to the family members who are left

living. In fact, multiple respondents stated that it was support and respect of the living family members which was the most important reason for going to a funeral. Part of giving respect to those still living is encouraging them that many families are suffering from a similar scenario. Many families are dealing with multiple deaths of the younger generations and are reeling from the costs of the funeral as well as the loss of household income. Community members' willingness to share personal stories of difficulty contributes to the lives of the family who are "walking through this difficult stretch of the road." Therefore, attendance at funeral events is often a gesture of solidarity. One of the main ways of supporting the bereaved was through reminding them that they will see the person again. One respondent said, "We talk with the family and remind them that this death is not the last thing in their lives. We give them a hope that there is another life after this death."[107]

Multiple respondents also connected the ideas of supporting the bereaved to helping family members realize that they are not alone through the frequent, palpable presence of the community. One respondent articulated this idea saying, "When families are bereaved, they feel like they are alone. They feel like there is no one around them. They may even feel that there is no God around them. We have to go to them, support them, and tell them that when death happens to their families, God is always there."[108] Continually, throughout the interviews, many respondents connected their presence at a funeral to a means of revealing the presence of God in the midst of death. The community, particularly the church members, understood their willingness to praise God and worship despite the sadness of the occasion, as a way of inspiring the bereaved family to also join in the life which is still happening.

The singing of hymns was continually mentioned as an integral vehicle in the process of supporting the families and helping them find the will to live despite this death. Multiple respondents talked about the hymns as a time of rejoicing and making space for the worship of God,

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[107] Community Interview #2, (17 Feb 2010)

[108] Community Interview #18, (3 March 2010)

despite loss and sadness. It was actually said during a few interviews that "songs make a person forget death."[109] For instance, if the one who has died was a part of one of the women's or men's associations, then the other members sing and dance for her, honoring the memory of all of the occasions where she sang and praised on behalf of another who had died. In this way, deceased are not mourned in the singing but their memory is upheld and remembered as a part of communal rejoicing. As one respondent said, "There is a change inside of you when the people come to sing and pray. Whenever you first discover that you have lost a family member, you feel that you will never stop crying. But, when those people come to the prayer meeting every day, there is something of the pain that is taken away. You feel better. When the actual funeral comes, you are far better."[110]

The power of song in this community is a source of great *hope* for all who hear it. One German Marxist philosopher in particular, Ernst Bloch, writes extensively on the ties between *hope* and music. He claims that at a basic human level there is always a yearning, a cry, individualistic and collective, which emanates from the human condition. Judith Brown writes about Bloch's explorations of a story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* about Pan and Syrinx.[111] While attempting to escape Pan's pursuit, Syrinx is caught in the waters of a great river. As Pan realizes that he does not have the tools to save her, he voices a lament over his loss, a sound which moves through the reeds on the banks of the river and makes music. Bloch argues that this lament song brings consolation to Pan, and brings the presence of Syrinx to him, though she is physically absent. Brown quotes Bloch saying, "That which has passed beyond 'the limit' is caught up again by this lament, captured in this consolation."[112]

Similarly, hymns that are sung throughout the bereavement process produce consolation and *hope.* While those who cry out in song do not physically bring back the dead in the flesh, they,

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[109] Community Interview #10, (25 Feb 2010)

[110] Community Interview #13, (27 Feb 2010)

[111] Judith Brown, "Ernst Bloch and the Utopian Imagination." *ERAS,* (2003): 1-11

[112] Judith Brown (2003): 6

nonetheless, experience the presence of the one who has been lost. Brown demonstrates that for Bloch the creation of music has an even deeper meaning associated with *hope.* Music is a product of imagination which is another human strategy for combating situations which are seemingly hopeless. This idea is pertinent to human understanding of death and how *hope* might come into the discussion. Though death is a reality, the making of music, stemming from a deep, primal need to cry out, is possibly a manifestation of a *hope* that life does not end with death. Brown says,

> In music the imagination precipitates the last utopian struggle, the overthrowing of death, which it contests with a concern that is all the greater because precisely death's mysterious territory is filled with night, a generative force which seems so profoundly familiar to music within this world. However firmly the night of death may be distinguished from any other, music rightly or wrongly feels itself to be a Grecian fire that will still burn in the River Styx.[113]

In many ways, the strong emphasis on music, particularly around the grave, demonstrates both the real possibility of life beyond death as well as the sheer power of music and song in bringing consolation to those who are grieved. Through music, *hope* is infused throughout the community and all who hear are reminded to imagine a future void of pain and sorrow.

