ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the growing need to understand the religious perspectives of forcibly displaced persons. It looks at the subject in terms of a journey and how a small group of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe retell their journey stories with theological significance. The research asks how these refugees correlate their experiences of faith and displacement. The answer comes as a synthesis that juxtaposes displacement and salvific events. Applying Simone Weil's idea of decreation to the data from in-depth interviews, the research looks at the individual journeys of refugees and traces these as a journey from creation to re-creation. Aspects of the journey develop at each level. As a creation, the *imago Dei* connects the person to God. A decreation takes place through displacement that leads the person away from their humanity in a downward spiral of dehumanization. Yet, the decreation of displacement is more than a list of needs and responsibilities; at its vortex is the possibility of a redemptive relationship. Re-creation takes place through a synthesis of displacement and salvific events, and the critical moment is when refugees recognize God's story in their personal story. The faith experience is not a static event; it becomes redemptive as it continues in a dialogical process of relating the journey to God and community. Finally, the result of this synthesis of re-creation and its redemptive process is a new reality that finds expression in *shalom*, being welcomed, and finding renewed purpose.

From Gravity to Grace:

Finding a Redemptive Voice

Among Displaced Christians in Europe

by

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed		(Candidate)
Date	27.6.17	

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Date	27.6.17	

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if approved, to be available for photocopying by the British Library and for Inter-Library Loan, for open access to the Electronic Theses Online Service (EthoS) linked to the British Library, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents
for their constant support throughout my life,
their love in living and dying,
the faith they have passed on, and
the hope we have together.

Acknowledgements

I began this study alongside of an active ministry, and I could not have imagined the dedication it would take to reach the end. It has been a journey of endurance.

Foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Daniel Groody and Dr. Edward Mogire, for their vision of how to reach the end, for engaging with me at various stages along the way, and for bearing with me through the long silences.

I am indebted to the community of tutors, staff, and students at OCMS for their invaluable advice, seminars, and discussions. Similarly, I have been inspired and challenged by the fellow students and faculty of *Spurgeon's Sabbatical* at Gordon-Conwell to pursue this research. These communities have been an oasis for me.

I would like to acknowledge the support and interest of various friends and family who have encouraged me at each turn. Thank you Peter and Lisa Vernan for always having a room ready. Nor could I have gotten through without the critical eye and proofreading of Debby Halgren, Wilrens Hornstra, as well as Reinhild and Tessa Sydnor. Thank you for your tireless effort to read my document yet one more time.

I am grateful I could join in the journey of each refugee as a fellow traveller and for the leadership at the church in Malta. Most of all I cannot thank Tom Albinson and other colleagues at IAFR enough for your understanding and patient waiting.

Finally, I would never have even begun without the constant love and support of my family, Reinhild, Tessa, Noah and Luke. They have endured and learned with me and together we have finished the race. Thank you.

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Preamble

Since 1985, I have worked among refugees and asylum seekers in Europe.[1] I have been based in Austria and France and worked in other parts of Europe including Italy and Malta. My work among refugees has focused on practical assistance and spiritual support.[2] Additionally, I have taken leadership roles in two related networks in Europe: the Refugee Highway Partnership (RHP) of the World Evangelical Alliance and the Global Diaspora Forum of the Lausanne Movement. Throughout this research, I have continued working in full-time ministry, allowing the research to develop naturally out of my communities, networks, and practice.

My work has been to come alongside various refugees and asylum seekers to offer accompaniment in the asylum process, including support for basic needs, language learning, and cultural adjustment. As a Christian pastor, my practice has also included prayer, worship, Scripture and spiritual discussions. Throughout my work, my aim has been to engage with refugees on their faith issues, and to help them find roots of faith that thrive in displacement as well as in a secular European context. Tapping into these roots has been intuitive for many refugees while for others it has been a new experience. One said, 'faith has been like a honey jar. I could only see the honey inside. Now as a refugee I have tasted the honey.'

The Scriptures have sustained many displaced Christians; likewise, the stories of faith from refugees have encouraged local churches, giving a

[1] Between 1989 and 1995, I took a leave of absence to study at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, in the USA. During this time, I was also ordained and worked as a Presbyterian pastor.

[2] During these years I have worked in two faith-based Christian NGOs dedicated to refugee issues. Currently I serve as the European Leader for the International Association for Refugees (IAFR). Further information is available at www.iafr.org.

renewed vision and purpose. While there is a plethora of studies to understand displacement issues, there is a relative lack of research to understand the dynamic role of faith in displacement.

In my work with displaced people over the span of thirty years, I have drunk many cups of tea and given a lot of practical help. But above all, I have been acutely aware of the theological connection between the refugees' faith and their experience of displacement. Making this connection sustains both the refugee as a person and myself as a long-term worker, and my hope is to uncover more of its redeeming effect.

Chapter 1

Mapping the Journey: Routes, Contours and Terms

1.1 Research Overview

1.1.1 Introductory Story: Saving My Brother

As the Arab Spring unfolded in February 2011, Hamilton was a refugee in Malta. He followed the events carefully because he had spent some time in Libya as a refugee. But Hamilton was concerned mainly because his brother and family were still stranded in Tripoli where the fighting was intensifying. It troubled Hamilton all the more as he watched various embassies evacuate their people, yet his brother had no one to help him. Hamilton tells the story of what happened next:[1]

> I woke up that night and I was praying, praying, praying because we say 'God is the Lawyer of our people,' and if our embassy doesn't come ... then we trust God can do more ... and then a Scripture was given to me. It was in Isaiah 64.[2] It was Saturday ... and just I opened my laptop and saw the news, The *Times of Malta*, it says ... 'anyone who is left behind in Tripoli, they can come within one hour to the port of Tripoli ... to leave on a Maltese passenger ship.'

Hamilton quickly called his brother and told him to order a taxi and leave immediately. Directing the events from his mobile phone, Hamilton told the driver where exactly to go in the port. He then made several calls to the officials including the Maltese ambassador's office in Libya to make sure that his brother's name would be registered on the list of evacuees. He went on:

> I explained (to the officials) they were asylum seekers who don't have a passport; they don't have anything. They were the only migrants to come on the ship to Malta, ... my brother and his family and three others who were living with them ... I can't tell you how I thanked God,

[1] Hamilton was one of the refugee participants in Malta during the second phase of interviews. He told this story during the interview as an example of God's involvement in the journey of refugees.

[2] All scriptures referred to in this dissertation are taken from the *English Standard Version* (ESV). Hamilton did not name a specific part of Isaiah 64, however, verses 1-4 are relevant.

> 'Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down ... to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! ... When you did awesome things that we did not look for, ... no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him. (Isa. 64:1-4)

> because even so it seems there was nobody to care, but then God cares. And then seeing this happening, it was very difficult for me. And this verse always, it clicks to my mind.[3]

Hamilton's story illustrates several important issues that this research explores: the connection between life events and Scripture, the intervention of God in life, and the significance of retelling these faith events. Most of all there is the issue of the story itself. Stories hold meaning and have the power to influence people, and because of this, stories are one of the most important things refugees can carry with them.[4] Hamilton says that his brother did not have anything when he fled as a refugee. Indeed, for many refugees at a certain level, the story is all they have. Hamilton's story demonstrates the personal situation he faces, the spiritual connections that he makes, and the account of historical events.

This research considers how forced displacement not only impacts the person but also has a redemptive element. It uses in-depth interviewing to understand the significance of stories told by Christian refugees. It explores these stories to see how the correlation of displacement and faith has a redemptive significance in their lives.

1.1.2 Relevant Events

Recent news reports from among asylum seekers in Europe underline the importance of faith issues among forcibly displaced people. In the first three months of 2016, the Austrian Catholic church received 300 requests for adult baptism from mostly refugees (Sherwood & Oltermann 2016). According to

[3] Hamilton refers to God's involvement in terms of care. Examples of Scripture that reference God's care include: Zeph. 2:7; Ezek. 34:12; Ps. 142:4; Job 10:12; 1 Thess. 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:7.
[4] The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes multiple meanings for the word 'story'. Relevant to this research is: "a person's account of the events of his or her life or a part of it". According to *Merriam-Webster* a 'story' refers to an account of the events that happened in a certain situation. It can also refer to the plot and development in a piece of fiction. A story refers to the content plane of what is being told; it is 'the what' of a narrative (Prince 2003). In this research I use 'story' alternatively in two ways: first, as a literal term for the account of a situation, and second as a figurative term for a collection of events that carry significance and meaning for the person.

Switzerland's Counselling Centre for Integration and Religious Affairs, more than 2000 Muslims have turned to Christ since 2014, with the numbers rising (Torres 2016).

Since the autumn of 2015, churches in Finland have faced a surprising new experience of Muslims asking about the Christian faith. The national Lutheran church conducted a survey about this interest in 165 state churches that are close to reception centres. It received 128 responses that reported a total of 117 baptisms of Muslims (Uusi Tie 2016). Seventeen Pentecostal churches were also surveyed and these reported 108 Muslims baptized. Already in 2009, the Danish Church Integration Commission reported there were 212 migrant churches in Denmark (KIT 2009), and *Christianity Today* confirmed this in 2012, noting that churches are impacting local communities (Moon 2012).

The state church in Hamburg expects to register several hundred baptisms in 2016 and non-state churches report the same. The pastor of a church in Hamburg commented that the new Christians will change the church (Das Erste ARD 2016). Similarly, a Lutheran church in Berlin has a thousand baptized Iranian and Afghan members with 300 more on the waiting list. The pastor in Berlin notes there is a Christian awakening among these refugees on a large scale and that the recent converts have brought meaning to their lives (Kasinof 2016).

The Mission Theology Advisory Group (MTAG) for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) has prepared a study of practical questions for churches to consider as they engage in mission among immigrants and asylum seekers (Mission Theology Advisory Group [MTAG] 2015). The questions they

identify include: What does God want? What is a Christian narrative? What are the fears? What are the long-term issues?

These questions together with the current events illustrate that refugee stories are impacting the life of the church. In reflecting on the recent surge of interest in Christian faith issues, various refugees in the reports above explained: they are tired of the violence, disillusioned with Islam, attracted by the love and grace of Christians, and affected by the power of Jesus' story.[5] The stories that accompany the current influx of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe highlight the relevance of this research to churches in Europe.

1.2 Main Contours

This research investigates the stories of displacement and salvation among Christian refugees in Europe. It contributes further exploration to the emerging field of diaspora missiology.[6] Using the idea of decreation adapted from Simone Weil, the research uncovers a correlation between salvation and displacement.[7] Aspects of the correlation include the importance of the *imago Dei* in humanity, the context of displacement, a redemptive experience through a reflection of God's story in the refugee story, and the process of dialogue.[8] The first half of the study describes the various ideas that have informed the research, while the

[5] These are the terms used by refugees in the articles by Torres, Tie, Moon, Das Erste, and Kasinof.

[6] The Lausanne Diaspora Educator's Consulation (2009) defines diaspora missiology as 'a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God's redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin'. This is one of the 19 definitions included in the Glossary of *Scattered & Gathered* (2016). Characteristics of diaspora missiology that relate to this study include: integration with other disciplines, participation in God's redemptive plan, and movement of the church to bring God's blessing to the world.

[7] James Wetzel (2015) rightly notes that 'decreation' is not Weil's term. A study of decreation would encompass Augustine's reference to the role of creation in salvation as well as Paul Griffiths' (2014) vision of eschatology and how a theology of last things unfolds. This research, however, is not a study of 'decreation'. Instead, it considers how Simone Weil's idea of decreation contributes to a redemptive understanding. Chapter Three will explain Weil's idea in further detail, and how it fits into this research.

[8] Chapters 5-8 as well as the introduction of the theories in Chapter 3 will describe these aspects more fully.

second half explores the process of correlation at work among the forcibly displaced.

The dramatic reports and stories from asylum seekers raise questions such as the credibility and the nature of conversion. While this research relates to these questions, it focuses on the correlation of experiences and how these shape a redemptive voice. I am looking at stories that involve faith in a redemptive way. This research is working on the assumption that a social inquiry into the migration and displacement of someone like Hamilton has to be related not only to the pressing issues facing displaced individuals, but also has to be grounded in historical understanding (Castles & Miller 2003: 8). With this concern, the research draws on the perspectives of those in displacement using data collected through in-depth interviews.

The second half of this study focuses on the theological development among refugees, with the aim of highlighting the voice of Christian refugees. The theological development draws on the decreation idea to analyse how refugees correlate their experience of displacement and salvation. The research explores the experience of refugees in terms of creation, decreation and re-creation.

1.2.1 Ontological Orientation

Creation, decreation, and re-creation function as three contextual levels, which are ontological in nature because they relate to issues of identity, attachment, reflection of others, and how the issues affect a person's being. Inevitably, connections between human and divine worlds cause dialectical tensions. Creation gives significance to humanity; decreation stands opposite to creation, and re-creation proceeds from a decreation. Together these levels introduce the incompatible and yet complementary relationship between decreation and re-

creation. The ontological orientation emphasizes the whole person and the connection between the parts that make up a person. It looks at the activity necessary to engage the whole person, and it explores the movement from one level to the next.

1.2.2 Decreation

Simone Weil's idea of decreation wrestles with similar issues that refugees face.[9] In particular, refugees experience loss, having been stripped of those things that give a person identity and dignity, such as families, livelihoods, and dreams. Weil's idea has been a catalyst to consider how the loss on one level might lead to something greater; it has been a stepping-stone for further reflection about the reality of displaced persons. Forced displacement destroys a person's reality, and the idea of decreation has provided a doorway to consider the re-creation of reality in redemptive terms. Weil's idea of decreation has catalysed reflection on the negative experience of displacement and its positive elements

Weil's thought originates in a modern secular world that has lost its religious roots and wrestles with its connection to faith. Growing up in an agnostic Jewish family, she fled France for a short while during WWII as a refugee. In her letter to her spiritual mentor, Father Perrin, Weil admits that until 1941, she had never once prayed in all her life (Weil 1959 [1951]: 71). Her own concern for the reality of affliction makes her aware of real and imaginary connections to life and faith. Like Plato's allegory of the Cave, Weil's idea of decreation considers the interplay between perceptions of this world and a transcendent supernatural one. These perceptions underscore the paradoxes

[9] According to Miklós Vetö (1994:11), decreation is Weil's key idea, and it will be defined more fully in Chapter Three. The idea forms the basis for a framework to explore the tensions between human affliction and God's transcendence.

and contradictions that exist in understanding reality. Decreation offers a framework to understand affliction and how faith relates to this.

1.2.3 Journey

The reference to a journey occurs on different levels. First, there is the literal refugee journey of fleeing to safety. This is a journey in terms of travelling from one place to another (*OED*),[10] and the refugees tell stories recounting these experiences. A second kind of journey refers to the long and difficult process of personal change and development (*OED*). On this second level, I refer to the journey of displacement, decreation, and faith to emphasize the impact of these on the person. The second kind of journey is one step removed from the literal journey of refugees and it is generally not so easy to perceive or to discuss it. This research takes place between these two levels to create a bridge between the actual journey and the more conceptual one. Finally, there is a third kind of journey, described as a research journey that refers to the various backgrounds, ideas, and processes for developing this research.[11] A journey means there has been a passage from a beginning to an end and it supports the idea that just like the refugees have crossed deserts and seas, they also pass through decreation to a redemptive end.

1.2.4 Research Problem

Before concluding with an overview of how the research unfolds, this section describes several problems for the research to consider.

[10] *Oxford English Dictionary,* from here on referred to as *OED.*

[11] Each of these journeys should be distinguishable by its context. For example all three appear in the Table of Contents. Chapters 1-3 describe the research journey. Chapter 4 discusses the interview material that give accounts of the literal journeys, while Chapters 5-8 include elements of both the literal and conceptual journeys, focusing on the bridge between the two journeys.

i. Nature of Faith

The first problem concerns the nature of faith among the research respondents. Is faith something that has been passed down and is it affected in some way by the journey? There are obstacles along the journey to make it difficult to have a relevant faith. This becomes acute in societies that have largely abandoned their own understanding of any historical or confessional connection. In *The Meaning of Revelation,* Richard Niebuhr (Niebuhr 2006 [1941]: 43) identified this problem in the modern world as a gap between the person and God.[12] The gap that Niebuhr referred to in the modern world is reappearing in the global world with the increase of forced displacement and the numbers of people searching to find a better and safer life. Douglas Ottati raises the relevance of Niebuhr's essay for my own research by asking:

> What if we can combine a critical appreciation for the historically and socially conditioned character of human knowing and experience with the conviction that faith is a real relation to the living God?(Ottati 2006 [1941]: xxviii)[13]

ii. Perception

The second problem relates to the perception of reality. Simone Weil expresses this problem in terms of attention and whether a person will embrace the real experience or an imaginary one. It becomes a problem when the person does not see realistically. Similarly how can I as an outsider understand something that I have not known or lived? The problem is that everyone creates imagined worlds of themselves and others. This becomes a practical problem with every effort to determine the refugee status (Kagan 2009), but it also exists on a theological level when a person relates their faith claims to the actual life

[12] Niebuhr discusses how a person's knowing is influenced by the point of view that is either internal or external (2006:31-35). These perspectives correspond to practical or objective viewpoints and the only way to bridge them is through a leap of faith (:43). For forcibly displaced persons this can lead to a dilemma in which faith and life lose their connection and relevance to each other.

[13] The problem occurs where the nature of faith does not combine the two.

experiences.

Paul Tillich wrestled with the problem of relating the questions of life to the answers of faith. His concern to bridge the gap between faith and culture was a valid one, and my aim is to understand how this happens among Christian refugees and to give a voice to the theological perspectives of these travellers. Just as the state needs to establish the credibility of the stories they hear, my research also establishes a similar credibility. It addresses the question of whether the perception is real or only an illusion that the person has come to embrace.

iii. Movement

A third problem relates to the impact of movement. For displaced people, everything is moving, and this makes it difficult to find a reference point. The refugees in this research are in dialogue between the events of displacement and faith. This makes them both the vehicles of this experience but also the navigators along the way. The problem of knowing the story requires a way to engage and re-engage with it at different points and from different angles along the way.

1.2.5 Research Question

The problems above illustrate what this research addresses through the following overall question: How do refugees correlate their experiences of forced displacement and faith? In-depth interviews provide primary source material for these experiences, which are explored from the angles of humanity, displacement, and salvation.

- Related to humanity: how do displaced persons describe themselves?
- Related to displacement: what is significant and unique about their experience and is there a common description for this experience?

- Related to salvation: is anything redemptive in the experience of displacement?

These questions ultimately lead to redemptive concerns and consider the results of a correlation: How does the journey re-order refugee lives to find meaning along the way and what are the important themes?

