Restoring communication in problematic interpersonal relationships in the family system. A Pastoral study

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ABSTRACT

In this study the interpersonal relationships and especially problematic communication within the family context is of paramount concern. The focus on communication, specifically in the family system, with a view to Biblically restoring communication in problematic interpersonal relationships gives the present study validity and value; this is especially true in the context of family systems in South Africa. The family system in South Africa is under pressure and the pastoral care giver is, subsequently, also under pressure to provide accurate counselling and intercession when needed to the family as a whole. This study aims to satisfy that need in focusing on restoring communication in problematic interpersonal relationships in the family system from a Bible-centred (Christian) perspective.

The areas that the researcher investigated centred on communication in problematic interpersonal family relationships and the way in which communication problems in a particular family system may contribute to the potential problems that the family as a unit may have to cope with. The researcher worked with the hypothesis that problematic communication in interfamilial relationships may severely impede the family system in functioning as an allied unit against the pressures of life (for instance financial challenges, work stress). If family communication patterns were healthy or at least functional, the hypothesis is that all other problems that a family might face could be handled more easily by a family as an allied unit. The research question of this study is: How can families, with problematic interpersonal familial relationships, be counselled from a Biblical perspective with the primary objective of restoring communication in the family system? Can effective Bible-centred counselling guidelines be set down and developed from a study of family systems as depicted in Scripture, the human sciences and an empirical study in order to restore communication in problematic interpersonal relationships in the family system?

This study shows that problematic communication in interfamilial relationships does impede the family system from functioning effectively. Interpersonal relationships in the family system is often complex and communication is only one element present in those relationships which can have a detrimental effect on good family relationships if communication is strained. The overarching research aim of the study was to obtain, develop and put forth Bible-centered praxis-theoretical guidelines on restoring communication in family systems caught up in problematic interpersonal relationships. The conclusion of this study is that families with problematic interpersonal familial relationships can be effectively counselled from a Biblical perspective with the aid of material from the human sciences with the primary objective of restoring communication in the family system.

KEY WORDS

family system, problematic interpersonal relationships, communication, pastoral study.

OPSOMMING

In hierdie studie is die interpersoonlike verhoudings en meer spesifiek problematiese kommunikasie binne die familiekonteks die belangrikste oorweging. Die fokus op kommunikasie, spesifiek in die familiesisteem, met die oog om skriftuurlik kommunikasie te herstel in problematiese interpersoonlike verhoudings, gee die studie geldigheid en waarde; dit is veral akkuraat binne die konteks van familiesisteme in Suid-Afrika. Die familiesisteem in Suid-Afrika is onder druk en die pastorale hulpverlener is ook, gevolglik, onder druk om aan die familie akkurate berading en intersessie, wanneer nodig, aan die familie in sy geheel te bied. Hierdie studie het dit as oogmerk om daardie behoefte te vervul deur te fokus op die herstel van kommunikasie in problematies interpersoonlike verhoudings in die familiesisteem vanuit 'n skrifgesentreerde (Christelike) perspektief.

Die areas wat die navorser ondersoek het, het gesentreer rondom kommunikasie in problematiese interpersoonlike familieverhoudings en die wyse waarop kommunikasie probleme in 'n spesifieke familiesisteem kan bydra tot die moontlike probleme wat die familie, as 'n eenheid, dalk sal moet hanteer. Die navorser het met die hipotese gewerk dat problematiese kommunikasie in interpersoonlike familieverhoudings die funksionering van die familie as 'n verenigde front teen die druk van die lewe (byvoorbeeld finansiële uitdagings en werkstres) sterk mag belemmer. Indien familiekommunikasie patrone gesond of immers funksioneel is, is die hipotese dat alle ander probleme wat 'n familie mag trotseer, makliker hanteer kan word deur 'n famile wat as 'n eenheid funksioneer. Die navorsingsvraag van die studie is: Hoe kan families met problematiese interpersoonlike familieverhoudings, beraad word vanuit 'n Bybelse perspektief met die primêre doel om kommunikasie in die familie sisteem te herstel? Kan effektiewe Skrifgesentreerde beradingsriglyne neergelê word en ontwikkel word van 'n studie van familiesisteme soos aangedui in die Skrif, die sekulêre menswetenskappe en 'n empiriese studie ten einde kommunikasie in problematiese interpersoonlike verhoudings in die familiesisteem te herstel?

Die studie wys dat problematiese kommunikasie in interpersoonlike familieverhoudings wel die familiesisteem belemmer om effektief te funksioneer. Interpersoonlike verhoudings in die familie is baie keer kompleks en kommunikasie is slegs een element teenwoordig in daardie verhoudings wat 'n negatiewe effek op goeie familie verhoudings kan hê indien kommunikasie vertroebeld is. Die oorhoofse navorsingsdoel van die studie was om Skrifgesentreerde praktyk-teoretiese riglyne te bekom, te ontwikkel en voor te stel om kommunikasie in familiesisteme wat vasgevang is in problematiese interpersoonlike verhoudings, te herstel. Die gevolgtrekking van hierdie studie is dat families met problematiese interpersoonlike familieverhoudings wel effektief beraad kan word vanuit 'n Bybelse perspektief met hulp van die sekulêre menswetenskappe met die primêre doel om kommunikasie in die familie sisteem te herstel.