The idea that the presence of others, that a *connection* to a community, brings healing and soothing for the bereaved continued to come up throughout the interviewing process, particularly when considering instances of death in small families. In these cases, often the neighbors assume some of the family duties, sitting at the home night and day during the period before the funeral in order to receive visitors. Most respondents had personal stories of neighbors and other community members easing their grief and inspiring them to move through heartbreak toward *hope*. Seeing many faces in the crowds who visit, even when they are unfamiliar faces, is an encouragement.

Often interviewees mentioned that they frequently attended funerals of strangers because either they were *connected* through an acquaintance or felt compelled to show support in a difficult

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[113] Judith Brown (2003): 6

situation. There was also a sense that the strength of the community stemmed from both African roots as well as from the Christian faith tradition. While many people are buried in Cape Town, there are still countless burials taking place in the Eastern Cape and many people also make the journey from their homes in Cape Town to the homeland, in order to support the family. Most respondents understood attending the funeral as a priority gathering in their lives because of both their African and Christian identity. These dual influences compelled them to commit to attending funerals both near and far.

Resistance during Apartheid

Though not all respondents were of an age to participate in funerals during the apartheid era, those who were old enough to remember, spoke about the occurrences which took place during funerals mainly in Gugulethu but also in other parts of South Africa. By and large, funerals were a fusion of church and polis. The specific elements of the bereavement process continued to take place but alongside of the influence of church and cultural tradition was also a political element. There were often multiple ministers present, particularly at the big funerals of comrades whose deaths were the result of political violence, but also there were many political activists scheduled to speak. Respondents spoke often about how funerals were the only legal public space to vent feelings and experiences, as all other public gatherings were banned.

As much as a funeral was a rite of passage for the deceased, it was also a *connecting* place for people to come together and share information and community concerns. It was at funerals where individuals had space for exercising *agency*. Often speakers would voice opinions which were not welcome sentiments by the apartheid government. Yet, the funeral and its masses ensured relative safety for individuals to speak out and lament or even rail about the difficulty of their circumstances. As a result of the political speeches and instances of large crowds getting highly agitated against the government, the police would become involved, being called in to dispel the

masses and to control the growing popularity of the comrades and activities who were inciting the crowds in the first place.

In Gugulethu, police brutality was a commonplace. If a funeral speaker said something controversial, often chaos would ensue, and the crowd would be scattered by police violence which included tear gas, water hosing, rubber bullets and in some cases even deaths of attendees. Individuals went to funerals knowing that by merely being present, they could be hurt or killed. Despite this, the community was not deterred, but instead strengthened in its resolve to attend funerals. Being a part of the struggle against apartheid meant that one would often be required to suffer. As one interviewee said, "If you were a part of the struggle, death and risk were a given. You can't get involved without the possibility of death."[114]

A number of respondents had personal stories of harm or injury from violence at funerals and instances of arrest because of participating in a funeral. One respondent displayed a scar from an injury she received when she attended a funeral. The police struck her with the butt of a gun. She said,

> You see this mark on my forehead. I got this when I was 45 years old. It is from the back of a gun. They were hitting because we had just come from a funeral of one of the comrades who died. It was a big funeral, and I don't know exactly how it all unfolded. They said that someone threw a bomb. So, the police came and started beating people up. I fell onto the ground as I was leaving the graveyard. You know when we black people come from the graveyard you must go to the house to wash your hands. So, the police officer beat me while I was on the ground. Afterwards, the chief came and I wanted to make a complaint because I was full of blood. He said they would take me to the hospital but I thought on the way, they might kill me. So, I refused.[115]

Even though she had this horrific experience, the respondent was adamant that she continued to attend funerals particularly because of a sense that being present at funerals contributed both to the life of the overall community and the closure that is needed when a person has died. No matter how many times a person was threatened or hurt, their duty to bury the dead came first. Community

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[114] Community Interview #3, (17 Feb 2010)

[115] Community Interview #5, (19 Feb 2010)

members continued to go back to the cemetery no matter how dangerous or risky attendance at a funeral became.

Some of the big political funerals in Gugulethu drew massive crowds. Thousands would come to the stadium for hours of speeches and struggle songs. The funeral for the Gugulethu Seven was a particularly memorable moment in the community. Because this was a funeral for community youth members who were killed by the police, the whole incident and subsequently the event of the funeral became politically charged. Many community members were angry and expressed that their patience for the apartheid government was exhausted. The police were unhappy at the size of the crowd, but this fact did not detract from the enthusiasm of the group. In the march between the stadium and the cemetery, many people were trampled and injured. After the internment, the crowd went from the grave to the site of the massacre. There, the police opened fire, shooting rubber bullets and steamed water at the gathered people. Though often the police claimed to be present in order to keep the peace, most often, there would be no peace. By in large, during the days of apartheid the Gugulethu community was very supportive of one another. Fear of hurt or arrest even did not get in the way of the call to give support to the cause and the families that had been harmed by political violence.