By looking first at the person as a human being and then at the nature of displacement, I consider how the parts interact to influence a redemptive experience. I ask how Weil's idea of decreation relates to each part. I use her idea most heavily in Chapters Three to Six and less in Chapters Seven and Eight. The refugees' journeys progress as their own expression of God's redemption.

The research question along with the sub-questions are similar to the ones of Robert Schreiter: to what extent are the respondents faithful to their experience of the Gospel and the tradition they have received and how do they express this experience of Christ (Schreiter 1985)? Refugees not only go through geographic and physical movement, but they also pass through a complex combination of interactions and processes for redefining and readapting their lives (Lewellen 2002). They are not only being re-routed through the journey, but also their lives are being re-established.

The research question uncovers the theological basis for authentic faith. Similarly to the viewpoints discussed above, refugees are seen not only in regards to where they have come from, but also to where they are going. The question probes the theological content needed for remaining faithful.[14]

It is commonly believed that refugee issues only have to do with justice,

[14] The idea of content comes from Marcia Riggs (1998:184-5) who describes content for living in the tension of a plural society with opposing sides. The content is characterized by a point of reference, hope, and embracing differences. This is content that builds an ethical capacity.

policy or protection–and not personal faith. The objection envisions redemption only in historical terms. It is as if to say, 'We know all we need to about redemption and we do not need to look outside of the historical context for more'. Richard Niebuhr referred to this mindset as the two-aspect theory that creates an inescapable dilemma in which there is no continuous movement between internal and external history and the only way to bridge the gap is with 'a decision of the self, a leap of faith' (Niebuhr 2006 [1941]: 42-3).[15] Similar to Niebuhr's dilemma, if there is a connection between real-life events of refugees and their internal personal faith experience, then how do those involved make these connections? How do they find the theological basis needed to sustain faith under the pressure of forced displacement?

1.3 Important Terminology

Displacement signifies that something has been moved, and when force is involved it highlights that the move is involuntary. The term 'forcible displacement' was first used in the Geneva Convention, human rights declarations, and UN resolutions to describe the context of international protection and the expulsion of people from their rightful place (Dawson & Farber 2012: 44). To describe displacement as ‘forcible’ asks whether the movement was involuntary in some way. In this way, forcible displacement relates to war crimes, treaties, and protocol that affect people. The term implies there has been some kind of legal or illegal action to cause movement. In this

[15] In *The Meaning of Revelation,* Richard Niebuhr refers to external and internal history to signify the way a person sees reality. In Niebuhr’s scheme, there is an outer viewpoint that sees things as objects and also an inner viewpoint that makes the self subjective. This considers whether history is only lived and known from the outside, or if it is also understood from within (Niebuhr 2006 [1941]: 31-5). This is similar to the dynamic between faith and displacement that I have identified among refugees. If redemption is only an externally knowable event, then why would there be any need to explore the subject in the context of displacement? I am arguing there is also an internal process at work that is important to understand.

way, forcible displacement differs from the voluntary movement of migrants.

I use the term 'forced displacement' in this research to refer to broader categories that reach beyond legal or political understandings. In displacement people lose their communities and part of their identity, making ontological categories vital for understanding the term. In this way, migration and diaspora are related to forced displacement. Diaspora originates from the Greek word *speiro,* which means to sow or disperse, and today it refers to community members who have been scattered from their homeland (Cohen 2008: 4; Safran 1991: 83). Diaspora and migration studies are related to forced displacement as they examine the movement and uprooting of people from their communities and identities.

My research focuses on displacement that is forced, emphasizing the non-negotiable, involuntary events and situations that have both local and global implications (Turton 2003:6-7). To say a person is forcibly displaced reflects the dangerous, inhuman and involuntary dislocation of a person from his or her family and community. Forced displacement refers to the violent or destructive, accumulated or sudden pressure that compels a person to make a desperate move out of their normal community in pursuit of peace and safety. I use the term inter-changeably with ‘forced migration’ as well as ‘displacement’.

1.3.1 Spectrum of Forced Displacement

Each year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) updates the numbers and statistics related to forcibly displaced people.[16] In addition to official refugees there are annually millions of internally displaced persons (IDP) and increasing numbers of asylum seekers, with Europe receiving the largest share of asylum claims. The year 2014 was a milestone in

[16] In June each year, the UNHCR publishes its *Global Trends,* with the current update and analysis of refugee statistics for the previous year.

these figures, with over 59 million forcibly displaced people reported worldwide, surpassing for the first time the number of displaced people after World War II. In 2015, the numbers of refugees rose further with unprecedented levels of asylum seekers entering Europe.[17]

A wide range of people fall under the term forcibly displaced, and they have been described as unprotected and stateless, alienated from their normal government or society (Schacknove 1985), involuntarily forced to flee, and unable to return to their home area (Haddad 2004). Figure 1.1 shows my illustration of the spectrum of people in forced displacement. At one end of the spectrum the groups are defined by state and legal concerns while humanitarian issues describe those groups at the other end. Moving from left to right, the distinctions between each group become less clearly defined.

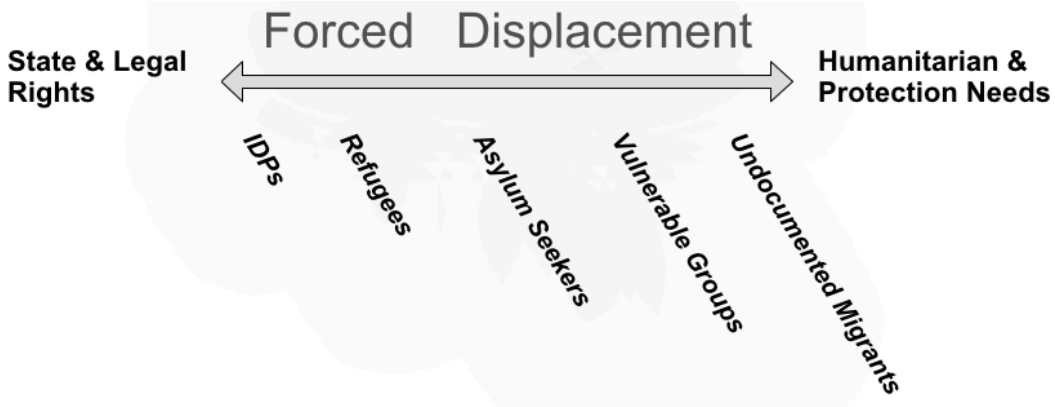

Figure 1.1 Spectrum of Forcibly Displaced People

The spectrum identifies five categories of forcibly displaced people that I refer to in this research.

- *Internally displaced persons (IDPs)* is one of the larger groups in regards to forced displacement. The term IDP was formalized in 1998 by *The Guiding Principles,* and it refers to those who have been forced to flee

[17] These figures are accessible through the UNHCR website at: http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&query=global+trends&x=0&y=0e.

inside their own country due to conflict, disaster or economic development (Brookings Institute 1999).The term raises concern for the protection needs of people who are still under the responsibility of their government. The key distinction of IDPs is that these people have not crossed a national boundary, yet they have still been forcibly displaced. Unlike 'convention' refugees, IDPs have no legal treaty or document to guarantee protection. This research does not include IDPs; however, I have included the term in the spectrum because it highlights the role of state sovereignty and responsibility, as well as the reality that for many, their journey began as an IDP. It also illustrates that a person in one group may have been classified in another group as well.

- *Refugees* refer to those who have been granted protection under the 1951 Geneva Convention or some other complementary or temporary form of protection.[18] Those who can document and show they fit this narrow legal definition of a refugee can receive official refugee status. Sometimes referred to as 'convention refugees', they represent a relatively small portion of those who have been forcibly displaced.
- *Asylum seekers* are those who have submitted a claim for recognition and status in a particular country and who are waiting for that state to decide about the claim.

[18] For example, there are over four million Palestinian refugees with legal status under the UNRWA mandate. This category also includes the temporary subsidiary protection status that was adopted in the European Union by Directive 2004/83, which sought to define minimum standards of protection. At the beginning of this research, the majority of those forcibly displaced in Malta, where most of the interviews took place, had received a temporary or subsidiary protection. This is not a refugee status but it gives a limited legal status and it allows the government to return the person to their home country as soon as the situation has stabilized. The category includes a temporary status like subsidiary protection because the subsidiary status is an international and legal status that guarantees protection like the refugee status (Gil-Bazo 2006).

- *Vulnerable persons* is a category referred to in EU legislation that includes groups such as stateless persons, unaccompanied minors and victims of human trafficking.[19] The UNHCR refers to these groups as 'persons of concern' (UNHCR 2014a: 7). While these persons often have an unclear status, they all have a clear need for protection.
- *Undocumented migrants* are those who enter countries without proper papers, as well as those living unregistered and unauthorized in a country. They fall outside of official asylum systems and their asylum procedures have expired or not yet begun. They are also described as 'irregular migrants' because of their effort to flee or move using unofficial avenues and illegal means such as smugglers.[20] This group reflects the varied nature of people on the move that includes economic migrants as well as convention refugees, asylum seekers or other vulnerable persons who may have at one time been included in some other category along the spectrum. They have since been forced to travel without documents and remain hidden.[21] The distinctions between these travellers are often difficult to identify (UNHCR 2009); what began as a decision to seek a better life may well have turned into a desperate attempt to protect their lives.

From the perspective of states, the primary role of a sovereign country is to give governance and provision for the security, subsistence, liberty and needs of its people. When this role is not fulfilled, often those who are affected by the

[19] Article 21 of the Reception Conditions Directive (Directive 2013/33/EU) is an example.
[20] The Cimade (2009) Concerted Management Agreements for Migration Flows and Co-developments/Briefing Paper, May 2009, notes that the emphasis on 'security' by the French State forces many displaced people to take extreme and dangerous measures outside of state systems.
[21] The mixed nature of travel and the unclear status of these people may account for why some refer to the refugees in this group as economic migrants, illegal migrants and aliens, immigrant workers, etc.

breakdown suffer, and as a result are forced to flee (Bretherton 2006; Walzer 1983). The 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention definition of a refugee recognizes and defines those in need of protection who have crossed international borders, and it has become the benchmark for determining the legal status of forcefully uprooted people. This status refers to those outside of their national borders, who can substantiate their claim of persecution due to nationality, race, religion or social/political membership, and who are unable or unwilling to return because they fear for their lives.[22] This standard provides governments with a political and legal framework not only for deciding a person's status within their borders, but more importantly for protecting the State's sovereignty and controlling the flow of people.

Defining forced displacement at the political end of the spectrum (Figure 1.1) gives protection through legal means focused mainly on status determination, policy development, and addressing causes. However it results in a narrow field of people who actually end up being protected (Crawley 2005). Haddad (Haddad 2004) notes the 1951 definition in today's global world is narrow, Eurocentric and individualistic. For all of the effort in giving a clear definition of who counts as a refugee, mere legal terminology leaves many questions unaddressed and effectively millions of people unprotected. A legal framework alone is not enough to decide a person's status or to give protection, much less to address adequately the complexities of forced displacement, and as a result, vast numbers of people fall outside the reach of law, and they are forced to take still more dangerous and extreme measures to address their

[22] Today there are 145 signatories and the often quoted words in regards to the definition of a refugee are: 'Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.'

displacement (Cimade 2009).

It is not enough to define the forcibly displaced in terms of the state or the 1951 Convention definition of a refugee, because there are also important humanitarian and protection needs to consider. Therefore, the other end of the spectrum emphasizes humanitarian needs that are not easily defined by laws. *The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Brookings Institute 1999)* is an example of the protection efforts.[23]

While not a legal treaty or document like the 1951 Geneva Convention, *The Guiding Principles,* have gained authority and standing over the years in the response to IDPs. The *Principles* are significant because they highlight the vulnerability of forcibly displaced IDPs and the need for full equality, human rights, state responsibility, and special treatment of these people, not simply as recipients of aid, but as resources (Consortium 2001).

To distinguish fully between the aims and legalities of refugee status falls outside the scope of this research. Yet, in general, this research recognizes the ineffectiveness of current systems for addressing the wide spectrum of forced displacement. The understanding of forced displacement needs to consider additional categories related to the person that can broaden the spectrum to consider other issues. In its 1969 convention, for example, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted a treaty for governing specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. In the first Article of this treaty related to refugee status, the OAU adds another criterion to the 1957 convention definition:

[23] In 1998, the UN commission on Human Rights requested that principles be developed as a guide for international standards related to internal displacement. The Brookings Project organized and supported the development of *The Guiding Principles,* which consist of 30 different principles for explaining the rights of IDPs and obligations of governments and organizations. The *Handbook for Applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (The Brookings Institute 1999) was adopted by the UN in 1999 to be used alongside of its own field manual.

> The term refugee shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality. (OAU 1969: Art.I, n.2)

Besides the five criteria of the 1951 Geneva Convention (race, religion, nationality, social grouping, political opinion), the OAU considers criteria for refugee status that stem from other factors besides deliberate violence and discrimination. In this way the unique OAU definition broadens the understanding of the well-being of persons.

This research refers to forcibly displaced persons as all those along the spectrum of forced displacement who are often mixed together. I alternatively abbreviate the term forcibly displaced persons as 'FDPs'. Many of those in this study are fleeing generalized violence and threats to their peace and safety like the OAU describes. They do not fit the narrow and technical categories of the 1951 Geneva Convention that Europe uses for recognizing refugees and asylum seekers. The common denominator for them is the experience of forced displacement. The different terms illustrate the complex and global nature of displacement and show the need to understand the evolving issues from the perspective of persons with stories and communities and not simply from a legal or humanitarian perspective (Sydnor 2011b).

1.3.2 Mixed Migration Context

The spectrum of displaced people in Figure 1.1 also shows officially recognized protected refugees and asylum seekers at one end and vulnerable undocumented persons in need of protection at the other end. The diversity along this spectrum of displacement has been referred to as mixed migration. An example of this kind of displacement was the North African crisis in 2011, when dozens of nationalities, including migrant workers in Libya, as well as

displaced people from other conflicts, fled simultaneously and faced a lack of security, psychological stress, and the fear of return (Swing 2012). Recognizing the mixture of people acknowledges the commonalities among otherwise hidden and unknown groups of migrants and displaced people who would normally not fit into the accepted categories (Pupavac 2008). Mixed migration, therefore, refers to the simultaneous movement between states and regions of both involuntary and voluntary migrants (Wood 2012: 9). The term reflects the complexity of displacement where latent structural aspects along with multiple kinds of people and mixed motivations are combined into one context of fleeing dangerous situations (Swing 2012).

1.3.3 Irregular Migration in Europe

Regular and irregular migrations are two ways to describe immigration in the European Union (EU). Regular migrants refer to those who come to Europe and legally reside for a variety of reasons such as asylum, work, family reunification or study. Irregular migration refers to those who enter or reside in the EU unofficially and without documentation. They are irregular because they did not follow the rules for entering a country. Many participants in this research are irregular migrants; they are stigmatized with a low social status and have very little power or control over their lives (Duvell et al. 2008).

This overview of the terminology shows the complexity surrounding displacement issues. If I were to limit the research focus to officially recognized refugees, then half of those in my study would not be considered. I refer to FDPs in a broad sense to encompass the full range of understandings, and give priority to the context of a person along with the needs, identity, relationships and other factors in forced displacement.

1.4 Conclusion

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first half through Chapter Four concentrates on the mechanism used to unfold the theological voice of refugees. After introducing the relevant issues of this research in Chapter One, Chapter Two serves as a map to spotlight the context, first describing highlights from my own experience that have shaped the research journey, and then pointing to key developments in the literature. Chapter Three describes the coordinates for the research journey. This introduces the framework of decreation and describes how this complements the correlation theory used in this research. Chapter Four turns to the refugee journey to look at the data gleaned from in-depth interviews and how it was collected. It introduces those on the journey along with their unique issues as vehicles of a theological voice.

The second half of the research draws from these in-depth interviews to chart the course of the faith and displacement experiences and how these comprise a journey toward redemption. Chapter Five begins with the creation of human beings in the image of God. Chapter Six considers the story of displacement in light of decreation, while Chapter Seven turns to the stories of God reflected in the refugees' own stories, the salvation experience, and the reality of re-creation. Chapter Eight continues the redemptive journey and the development of the redemptive effects in terms of *shalom*, welcome, and purpose.

CHAPTER 2

Background of the Journey: Personal Practice and Literature Review

The interdisciplinary nature of this study draws on ideas from various fields. This chapter will describe the background to this research first in my practice and second through a literature review, which focuses particularly on the faith aspect. The chapter will begin by considering issues related to my practice, as it has set this research in motion and provides the basis for its development.[1]

2.1 Personal Practice

The following aspects of my practice have contributed to the research journey.

2.1.1 In-depth Conversations

Before the start of this research in 2009, my practice has always consisted of in-depth conversations with refugees. These conversations have sought to understand the person's story. Sometimes they have been for official purposes at the request of the person. I have helped to write down in English the story of why they are refugees and how they came to where they are. At other times, these interviews and conversations have been a normal step in the process of getting to know a person and helping them through the difficulty of displacement. Moreover, at other times, the person has asked to tell me their story as a way to build trust and understanding. In general these conversations

[1] This chapter discusses various ideas and theories, which have led to the actual theory and methodology that I use. The aspects discussed in this chapter are not the theories that guide this research. This research is exploratory and for this it uses in-depth interviewing and Simone Weil's idea of decreation as a framework, which will be discussed fully in Chapter Three and Four. The research will draw on aspects of this current chapter as they relate.

have described the need for peace, safety and freedom, and they have helped me understand the person's experience.

2.1.2 Gadamer's Dialogical Process

My conversations with refugees drew me to Hans Gadamer's idea that understanding of another's perspective lies in dialogue. He explains that this is relational, where 'the truth of things resides in discourse … and not in the individual words', and thus the relational order is much more than 'mere correspondence of words' (Gadamer 2013 [1989]: 429-430). Gadamer's order of understanding begins in dialogue with others as a reciprocal process. It shares mutual horizons and not simply one perspective over another (Lawn 2006: 66). According to Gadamer, understanding develops back and forth between the events, the person and the community, which he refers to as a conversation:

> The more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. ... it is generally more correct to say ... that we become involved in [a conversation]. The way one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own twists and reaching its own conclusion, may well be conducted in some way, but the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led. No one knows in advance what will 'come out' of a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like an event that happens to us ... all this shows that a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it-- i.e., that it allows something to 'emerge' which henceforth exists. (Gadamer 2013 [1989]: 401-402)

Even though Gadamer's idea of a conversation may appear abstract and inconclusive, it offers a theory grounded in everyday language and ideas. The theory accommodates others as it brings past understanding into the present in new forms (Lawn & Keane 2011: 31). This creates a hermeneutical circle where the experiences represent the interface of different horizons and viewpoints and the idea suggests there are repeating cycles that develop understanding (Lawn & Keane 2011: 35). The dialogue that Gadamer describes works in a complementary fashion to the progression of a refugee journey. While the journey's purpose is the destination, the dialogue gives a means to develop

understanding along the way, in contexts where the person is hidden and stripped of meaning and significance.