SLEUTELWOORDE
familiesisteem, problematies interpersoonlike verhoudings, kommunikasie, pastorale studie.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

ABSTRACT iii

OPSOMMING iv

CONTENTS v

CHAPTER 1

1.1. TITEL 1

1.2. KEY WORDS 1

SLEUTELWOORDE 1

1.3. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT 1

3.1 Background 1

3.2 Validity and Value of Proposed Study 2

3.3 Problem Statement 3

3.4 Research Question 5

1.4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES 6

1.4.1 Aim 6

1.4.2 Objectives 6

1.5. CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT 7

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 7

1.6.1 Basis theoretical research 7

1.6.2 Meta theoretical research 7

1.6.3 Empirical research 7

1.6.4 Practical-theoretical facet 8

1.7. CHAPTER DIVISIONS 8

1.8. SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN POINTS 3.3, 4 AND 6 9

CHAPTER 2

RESTORING COMMUNICATION IN PROBLEMATIC INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM - A PASTORAL STUDY

A BASIS THEORETICAL STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION 10

2.2 BACKGROUND 10

2.3 THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY 11

2.3.1 Communication in the Family 11

2.3.2 Destructive practices in the family 12

2.3.3. Conflict in the Family 12

2.4 BIBLICAL ROLE FOR MEMBERS IN THE FAMILY 13

2.4.1 Husband / Father 13

2.4.2 Wife / Mother 14

2.4.3 Children 15

2.4.3.1 Son / Boy 15

2.4.3.2 Daughter / Girl 15

2.5 MARRIAGE AS BIBLICALLY ORDAINED INSTITUTION 16

2.5.1 Communication in the Marriage 17

2.5.2 Communicational Conflict in the Marriage 18

2.5.3 The reconciliatory work of Christ 18

2.6 CHRISTIAN PARENTING 20

2.6.1 Communication between parents and children 20

2.6.2 Communicational Conflict between parents and children 21

2.7 Basis theoretical perspectives from Chapter 2 that can be utilized in constructing a theoretical framework for understanding, explaining and changing the praxis of communication in the Christian family from a theological vantage point 22

CHAPTER 3

RESTORING COMMUNICATION IN PROBLEMATIC INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM - A PASTORAL STUDY

META-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND 25

3.2 Basic orientation to the way in which the problem field of problematic interpersonal communication in the family system is addressed by research from the human sciences 26

3.2.1 Communication in the Family 26

3.2.2 Conflict in the Family 26

3.2.3 Constructive and Destructive Conflict 27

3.3 The secularization of the marriage institution and its implications for addressing problematic inter-personal communication in the family system 27

3.3.1 Partnership Marriage 28

3.3.2 A changing role for the Husband / Father 28

3.3.3 The implications of this changing role of the husband for problematic developments in interpersonal relationships in the family system 29

3.3.4 A changing role for the Wife / Mother 30

3.3.5 The implications of this changing role of the wife for problematic developments in interpersonal relationships in the family system 31

3.3.6 Secular Parenting 31

3.3.6.1 Communication between parents and children 32

3.3.6.2 Communicational Conflict between parents and children 32

3.3.7 The place of Children in secularized family life 33

3.3.7.1 Son / Boy 33

3.3.7.2 Daughter / Girl 33

3.3.7.3 The implications of this changing role and place of children for problematic developments in interpersonal relationships in the family system 33

3.4. Secularized means of addressing and resolving communication conflicts in the family system 34

3.4.1 Constructive and Destructive Conflict 34

3.4.2. The nature of interpersonal communication in the family system and proposed therapeutical intervention in resolving conflict 35

3.5. Meta-theoretical perspectives from Chapter 3 that can be utilized in constructing a theoretical framework for understanding, explaining and changing the praxis of communication in the Christian family system from a theological vantage point 36

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: EMPIRICAL STUDY ON DYSFUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS IN THE COMMUNICATIVE SYSTEM OF A SELECTED FAMILY

EMPIRICAL STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION 41

4.2 EMPIRICAL STUDY 41

4.2.1 Overview of the empirical research process 41

4.2.2 Qualitative Research methodology 42

4.3. BASIC EXPLANATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN DIFFERENT STAGES AND DOCUMENTATION OF RESULTS 42

4.3.1 The research group selected in its correspondence with the purpose of the research (Stage one of empirical research: Planning and framing the research) 42