Resistance of HIV and AIDS

Even though many recall the days of the struggle as an era of extreme community support and togetherness, the notion that community support and care has lessened over the recent years came up in the conversation quite a few times, particularly when it comes to dealing with those suffering from HIV and AIDS. Part of the challenge which faces the community stems from the lack of obvious support for those suffering from HIV and AIDS found in church congregations.

In the black communities, the church is the heart of social life, with everything starting and ending with the church. While there are a few good examples of hands-on engagement with issues

pertaining to HIV and AIDS, early on most often churches displayed ambivalence or outright hostility towards addressing HIV and AIDS with openness. Changing these mentalities in the church must start with the leadership who are setting the tone for congregations. Just like pastors were trained during the apartheid era to know how to address the political struggle in their churches, pastors need to be taught ways to deal with HIV and AIDS which might bring about community cohesion. In some cases this training has begun to take place, but there are many practices and ideas which will have to be reversed in order to have a lasting impact. One Gugulethu pastor pointed out that it took about a hundred years to fully resist apartheid and overturn it, therefore it would make sense that it would also take time to fully resist the spread of HIV and AIDS. For many individuals, becoming involved with the apartheid struggle took time and effort of the larger community. With this in mind, indeed there is *hope* that more individuals might engage in HIV and AIDS prevention and help communities to better resist its damage.

Because often it is the elders of the church who preside over the funerals, training is important not only for pastors but also for the lay leadership of churches. One elder who was interviewed acknowledged that part of the responsibility for HIV and AIDS education fell on the leaders in the church, particularly those who preach at funerals. Often, even at funerals for AIDS related deaths, the sermon is about general things and does not address HIV and AIDS at all. Even when the speakers do not address the real cause of death, many of the funeral attendees gossip about the deceased and the family. In order to change these things, one church leader said, "Our funeral sermon needs to be changed. We need to focus on HIV and AIDS related illness. People are just gossiping and not listening. We must focus on HIV. If we do, people will change. The church must now play a bigger role. As lay preachers, we must give people the right information."[116]

Along with the attitude of this elder, many of the respondents indicated that there has been a shift in the recent years pertaining to disclosure and openness. There are more people willing to be

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[116] Community Interview #8, (21 Feb 2010)

honest and their honesty has inspired others who would have otherwise died alone. While many people refused to hear about HIV and AIDS and did not consent to talking about it in public, often becoming embarrassed or protective of the family reputation, those kinds of mentalities have lessened. The more churches demonstrate this honesty, and encourage their membership to follow suit, the better HIV and AIDS will be resisted in the future.

A few of the respondents had examples of when they had spoken openly about HIV and AIDS at a funeral, often when one of their own family members had died from an AIDS related illness. There was a common acknowledgment that because a diverse group of people attended funerals it was an appropriate time to reach out to many different people. This *intergenerativity*, the intergenerational audience in attendance, further heightens the need for speaking out against the horrors of HIV and AIDS. At a funeral, there is no skirting the consequences of an untreated illness. Because the occasion of the funeral is about dealing with death, those individuals who attend are faced with the reality of HIV and AIDS. Because of the influence of the J L Zwane community, many of the older members have become educators and advocates for teaching the youth about the disease, another example of *intergenerativity*. One respondent, whose niece died from AIDS, spoke at the funeral, telling her friends in detail of the way that her family member died. She did not spare the crowd of the difficult description because she wanted the youth in the crowd to understand what happens when a person begins to die from AIDS. She said, "I wanted them to know why she died so young. I felt I should speak at the funeral because there were so many young people there. It was an opportunity to talk to her friends and encourage them to care for themselves and their futures."[117]

In many cases, those who had examples of HIV and AIDS education at a funeral also indicated that the audience was receptive to what they had to say. None of the respondents had experienced alienation because they had spoken openly about HIV and AIDS. Instead many had examples of being embraced and cared for because of their courage and willingness to speak out. In

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[117] Community Interview #1, (11 Feb 2010)

one example, a married woman spoke to the crowd about the dangers of contracting HIV and AIDS within marriage, most often because of spousal infidelity. While it was difficult to come face-to-face with the reality that no one is safe from HIV, even when one is married, the willingness of the speaker helped to educate many spouses who may have been in a similar situations. Denial of illness may be possible as long as a person is alive and in relatively good health, but when illness progresses and then ends in death, there is little room to ignore it.