2.1.3 Extended Epistemology

Reflecting on my practice and the desire to understand the connections to faith that refugees make, I have resonated with John Heron's description of an extended epistemology (Heron 1996: 52-3). Heron describes different levels of knowing that form an 'up hierarchy' in which the upper levels require the fulfilment first of the lower levels of understanding. In Heron's model 'each of the four kinds of knowledge is validated with all the others by its own internal criteria and also by its interdependence' (Heron 1996: 33). Peter Reason (Reason 2008: 211) describes the levels of extended epistemology as follows:[2]

1. *Experiential knowing* is the face-to-face encounter with a person, place or thing, through empathy, resonance, and without words.
2. *Presentational knowing* comes out of the experiential as a form of expression such as a story, drawing, sculpture, movement or dance.
3. *Propositional knowing* tells about something, and comes through ideas, theories, and informative statements.
4. *Practical knowing* is a 'how to' skill, knack or competence.

An extended epistemology is significant because it carries the idea of a holistic approach to understanding that allows for co-participation in the process, rather than a top down process of understanding. Similarly, my research journey has evolved through encounters with refugees in multiple modes of functioning, whether intuitive, reflective or some other. These

[2] The four levels of the hierarchy begin in the affective and proceed up through the imaginal, conceptual and practical aspects of the person. The corresponding modes of functioning that also begin in the affective level include: feeling and emotion; intuition and imagery; reflection and discrimination; intention and action. Heron describes the difference in these functions in terms of three polarities. The first describes the polarity between individuating (inward) or participating (outward) actions. The second describes the difference between a ground process and reorganization. The third describes the polarity of life and mind (Heron 1992:18-30).

encounters and accounts from refugees have formed an awareness of the whole person rooted in their experience.

One example of an encounter occurred as I regularly met with an asylum seeker whose parents had been murdered and who feared for his life as well. While waiting for his application process, he lived nearby in an asylum seeker's centre, and I picked him up each day to take him into the city on my way to work. As we travelled into the city from day to day, he talked about his life: where he came from, why he fled, and how he came to Europe. His stories seemed driven by two things. On the one hand there were painful memories of real life that sometimes moved him to tears, while on the other hand, there were hopes and dreams that reflected his vision and plans for a better life. Between these two ends was the back and forth of Scriptures read, things seen, and ideas we discussed. We interacted across the various levels of knowing. Our interactions also served as encouragement to him–a practical resource for survival as an asylum seeker.

2.1.4 Deeper Life Issues

The experiences of displacement lead to conversations about life issues such as identity, justice, and communities. Gadamer's theory is useful only if it is practical in real events. Jean McNiff (McNiff 2007) clarifies that knowledge and learning cannot be separated from real life. She develops a practitioner research methodology to investigate lived experience through questions such as: What is my concern? Why am I concerned? What kind of experiences can I describe to show the reasons for my concern? What can I do about it? What will I do about it (McNiff 2007: 310)? These questions highlight that understanding involves a personal inquiry. My direct contact with FDPs requires me to continually stay aware of their needs as seen in the following two examples.

i. Contradictions in Rome

Prior to the start of this research, I helped to initiate efforts among refugees in Rome alongside several local churches and organizations. In the organizational reports I identified events and situations that seemed like contradictions and anomalies to the expectations.[3] An anomaly is something that creates a tension that reoccurs consistently and that is difficult to resolve (*OED*). I have described these contradictions as anomaly-like situations in Figure 2.1 in order to point out how the refugees and others have understood certain things, and why the events turned out the way they did. Figure 2.1 gives an overview of six anomalies that I identified in the reports. The comments in Figure 2.1 highlight the unspoken expectations and uncover complex life issues at work.

Summary of Anomaly	Description of Events	Comments
1. This is more than a story.	The group protesting on the street crossed the desert together.	I expect to hear a story of unfortunate events, but their displacement has actually shaped them as a community.
2. There is a different perspective for understanding Scripture.	The former refugee joined the conversation about God and referred to his own suffering.	I expect a complex argument for defending Scripture, but here he defends it from his own experience.
3. Powerlessness is overcome in unexpected ways.	Refugees protest by sleeping on the sidewalk and by blocking the traffic.	I expect people to overcome with the support of others, but here they overcome without any means.
4. Those who give are surprised by what they receive.	Scripture inspired the youth and their leader said, 'they have forever changed our lives'.	They expect to give, but here they actually receive more than they give.
5. Refugees are free to serve, but not to initiate and lead.	Pleas for help and efforts to change are ignored.	This contradicts the idea of 'servant leadership'.
6. Organizations keep the religious and spiritual separated from social care.	Organizations distrust one another because of the differing views about this separation.	While this kind of policy seeks to protect vulnerable ones, it contradicts their need to connect these spheres.

[3] From 2004-2007, I took part in 4 different visits to Rome to research the situation among refugees and to develop a way to assist local churches in helping refugees. Throughout this period the research teams spent more than 5 weeks meeting refugees, organizations and individuals in Rome. Each team documented the visits, conversations, interviews and information that it gathered and these were compiled into 4 reports totalling more than 100 pages. These documents are unpublished reports that form the source material for analysing the context of refugees in Rome and the relevant issues.

Figure 2.1 Anomalies among Refugees

ii. Graffiti in Malta

During the second phase of this research, I was also helping my organization establish its work in Malta. I reflected on conversations with refugees to learn about their situation and their journey to Malta. One man described how he was stranded on a boat with over 100 people. As they were being rescued at sea, the ladder crashed into the fragile overloaded boat and caused it to overturn. Sixteen people died –mostly those who could not swim (Sydnor 2010a: 12). Nearly every person I spoke to referred to the difficulties they faced in Malta with comments like, 'Life on Malta is harsh because there are only rocks, sand and sea,' 'All you can do on Malta is swim. You could say, ... on Malta you either sink or swim' (Sydnor 2010b: 9).

On one visit to Malta, we offered an art workshop called 'Find Your Voice' for FDPs in one of the refugee centres (Sydnor 2011a). A number of FDPs took part in activities centered on drawing and painting, including a graffiti wall for anyone to draw on. Besides pictures of birds, flags and maps, there were several sketches of the sea with boats, and a fist rising out of the water with the words, 'God only will judge me' (see Figure 2.2).

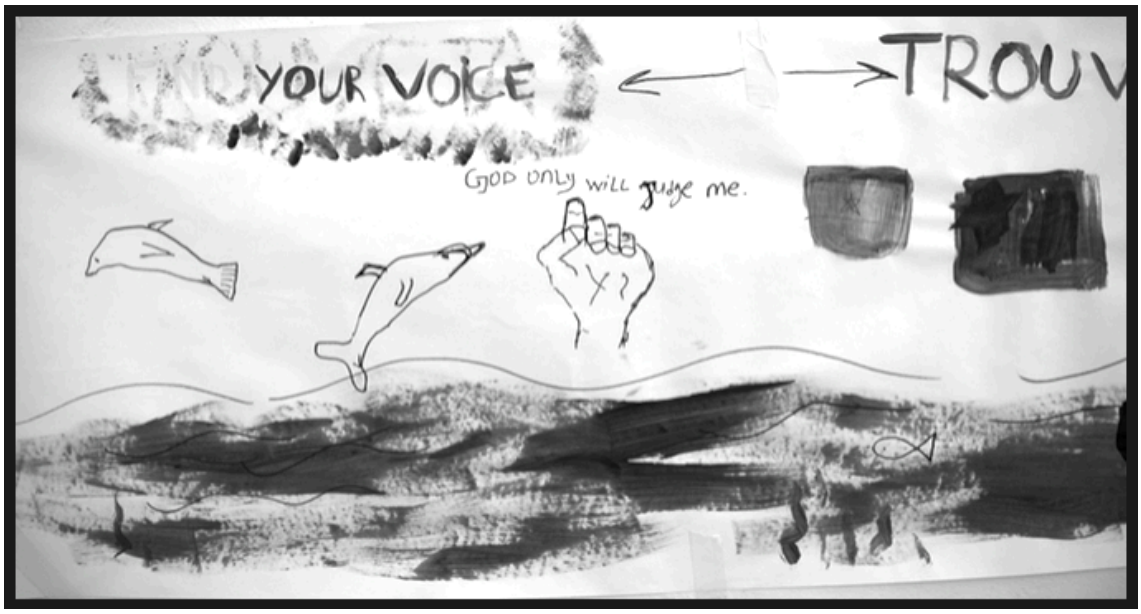

Figure 2.2 Art Workshop and Graffiti Wall in Malta

The events in Rome and Malta reflect critical incidents that Fish and Coles (Fish & Coles 1998) describe as routine things we overlook and no longer notice. The events described in Figure 2.1 called ‘anomalies’ are not routine, but abnormal and extraordinary, and my comments of the events show how their significance is missed. Incidents like these have been instrumental for my research journey because: they use stories to convey meaning; they take place in connection with communities; they show the power of paradox; they reflect the significance of contradictions and the need to understand deeper issues.

2.1.5 Narrative Theory and Contingency

This research does not use narrative theory as its methodology; however, it does draw on narrative ideas to understand the nature of refugee experience. According to *A Dictionary of Narratology*, a narrative is the representation of one or more real or fictive events that are made of two parts: stories and discourse (Prince 2003: 58). The stories refer to the content of the narrative that give the basic material and sequence of events (Prince 2003: 93), whereas the discourse refers to the expression and how the narrative functions and comes

to be (Prince 2003: 21). Narrative ideas have been an important part of my practice among refugees and they are dependent on many variables that give the narrative a contingent quality.

According to Stephen Crites (Crites 1989), narratives describe human experience and take on their specific meaning or significance depending on how the narrative is structured and what they claim. Gerard Genette (Genette 1980 [1970]: 27) explains a narrative in terms of three notions: a) the discourse of events; b) the analysis of actions to convey what we know, or the process of representing a particular meaning; and c) the event of a person narrating a story. Susan Chase assigns the following characteristics to the narrative process: a) the understanding and organizing of events from the narrator's point of view; b) an emphasis on verbal action; c) consideration of social circumstances as well as local contexts; and d) an effort to find meaning in disorder (Chase 2005).

Narrative perspectives give special attention to the marginalized person and how to construct meaning out of life events in terms of a story (Ganzevoort et al. 2014: 3). In a refugee context, narrative theory attempts to find order and relevance in the chaos of displacement. Since the 1980's various fields of psychology have made the narrative turn to explore the broader concerns of human lives and how to structurally understand the plethora of human traits (McAdams 2001: 100). The all-encompassing nature of a narrative theory is contingent on a multitude of other factors, and this makes it absurd to think there is a social science that can simplify the complexity of human life (Morson 2009: 132).[4] A contingency refers to future events or circumstances that are

[4] Gary Morson (2014: 131) uses contingency like Aristotle to mean 'something can either be or not be'. Morson reflects on the state of the world that is guided by both order and entropy. He

possible but cannot be predicted with certainty (OED). Therefore, the contingency of narrative theory highlights both the problematic and realistic nature of the theory by reflecting the uncertain and unpredictable quality of life's events.

The contingent quality of narrative means that the events in life could have been different and could have developed in an alternate way from the person's expectations. John Beatty explains that the contingency occurs in two ways, either in terms of causal dependence on uncontrollable prior events or as unpredictable future alternatives (Beatty & Carrera 2011: 482). The events of life are not self-evident; they have to be interpreted by taking into account the contingency of life; they become turning points in the narrative sequence that bring about existential change (Scherer-Rath 2014: 132-4). Reflecting on the significance of narrative, Beatty explains that what makes a story worth telling is its unpredictability (Beatty 2016: 38). The contingency of narrative reminds both the respondent and the researcher of life's reality that is predicated on uncertainty and unpredictability. Narrative theory offers a way to interpret and retell the events of a contingent world.

I have summarized the various elements of narrative theory into my own diagram (Figure 2.3) to show the process at work between: story, narrative, and voice. The diagram in Figure 2.3 illustrates three elements that are involved in narrative theory along with the key descriptions. These elements not only

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recalls three ways that have been used to impose order by either: scientific law, theorized truth of putative science, or imposed such as on a gaming platform. His point is that 'mess' is the natural order of the world and any theory of how to bring order into the world (such as narrative theory) falls within one of these three approaches. The inconclusive nature of the theory does not explain the disordered world.

describe the narrative process but they also offer a way to process the contingency of narrative (Scherer-Rath et al. 2014: 174).[5]

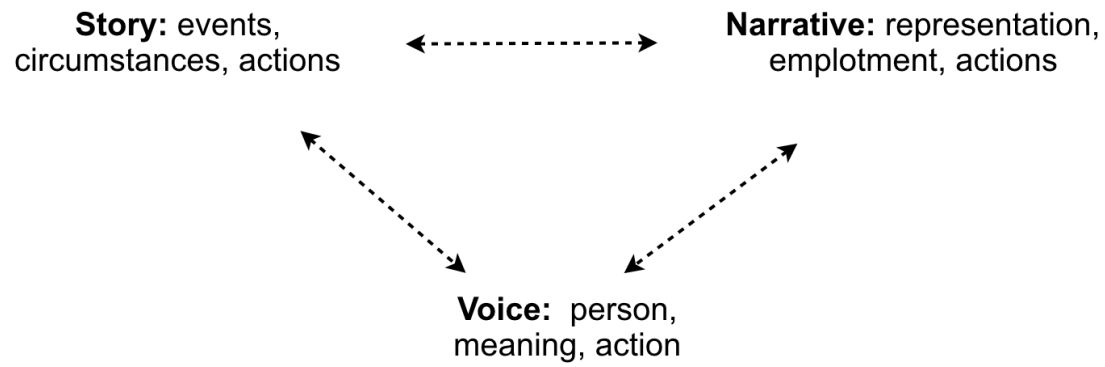

Figure 2.3 Elements of Narrative Theory

Action is the common factor in each element that identifies the parts and implements the theory. McAdams (McAdams 2001) considers narrative theory in terms of identity and the life stories that accomplish human intentions.[6] These intentions generate a sequence of actions and reactions as a plot in time (McAdams 2001: 103). The action as an expression of intentionality, therefore, is at heart of narrative theory, and it follows that contingency makes the

[5] Sherer-Rath et al. (2014) make this observation regarding the tool they developed for reflecting on life stories. The tool assumes people develop identity by constructing a life story, and it interprets data according to the categories of existential events, contingent interpretations, ultimate life goals, and intentionality. These categories correspond to the three elements of narrative in Figure 2.3 along with the emphasis on action. The tool first collects data from existential events. Second it places these events along a lifeline that considers several layers of meaning for each event, matching each one with a range of emotions that I have summarized as: anger, happiness, sorrow, anxiety, and amazement. Third, it assists the person to reflect on the events and meaning and to identify ultimate goals that express the deeper reality of direction and values that shape the person. The tool also reflects on the relation between the intentionality of the person's actions and the life goals. The success of the tool depends on its ability to account for the contingent nature of the various actions and interpretations.

[6] McAdams (2001: 102) describes identity as an integrated configuration of the self that takes place on two levels: 1) there is a level of synchronic integration of different conflicting roles and relationships, and 2) there is a level of diachronic integration to reconcile a prior state in time with the current one.

intention problematic.[7] Action as an expression of intentionality is a prime factor in establishing the conditions necessary for narrative theory and story comprehension.

i. Story

The story is the first element of narrative theory, and it gives the basic content of the circumstances behind a narrative. A story describes a lived event; it holds meaning for the present and shapes the person. Stories emphasize the activity and the action that took place. Jean Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek (Clandinin & Rosiek 2007: 40) note that people are storied beings; they are known by story and find meaning in story, so that these experiences have an ontological effect. Journeys are about movement, and the action unfolds the story. Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1984) explains that how a person describes this action helps to understand the story.

ii. Narrative

The second element is the retelling of the events, called a 'narrative'. A story recounts the events, but a narrative gives meaning. While the story is a causal sequence of events the narrative is more complex because it establishes a connection between the sender and receiver (Prince 2003: 93). In this way, every story is a narrative, but not every narrative is a story. The narrative is a representation of the past story, and it can be expressed in a variety of modes such as written, photographic, and videographic. A narrative is the story made real again for others to understand and pass on; it is a living story and as such has many authors (Boje 2007: 331). Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1984) notes that stories present what has happened, whereas narratives re-present the events. He

[7] The problematic nature of contingency was introduced above, whereby the dynamic of contingency introduces discord into the framework of a story. Paul Ricoeur's description of 'emplotment' in *Time and Narrative* (1984: 21) reflects an effort to reconcile the interplay and paradox of *intensio* and *distensio*, in which 'the soul distends itself as it engages itself'.

explains that a narrative uses mimetic activity to create an emplotment or reorganization of the events (Ricoeur 1984: 31-4). David Boje (Boje 2007) points out the 'systemicity' that is involved in finding meaning in events; in and of themselves, they are unfinalized and unmerged, chaotic parts of a social world. The narrative therefore rests at one end of the story span, bringing coherence to incoherence, and the person exists somewhere between these two poles.

iii. Voice

The third important element of narrative theory is the voice, which acts as a link to the person. The voice of the person connects the story events and the narrative together over time (Chase 2005: 656). From a social science perspective, these voices are mediating the influence of the narrative, so that the narrative process is a way of understanding experience in the past: 'to access these disparate voices ... and to glean how the ordinary people interpret and enact the imposed representations on them by those in power' (Morgan-Fleming et al. 2007: 84-5). From this perspective, a narrative process brings forth the voice of a person that is built on the subjective meaning carried within the story (Atkinson 2007: 224).

iv. Summary

Narrative theory along with its contingencies calls attention to the connection between the parts: a) it looks at the person's story of experiences; b) it describes the plot and causal sequences; c) it is a reconstruction to make sense of data; and d) it identifies common themes, relations and particularities (Griffiths & Macleod 2008). The graffiti wall (Figure 2.2) with its text and images illustrates the narrative theory (Figure 2.3). The different drawings retell the narratives of actual stories and events at sea. These together shape the voice,

like the hand turned into a fist. Such a wall also reflects the tension of decreation[8] as the back and forth between events, meaning, and its human mediator (Ricoeur 1984: 6). This research does not make a narrative inquiry, but it makes similar connections that the narrative theory illustrates. I have used the narrative theory and the contingency factor highlighted in this section to increase appreciation for the active role that refugees play in shaping their theology. Together these point to the theological dimensions of refugee journeys and how these dimensions connect the person and faith.

v. Agnes' Example

The voices of FDPs in this research have a theological significance because of the connection they make to God. On one hand, they recount an experience of faith, and at the same time they rediscover that significance in each new context. This sets the stage for a dilemma because the connection between faith and life is not always clear and it includes contingencies.