Table 4.1: Participating family: members' particulars 43

4.3.2 Data collection (Stage two of empirical research: gathering and recording information) 43

4.3.3 (Stage three of empirical research: analyzing the information) 44

4.3.3.1 Respondent 1: Mother 44

Table: Respondent 1 46

Conclusions 46

4.3.3.2 Respondent 2: Brother 46

Table: Respondent 2 47

Conclusions 47

4.3.3.3 Respondent 3: Sister (eldest) 47

Table Respondent 3 48

Conclusions 48

4.3.3.4 Respondent 4: Sister (middle) 48

Table: Respondent 4 49

Conclusions 50

4.3.3.5 Respondent 5: Sister (youngest) 50

Table: Respondent 5 50

Conclusions 51

Synopsis 51

4.3.4 Stage four of empirical research: Interpretation of the information with the eye on construction of theological theory 53

CHAPTER 5

RESTORING COMMUNICATION IN PROBLEMATIC INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM - A PASTORAL STUDY

PRAXIS THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

5.1 INTRODUCTION 55

5.2. THERAPEUTIC FOCUS ON RESTORING COMMUNICATION AS POINT OF DEPARTURE IN DEVELOPING PRAXIS THEORY 56

5.2.1 The need for restoration of marital relationship as foundation of the family life 56

5.2.2 Important aspects of therapeutic intervention by Christian counsellors in restoration of communication in the marriage 57

5.2.2.1 The importance of training a pre- / newly married couple in a shared framework 57

5.2.2.2 Training married couples in communicating forgiveness 57

5.2.3 Training married couples in communicating appreciation 58

5.5.2.3 Christian counselling's therapeutic focus on restoration of communication when parenting 58

5.2.3.1 Communication when there is conflict between parents and children 58

5.2.3.2 Handling anger when communicating with children 59

5.2.3.3 Therapeutic focus on practical parenting: Raising sons to become Men of God 59
5.2.3.3.1 The king pillar 60
5.2.3.3.2 The warrior pillar 60
5.2.3.3.3 The mentor pillar 60
5.2.3.3.4 The friend pillar 61

5.2.4 Christian counselling's therapeutic focus on restoring communication: members in their particular roles towards other members of the family and in their individuality 61

5.2.4.1 Understanding the communicative dynamics involved in the Husband / Father role and conduct in the family 61

5.2.4.2 Communicative dynamics involved in the Wife / Mother's conduct and role in the family 63

5.2.4.3 Communicative dynamics involved in Children's role and conduct in the family 64

5.2.4.3.1 Children must be disciplined and obedient 64

5.2.4.3.2 Children must be truthful, faithful and modest 65

5.2.4.4 Communicative dynamics involved in being an individual in the corporal life of a family system 65

5.2.5 Different approaches in Christian counselling to understanding therapeutic intervention in distorted marriage and familial relationship 66

5.2.5.1 What is Biblical / Christian counselling and its unique contribution to therapeutic intervention? 66

5.2.5.2 A multifaceted look at the goal of Biblical / Christian counselling and its implications for restoring interpersonal communication 67

5.2.5.3 The Goal of Biblical / Christian counselling: Listening and its implications for restoring interpersonal communication 68

5.2.5.4 Diverse perspectives from different Biblical / Christian counselling models as possible resource for the therapist 69

5.2.5.4.1 Nouthetic counselling: Adams 69
5.2.5.4.2 Collins' counselling model 69
5.2.5.4.3 Crabb's counselling model 70
5.2.5.4.4 Narrative therapy 70
5.2.5.4.5 Healing through memory: Smith 70

5.3 PRAXIS-THEORETICAL GUIDELINES FOR RESTORING COMMUNICATION IN PROBLEMATIC INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM 71

5.3.1 Creating a renewed sense for Familism 72

5.3.2 Promoting restoration of open communication patterns 72

5.3.3 Ministering reconciliation with God and forgiveness in restoring open communication patterns 72

5.3.4 Creating a renewed sense for the Christian way of handling communication during conflict 73

5.3.5 Stressing the importance of identifying problem thinking and managing problem behavior with the eye on renewal of thought and behavior patterns 74

5.3.6 Promoting the establishment of cohesive communicative patterns in Family Therapy 75

5.3.7 Teaching the role of faith in the Trinity in restoring problematic interpersonal relationships in the family 76

5.3.7.1 God the Father 76
5.3.7.2 Jesus Christ 76
5.3.7.3 The Holy Spirit 77
5.3.7.3.1 The Comforting Holy Spirit 77
5.3.7.3.2 The Guiding Holy Spirit 77

5.3.8 Emphasizing steadfastness in prayer (The open communication channel with God) 78

5.3.9 Encouraging constant study of the Scriptures as communication channel to be constantly aware of God's will for our lives 78

5.3.10 Equipping to wear the armour of God as daily safeguard against lapsing into distorted, doubting, distrustful, insensitive communication patterns 78

5.4. CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER 5 79

5.5. FINAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY 85

APPENDIX A 88

APPENDIX B 90

BIBLIOGRAPHY 91