Nonetheless, over the years, many families have not been willing to name HIV as causing death. Story after story indicated that, in many cases, individuals and families have not been willing to come to terms with HIV and AIDS and have refused to be honest with the community about the true cause of death. When openness and education at a funeral is refused, this action sends a message that there is something wrong with disclosure. This mentality helps to feed the fires of stigmatization as well as fear about the disease which is, in reality, unfounded. Some spoke of families who believed that merely uttering HIV or AIDS would make one sick with the illness. Other examples declined visiting the clinic because of the possibility of seeing a familiar face and being marked as HIV positive. Finally, there are individuals who state that dying alone is better than making one's HIV status public. Despite the progress that has been made in inspiring individuals to approach disclosure with openness and honesty, there is still great need for communities to further embrace transparency.

One particular respondent is often asked to speak at funerals both because she is a known educator and counselor about HIV and AIDS and also because she is, herself, HIV positive. Over the years, she has become a regular speaker at funerals, most often requested by family members to help teach those who attend the funeral about HIV so that their life might not end the same way as the deceased. She is known throughout the community because of her work in education and because of her willingness to be open about her own status. In her interview, she conveyed the attentiveness that she witnesses at most funerals. Because many individuals come to the funeral,

interested to learn what the cause of death was, she emphasizes that it is important for the family to be truthful.

She, along with many other respondents, also confirms the uniqueness of the funeral, mainly because it is one place where every kind of individual is in the audience. It is a chance to reach out to a diverse population, many of whom might not otherwise attend a church fellowship or may be in a church where the leadership is not willing to do HIV and AIDS education. Part of the strength of her testimony is the sheer fact that she has been taking ARVs for over seven years and is still healthy. She encourages people, when they are not aware of their status, to immediately test so that they will know what steps to take to preserve a healthy future. For the most part, her honesty has not resulted in stigmatization. Instead she says, "People come up to me after the funeral or later in the street, and they often hug me and thank me. Some were acquaintances but didn't know my status. They are surprised that I am HIV positive because I look healthy. I remind them that if you look after yourself, no one can tell you are positive by looks alone."[118]

Finally, there are cases when honesty and education at a funeral has led others who were not open about their status, to be inspired to change. Witnessing the courage of someone who is willing to disclose at a funeral has given strength to others to do the same. Nonetheless, it is not an easy process. There are still many examples of stigmatization and pointing of fingers. Even for those who have spent many years educating and teaching, disclosure of one's personal status can be a lonely road. The more communities have been exposed to willing persons, interested more in educating individuals for the good of the future than hiding their status or experience because of shame or fear, the more that communities will be equipped to embrace those living with HIV and AIDS. One important step in breaking the cycle of stigmatization, is finding those who are willing to be honest about their status as well as the realities of illness.

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[118] Community Interview #23, (22 March 2010)

One location where this education can take place and reach a diverse population, confirmed throughout conversations with community members in Gugulethu, is the site of the funeral. It is in this space, seeped in *coherence* and exuding great *hope*, where many persons of every generation *connect* with one another, celebrating *intergenerativity* and voicing *agency* with the goal of ceasing the carnage of HIV and AIDS, that a 'site of resistance' has been born.

Ch. 7: Conclusion, *Leading Causes of Life*

The cemetery on NY 5 in Gugulethu, the same cemetery where members of the J L Zwane church community were fired upon or chased away by police and where many of the first victims of the AIDS epidemic were buried, is now full. There are no spots left for new bones, because there are no plots of earth left to dig. Nonetheless, this site is surprisingly busy on Saturdays. Even though there are no new plots, individuals can be buried on top of family members. Though whole new graveyards have been opened, many members of the Gugulethu community continue to return to this site on NY 5, to celebrate life despite death in communion with those who have been proclaiming the same reality in this space from the earliest days of Gugulethu.

In the midst of what seems to be a valley of death, life emerges again and again, unwilling to be extinguished. Part of the draw to this cemetery is the *connection* it symbolizes, *connection* to family and friends, *connection* to the spirit of the past and its struggles but also the promise of life which has been at the center of the ritual emerging from this sea of graves. Gunderson speaks of this *connection* saying, "They were drawn toward each other because of their hope for both the transformation of community and of self."[119] Members of the Gugulethu community do not witness the cemetery as merely a place for the dead, but also as a place for the living, a place that represents a promise of transformation, even when that promise seems to be an impossibility. For many in Gugulethu, and certainly for those associated with the J L Zwane Church and Centre, the concept of a future renewed and whole, free from sickness and death, is deeply rooted in Christian theology. The notion of eschatological healing is a major emphasis both in Judeo-Christian sacred text as well as in the religious traditions which have developed over many generations.