The story told by Agnes of her rescue at sea as a refugee provides an example of the connection:

> I was on a boat with 22 other people that included both Christians and Muslims. It was stormy and everyone was afraid of what might happen. The others in the boat knew that I would pray and sing, so they called on me to stand and do this in the front of the boat whenever we were afraid. They would even hold me up in the rough seas so everyone could hear. … After three days, we were finally rescued, but the boat was already sinking. As it filled with water I became stuck in the front of the boat and was pulled under the water. I couldn't get free and it grew dark all around me. I went down into the water, and I remember thinking that I was going to die. Everything went black and I think I passed out. All I remember then is that I called out 'Jesus' and with this the water rushed into my mouth and this must have revived me. I looked up and saw a light above and so I swam towards that and was rescued. I know now that it was God's powerful hand that saved me. (No transcript available)[9]

Agnes noted in her story the power of God to save her. Yet she told the

[8] Decreation refers to the negative realities of life that cause affliction and lead to the tension of living in a void, empty of meaning and significance. The tension comes in reconciling this condition. The following chapter will introduce the theory of decreation.

[9] After Agnes was rescued, she came to Malta where she met and married Hamilton, who told the story in the first chapter of rescuing his brother in Libya. When Agnes told me this story, she had been in Malta for over 7 years. I did not record this interview because we were at a church gathering and it was not convenient.

story in the context of explaining that the hardest obstacle to overcome is not fear in the journey but rather worry over the future and what to do next. Agnes said, ‘in the difficult times afterwards, refugees will ask, “Why God is this happening to me?”’ She commented, 'We will either grow stronger or weaker in our faith as a result of what we have passed through.'

As I reflected on Agnes's story, I realized other angles that could be told, or contexts that could be explored. These reflect dimensions that have not been placed upon the story, but have risen up with it like Agnes herself has described. They point as well to the contingency of her narrative. For example, the story tells how Agnes went to Malta and not to another place. In Malta, she met her husband, and so it is the narrative of her family that was dependent on the crossing and rescue. But also, other questions could be asked: How is the story a reminder and encouragement for those who worry about the future? How will those in the boat with her remember the woman who sang and prayed? And to what extent has this story influenced me and how will I retell it? In each context there is a different contingency and the story takes on a new significance.

Agnes’ story illustrates the connection she makes between God’s action and the ongoing situations of life. It creates the desire in me to understand the theological workings and how a story like this has a redemptive impact beyond the sea. How does this happen in her life or others?

2.1.6 Academic Contributions

Finally, alongside the active practice that I have carried into this research, my journey has inspired several academic contributions that I have made in addition to the work of this thesis. These include:

- 'Understanding the Forced Displacement of Refugees in Terms of the Person' *(Sydnor 2011b)* looks at the definition of refugees and argues that consideration of personhood helps to clarify the issues. This study challenged me to consider what a holistic understanding of forced displacement might involve and to acknowledge its complexity.
- 'Approaching Forced Displacement Through the Context of *Shalom'* is an unpublished conference paper presented at the 13th Quadrennial Assembly of the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) (Sydnor 2012), in Toronto Canada. This demonstrates how *shalom* in the Scriptures replaces the context that has been lost by forcibly displaced people.
- 'Welcoming Asylum Seekers', in *Engaging Muslims in Europe* (Sydnor 2014) promotes a balanced non-polemical understanding of Christian ministry among Muslims. My chapter looks at hospitality in the scriptures and its significance in light of human dignity.
- 'Welcoming the Stranger: A case study of an international church in Malta' in *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology* (Sydnor 2016) presents a case study of the church in Malta where much of this research took place,[10] and highlights important factors for strangers to thrive.

My practice has sought to apply related ideas alongside of my concern for ongoing relationships among refugees. These ideas along with my practice provide the background for my own academic views to develop. These views have drawn as well on the literature across the field, and this chapter will turn

[10] Besides contributing this chapter, I also served as a co-editor for the section 'Issues in Global Diaspora Missiology'. Six of the ten chapters deal with issues of forced displacement that have surfaced in this research including: detention, trauma, holistic approaches, destitution, and economic pressure.

now to the background literature that has also shaped the context of my research.

2.2 Literature Review

This research draws on a broad spectrum of literature ranging from refugee studies and methodological approaches to theological concerns. Accordingly, the bibliography is a general one to reflect the wide selection of literature that has influenced the research. The bibliography includes not only the literature that has been directly referenced in the dissertation but also the literature that has informed and shaped the research. The range of references listed in the bibliography reflects the inter-disciplinary nature of this research.

Similarly, this review will not consider all of the literature represented in such a general bibliography. Rather, the review will focus on a small sample of the literature that considers the experience of displacement and faith. Displacement and faith are two facets of my thesis that are considered in light of each other, and this review will focus on part of the literature that considers both faith and displacement together. Therefore, except for drawing several conclusions from the general literature at the start, the following faith related concerns will guide this review: the need for more focus on faith issues from the migrant perspective; the development of a faith identity in diaspora studies; and the theological framework for understanding faith and displacement. The review identifies the need for further study and where this research fits into the larger academic field.

2.2.1 Multi-faceted Characteristics

First, it is important to establish the need for a multi-faceted approach to understanding displacement issues. Several voices in the general body of

literature underline the importance of approaching displacement issues with awareness and concern for its complexity (Malkii 1995). These efforts are important because they demonstrate the inter-disciplinary nature of the research.

In 1985, Barbara Harrell-Bond's significant study, *Imposing Aid (Harrell-Bond 1986)*, became the first ethnography of displacement. It assumed the complex nature of displacement and the need for more than the perspective of aid agencies, but also those of local governments and hosts. This was groundbreaking at the time for its multi-faceted consideration of the issues.[11] Similarly in the area of policy, David Turton (Turton 2003) points out that too often critics have approached the subject through a single concern such as the legal issue of status determination. However, the situations are usually more complex and those involved need an approach that considers the persons involved as ordinary and purposive actors (Turton 2003: 1).

In 2001, *The International Migration Review* surveyed 50 years of refugee studies, in which Richard Black (Black 2001) noted that the literature of the field focused significantly on problem-centred concerns of policy organizations and bureaucratic interests. The concerns featured descriptive characteristics of groups such as IDPs with a high degree of policy relevance and legal synthesis. Black identified eighteen different fields of study that were addressed in a decade of *The Journal of Refugee Studies* including: political science, anthropology, psychology education, and gender studies. His review shows the diversity of perspectives and the difficulty of narrowing the field of refugee studies to any single focus.

[11] Harrell-Bond's study centred on issues related to Ugandan refugees in Sudan during 1982. Despite its emphasis on related issues, the book does not show an extended treatment of religious or faith issues. In the demographics section of the book, she includes a short overview (six pages) of religious topics.

Despite the diversity, there is a notable lack of religious articles and topics in Black's review. A similar lack of religious focus becomes evident in a review of more recent literature catalogued by Elisa Mason on the website *Forced Migration Current Awareness*. The website highlights web research and information relating to refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, and other forced migrants.[12] Mason clarifies that the website focuses particularly on grey literature which refers to unpublished or informally published materials outside the mainstream distribution channels of books and scholarly journal articles. The grey literature is significant for its attention to developments at a praxis level.

From 2005–2014 the website incorporated over 3400 posts categorized under more than a 1000 subjects with numerous links to the related literature and its material. All of this catalogued data underlines the extensive literature coverage in the field. Yet of the many spiritual topics that could have related to migrants during that time range, Mason identifies only three categories: religion, religious groups, and religious persecution, and these subject categories include only a total of 77 posts. The lacunae of literature in Black's review and Mason's blog stress the importance of giving more attention to the related issues of faith.

Another important contribution toward awareness of the diversity and complexity of the issues has been Roger Zetter's (Zetter 1991; Zetter 2007) discussion on the concept of labelling. Labelling refers to the descriptions and labels that governments, NGOs and other care-givers construct and use in order to carry out their work among refugees. Over time, the labels become a way of stereotyping and controlling the refugees who become dependent on

[12] Available at http://fm-cab.blogspot.fr/

them. While the intent is to assist and bring aid and solutions to refugees, often the labelling assigns meanings to refugees that become negative and de-constructive. Zetter's original article along with its revision in 2007 show the importance of exploring the social world and lived reality of refugees and have been one of the most cited topics in the field (Zetter 2007: 172).[13] Emma Haddad (Haddad 2004) mentions that labels bring ethical judgments and values that lump all refugees into one term, and that the critics need to recognize instead how refugees themselves shape the term. Studies like these raise the importance of non-static approaches that open the way for interdisciplinary contributions.

One final development toward multi-faceted awareness in the literature has been the '*The Dialogue on Faith and Protection*' (UNHCR 2012), sponsored by the UNHCR. This dialogue was held among representatives of the world religions to discuss religious themes related to protection challenges. It was a landmark meeting for its effort to bring religious and non-religious concerns to the same table. The first of three objectives for the dialogue was to explore how the right to seek and enjoy asylum and the protection of stateless persons are reflected in religious values and traditions. This objective resonates with my own research question of how Christian refugees relate their experience. The former High Commissioner's comments validate the concern as well, noting that the faith communities of FDPs help create 'the political will and space in the

[13] Edward Mogire (2009) draws out the effects of labelling when a host country like Kenya reclassifies refugees as security threats. As Zetter implies, the labels have now been multiplied many times over in terms of militarization, crime, increasing numbers, terrorism. Any one of these labels succeeds in separating the refugees from the original causes with no chance to engage or bring change (Mogire 2009:23). In effect, these refugees have been separated from their story, they have been given another story and the connection to original causes has been lost. An issue like labelling is significant because it shows the tendency for those in power, including researchers, to control what gets talked about or not, whether as policy, legal, humanitarian or other concerns. There is a need to broaden the research to address the concerns from the perspective of the actual displaced persons, which I point out in my own article (Sydnor 2011).

hearts and minds; prevent and assist in conflicts; address root causes; help to make informed choices, and help to sustain solutions' (Guterres 2012b: 3). The dialogue illustrates the importance of grounding this research not only among like-minded advocates, but also among those who do not share the same concerns. This sample of literature from the general field of refugee studies establishes a foundation for research rooted in the diverse, complex and multi-faceted nature of forced displacement.

2.2.2 Faith Dimensions

Several studies in migration support my research and demonstrate the need for multi-dimensional considerations to include faith. In the introduction to her study of undocumented migrants into the United States, Maria Hagan (Hagan 2008) explains that there is renewed scholarly interest in the connection between immigration and religion. She claims the developments of transnationalism have moved religion from a restricted study of immigrants' experience to the broader context of the immigration process (Hagan 2013). Peter Phan develops a theology around this process and notes from a church's perspective, migration is a 'pressing and perennial concern', quipping that 'migrant' should be a fifth mark of the church confession to say: one, holy, catholic, apostolic, and migrant church (Phan 2016: 847, 849).

Although there are some studies that look at displacement through a religious and theological lens, most of them address the topic through an economic or social model.[14] Stephen Castles and Mark Miller in *The Age of Migration* identify five trends in migration: increased countries; increased numbers; a mix of types such as refugee, labour, and resettlement groups; and

[14] For example, although Harrell-Bond's work, *Imposing Aid*, opened the way for interdisciplinary research, it only included 6 pages of discussion related to spiritual or religious issues.

increasingly feminized and politicized issues (Castles & Miller 2003: 7-9). Despite the move toward diversity, the list of trends in Castles and Miller does not include a religious connection. The faith concerns of Phan and Hagan contrast with the absence of these issues in much of the field, illustrating that more needs to be done to understand the faith perspectives among migrants.

Before the influx of refugees from Syria and the Arab world in 2015, The Pew Forum (Pew Forum 2010) estimated 49% of the world's immigrants were Christians, with 42% of those entering the EU being Christians. The rising number of migrants on the move coupled with the economic downturns in the world increased the effects of migration (IOM 2011). The concern of the EU to externalize these effects amounts to practices that limit the encounter with others it considers unwanted (Triandafyllidou 2010). The influx of more than one million refugees reaching Europe in 2015 means that Europe must explore other ways to conceptualize and engage with displacement. Castles and Miller observe that one objection to the development of the EU centres on loss of control over international migration. They observe that behind the EU development lies the question of identity, not only how the EU will identify itself but especially those coming in from the outside (Castles & Miller 2009: 196-99).

The claim by Castles and Miller has far-reaching implications for the capacity to engage on a level of faith because it requires a robust theory and methodology for understanding these issues of identity. The Refugee Study Centre (Refugee Study Centre 2010) reports on a series of discussions looking at the distinctiveness of faith-based organizations. One workshop described how faith among forced migrants differs from that in the West where 'religion is irrational and something to separate from the realm of assistance. Economic indicators, for instance, are valued over faith-based values' (Refugee Study

Centre 2010: 10). Another workshop claimed that the response to migrant issues often overlooks the migrant's values, beliefs, visions, and intentions (Refugee Study Centre 2010: 4). The separation of faith and displacement directly affects the capacity to respond appropriately to a large percentage of displaced people. The acute need for more appreciation of the spiritual dimension behind the values and identity of migrants depends on the capacity to understand and support it.

Darrell Jackson and Alessia Passarelli (Jackson & Passarelli 2008) give a theological interpretation of migration in Europe, noting several important themes including: faith rooted in the person; faith communities born out of these living persons; and in light of the concern for the person, the importance of theological approaches to migration. The two authors also published a revised version of their study that confirms the developing trends related to churches. Their updated report notes the issues affecting the context of immigration in Europe including: secularism, integration, self-identity and otherness, the stranger, the community and belonging (Jackson & Passarelli 2016: 31-35). Both of these reports call for greater theological appreciation.

In a separate article, Darrell Jackson (Jackson 2012) suggests that confidence in the intercultural dialogue in Europe has been ebbing because it is framed in terms such as awareness, integration, respect and co-existence, which do not reflect the reality (Jackson 2012: 140). He cites examples of religious dialogues in Europe that not only show incorrect understandings of the religious groups and issues (Jackson 2012: 147), but also reflect a diminished religious capacity.

Another example of understanding migrants' identity has been the POLITIS study (Vogel & Leiprecht 2007).[15] This was a three-year inquiry into the civic involvement of immigrants in 25 countries and the range of respondents included irregular migrants and asylum seekers. The study was based on social cognition theory that individuals construct reality in their minds through a social process (Vogel & Leiprecht 2007: 26).

A follow-up project of the POLITIS study applied the same approach to explore how churches are a 'welcoming harbour' and how they encourage a participatory environment for immigrants (CCME 2010: 6). The report from the church study sub-titled, 'Models of Integration through Religion, Activation, Cultural Learning and Exchange' (MIRACLE), put the views and input of the participants at the core of its report. It concluded that churches can be and are places of integration (CCME 2010: 20). The methodology has two main concepts: diversity as richness and the need for dialogue. It highlights the benefits and challenges, structure and attitudes that might prevent or promote integration. The methodology acknowledges formational issues (CCME 2010: 22), yet there was very little if any reference to values of Scripture or theological issues that shape the religious identity involved in integration. The report did reference the 'holistic' nature of worship among the immigrants (CCME 2010: 18). However, since the study looks at the realities behind the social process, there should be some indication of the influence and role of the spiritual aspect. Does the lack of religious data reflect the reality of these participants or a knowledge approach that was unable to assess their spirituality? Studies such

[15] The study involved three researchers from educational institutions and one NGO (CCME) and 75 student partners to conduct interviews in native languages and translated into English. There were also 25 country experts chosen and prepared to work with the student partners. The study used a participative interview method. It looked at the potential for civic participation among first generation immigrants, and the potential for building an integrated Europe. The aim was to improve understanding of factors that promote or inhibit integration and to explore perceptions of Europe from outside.

as these show the importance of identity and how this connects to a person's faith, but these kind of studies are not widely represented in the literature.

2.2.3 Diaspora Classification

Diaspora studies help distinguish the unique characteristics of people who live outside their place of origin, and as such have formed an important cornerstone to my research. Diaspora studies have been especially useful for classifying the identity of displaced Christians in terms of being on a journey.

Scattered and Gathered: A global compendium of diaspora missiology (Tira & Yamamori 2016: 2) focuses on characteristics of the church in contemporary global situations. The 'Glossary' of the compendium includes 19 definitions of diaspora to reflect the nuances of identifying people of a diaspora. According to these descriptions, diaspora describes God's people on the move, displaced, banished, exiled, dislocated and residing within God's redemptive plan for the world. Movement in association with God's redemptive work is the abiding mark of the diaspora of Christians on a journey.

Several important developments in the literature have led to a spiritual understanding of diaspora. First, William Safran (Safran 1991) pointed to 'the conceptual problem' of diaspora because the term's association with the Jewish exile. In reality, he recognized that the term diaspora referred to many more groups besides only this one. He amalgamated the broader characteristics of the term to describe a 'victim' diaspora.[16]

Second, Robin Cohen (Cohen 2008: 16) 'deterritorialized' the term to refer also to movements of people due to conditions of labour, trade, and

[16] Safran classifies people in a victim diaspora as those who: 1) are dispersed from an original center to multiple regions; 2) have a collective vision; 3) believe they are not accepted and feel alienated; 4) idealize the ancestral home; 5) are committed to its prosperity; 6) and continue to relate to the homeland (Safran 1991:84).

colonialism.[17] These diaspora classifications refer to more than a territory and thus could incorporate considerations of 'otherness' in the stigmatized descriptions of the irregular migrant, undocumented asylum seekers, and 'illegal' immigrants (Cohen 1994: 189-190). Cohen suggests, 'we know who we are by who we are not' (Cohen 1994: 198), which resonates closely with notions of social exclusion and 'othering'.[18] Surprisingly, similar patterns are at work among FDPs that diaspora identity has to overcome. The development of an identity like Safran and Cohen describe calls for theological considerations.

Robert Gorman suggests 'Classical Diasporas of a Third Kind' (Gorman 2011), emphasizing the spiritual dynamics at work among Christians on the move. Paul Evans (Evans 2015: 43) likewise contends that diaspora is a better term for Christians than exile because it encompasses a scattering that is situated in culture looking forward to a heavenly home. Gorman explains that this third kind of diaspora includes characteristics of the previous two, but it differs in that its quality is hidden, silent, and distinctly non-ethnic (Gorman 2011: 644-45). It is a spiritual diaspora of Christians who live under God's concern for justice and mercy (Gorman 2011: 648), and rather than a national or ethnic unity, there is unity on a spiritual level in love of God and love for others (Gorman 2011: 652-53).

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[17] Edward Said's description of *Orientalism* (Said 1978) describes similar issues of identity. Orientalism refers to 'classifications multiplied and refined beyond the categories of a sacred nation ... (yet which are) reconstituted, redeployed, re-distributed according to the old frameworks (Said 1978: 120-22). Said's work describes the indelible effects of colonialism.

[18] According to *Theorising Social Exclusion* (Taket et al. 2009) social exclusion is a recent term that originated in France in 1974 to refer to people who fell outside of the social system. (This characterizes many asylum seekers in France today.) The term has developed many nuances, but largely it describes the process of preventing people from participating in the mainstream activities of society. It is dynamic, complex and contingent on other factors and thus it calls for sophisticated approaches to understanding (Taket et al. 2009:190). 'Othering' as an aspect of social exclusion, is a mechanism that distinguishes 'us' from 'them'. 'Othering' produces stigma and leads to oppression, superiority, defensiveness, inequality, and secrecy as a way to avoid being marked (Barter-Godfrey & Taket 2009). These theories fall outside the scope of this literature review, but they are important to note because they touch on related elements.

Despite the development of the terminology of diaspora, the idea of a journey among Christian groups is still not solidified. The 19 definitions described above suggest there is a similarity to chaordic groups. These groups are characterized by the lack of central organization or structure around common elements such as lifestyles, opinions, traditions and subcultures that exist under a single identity (Werbner 2005: 546).[19] The development of a concept of diaspora demonstrates the need for greater precision in order to answer the questions that result from human displacement. Although diaspora classification can lead to the normalization of a spiritual identity in displacement, it still does not deliver a clear and practical concept for envisioning how faith develops through the experience of diaspora. A theological approach is needed to understand the faith development.

2.2.4 Theological Perspectives

The discussion of God's people on the move in a redemptive direction calls for a theological perspective. The specific concepts at the core of this research such as correlation, displacement, faith, and salvation will be discussed in the following chapters. This section considers different perspectives that contribute to the theological emphasis in my research.

i. Relevant Theories

Several perspectives in the literature have conveyed formative and helpful theories to theological understanding of Diaspora. *A Theology of Liberation* (Gutiérrez 2001 [1973]) reintroduces a way of doing theology among the poor that is theocentric and capable of penetrating the present reality through the eyes of faith as a new reality. Walter Brueggemann (Brueggemann 2002) opens his apologia on *The Land* with a vision of people scattered across the land who

[19] Pnina Werner (2005: 246) describes a chaordic diaspora as one that has multiple discourses, lacks any command centre and experiences internal dissension and competition.

have a 'sense of being lost, displaced and homeless ... yearning to belong somewhere, to have a home, to be in a safe place' (Brueggemann 2002: 1). David Bosch recognizes the crisis in worldview and self-understanding, and calls for a missionary theology and not simply a theology of mission (Bosch 1995). Bosch notes there is a new theologizing underway as a result of a paradigm shift in missiology in which the challenges of today cannot be approached piecemeal but only through a transformational understanding (Bosch 1991: 189). Bosch identifies this shift as contextual theology and the idea that 'the missionary message of the Christian church incarnated itself in the life and world of those who embraced it' (Bosch 1991: 421). The views of Gutierrez, Brueggemann, and Bosch are examples of formative and relevant theories that shape theological understanding, however, as Philemon Beghela (Beghela 2014: 185-7) clarifies, God's people on the move ‘do not lose time’ debating the specific details of a Scripture text.

ii. Diaspora Missiology

Instead, the diaspora of Christians is concerned with the practical and spiritual aspects of faith and how this relates to their context. The emerging field of studies called 'Diaspora Missiology' offers another perspective to address these concerns; it identifies the multi-directional and grassroots nature of scattered people in building the Kingdom of God (Wan & Tira 2009; Tira & Yamamori 2016). Diaspora missiology is rooted in the mission mandate of the church, like *The Seoul Declaration* (Lausanne Diaspora Educator's Consultation 2009) describes, as a strategic focus for the whole people of God. This focus is rooted in God's covenants of creation and redemption, and it sheds light on practical issues of diaspora workers like Joy Tira and Enoch Wan (Wan & Tira 2009) explain. These are 'Pilgrims on a Journey' (Harvey 2016) with a sense of

mission that moves through to and beyond this world for God's purposes. Jehu Hanciles (2008:545) makes a parallel between immigrant communities in today's global world and refugee migrants in the book of Acts who first preached the gospel in Antioch to non-Jews (Acts 11:19-20). He argues that Christianity is by nature a migratory religion and that every Christian migrant is a potential missionary, who will have a significantly different approach to theology (Hanciles 2004:99,103). The narrow focus of diaspora missiology is its emphasis on God's people as doers and workers in God's Kingdom, but above all else their identity as God-made human beings matters.

iii. Theology of Migration

The theology of migration gives another perspective that Peter Phan describes as a new method that includes the idea of pilgrims journeying (Phan 2016: 845-55). God's people are not only on the move, but God as well is on the move. The theology of migration is rooted on one hand in the assessment of a sociopolitical and cultural context but also in the awareness of God's action for humanity. In this understanding God's movement comes first through creation and second through Christ. The first is a move from non-creative to creative parts while the second is a move from the un-incarnated to the incarnated (Phan 2016: 858-62).

Daniel Groody describes this movement in 'Crossing the Divide' (Groody 2009) as one that crosses four borders which he explains in terms of: 1) *imago De*i–the move through creation to humanity; 2) *verbum Dei*–the move realized through Christ; 3) *missio Dei* –the redemptive work of God, and 4) *visio Dei* – grounded in the kingdom of God. According to Groody's scheme the migrant reframes the journey in terms of God's journey (Lausanne Diaspora Educator's Consultation 2009: 851). In *Globalisation, Spirituality and Justice* (Groody

2007a) Groody depicts God's activity in places of inhumanity and through this he uncovers the essence of being human and redeemed.

iv. Practical and Spiritual

The perspective of displaced people on God's action in their midst is not conceptual; rather, it is a lived experience that connects to the presence of God. For these travellers, God's redemption is practical and spiritual concerned for sustainability, re-settlement, and welfare building (Beghela (2014:188-89). They include practical consequences like the 'Continuum of Response' developed by Tom Albinson (Albinson 2017) that envisions a re-humanization among FDPs. According to Parsitau Saleina, refugee faith is 'a strategy of belonging and empowerment for faith, prayer, and spirituality in the face of crisis' (Refugee Study Centre 2010: 5). The strategy that Innocent Magambi describes as a former refugee is to remember first 'you are not alone' and second, 'you are the solution' (Magambi & Aeilts 2015; Aeilts 2016: 504). These redemptive experiences are practical because they connect the person to the presence of God.

A practical and spiritual perspective leads to a salvific understanding in which the experiences of faith and displacement correlate along a journey. Paul Tillich (Tillich 1947; Tillich 1951; Tillich 1952) considers how a correlation happens and his ideas will be discussed in the following chapter. Likewise, this research will consider the ideas of Hans Gadamer and Simone Weil and how these contribute as well to a theological understanding.[20]

[20] Chapter Three will present Weil's idea of decreation as a framework for understanding the correlation that refugees make, and Chapter Seven will look at Gadamer's process as a practical application of the correlation.

2.2.5 Summary

First, this review has established how a multi-faceted approach to displacement issues should incorporate faith dimensions. Second, turning to diaspora issues, the review traced how the literature has classified diaspora experience but has failed to explain the development of faith. Finally, the review looked at theological perspectives that include missiological, socio-theological and practical focuses. The question of this research fits into the literature at this point by exploring more concretely the spiritual reality and perspectives of FDPs.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter described the background of my research. This includes my personal practice that is centred on conversations and relationships that can address the deeper issues among refugees. My practice has also incorporated a dialogical process, extended epistemology, as well as narrative ideas. The first part of this chapter demonstrated the value of bringing relationships and theory together. The reference to theories did not describe the basis for this research, but rather, it underlined the background that has been person-centred, and practical.

The second part of this chapter gave a literature review that covered a spectrum of issues that link faith and displacement. It described diaspora classifications and outlined several theological perspectives. Building on these conclusions this research will highlight the perspective of FDPs as seen through the lens of decreation. It will look for more than definitions and classifications, attending to the need for practical faith rooted in God's action. The theory for

this research is not focused only on a social concern but also on the correlation to faith, and the following chapter will discuss the theoretical basis for this.

CHAPTER 3

Coordinates of the Journey: Framework and Correlation

Many forcibly displaced persons tell stories that have a theological significance. This chapter describes two theories to expound how the stories function theologically, and also how I answer the research question: How do refugees correlate their experiences of forced displacement and faith?

Building onto Simone Weil's idea of decreation, the first theory forms a framework for understanding the context and realities of refugees. A decreation framework presents three coordinates along the journey that stand like topographical signposts to describe the refugee reality. The second theory discusses the correlation process and its distinctive features among FDPs. The theories work together to argue that refugees correlate their experience through movement across the landscape of their lives. Each of these theories will also underpin the theological developments of transformation and redemption among the FDPs discussed in Chapter 7. As a transition between the two theories, the chapter will consider the transformative aspects of decreation and how these show up in Scripture.

3.1 Decreation Framework

Figure 3.1 shows the decreation framework used to support and guide the theological reflections in this research.

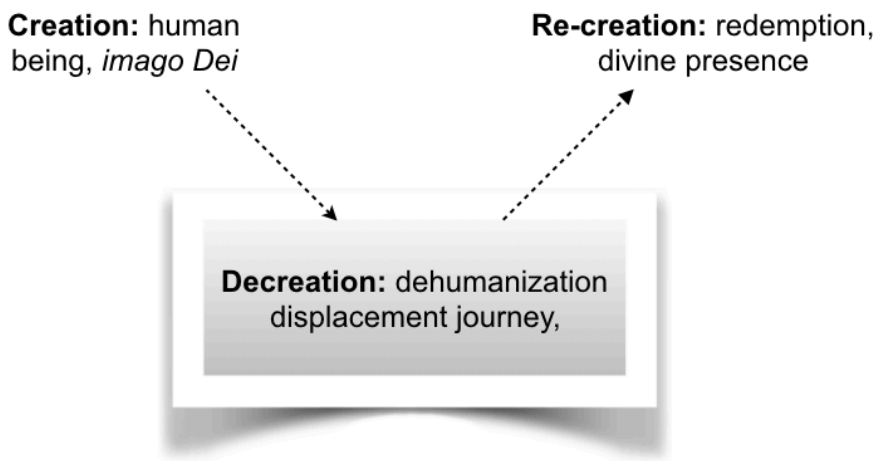

Figure 3.1 Decreation Framework

The illustration in Figure 3.1 visualizes the amorphous concept of decreation. There are three contexts to consider: creation, decreation and re-creation. These are like coordinates on a map to situate the person in a particular milieu and correspond to the following realities:

- creation – humanity and *imago Dei*;
- decreation – dehumanization and displacement journey;
- re-creation – redemption and divine presence.

As the name underscores, decreation is the primary context and reality in which FDPs find themselves, and it will be discussed below. However, there are two other contexts, creation and re-creation that stand at opposite ends. One implies God as creator and the other, God as re-creator, and as Simone Weil says, there is a space between God and God (Weil 1959 [1951]: 127), implying a movement from one side of the spectrum to the other. The arrows indicate not only the connection between them, but together they represent the refugee journey. Each of these realities contributes an important part to the theological understanding among FDPs, and they will also be treated individually in the following chapters.

3.1.1 Definition

The decreation framework follows Simone Weil's approach using decreation as a mechanism to define and understand reality. The mechanism confronts the disparities in the world like a reality check. Weil says of decreation in *Gravity and Grace* (as a definition): 'to make something created pass into the uncreated. Destruction: to make something created pass into nothingness. A blameworthy substitute for decreation' (Weil 2003 [1952]: 32).[1] Miklós Vetö identifies decreation as Weil's key idea, and he points out that Weil does not give an exact definition of the term (Vetö 1994: 11-12).[2]

Despite its ambiguity, I use the term to mean a quality, state or situations that characterize reality and especially one that threatens a person's dignity and fulness of life. The term is a kind of self-knowledge that leads to a state of nothingness, which becomes for Weil the avenue for loving and serving God (Vetö 1994: 27). Weil uses the idea of decreation throughout her writing. In *Gravity and Grace*, decreation is the prerequisite for grace. Weil does not use the word 'decreation' in *Waiting for God*, rather two metaphors that call to mind the loss of one thing in order to gain another: the image of a man who sells all he has to buy a field, and a servant waiting attentively for the master (Weil 1959 [1951]: 196). Likewise, the term does not occur in *The Need for Roots*, however, 'uprootedness' describes the condition of decreation.[3] Decreation stands for the spiritual affliction for which Christ came and gave himself. While

[1] The word does not occur in the *OED.* The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (1913 unabridged) defines *decreation* as 'destruction', 'opposed to creation', and the 1959 edition enters the word as 'uncreating; annihilation'.

[2] Vetö adds that 'de' also indicates the word relates to annihilation or reduction, and it is the primary vocation of humans in the context of creation.

[3] Weil in Part II of *The Need for Roots* says, 'to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul' (Weil 2005 [1952]:41). The danger of 'uprootedness' is that the person might fill the need with superficial solutions. Weil refers to superficial solutions as an *'ersatz'.* These are alternative solutions that a person creates to fill a need. In her *Notebooks* she writes, 'one must uproot ... have no native land on this earth that one may call one's own. ... in uprooting oneself, one seeks a greater reality' (Weil 2004 [1956]). Thus, to be uprooted makes decreation possible.

decreation refers to negative and destructive realities, Weil uses the term in a positive way to mean the embrace of these realities as the first step toward a redeemed life.

3.1.2 Creation

Creation is like a prologue to the displacement context in the decreation framework. Creation corresponds to the worth and dignity of humanity and the image of God.[4] Just as decreation refers to the journey of refugees who experience the breakdown of their humanity, re-creation re-establishes the person in a redemptive way. These are not three separate contexts, but like a journey suggests, they are connected. Creation and re-creation relate to the divine initiative and between them lies decreation. Decreation serves apophatically to connect the person to the creator it seemingly denies.[5]

The unique and important contribution of refugees to this framework is their ontological expertise. This kind of expertise demonstrates a person's humanity. The problems that refugees face deny their identity as human beings, and the ontological emphasis of creation is important, because as Daniel Groody suggests (Groody 2009: 642), it draws on the *imago Dei* to counter the labels and treatment that FDPs receive. The context of *imago Dei* originating in creation becomes the basis of a redemptive voice that goes to a deeper level, to the core of a human being that was put there in creation (Groody 2009: 644).[6]

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[4] Weil refers very little to the biblical idea of creation. She notes God's absence in creation and that the person moves to the uncreated. For her it seems that life begins with the Fall.

[5] The valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14 illustrates the connection between the three contexts. The image of bones indirectly recalls the life that Israel once had before its traumatic and hopeless exile. On either side of the dead bones has been the life of God's word and breath. To pass from the life before to that to come, the prophet wanders back and forth through the valley of bones. There has been a decreation at work that the prophet uses to connect back to God.

[6] Daniel Groody (2009) suggests four foundations to address the problems and barriers between migration and theology: *imago Dei, verbum Dei, missio Dei,* and *visio Dei*. These

3.1.3 Decreation

In Weil's thought, affliction is the reality of life.[7] Weil associates affliction with force that uproots life, and in this way she connects the idea to displacement:

> There is not real affliction unless the event that has seized and uprooted a life attacks it, directly or indirectly in all its parts, social, psychological and physical. ... There is not really affliction unless there is social degradation of the fear of it in some form or another. (Weil 1973 [1951]: 119)

She continues:

> The great enigma of human life is not suffering but affliction. It is not surprising that the innocent are killed, tortured, driven from their country, made destitute, or reduced to slavery, imprisoned in camps or cells, ... It is not surprising that disease is the cause of long sufferings, which paralyse life and make it into an image of death. (Weil 1973 [1951]: 119)

Affliction creates a void that 'produces hatred, sourness, bitterness, spite' as the balance of evil (Weil 2003 [1952]: 16):

> Affliction is anonymous before all things; it deprives its victims of their personality and makes them into things. It is indifference ... that freezes all those it touches right to the depths of their souls. ... They will never believe anymore that they are anyone'. (Weil 1973 [1951]: 125)

These quotes illustrate the dehumanizing aspect of decreation.

i. Exposes Reality

Decreation is significant because it exposes the reality of life. It uncovers the effects of affliction in terms of God's absence. Weil explains:

> It is surprising that God should have given affliction the power to seize the very souls of the innocent and to take possession of them as sovereign lord [sic]. At the very best, he who is branded by affliction will keep only half his soul. ... Affliction makes God appear to be absent for a time, more absent than a dead man, more absent than light in the utter darkness of a cell. A kind of horror submerges the whole soul. During this absence there is nothing to love. What is terrible is that if, in this darkness where there is nothing to love, the soul ceases to love, God's absence becomes final. (Weil 1973 [1951]: 120-21)

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foundations conceptualise a theological framework as 'a way of thinking about God and what it means to be human', and 'in understanding and responding to migrants and refugees' (Groody 2009:642).

[7] Weil develops a range of topics related to affliction, such as suffering and evil to show life in all its reality. Weil describes affliction in her notebook as a thorn in the soul, an inescapable suffering of even physical pain that a person continually comes up against, 'like a fly against a pane of glass without being able to make the slightest progress or discover anything new, and yet unable to prevent itself from returning to the attack' (Weil 2004 [1956]:483). In *Waiting for God*, affliction is the uprooting of life, 'a more or less attenuated equivalent of death, made irresistibly present to the soul by the attack or immediate apprehension of physical pain (Weil 1973 [1951]:81, 118).

To expose reality as a void is significant because of the natural inclination to fill a void.