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[119] Gary Gunderson and Larry Pray (2006): 153

It is impossible, in this particular context, to separate the *leading causes of life* present in the bereavement process from their theological ties. It is through the spirit of the church community and fellowship that these LCL practices are sustained. Even Bloch argued that *hope* can only be sustained through death because of its links to religious faith. One scholar argues of Bloch, "It is apparent that for Bloch the dynamism necessary to sustain hope in the face of death (regardless of whatever linguistic strategy may be employed, as we have seen, to defuse its threat) can only be drawn from religious 'mystery.'"[120] Despite the weekly reminder of death which every member of the Gugulethu must face, there is still a greater *hope* which individuals cling to, the promise of a future where all has been made new, where no pain or sorrow exist. Though there is no evidence that the dead will rise or when the dying will access this renewal, there is a great *hope* and anticipation of this future nonetheless. Bloch articulated this concept through the notion "that man possessed an anticipatory consciousness which gave him not-yet-conscious knowledge of future possibilities."[121]

Whether the challenge has been the apartheid government or the growing numbers of AIDS related deaths, the process of bereavement in Gugulethu has not wavered from its purpose, reminding all who hear that life goes on even after death. The principle evidence for this life is in the details, the every day practices, which take place week after week. These practices embody the *leading causes of life.* They represent a commitment for generating life, for continuing to live and thrive, even in the midst of the challenges which press down township communities, and they gesture toward the notion that death does not have the final say.

No matter how one examines the township funeral system, and even in spite of appropriate and needed criticism, at the core of the practices upheld in these communities is an emphasis on life. In Gugulethu, no individual walks through the valley of death alone, disconnected from the

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[120] Richard H. Roberts. "Review Article: An Introductory Reading of Ernst Bloch's The Principle of Hope." *Journal of LIterature and Theology,* Vol 1, No 1, (Mar 1987): 108

[121] Richard H. Roberts (1987): 91

community. Churches, even when the deceased and family are not involved, street committees, neighbors, and community members at-large come together, again and again, indefatigably with the purpose of giving support. In their sheer presence and movement both at the home during bereavement and around the coffin and grave during the funeral rites, they remind the grieving family that they are not left alone to deal with death but instead are surrounded with life.

It is important to note, particularly when considering an African community, that individuals cannot ever be separated from family, family cannot be separated from community, smaller communities cannot be separated from the whole of the people, and finally the people cannot be separated from creation. This way of conceiving connectedness is understood well through the Sesotho notion of *bophelo*-- a word for wholeness of life which incorporates physical, mental, and emotional health as well as the functionality of the community as a whole. Where community is understood in this way, being comprised of deep and extensive *connections* which sustain life at every level, "it is not possible to understand a person abstracted from family, community, nation or larger society, or land and creation."[122]

With this kind of *connection* in mind, the link to the other *leading causes of life* is more apparent. Gunderson and Cochrane demonstrate in the *leading causes of life* model (LCL), that connection is linked to memory (or *intergenerativity*) and anticipation (or *hope*). They argue, "Psychoanalysis has taught us that both memory and anticipation can be pathological, but primarily, memory helps us define those attachments that will enhance our capacity to thrive, while anticipation enables us to recognize a possible future with enough clarity to move toward it."[123] Conversations throughout the Zwane community confirmed this notion. Stories and examples from funerals all contained this commonality--those who attended funerals did so to give the mourning family a reminder, a memory, of the life which was still present and furthermore, the strength to

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[122] Gary Gunderson and Jim Cochrane (forthcoming in 2010): 4-11

[123] Gary Gunderson and Jim Cochrane (forthcoming in 2010): 4-13

have hope even in the midst of darkness and the courage to anticipate a future where life rather than death is principle.

Throughout the J L Zwane community as well as greater Gugulethu and every other community like it, families, churches, and other support systems are constantly adapting in order to cope with the ways that life is unfolding. This process is never-ending nor static, and presents complexity which can only be dealt with in the moment. Yet, *intergenerativity* proclaims just this idea. Engaging in available resources, means adaptively acting toward positive health outcomes. Some of the best evidence for life being birthed in unexpected places can be seen in all the ways that children who have been orphaned because of HIV and AIDS are finding home and family however impossible the odds. One example of this among hundreds, maybe thousands, is a woman in the Zwane community who herself was not able to have biological children but who is raising eleven children. None of the children are blood relatives but have formed a cohesive family unit, grounded in the care of an unconventional mother who has lived this principle of *intergenerativity*. Not every child finds herself in the embrace of this kind of care but the existence of examples of unconventional families, a wholeness of life, is enough to encourage and foster *hope*.

Notably, those who participate in growing these kinds of *connections* and this form of radical *hope*, do so through their own *agency*. As Gunderson and Cochrane described, *agency* depends on individuals having the space and support to problem solve, to voice their concerns and take constructive action to deal with challenges. In this study, mounting evidence shows that in these communities, participation in bereavement processes is about generating healthy life practices. Having *agency,* the ability to be a part of these practices, has cost many individuals dearly, some lives lost in the process. But, participation was worth the risk for those who had a deep vision of true community. From those persons who incurred injury during the days of apartheid funerals to those individuals who now risk stigma and isolation by disclosing their status at funerals, they do so in order to maintain their capacity to choose a way of living and prioritize

practices which are most important, even at the risk of danger or harm. This is what the actions of funeral attendees have proclaimed throughout the years, whatever the circumstance or challenge may be.

Hope is informed by life and can be sustained despite the ways that life is threatened. Saturday after Saturday, funeral after funeral, death after death, a message of *hope* emanates from the grave. It is a song sung by a timeless web of individuals, past, present, and to come, which proclaims that, despite the apparent finitude of the grave, life still exists. The promise of renewal rings louder than the reality of the coffin. This *hope* is grounded in an expectation that creation of life will continue long after all of us have, too, been buried. Despite the reality of death, informed *hope* gives us what David Ingvar calls "memory of the future."[124] The curious part of this kind of *hope* is best understood through the strength of the *hope* present in others who have come to witness, for instance, the event of the funeral. Through their song, a message of hope is transmitted, a reminder of the pulsing life which unfolds in every moment, even, and possibly especially, at the cemetery. Gunderson and Cochrane argue that "informed *hope* is also not only a condition of being human, but also an imperative: because any action we take in anticipation of a different future or possibility reverberates in the lives of others around us, it makes us responsible for our actions and accountable for their outcomes."[125] When funeral goers have the courage to sing about promises of renewed life, they reverberate *hope* into the community, bringing new energy to those who have been depleted by illness and death.

David Harvey articulates these connections where *hope* plays a major role between individuals as "web of life." He shows that the *hope* found in the connections points toward a deeper meaning, or in the language of the *leading causes of life*, deeper *coherence*. Meaning of life and death is exactly what funeral attendees strive to understand. In the movements of the funeral,

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[124] David H Ingvar. "Memory of the Future: An Essay on the Temporal Organization of Conscious Awareness." *Human Neurobiology*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (1985): 127-36.

[125] Gary Gunderson and Jim Cochrane (forthcoming in 2010): 4-13

even in the most horrific circumstances, those who participate profess that in and beyond death, meaning still remains. This meaning is the underlying cause of *coherence*. It is the reason that week after week, year after year, and even generation after generation, the cemetery has remained a site of proclaiming *hope* instead of despair. No event in life, even the funeral, is worthless or invaluable. Ingvar says, "Against the idea that we are headed over the cliff into some abyss (collapse) or that we are about to run into a solid and immovable brick wall (limits), … [it is better] … to construe ourselves as embedded within an on-going flow of living processes that we can individually and collectively affect through our actions."[126] Because those who participate in the bereavement process are embedded on every level of the community, there is never a moment which is void of *hope*.

If, as Gunderson claims, "life follows hope,"[127] then funerals are a site of active creation of life. In the processes of bereavement practiced throughout many communities throughout Africa and particularly in the J L Zwane community in Gugulethu, the *leading causes of life,* connection, coherence, agency, hope, and intergenerativity, are revealed every day. Tradition over time has instilled these values as imperative for sustaining the life of the community in the midst of constant and intensifying difficulty. Where faith and health as viewed side by side, the evidence of the generation of life is palpable, even in the midst of the HIV and AIDS crisis. Gunderson says, "Our imaginations are so dominated by death that both our seeing and thinking are challenged. We don't expect to see life, and, then, when we do, we don't have any practice in thinking about it."[128] It would be easy to expect that the HIV and AIDS crisis is an endless spiral of death which will only result in an absence of hope and potential for any life at all left in its aftermath. Yet, a closer look at the funeral practices of those who are most impacted by the AIDS crisis reveals that life is as palpable as ever. No doubt, there are challenges which township communities face but through the

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[126] David Harvey. *Spaces of Hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000

[127] Gary Gunderson and Larry Parry (2006): 163

[128] Gary Gunderson and Larry Parry (2006): 112

leading causes of life, communities have the tools for sustenance and even a way forward despite the growing darkness. As these *leading causes of life* continue to influence the posture of community life, it would only seem plausible that resistance to any harbinger of death, even something as devastating as HIV and AIDS, would follow.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions:

Talk about the role of faith in your life? Prayer? The Bible?