Decreation acknowledges that in the context of refugees, God seems absent. Rowan Williams (Williams 1993: 54) explains the non-existence of God is necessary for Weil in order to block filling the void and meeting real and urgent needs in ways that manufacture a relationship to God. Weil explains in her notebook:

> Religion in so far as it is a source of consolation is a hindrance to true faith: in this sense atheism is a purification. I have to be atheistic with the part of myself which is made for God. Among those men in whom the supernatural part has not been awakened, the atheists are right and the believers wrong.[8] (Weil 2004 [1956]: 237)

In Weil's thought, religion hinders true faith, because it nurtures the ego and the possibility of a manufactured and imagined faith (Rozelle-Stone & Stone 2013: 27-9).[9] Decreation, and the reality of affliction that it reveals, dismantles the false reality. According to Weil:

> If I thought that God sent me suffering by an act of his will and for my good, I should think that I was something, and I should miss the chief use of suffering which is to teach me that I am nothing. It is therefore essential to avoid all such thoughts, ... I must love being nothing. How horrible it would be if I were something! I must love my nothingness, love being a nothingness. (Weil 2003 [1952]: 111)

Weil's notion of God's absence begins in the subjective experience of affliction, but it differs from other existentialists of her time who transfer abstractions of faith to experience. Weil's thought maintains two parallel worlds and decreation links these together.

ii. Initiates Balance

Decreation offers a mechanism to find equilibrium in the contradictions and paradoxes of life like those faced by refugees. Decreation brings the person

[8] The same passage occurs as well in *Gravity and Grace* (1973 [1951]:115) to explain 'atheism as a purification' of religion.

[9] For Weil, the imagination of alternative realities, or some other life is an escape from reality. It is an *ersatz* form–a substitute reality. Examples of this include: being rooted in social connections and a native land; attachment that produces a false reality; and the idea of copying something in the spiritual life (2004 [1956]:298, 313, 345).

face to face with the dilemmas of life in order to wrestle with these opposites, not to prove one over the other, or to systematize them, but to conceive of life and to understand its contradictory nature (Rozelle-Stone & Stone 2013: 5). Decreation reflects an extreme response to find 'in what sense the contrary is true (Fiedler 1973 [1951]: 31).' The relevance of decreation is its 'intensity' of call for a person to process life as it really is and not as imagined:

> One must conceive as a whole the possible contrary attitudes, together with their respective reasons, with the very greatest intensity; and while the mind at its highest level is riveted upon this contradiction, nature, which is incapable of entertaining contradictories, leans to one side or the other. Either the mind maintains real within itself the simultaneous notion of the contradictories, or else it is tossed about by the mechanism ... from one of the contraries to the other. (Weil 2004 [1956]: 385-86)

By wrestling with the contradictions that arise as a result of decreation, a person embarks on a path of truth that has the concept of eternity and the supernatural on one end and the reality of existence in the created world on the other (McCullough 2014: 36). Decreation embodies the tensions that refugees face along this path.[10] However, in Weil's thought it is not a matter of resolving these, but rather finding the equilibrium, which is a question of uniting gravity and grace.

iii. Embarks on a Journey

My decreation framework conveys the idea of a journey. Weil describes decreation as a passage from the created to the uncreated: 'to make something created pass into the uncreated. Destruction: to make something created pass into nothingness. A blameworthy substitute for decreation' [sic] (Weil 2003 [1952]: 32).

Weil sees decreation as a conscious movement that affects existence and

[10] In his study of the overlap between George Grant's doctrine and Weil's thought, Brad Jersak describes secular liberalism as having left the 'liberty of desires bereft of any hierarchy of values' (Jersak 2012:106). He shows how contradictions in secular society have been nullified, underlining the relevance of Weil's idea also among refugees coming into a secular world.

even includes the force to 'make' it.[11] She equates decreation to a passage across an ontological threshold that moves from the created to the uncreated.[12] Weil refers to Plato's analogy to explain that those in the cave see the self as 'the only shadow which sin and error cast' –a shadow for a being (Weil 2003 [1952]: 40).[13] The image draws attention to the direction the traveller will choose: either inward toward a false reality or outward toward the light of true being.[14] However, the traveller is not only waiting in their existence of nothingness, but is on a journey as they pass from gravity to grace.

As the title of this dissertation suggests, there is not only the necessity of gravity and grace, but also the movement from one to the other. Weil envisions the cross as a journey for all those involved:

> God wears himself out through the infinite thickness of time and space in order to reach the soul and to captivate it ... It is thus that the soul, starting from the opposite end, makes the same journey that God made towards it. And that is the cross. (Weil 2003 [1952]: 88-9)

[11] For a short while, Weil was a refugee herself, and the idea of a journey is evident at several points in her writing. Most significantly, Weil refers to Plato's cave analogy throughout *Gravity and Grace* to make conclusions about the journey out of attachment (2003 [1952]:20, 50-59, 60, 138-9, 165). Decreation is the first stop on this journey at which place the traveller is uprooted and divested of self-illusions. Immediately to follow this context of decreation, Weil refers to Plato's analogy.

[12] Gustave Thibon, Weil's publisher and editor concludes in the postscript of *Gravity and Grace* after fifty years since its first release, that it is still relevant as 'a message from eternity, addressed to eternal man, this Nothingness capable of God' (Weil 2003 [1952]:183. Like Thibon suggests, Weil's concern in *Gravity and Grace,* as in decreation, has been with the eternal state of existence (2003 [1952]:40).

[13] Weil refers to the cave analogy in *Gravity and Grace* (2003 [1952]) at the start of the section on 'Self-effacement' which immediately follows the 'Decreation' section, further highlighting the importance of decreation for making a turn in the journey. Brad Jersak describes George Grant's journey along a similar trajectory of belief in another reality that was initiated by Grant's own conversion experience which marked a turning of his soul (Jersak 2012:129, 135).

[14] The inward direction turns toward the shadows of self as a false being cast deeper into the cave, while the outward direction goes toward the light of the true being and another reality beyond the cave. To turn toward the light requires the virtue of humility. Weil says, 'to come out of the cave, to be detached … means to cease to make the future our object' (Weil 2003 [1959]:20). Movement in the cave is related to values of this world and the necessity of idolatry (Weil 2003 [1959]:51, 60).

The refugees in this research embark on journeys that affect their identities and souls as human beings (Arnett 2010: 3).[15] Decreation initiates the journey and prepares the person to make a directional turn away from the self toward a new reality.

3.1.4 Re-creation

Decreation recognizes the void of affliction, however, it also opens the way for attention to the supernatural transcendence of God. Re-creation refers to a new reality that comes as a result of decreation and attention to God's presence.[16] Re-creation is the act of grace that fills the void.[17] The idea of an equilibrium between gravity and grace stands behind much of Weil's thought. However, by envisioning a re-creation, the framework provides a structure for the journey from gravity to grace.[18] In Weil's world, the cross represents God's grace which like a lever makes God's counterweight possible, so that 'heaven coming down to earth raises earth to heaven' (Weil 2003 [1952]: 92-3).[19] The cross of Christ stands as the climax of Weil's theology because like decreation, it points to the reality of 'what is': the intersection between the two furthest points in space– God and humanity (Rozelle-Stone & Stone 2013: 37, 39). For Weil, this means, 'I have to be like God, but like God crucified. Like God almighty in so far as he is

[15] Alasdair MacIntyre in his expansive work *After Virtue* (2007:205) adds that the significance of human life as a story comes in relation to the whole of life where the beginning, middle, and end are linked together.
[16] Attention 'consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object' (Weil 1973 [1951]:111). Weil emphasizes 'the effort that brings a soul to salvation is like the effort of looking or of listening; it is the kind of effort by which a fiancée accepts her lover. It is an act of attention and consent' (1973 [1951]:126).
[17] Weil says the void is like a dark night with the empty space of a vacuum that grace fills, and it is even grace that makes this void (Weil 2003 [1952]:10-11).
[18] Weil does not refer directly to decreation and re-creation like the combination of gravity and grace. In her *Notebooks* (2004 [1956]:544) she makes one reference to 're-creation'. This will be discussed at the start of Chapter Seven.
[19] For Christ on the cross, the crucifixion marked God's absence and withdrawal from the world. On the cross, Jesus fully accepted his own void of nothingness crying out, 'My God, why have you forsaken me'?

bound by necessity [sic]' (Weil 2003 [1952]: 89).[20] Weil uses the example of rising to heaven, which is impossible, unless directed in her thoughts towards something better than her (Weil 2003 [1952]: 99). This is her re-creation and what draws her upwards to a new plane. ... 'Only grace can do that' (Weil 2003 [1952]: 99).

3.2 Scripture and Theology: Signs of Decreation

This research relates decreation to faith and displacement, and it will make a connection to Scripture. This section looks at how decreation occurs in Scripture. It does not give a biblical theology of the term, rather it looks at several Scriptures to illustrate the decreation themes and to strengthen the validity of the term in this inquiry.

3.2.1 Luke 10:25-37: Loving God and Loving Others

> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to
> *r*inherit eternal life?" **26** He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" **27**
> And he answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul
> and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." **28** And he
> said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." **29**But he, desiring to
> justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" **30** Jesus replied, "A man *w*was going
> down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him
> and departed, leaving him half dead. **31** Now by chance a priest was going down that road,
> and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. **32** So likewise a Levite, when he came
> to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he journeyed,
> came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** He went to him and
> bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and
> brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** And the next day he took out two denarii and
> gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will
> repay you when I come back.' **36** Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor
> to the man who fell among the robbers?" **37** He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And
> Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37)

Weil's idea is that God's love makes a journey across the universe and it is impossible for humanity to show a similar love until they first decreate. Weil says, God 'wears himself out' to reach humanity and humanity must make the

[20] The kenotic response of Christ on the cross is a model for humanity in its own void, who like Christ must cross an infinite space. *Kenosis* in Philippians 2:5-8 emphasizes Christ's submission, sacrifice, and humility.

same journey back to God (Weil 2003 [1952]: 88-9). Yet she reasons, 'we are incapable of progressing vertically. We cannot take a step toward the heavens' (Weil 1959 [1951]: 133). Therefore, she asks if, 'Divine Love crossed the infinity of space and time to come from God to us … How can we take it back … How can we repeat the journey in the opposite direction' (Weil 1959 [1951]: 134)? Weil's question is like the lawyer's in verse 25, and the answer lies in the traveller's affliction, which Weil describes as 'a marvel of divine technique' (Weil 1959 [1951]: 135).

Weil describes the traveller as:

> Reduced by affliction … only a little piece of flesh, naked, inert and bleeding beside a ditch; he is nameless; no one knows anything about him. Those who pass by this thing scarcely notice it, … and only one stops and turns his attention toward it. (Weil 1959 [1951]: 146)

The decreative moment is when the Samaritan notices the affliction (1959:146-7). This becomes transformative, because it requires the person to make a renunciation of previous ideas and imaginations of love. 'To give up our imaginary position as the centre, to renounce it … means to awaken to what is real and eternal … such consent is love. The face of this love … is the love of our neighbour' (Weil 1959 [1951]: 159-60). Weil explains:

> Creative attention means really giving our attention to what does not exist. Humanity does not exist in the anonymous flesh lying inert by the roadside. The Samaritan who stops and looks gives his attention all the same to this absent humanity, and the actions which follow prove that it is a question of real attention. (Weil 1959 [1951]: 149)

In Weil's interpretation, the redemptive moment comes in the acceptance of affliction and the embrace of reality. This requires the lawyer to follow the Samaritan's example who embraced the traveller. Only then will he be able to begin the journey back towards God. This is the spirit of Jesus's challenge in Luke 10:37–to become like the Samaritan.

There are several aspects in this passage of loving God and others that reflect the nature of decreation. First, the reality that Jesus describes in the

Samaritan's story conflicts with the expectations of others. This corresponds to the imagined realities that decreation reveals and renounces. The tension between realities is evident in the lawyer's effort to test Jesus and to justify himself (Luke 10:25-29). It suggests the lawyer has a vision for God's people that conflicts with Jesus's perspective.[21] The reality Jesus describes is predicated on God's grace, mercy, and compassion like the Samaritan showed to the traveller.[22] Like Weil has described, God's love precedes the person's love.

Second, Jesus's reality is transformative and so are the effects of a transcendent reality in decreation. The love in question in Luke 10 is more than a feeling or a rule to follow, rather it is concerned for the nature of life that conforms to God's reality (Burridge 2007: 12). In the Samaritan story (Luke 10:30-37), Jesus described a way of loving that touches life in the present. In the final verse, Jesus repeats the necessity to follow the Samaritan's example. In doing this he implies that the biggest need for the lawyer is to question the quality and condition of his own attitude.

Third, loving God and others occurs like a journey. Jesus tells the Samaritan story within the context of his own travel account towards Jerusalem and ultimately the cross. The journey to Jerusalem provides a framework for the Samaritan story and many more events along the way (Fitzmyer 1981: 826).[23]

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[21] Lawyers belonged to the Pharisaic group of lay leaders intent on reviving Jewish life. They were a political interest group who opposed others with different viewpoints (Saldarini 1992:297). In another confrontation with Pharisees and lawyers, Jesus comments 'you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers' (Luke 11:46). Keener (1993:828) clarifies the group consisted of several thousand pious Jewish men who had no political power, but were respected and influential, and who emphasized their own version of purity rules and the resurrection of the dead.

[22] The command to love God and others originates in the Old Testament law. Deuteronomy 4:4-5 and Leviticus 19:2,18 shows the two respective commands and each of these is preceded by the indicative of God's identity, uniqueness, and holiness (Wright, CJ 2006:59).

[23] The travel account begins in Luke 9:51 when Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem. It continues until 19:44 when Jesus sees Jerusalem and weeps (v.41) in lament. Along the way, the movement is made clear with no less than nine references to the movement (Luke 9:57;

Jesus is on his way to God's holy city and he takes the disciples along with him to learn as they go. The reality he teaches is not a static idea or a rule to keep, but rather a direction of life. Decreation echoes this way where 'sin is not a distance, it is a turning of our gaze in the wrong direction' (Weil 1959 [1951]: 124). Re-creation is a turning in the right direction.

3.2.2 Romans 6:1-4: Centrality of the Cross

> What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? [2] By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? [3] Do you not know that all of us [o]who have been baptized [p]into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] We were [q]buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as [r]Christ was raised from the dead by [s]the glory of the Father, we too might walk in [t]newness of life. (Romans 6:1-4)

This passage shows the use of decreation for building faith through its connection to the crucifixion of Christ. Romans 6:1-4 marks a pivot between two sections in the letter of Romans. These sections are often referred to as the justification of believers (Rom. 1-5) and the sanctification of new life (Rom. 6-8). Generally, these two sections establish the work of Christ for justification, and the walk in newness of life as the sanctification of the followers.[24] Christ's work on the cross serves as the 'strategic mechanism' to unfold justification and signal sanctification (Edwards 1992: 157).

The crucifixion lies at the centre of the decreation idea:

> He whose soul remains ever turned toward God … finds himself nailed to the centre of the universe … at the intersection of creation and its creator … at the arms of the Cross. '(Weil 1959 [1951]: 136)

If the image of God's journey toward humanity discussed in the previous section corresponds to justification, then the turning point of the journey is the cross. Likewise the journey back towards God reflects the result of Christ's work on

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10:1; 10:38; 11:53; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11; and 19:28). Joseph Fitzmyer (1981:826) acknowledges that this movement is not very organized which makes it difficult to know how the content fits the form. But, regardless, the travel account for him is the way to Luke's theology as a whole.

[24] James Edwards (1992:156) notes that the quote in Romans 1:17 from Habakkuk 2:4 introduces the structure of Romans in which the first part describes the righteousness of God while the second part looks at righteous living.

the cross.[25] In Weil's terms, decreation marks the connection between the two parts of the journey, and thus the questions here reflect concerns of decreation.

The way of Christ leads both to the cross and from the cross as two sides that are woven together and inseparable, and the concept of decreation raises the question of what hinders the connection between the parts of the journey. The three questions in Romans 6:1, 2 and 3 reflect the concern for overcoming obstacles to the walk in newness of life. In terms of decreation, these questions help to uncover false realities for understanding life, measure genuine faith, and show concrete signs of change.[26]

Using decreation to explore questions like these helps to understand how the command to love God is rooted in the indicatives such as God's grace, mercy, holiness, and identity. For Weil it is necessary to decreate everything in order to expose false imaginations and understandings about reality. This process leads to the cross that becomes the basis for all that follows. Weil's comment on the centrality of Christ's work on the cross reflects the relationship and balance between the parts: 'Saint Paul was perhaps thinking about things of this kind when he said: 'That ye being rooted and grounded in love may be

[25] These ideas relate to discussions in the literature about the indicative and imperative parts of Scripture. The indicative refers to assertions about God and imperatives are the actions of believers. Romans is an example of moving from the indicative to the imperative in which there is an 'indissoluble' connection between the two (Burridge 2007:106). The understanding that a person has died to sin, lives in the spirit and now fights against sin, reflects a peculiar problem of indicatives and imperatives, which for some have seemed like contradictions (Bultman 1995:195). Rudolph Bultmann identified an organic connection between the indicative and imperative parts of faith that necessarily belong together and not apart. Likewise, Paul argues that they belong together. The question is what the nature of this relationship looks like. Do the imperatives lead to new life or proceed from new life or are they inseparable? Michael Parsons (1995:229) believes the imperatives are closely related yet distinct as the consequence of God's act in Christ, whereas if they are inseparable, then the commands of God also describe the provision of God. These discussions raise questions about the nature of a decreation experience and the kind of relationship it reflects between the commands and provisions of God in a person's life.

[26] Cranfield (1997:298-305) notes the concerns of Paul's questions. In Rom. 6:1 it is to rule out any misunderstanding that could be twisted by bogus logic to continue in sin. In Rom. 6:2 the reality is that Christians will continue to 'live with' sin and Cranfield points out four ways that this happens positively. Finally, in Rom. 6:3, he considers the question in terms of the decisive change that comes with baptism in Christ's death.

able to comprehend … and to know the love of Christ … (Eph. 3:17-19)' (Weil 1959 [1951]: 136).

3.2.3 Philippians 2:1-3: Self-Sacrifice

> So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **2** complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (Philippians 2:1-3)

At the heart of decreation lies the idea that to reach a goal and to become something, it is necessary to first become nothing. This resonates with Galations 2:20:

> I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

These verses echo Weil's own words (Weil 1959 [1951]: 157): 'He whose soul remains ever turned toward God … finds himself nailed to the centre of the universe … at the intersection of creation and its creator … at the arms of the Cross.' Thus, at the heart of decreation is negation from which flows the virtue of humility (Weil 1959 [1951]: 157).[27] This parallels Philippians 2:3, 'in humility count others more significant than yourselves.' Humility is a uniquely Christian virtue rooted in Christ's example and is directly related to the self-humiliating love of Christ seen in Philippians 2:3 (Ridderbos 1975: 297).