How do you feel when you read the Bible? What is your favorite scripture passage?

Tell me about your feelings about death and heaven? Where do your beliefs come from?

What does salvation mean to you? Does salvation impact your understanding of death?

Why do you attend funerals?

Do you remember the first funeral that you attended? How old were you? What were the circumstances? How did you feel when you were there?

What does the funeral mean to you? How does it impact your life?

Talk about what funerals were like during apartheid. Did you attend funerals then?

Did you ever feel that you were at risk when going to a funeral during the struggle? If you felt in danger, did that fear or risk impact your attendance at funerals?

Are there any stories you can remember where trouble happened at funerals? What kinds of things did the speakers talk about during apartheid funerals.

What kinds of things do people talk about now during funerals?

Describe a typical funeral and all of the parts (i.e. bereavement visits, gatherings at home for memorial and before the funeral, service, graveside, meal, etc).

What are the kinds of songs that are sung? What do the songs mean or represent? What does the dancing mean?

Tell me about the body and the coffin.. what rituals are connected with the body? What about the grave?

Do all people take part in the burial? What happens at the graveside? What are the most important components of the burial, that you could never leave out?

Thinking about the funeral as a whole, what are the main important moments? What could you never leave out in the process?

Talk about what happens at the meal. Who is invited? Does the food ever run out? Who prepares the food? Do neighbors ever help? What is the importance of the meal at the funeral?

What happens if someone dies in a family that can't afford the funeral costs?

How does HIV and AIDS impact the process of funerals?

Do people speak openly about AIDS at funerals?

If someone dies of an AIDS related illness, does that change the funeral? How is the family treated?

What about if there are children who have been orphaned?

Talk about your community and the funeral? Do you think funerals in your community are special? Are they similar to other townships?

What kinds of relationships do you have with your neighbors? What role do neighbors play in the funeral process?

Is there anything else about that funeral that you want to talk about?

Appendix B:

University of Cape Town
Faculty of Humanities

Consent Form

Title of research project:

The South African Township Funeral:
A Site of Resistance of HIV and AIDS and a Leading Cause of Life

Names of principal researchers:

Rev. Mary E. Baars

Department/research group address:

Department of Religious Studies
Room 5.40, Leslie Social Science Building,
Upper Campus, UCT

Tel: 021 - 650 3452
Fax: 021 - 689 7575

Name of participant:

Nature of the research: Individual interviews

Participant's involvement:
What's involved: This research is based on a 25 minute interview where participants are asked about subjects ranging from personal faith to the role of funerals in the life of the community. All questions are open ended and participants have the opportunity to decline answering any question. Most questions are designed to make space for story telling and articulating both theological and practical impacts the funeral rite have on the individual and community as a whole.

Risks: There are no direct risks in this study. All participants will remain anonymous and their reporting will not be connected to their actual person at any time. It is possible that the remembering and telling of stories might create an emotional response from the participant.

Benefits: This is an opportunity to be empowered through story telling and a chance to recognize the powerful and important role the funeral rite plays in township culture. The whole process of the funeral offers many gifts to the people and by acknowledging the positive effects of the funeral, a greater awareness of this unique process may result.

Costs: There are no costs but the the giving of one's time.

Payment: There is no payment for the study. All interviews are voluntary and flexible in the amount of time used.

• I agree to participate in this research project.

• I have read this consent form and the attached information sheet it and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.

• I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following:

- I understand that my personal details may be used in aggregate form only, so that I will not in any way be personally identifiable.

• I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.

• I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of Participant / Guardian (if under 18): _____

Name of Participant / Guardian: _____

Signature of person who sought consent: _____

Name of person who sought consent: _____

Signatures of principal researchers: a)_____ (name)

b)_____ (name)

c)_____ (name)

Date: _____

Letter of Agreement:

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of my research project focusing on the culture of township funerals. In order to prepare you for the interview process, I want to outline my project and its goals and aims.

After spending almost two years in Gugulethu as a pastor, I have been deeply affected by funerals within the community. As I have been a part of these funerals, I have witness the important role they play in the life of the community. I am interested first in what the funeral means in the life of individuals in the community. I want to know why so many people commit to going to funerals, sometimes every weekend, and why they play such an important role in the life of the community. I am interested in the process of the funeral, the details of what happens during each part of the funeral process from the period of mourning to the internment. I am interested in who all is involved in this process and what roles they may play.