Humility allows a person to say with confidence: 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (Phil. 1:21). It is defined as counting others better than oneself, similar to the example of Christ (Ridderbos 1975: 297). Self-sacrifice is an expression of the deeply penetrating command of God. It is, 'a great "humanity" and a matured psychological insight become manifest, whereby the

[27] Negation is at work on several levels in the idea of decreation. There is negation as God detaches from creation and chooses not to command it. God remains detached even as Christ emptied himself of his divinity. Similarly in affliction, human beings are called to imitate God, deny the self, and renounce all that leads to pride.

concrete significance of what love is is not expressed in lofty generalities, but pointed out in the concrete relationships of man to man' (Ridderbos 1975: 298). Weil describes self-sacrifice as a renunciation and 'loss of all loved beings and all possession ... our opinions, beliefs concerning what is good, what is stable … we must not lay these things down of ourselves, but lose them–like Job' (Weil 2003 [1952]: 36). Self-sacrifice resembles Christ's kenotic sacrifice. According to Weil:

> God has conferred upon [man] an imaginary likeness of this power, an imaginary divinity, so that he also, although a creature, may empty himself of his divinity. ...so each man imagines he is situated in the centre of the world. ... We live in a world of unreality and dreams. To give up our imaginary position as the centre, to renounce it, ... means to awaken to what is real and eternal. (Weil 1959 [1951]: 158-9)

This kind of sacrifice emphasizes 'nothingness' as Weil calls it, and through it a person recognizes the being of another. Decreation leads to self-sacrifice as a step toward love of others as Robert Reed describes:

> In decreation we take ourselves out of the picture, not just accepting how defenceless and vulnerable we are, but realising, and living by ... the ethical truth that there is something–more important, someone in the world besides oneself.' (Reed 2013: 28)

Self-negation, and the embrace of others are primary characteristics in decreation and are part of a refugee's journey to God. These characteristics reflect a turn toward others and toward God.

3.3 Correlation through Movement and Relationship

The theological reflection on the stories in this research leads to a theory of correlation. The correlation takes place in the hermeneutic process of reconciling personal experience and historical reality. This section establishes the theory of correlation and my argument that FDPs correlate faith and displacement as a result of movement through life and the repeated process of connecting the realities. Agnes' story from the previous chapter illustrates the

correlation. She links the fact that God is able to save directly to her personal experience of being saved at sea. She connects faith and displacement with no historical distance. This view stands in contrast to a priority of analysis that separates facts and theories from experience (Bevir 2011: 25).

3.3.1 Correlation Theory: Two Realities

The correlation theory first makes a personal and social exegesis of the displacement experience.[28] Through this analysis the correlation identifies existential aspects of human experience such as: 'Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose?' (Baldwin 2015).[29]

Second, the correlation looks at the faith claims to understand what these concerns are and how they trace back to a transcendent God. Just as the first part is based in the reality of life found in experience, the second is based in the reality of God found in Scripture. Juxtaposing the revelation of Scripture and the experience of reality, the correlation functions through the relationship between the two when they meet and connect.[30]

As FDPs pass through the realities of life (depicted in the decreation framework), they are involved in an iterative process of relating faith and displacement. A holistic understanding emerges when the two realities come together. In other words: when ‘A’ meets ‘B’ the correlation becomes ‘C’.

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[28] This kind of analysis coincides with Gadamer's observation:

> The historical realities of society and state always have a predeterminate influence on any 'experience'... Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live. (Gadamer 2013 [1989]:288-89)

[29] Chris Hermans (Hermans et al. 2002:x-xi) in his introduction to social constructionism notes that reality is formed socially and he suggests that a good correlational discipline relates to social science in ancillary, cooperative and parallel modes.

[30] The relationship between these parts is the basis of many theological discussions. In *Seventy Letters* Weil describes the relationship as ‘a perfect and divine equilibrium between man and the universe' which is like ‘a mirror of salvation’ (2015 [1965]:87,125).

i. Weil's Equilibrium in Reality

Weil's notion of decreation was considered extensively in the first part of this chapter. Weil makes a correlation particularly in two ways. First, Weil correlates the affliction of life and the transcendence of God through a movement of grace. She describes grace as a two-fold movement: One is an ascending movement, and the other is a descending movement she calls a second degree of grace (Weil 2003 [1952]: 4). Weil uses the example of rising to heaven, which is impossible, unless her attention is directed towards something better than her. This is what draws her upwards to a new plane. 'Only grace can do that' (Weil 2003 [1952]: 99). The other movement of grace points downward to the reality of affliction.

Second, through equilibrium, she finds balance at the vortex of where the two worlds intersect. In Weil's thought these two worlds coexist resulting in both gravity and grace. The correlation is one of equilibrium. The correlation shaped by decreation emphasizes redemption as the intersection of gravity and grace. For Weil, this is a connection to 'Divine Love' that happens at the crucifixion and not at the resurrection. Rebecca and Lucian Rozelle-Stone point out that the crucifixion calls attention to Christ's exemplary response to God's withdrawal in the world, whereas the resurrection concerns itself with doctrines and the imagination of the future (Rozelle-Stone & Stone 2013: 37). Weil describes 'Divine Love' as that which 'crossed the infinity of space and time to come from God to us' (Weil 2009 [1951]: 134). Her point is that through affliction, humanity can make the same journey back to God:

> Affliction is a marvel of divine technique. It is a simple and ingenious device which introduces into the soul of a finite creature the immensity of force, blind, brutal, and cold. The infinite distance separating God from the creature is entirely concentrated into one point to pierce the soul in its centre. (Weil 2009 [1951]: 135)

In finding the equilibrium, Weil makes a correlation that says ‘A’ equals ‘B’, differing from Paul Tillich’s idea of human and divine realities that fold in on themselves as discussed in the next section.

ii. Tillich’s Method of Crossing

Paul Tillich built his method around a complex and often ambiguous reference to 'Ultimate Reality,' where religion ‘moves from man toward God, while revelation moves from God to man’ (Tillich 1955: 2). His method unfolds in two parts: first, to distinguish the symbols provided by the religious tradition and second, to bring these together in culture (Ormerod 1996: 708-09). The method addresses the need for mediation between religion and culture (Clayton 1980: 66). He described himself as a man ‘on the boundary’ with the hopes of communicating to both sides (Parrella 2004: 4). Like Agnes’ story illustrates, many FDPs live between the boundaries and limits of broken worlds and inadequate understanding.

iii. Search and Find

Tillich developed his method of correlation that searches for the questions of culture and finds the answers in religion: [31]

> 'the question implied in human finitude is answered in the symbols which constitute the idea of God ... the questions implied in man's existential disruption and despair are answered in the symbol of the Christ and his appearance under the conditions of existence'. (Tillich 1947: 25)

During Tillich's time, the world was fragmented and incoherent which caused existential struggles for many people. Tillich’s concern was holistic in that he hoped to hold culture and faith together by infusing the existential questions with theological answers (Reimer 2004: 3).

[31] Tillich emerged from the devastation of human life in WWI to ask, why Christianity failed to answer such suffering. He claimed, 'The Christian message provides the answers to the questions implied in human existence' (Tillich 1951:65).

For Tillich, faith is the precondition of theology, 'out of which a theologian must create' (Tillich 1947: 19), and in this way his method has apologetic and not kerygmatic purposes (Tillich 1947: 25). Tillich's method identifies aspects of correlation such as the need for mediation between opposing worlds and conflicting experiences. The emphasis is not on winning over others through a particular argument or opinion, rather on the common ground found in God–the importance of faith that shapes identity and culture that critiques faith (Gilkey 1990: 57-60, 66). Tillich's idea of correlation says 'A' and 'B' become 'A'.

3.3.2 More than Equal or Existential

My correlation theory goes beyond both Weil's emphasis on equilibrium as well as Tillich's existential position. My theory underscores the continuous movement of FDPs toward a redemptive relationship. The correlation is a connection between the sides to form a new understanding. The correlation is a process that complements the elements in the decreation framework (see Figure 3.1). The FDPs are continually reaching back to their humanity in creation and forward to the salvation of a re-creation. My theory is dependent on the person's initiative and action like the elements in narrative theory suggest (see Figure 2.3). The theory is a process of fluid movement that continues throughout the journey. [32]

This is different from Tillich's method that loses the distinctiveness of specific Christian concerns that relate to life. It also differs from Weil's emphasis on finding the equilibrium.[33] The correlations of both Tillich and Weil are more

[32] The correlation of experiential and divine realities functions like a dance, in which the two sides are like dancers who offer important reference points for the other. To raise or reduce one over the other is to make no correlation. The idea of a dance comes from Johannes van der Ven's evaluation of social constructionism. He argues that every human activity including religious and non-religious alike is a social construction, and if God is taken out of the equation then there is no dance (Ven J. A. van der 2002).

[33] This also acknowledges that Weil's ideas are difficult to grasp and not everyone can see how her ideas are helpful for theology because of their abstract and ambiguous nature. As Rowan

static, emphasizing concepts and states of being. Granted, Weil describes grace in terms of movement, but the movement distinguishes the balance between divine and human categories on either side of the correlation. Weil's balance of equal sides differs from Tillich's theory that reduces faith to general symbols and ultimately excludes God from the equation. [34] Tillich's method applies a reductionist approach to the biblical texts that loses the specificity of the Gospel, and instead finds the divine in everything. Tillich spins the theological connection between secular society and faith experience until the two become the same thing.[35] While Tillich's concern for commonality is relevant to refugees in a plural context, it does not offer a clear vision of how these parts come together consistently with the Scriptures.[36] The distinctions of these comparisons show that Weil finds equilibrium of the sides and that her correlation is balanced, whereas Tillich's is existential, and my correlation is relational.

Williams observes, Weil brings a powerfully comprehensive vision to the table, but it is laced with moral ambiguity and logical incongruence (Williams 1993:53). Andrea Hollingsworth adds that Weil's approach requires a hermeneutic that can appreciate the dance between form and content (2013:204).

[34] Thiselton (2007:184) identifies five difficulties in Tillich's method: It is static; generalizes too much; reduces terms indistinctively; relies exclusively on existential perspectives; and functions on a pre-conceptual level. Similarly, Anthony Akinwale comments about the method in regards to African theology, saying it is an 'invalid generalization' to say Tillich's ideas apply in other contexts, because there are far too many limits and distinctions to Tillich's perspectives (Akinwale 1994:189).

[35] Neil Ormerod clarifies that Tillich's method does not differentiate enough between divine categories and human ones; it assumes there is a pure faith to respond to the human situation, but in reality this faith evolves and adapts to the age and does not stand up to critical examination (Ormerod 1996:712,719).

[36] Robert Doran clarifies that theology must establish the norms of social, cultural, personal and religious authenticity in history (Doran 1990:4).

3.4 Conclusion

Weil's idea of decreation offers nuggets for understanding the dynamics at work in a context like displacement, yet these nuggets are often out of reach.[37] The theories behind this research have taken shape through a deliberation of decreation, which is a difficult and complex idea to grasp. The first theory describes the realities that are involved in a correlation and the second describes the movement between these realities. The next chapter will take an in-depth look at the interview data and the process of collecting the interviews. Chapter Five onwards will then use both the interview data and the theories discussed in this chapter to continue developing the redemptive impact of the refugees' stories.

[37] Five weeks before she died, Simone wrote to her mother: 'I too have a sort of growing inner certainty that there is a deposit of pure gold in me which ought to be passed on. The trouble is that I am more and more convinced by my experience and observation of my contemporaries that there is no one to receive it' (Winch 1978 [1959]:2). Weil's comments reflect the sentiments of many who read her work: they are not quite sure what to make of it and how and if it applies in the world. Is this because the thoughts are so pure and unattainable, or because they are misapplied or misunderstood?

CHAPTER 4

Stories on the Journey: Data, Interviews, and Findings

The research uses in-depth interviewing in two phases to explore the issues of forced displacement and faith. One of the best ways to understand an issue is by asking those involved, and interviews provide the opportunity to hear these perspectives and opinions (Amaral 2011; Amaral 2013). A small collection of interviews forms the backbone of this research and this chapter will:

- give an overview of the interviews;
- describe the interview development;
- summarize the highlights;
- list the key findings.

4.1 Overview of the Interviews

In-depth interviewing involves intensive interviews with a small group of respondents to explore their perspectives, ideas, programmes and situation (Boyce & Neale 2006: 3). The interviews supply needed details and an important context behind the issues refugees face and are helpful where people may not be comfortable in a more formal environment (Boyce & Neale 2006: 3). The analysis explores common themes and patterns in the interviews which the research uses to build upon (Baker & Edwards 2012: 6). These interviews extend and formalize everyday conversation (Prairee Research Associates 2016: 1), and provide an extension of my usual practice for understanding the stories and experiences of refugees. I approached the interviews of both phases like Herbert and Irene Rubin (Rubin & Rubin 2005) describe as 'a

responsive interviewing' where the researcher becomes a conversational partner with the participant, responding both as an insider and outsider, initiator and recipient to what he or she hears.

The aim in using this method is to explore the correlation between displacement and faith particularly from the refugees' perspective. Used in this way, the interview material offers a window for analysis through lived experience (Clandinin & Rosiek 2007: 37). Philip Amaral uses a similar interview approach in two recent Jesuit Refugee Service reports.[1] The report by Amaral (Amaral 2011) about alternatives to detention was also conducted with a small sample group of 25 interviewees in three countries. Understanding these migrants helped to address the primary issue of detention (Amaral 2011: 14). Like my own research, these reports approach the topic from the asylum seeker's point of view. To learn from those who are most concerned offers a valuable perspective, yet as Amaral notes, there is not much research offered from this angle (Amaral 2013: 5), underlining my own research effort.

4.1.1 Demographics of Two Interview Phases

The interviews took place in two phases between 2009 and 2012. In total, I carried out twenty-three interviews among a mixed group of people. Of the 23 interviews 19 of the respondents arrived in Europe as FDPs through irregular means. The interview respondents represented a mixed group of migrants from 11 countries including: Iran, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Syria in the first phase; and Eritrea, Ghana, Niger, Sierra Leone, Congo, and Cameroon in the second phase. Of the 19 FDPs, eight cited refugee reasons for their displacement (George, Esther, Hamilton, Stanley, Agnes, Jason, Amin, Lani), and eight

[1] One report (Amaral 2013:5) used interviews to evaluate the Dublin system from the perspective of asylum seekers, while the other report (Amaral 2011:14-15) used a small group of interviews to learn how migrants themselves perceive the alternatives to detention.

mentioned that economic reasons combined with the need for work caused them to leave (Isa, Isaac, Julie, Esther, Franklin, Solomon, Baldwin, Lani, Stanley). Two people said they left because of family conflict (Isa, Rachel). The ones who left for economic reasons had to continue for refugee reasons. Similarly, at least four of those who named refugee-related reasons for leaving (Esther, Jason, Amin and Hamilton) also described economic conditions that made them flee further.

The group of interviewees consisted of five women and 18 men from a variety of backgrounds. Although most of the respondents in the second phase attended the same church in Malta, their religious background was diverse. They came from Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal church backgrounds. Some respondents had also converted to Christianity from non-religious and non-Christian backgrounds.

4.1.2 First Phase Interviews

The first phase included six interviews with refugees from four countries: Iran, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Syria.[2] My choice of respondents gave priority to relationships where there was established trust (Noy 2009). Five of the refugees in the first phase had previously known me through my work. Two of these had moved away to other countries, which is where I contacted them for the interview. The sixth person had worked closely with my colleague.

After conducting the six interviews in the first phase, I realized that two of the respondents created an imbalance among the sample and could potentially skew the results.[3] Therefore, I limited the interview group in the first phase to a

[2] Appendix C gives an overview of the interviews. The first phase is comprised of Interviews 1-6, while the Interview numbers 7-23 formed the second phase of interviews.

[3] The two interviews that I did not include in the first phase analysis were conducted with former refugees from the same country who worked with me as colleagues. These were not included in the final analysis because their interviews were unequal to the other interviews and made the sample unbalanced. As colleagues in the same organization, there were questions of

small coherent group of four, which made the comparisons easier and served as a reference point for the next round of interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. In addition to this, two of the respondents asked to invite community members to the interview. These interviews therefore included a friend and three family members, illustrating the importance of community relationships. The overall results of the first interview phase supported a holistic understanding of the person and it helped to set the direction for the second phase.

4.1.3 Second Phase Interviews

The second phase of interviews took place in Malta among the remaining 17 respondents, whom I had not previously known.[4] I chose Malta for practical reasons, as my organization was exploring ways to partner with churches. This enabled me to carry out the interviews in the context of my work. I formed the interview group within a small church community which on one hand limited the sample, but on the other hand made it easier to communicate with the group and to build trust. I carried out the interviews over the course of two years during several visits.

After participating in various church activities and getting to know some of the refugees, the pastor introduced the research I was doing and encouraged refugees in his church to participate. I made arrangements for the interviews with those who expressed interest. While the first phase looked broadly at the refugee journey in a holistic way, the second phase focused more on specific aspects of this journey.

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responsibility and accountability that the other respondents did not have. These two interviews also lasted longer and included two or more sessions. In addition, one of these was in German, which added translation issues. In the end, the sample of interviews in the first phase included 4 people.

[4] This group included 14 respondents who had entered Malta irregularly by boat (without documentation). There was also a regular immigrant worker as well as the pastor and his wife.

The two phases of research at first seem unrelated with diverse groups representing a host of separate and unique socio-ethnic interests. However, the groups share several similarities: they are displaced persons in Europe, with similar journeys of faith, and members of a Christian community. The small and diverse samples in each phase are well-suited for the purpose of in-depth interviewing because they enabled me to gather detailed information and explore issues at length (Boyce & Neale 2006: 3). Furthermore, the groups are not limited to one nationality or ethnicity. Instead, they form a real representation of the stakeholders in this research. The mixed groups highlight the research being focused on the common characteristic of forced displacement among refugees in a European setting and the correlation to their faith.[5] Despite the small groups, my aim in has been, like Elisa Mason (Mason 2008) describes in the conclusion to her handbook, to form an inclusive approach to the exploration of relevant issues.

4.2 Interview Development

The two phases of interviews have been important for the overall development of the research. The first phase was exploratory in nature by refining the research aim and establishing the importance of the whole person. The second phase carried out the interviewing on the basis of a holistic understanding discovered in the first phase.

[5] Mason keeps an extensive website to track current research in the area of forced migration at http://fm-cab.blogspot.com/. In the conclusion to her handbook, she describes the need for cross pollination to 'support an inclusive approach to the study of forced migration; encourage research by forced migration issue rather than by forced migrant type; identify what has been done as well as gaps; facilitate access to research literature across disparate sub-groupings; and, most importantly, contribute positively to a better understanding of, and a search for solutions to, the problem of human displacement in the world today.'