My second interest has to do with past funerals during the apartheid era. I am interested in what happened during those funerals and why people continued to attend them even if there was a potential risk. I am wondering how apartheid was resisted at the particular site of the funeral. Furthermore, I am interested in the present struggle with HIV and AIDS. I am wondering if the same principles in the funeral process during the apartheid era could be employed in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

This interview will be a series of questions which may shed light on these questions. My hope is that you will answer the questions as honestly as you can. There are no right answers. The knowledge and opinions that you have are valuable to me, whether of not I agree with you or even fully understand where you are coming from. The information that you provide me will be used in a paper that I am writing for a Masters of Arts at the University of Cape Town. I may use a direct quote or I may generate common themes from the whole of the interviews to show a particular trend within our community. Your comments and quotations will always remain anonymous. You are free to stop this interview at any time as well as withdraw from my project. When the project is completed, I will make copies of my paper available.

Again, I thank you for being a part of my project. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 0735301076.

Many blessings,

Reverend Mel Baars

Appendix C- TAC Struggle Songs:

(as published on the TAC website: www.treatmentactioncampaign.co.za)

The Generics - Thula Mama / Consoling The Mothers

Be consoled Mama,
Be consoled Mama,
don't cry mama,
We took him and brought him home.
He just cried, saying "it's AIDS"
Go well Comrades
You are the heroes.
You have fought strongly in the battle against AIDS.
We say these words to you Simon Nkoli, Gugu Dlamini, Sibusiso Mkhize, Christopher Morape.
Your spirit is right with us.
Be consoled Mama.
Be consoled Mama.

Never Give Up

Never Give Up!
Comrades!
Hold on!

I Was Sitting

Oh! I Was Sitting in the dark dying of Aids.
Zackie arrived, arrived MSF to set me free.
They set me free
I didn't know about this TAC.
Then Sipho arrived and taught me
I didn't know anything about the anti-retrovirals drugs until MSF came to educate me
They set me free
Oh! Come, come mother, come father, come sister, together with your big brother.
We are going to defeat HIV
Defeat it.....HIV

Ileta / The Letter

I received a letter from TAC
It speaks nicely saying Biozole is now available
Oh Zackie Achmat we love you
Ola Zackie our buddy, son of Achmat.
We solute you brother, all of us here in South Africa.
You sacrificed your life going all the way to Thailand to import Biozole illegally.
You were defying the state.
You have shown that here in South Africa we can make it.
We can defeat HIV brother.

Now we salute you baba!
Keep up the good work.
Make it a point we don't suffer the way we suffering now.
Simply because we see the state doesn't care about us any longer.

Ingaba Senzeni Na / What Did We Do?

What did we do to you Thabo Mbeki.
We want AZT.
We want Biozole.
We want Nevirapine from you Thabo Mbeki, Thabo Mbeki, What is our debt?
What is out sin?
Is it Aids?
Thabo please, speak to Pfizer, Spek to Glaxo
Talk to BMS to reduce prices,
What did we do to you Thabo Mbeki

Bonanje / Have A Look

Have a look, Pfizer is making fun of us
Have a look, Mbeki is making fun of us
We are going to give them a minute to change their ways
Have a look, Manto has contempt for us
We are going to give them a minute to change their ways

Abanomona / Those Who Are Jealous

Those who would divide us,
Do not enter into TAC
.....Change Comrades
.....Change your step

Uyabuza uTAC / TAC Is Asking

TAC is asking when will the prices go down, Tshabalala doesn't want to.....Helele Ma
Joing TAC.....Helele Ma
Tshabalala doesn't want to,
Thabo Mbeki doesn't want to,
Pfizer doesn't want to

Thula Sizwe / Consoling The Nation

Be consoled, Nation.
Don't Cry our TAC is going to conquer for us.
Be consoled, Nation.
Don't Cry our TAC is going to conquer for us.
Be consoled, Nation.

Don't Cry our TAC is going to conquer for us.
In HIV/AIDS our TAC will conquer for us.

Siyafa / We Are Dying

Whoo hu hu hu whoo hu hu hu
We are dying, dying, dying, dying, dying with HIV

Iyasigqiba / It's Killing Us

It's killing us.....HIV
HIV is killing us
BMS we want D4T
BMS we want DTI
It is killing us

Jikilele / Globally

We know AZT Globally
AZT - we know it.
It is protecting children from HIV globally, globally
MTCT
Prevention
We know Nevirapine.
It is protecting children from HIV globally, globally