4.2.1 First Phase Questions

The first phase of interviews used broad open-ended questions to allow the respondents to name and discuss the issues of their journey freely as they chose. The small sample and the informal atmosphere of the interviews helped to focus on the life story of a few refugees, serving as a bridge to the refugees' personal and subjective perspectives (Atkinson 2007: 225). I approached the first phase in an open-ended and unstructured manner to preserve what the respondents were really saying and to explore the links between the different parts with as little of my own bias as possible (Roulston 2009: 3). I was interested in the whole story and particularly what they chose to tell and how. I encouraged them to speak about the memories and highlights from their journey, and I gave them the freedom to describe this as they wanted. As a result I did not take a written protocol into the interview. I first asked about general background information and took notes as the conversation developed. I employed an empathetic tone of careful reflective listening (Roulston 2009: 22) and referred to the notes as cues for the next question or topic to highlight or clarify. After analysing and reflecting on the results from the first phase, I changed the interview questions to a more directed approach. I adapted an interview protocol for the second phase based on the results of the first phase (see Appendix A).

4.2.2 Second Phase Questions

I focused the interview questions in the second phase on a holistic appreciation of the issues that had developed. My aim in the second phase moved beyond the interest in the progression of the whole journey. Instead, the second phase explored the connections between displacement and faith events, by focusing the questions on specific parts of the journey. I took an interview guide (see

Appendix A) with me into each session that included sample questions to draw from in order to discuss and understand the following topics:

- Part one: personal background.
- Part two: experiences of the journey.
- Part three: specific aspects of faith.
- Part four: involvement in churches.

It was not my goal to answer all the questions in each part, but rather, to understand the general topic. In order to see the issues from the refugees' perspective, I applied an extended epistemology to draw on different kinds of knowing, whether through affect, cognition, presentation, or action. I included questions to explore feelings as well as cognitive ideas and concepts. I encouraged the respondents to visualize or give a picture of their experience and asked about their favourite song along the journey. Not only did everyone eagerly answer the question about a song, at least half of them even spontaneously sang the song.

4.2.3 Interviewing Process

The interview sample in the first phase developed naturally through established and trusted connections with each respondent. In the second phase the sample developed as a snowball effect. Each person first heard about the opportunity in a neutral meeting unrelated to the research, for example at a church activity or through a friend. The potential participants were recommended from among the church community and the previous relationships that had been built. I carefully explained the purpose of the research and initiated a verbal agreement with each respondent before meeting together. There were multiple opportunities for the respondents to decline or withdraw from participation in the interviews.

In general, the first phase of interviews probed the accounts of Christian

refugees who described their journey of forced displacement and the manifestation of faith along the way. The second phase focused more specifically on the experience of displacement and faith and the relationship between these. Appendix B describes the steps I took to conduct each interview and how I collected and sorted the material into coded data. I carried out qualitative data analysis (QDA) of the interview material as a process for 'noticing, collecting and thinking about things' (Seidel 1998: 2). I used HyperResearch 3.7.3 software to assist with the transcribing, coding and analysis of the interviews.[6] According to John Seidel, code words represent both the similarities and differences in the material as well as the overlap in terms that require additional analysis:

> Code words more or less represent the things you have noticed. You have no assurance that the things you have coded are always the same type of thing, nor that you have captured every possible instance of that thing in your coding of the data. This does not absolve you of the responsibility to refine and develop your coding scheme and your analysis of the data. (Seidel 1998: 14)

The QDA process included over 300 pages of transcribed interviews and more than 70 pages of notes related to the coding process and analysis. The process of coding identified the various categories and themes referred to in the research. Depending on the length and content of the interviews each interview included from 50 to 150 codes. These codes are the basis for showing the key findings and for applying the results to the analysis. The Appendices show the following summaries of the interview data that have been derived from the coding:

- Appendix C: gives an overview of the interview material discussed in Chapter Four.

[6]This tool is developed and updated by ResearchWare (1997-2016) with a focus on qualitative data analysis that is affordable, research friendly and robust enough to meet the needs of research. The company also offers HyperTranscribe which I used for the interview transcriptions. For more information visit http://www.researchware.com/.

- Appendix D: shows a map of the data in the first phase to support an understanding of the whole person as discussed in Chapter Five.
- Appendix E: lists the categories used to describe the core displacement experience in Chapter Six; it shows the number of occurrences in each interview of the second phase.[7]
- Appendix F: gives a sample of the data from the second phase used in Chapter Seven to illustrate how refugees' personal story connects to God's story.

4.2.4 Limitations

There were several limitations to the interviewing as a result of both the small sample size and the actual mechanics of carrying out the interviews. However, all of these limitations have also strengthened the research effort.

i. Small Size of the Interview Sample

The small size of the interview sample seemingly limited the credibility of the research. The number of interviews was limited because I was not always geographically present and I had other work responsibilities. As the research began, I was based in Austria and was able to follow up with contacts there. Malta was chosen because I was also active there in regular work and had previously participated in activities and developed relationships with the respondents. My previous contact made it possible to build on established trust, which is a prerequisite for the integrity and success of in-depth interviewing. While on one hand the nature of my work limited the size of the interview sample, it also established the foundation needed for reliable results.

[7] There were 17 interviews in the second phase; however, only 14 interviews are included in the table. The pastor and his wife were not included because they are not forcibly displaced. It also does not include Agnes because her interview was completed only after the compilation of the table.

ii. Personal Bias

My regular work and advocacy in favour of refugees and asylum seekers has made the research prone to personal bias. I have addressed this through extensive reading as well as through the test of time. Over time I have been able to revisit the findings to confirm them. My work among refugees in other contexts added triangulation and brought further credibility and verification of the findings.

iii. Use of English

On one hand the use of English required the respondents to speak in a second language and manifested itself mostly through difficult accents and syntax. This limitation required tedious concentration and clarification throughout the interviews. Sometimes, the meaning was not immediately clear and it depended on the whole context. Something not understood in one part of the interview became clear only later when I had heard the whole interview, or reviewed my notes and listened to the recording. Often, the various stories or accounts did not come in single blocks of narrative, which meant the parts had to be identified and put together as a unit.

However, on the other hand, the limitation of English has been balanced by other factors. in-depth interviewing by its nature focuses on a smaller group and does not require a cross-section of people. Successful interviews consist of more than words. The interviews do not simply communicate a meaning for the other to understand, but also provide the opportunity for the respondent to process their journey for their own understanding. This dynamic builds further trust and respect, and a sense of control for the person in their communication. As I thanked each respondent at the end and gave them the chance to make further remarks, several respondents added comments such as: 'thank you for

the chance to speak', 'it encouraged me', and 'it helped me to speak'.

The need to understand is not so much a problem as it is a reality that all refugees face as they live and interact in different languages. Even with translators, refugees have found that their stories have been falsely repeated or misunderstood. There is more to understand than simply the correct words. Some refugees have told me they would rather tell their story directly in a second language to insure the meaning has been conveyed than to risk having a translator misrepresent what they have said.

Other means of communication besides words help to overcome the language limitations. For example, every respondent remembered a song; they pointed to Scriptures and gave examples from life. The interview results discussed in the rest of this chapter will further confirm that the research itself overcame the limitations it faced.

4.3 Interview Highlights

As previously noted, the stories and events described in the interviews often had to be knitted and joined together from different places in the interview. The meanings were not always clear until further questioning or careful listening. Despite this dynamic, the interviews were rich in original descriptions of experiences and their significance.[8] Besides the original excerpts, I have also retold various stories at different points in the analysis. I have included Appendix C to introduce a sample of the material from each interview, which shows the data according to the order the interviews were given. The columns

[8] I refer to original excerpts from the interviews throughout the analysis and when possible, I have included the time-stamp as a way of showing the context of the statement and when it was made during the interview. The time-stamp format (00:00:00) shows the approximate hour, minute and second, and when needed I have also included the person's alias in front of the time.

give direct quotes or summaries from the interviews including the key theme as if the person were speaking, and further data related to the person, the refugee experience, scripture, faith and the church. The columns correspond to the main body of material covered in the interviews. I have summarized four of the interviews to highlight the nature of the experiences.

4.3.1 Oliver

Key Theme: A refugee is a human being, and a human is human.

Oliver was an active believer from a Christian minority before leaving his country as a refugee. He had come to Europe for resettlement and I met him at a drop-in centre where he was helping as a volunteer. We arranged to meet in his room for the interview, and when I arrived he had prepared notes about what he wanted to say.

We began the interview with a discussion of what his life is like as a refugee:

> Never would I like to go to other countries. ... (The decision to leave) not happens to one day or one year. It is a kind of life story and many things coming, is growing in my mind. ... I can say like this that when you are in your country you don't know the difficulty of the people as refugee. ... But now because also I am a refugee, I understand the people who are the refugee–their difficulties ... You know sometimes they have difficulties with financial things, sometimes they have difficulty with the culture, sometimes they have difficulty with many things. ... (Before I was a refugee, I looked down on refugees from a) high place–a kind of proud. (00:18:41)

This was a respondent in the first phase of interviews and so the topics progressed as a conversation without a prescribed plan. We discussed subjects as he raised them and one of these was how the experience as a refugee has influenced his life:

> I can confess I become more near to God because also I am a refugee, because also I don't know what will happen in the future. Even if I pray that in future, "today, the future is in your hand, you are in control." But as a human I have my weakness and sometimes I worry what will happen in future, so more I become near to God, close to God.' (00:19:42)

He made comments about his faith and so I also discussed this topic, asking, 'Can you give an example of growing in your faith?' He referred to his

worries about cultural differences:

> This is a simple example ... I become worried, and inside me is like a river, but when I sit and see I cannot do anything and you are in control of everything this is very big thing that God shows to me. (00:23.20)

I followed his reference to God with a question about what helps him or others to have a strong faith as a refugee:

> The trust to God for everything as our father is the most important thing. ... I remember God's promises. ... I am reading the Bible, it is a renew for me, it is a refresh my faith. ... He saw himself in the bible, as God's people. (00.38.21)

At the end of the interview, Oliver referred to his notes to make further observations about the journey of refugees. These included the struggle to say goodbye, the administrative process, the financial cost, and the cultural differences.

4.3.2 Rachel

Key theme: God is faithful and mighty even when I am struggling.

This was a short interview due to the children waiting and interrupting. The respondent was a single parent who fled with her spouse because of a family conflict that eventually had put their lives in danger. Fleeing as a couple, they were separated in Libya, one traveling onwards alone to Malta with a child. From Malta, now as a single parent, the respondent tried to travel to another part of Europe, but 'the memories have been wiped out'. The events surrounding these journeys were not very clear and the respondent did not talk freely about it.

Generally the responses were brief. Regarding the life as a refugee:

> It's not easy here. I wish we have the opportunity when we have children, we have child, daycare for the children, so we can work. But we as a single parent no we can't work, because we have to take care of the children. Because no one can take care of our children for us to go to work, and we depend on the allowance that is given us as self-sufficient, just to keep us. (00:08:54)

Faith in God has played a central role in the experience:

> Being a refugee, I still thank God, because God is still seeing me through. Though it has been difficult, but I know that God has been really there, cause things that have happened. He has proven himself faithful, many times. He has really proven himself, because he has said, "I will never forsake ... I have been there for you." He has been there for me with all we have gone through. ... (The experience has strengthened my faith. 'It has made me more to see life (as) not easy, but we have to take it as we see it, to start strong in faith. (00:10:31–00:11:31)

I asked specifically about the difficult part of the experience. The difficulties have not been in faith but rather in the limitations as a person:

> It's difficult because we are not free to do what we want to do, because we are not citizen of the place, it's what...how would I say. We are not free. We are not free. We are not free. We are not free at all. (00:12:25)

Describing the experience further, ‘(there is no one) to accept me the way I am, that is willing.' The respondent's greatest need was for acceptance as a stranger, and her favourite song relates to this need:

> Jesus will be there. Jesus really cares. No matter what I am going through. Jesus will be there for me. Yes he knows just what to do (00:21:25).

It was difficult to encourage a long dialogue. The conversation consisted mostly of questions and brief answers. For example, the following excerpt explores the role of faith:

> Question: Were you active in your faith before you became a refugee?
> Answer: Not too active. Not too active.
> Question: When did your faith first mean something to you?
> Answer: I've known Jesus since 1990, but not really. I'm just "Christian". But I turned to God. I know that I really have to be strong in faith.
> Question: How did that happen –that you became strong in faith?
> Answer: It's the challenges of life, what I've been going through.
> Question: Did that happen while you were a refugee?
> Answer: Yes. (00:23:32–00:24:31)

4.3.3 Stanley

Key theme: God fills my life, restores my purpose and unites me with a family.

Stanley recounted his entire story in the first five minutes of the interview without any reference to faith. However, as I asked further about his journey, it was clear that his faith has been fundamental to his survival and recovery from the effects of displacement. Similarly, at the start of the interview, he implied

that he made a simple decision to leave his country to find work, but later as he reflected on his detention in Malta, he considered detention as a small price to pay, 'because, (if) I were to be in my country either I would've been killed or I would've been in prison' (00:02:54). The dynamics of the interview were like peeling off layers that depended on understanding his communication style and building trust and confidence with him.

Stanley's connection between ideas was difficult to follow. Sometimes he began sentences with conjunctions, which made it hard to know if the thought was a new one, or simply a clause connected to something else. In discussing how the displacement experience has affected him he said:

> For sustaining me alone is something. Because how do I say this –being here if you first go to hospital, somebody is there to care for you. But, if you know you are Christian and you get there, and even your Christian brother doesn't come there, you know that God is with you, God is way more close than the other. So how do I say it? –I got to here now. I got to know the real meaning about Christianity. It's not everything about you, you, you. You need to think about others more than even yourself, because you know yourself, you know what you need, but you don't know what others need. (00:25.16)

When Stanley's ideas were unclear it helped to ask him a specific question. For example, I asked him to describe the refugee life as if it was a picture. 'What do you see?'

> I wouldn't say a pleasant picture. It would be some horrible or two-sided picture, where depending on the angle where you stand you see it sometimes as a very nice picture or you see it sometimes as very horrible. Because when you remember what you passed, it can be very horrible. And when you check yourself from the past you see that in some aspect you are not the same person as you left the house. (00:11:31)

Stanley was very reflective about his experience of being a refugee. The experience has given him meaning and purpose:

> If you are a refugee and you don't have Christ, it means you don't even understand the fact that you are a human being. Because if you are with Christ you know that every human being on this earth is already a refugee, because this is not your home. (00:31:31)

The journey of displacement to him is like an act characterized by the problems to solve. 'And those problems are there for you to solve it. You have the power to solve it. Not for you to achieve a positive result, but solve it'

(00:39:07). The act as a refugee for Stanley is like taking an exam in which 'they give you a question to answer, you answer it, but as to pass and fail, these are two things that are going to come out' (00:39:07). Like the answers on the exam, he feels responsible for his actions that have practical effects on others:

> But if your lifestyle gets influence on others, the way you talk with others, the way you behave with others, the way you respond to someone who is in need, for example somebody's problem, is not by going to the hospital or going to seek for any other power. He needs someone to just pour out his problems or his burdens onto when he feels all alone. And when he's telling you, the way and manner you are going to address or learn and listen to the person attentively will let the person know that yes, this person is there for me. (00:35:08)

In comparing his actions to faith he said, pastors will tell you 'raise your hands up and pray. ... (But) It's not by raising your hands up that makes you a Christian, but it's by your act' (00:35:08). He remembered in detention, he read the Scriptures everyday:

> It became something like, I took it as a storybook to read ... Because, whatever is happening today, has happened before in the Bible ... Everything that we are facing today, you go into the Bible is there. Like Abraham who built the altars, he too has to 'go there and restart everything from there. (00:50:46)

Stanley planned to leave his country and he travelled with papers to Libya where he intended to work. However, in Libya, the police destroyed his papers and he was put into prison. This event began the unexpected result of being forced to flee further, and the difficulty of being alone and cut off from his family. The loss of family has been like a death for him. It has been a trauma that has been bridged by the church:

> (If you are) part of this church and you bring (your) idea to church, it help the church to grow. So if you are not there, that side goes down. So you feel good to be there so that it always goes what up. ... And then the act of the refugee in you will be materialised for everyone to know. And there the family or the people with you being a family member, will also recognise you are one of them. (01:02:36)

In making his reflections, Stanley referred directly to his own path and the decisions he makes. He applies a three-part strategy of action to redeem his

situation that includes understanding the context behind it, praying for the situation and applying Scripture to his life.

4.3.4 Jason

Key Theme: Like an oasis in the desert, the Lord is my security, and just as the Lord has helped me on my journey, I want to help others in their time of need.

The need for safety and protection has driven Jason from his family and country for over fifteen years. Describing his life as a refugee he said, 'Life as a refugee is not a good life, because, there is no security for you. Like in Africa there is no security' (00:56:27). He referred to his need for safety, security and protection at least fifteen times during the interview:

> When you go to seek asylum, there is nothing safe for you. There are people they will watch over on you. ... They say we must go maybe to Cameroon, because here it's not safe. Better you go maybe to Gabon or Cameroon you can get claim asylum, and you can stay safe. (00:10:10–00:11:46)

He described one threat to his life along this journey as follows:

> (I worked in a restaurant and some men threatened me, because I was a foreigner) ... I hold, the stick we used to cook with, and he just come for me to beat ... I make the stick like this, and he just pass because he was coming to take it by force, and we start now to fight and they take me they say we are just going, we will kill you. But the way was very, the corridor was very short. So I just hold myself, they come, many, many. They beat but I could not go. Until a lady just come inside between us and I just take the way to her. (00:25:10)

A large part of the interview was spent clarifying the journey to Malta which lasted for over three years in search of a safe place. The list below summarizes this journey for protection:

- Waits for ten months to register at the UNHCR in Cameroon while living in an abandoned building;
- Finds his way to the next UNHCR office when the one in Cameroon closes before he has registered;
- Fights off attackers in Nigeria;
- Meets strangers in Mali and works to pay expenses;

- Reaches the UNHCR office but they do not determine status;
- Changes his plan to find work in Libya;
- Misses family and grieves being alone on New Year's day;
- Starts a laundry business in Mali to pay expenses;
- Hides in the desert while the police try to arrest him;
- Walks across the desert border;
- Survives while stranded at sea for five days;
- Rations and shares food while imprisoned in Malta for nineteen months.

The list of events is significant because like many of the respondents, Jason does not emphasize the details of his journey. Many of the events are incoherent and I often had to go back to clarify their extraordinary nature. However, for the respondent, they are normal and like Jason said, 'You need maybe, for me, I need like to forget these things so I can just live normal life. Cause if you think more about it... Sometimes it's not good. You can get sick' (00:56:59).

To summarize his journey and what has been significant to him about it, Jason said:

> For me it's also spiritually, it's also the way to trust God. Because through this time you need to pray. Because I used to have small, what do they call it, New Testament, the small one. And in every place you need to pray. For you maybe to pass to another country so you have, you put all your mind and everything to trust in God. Reading the Psalms, praying God. (01:08:09)

It was easier for Jason to refer to concrete events than to discuss ideas or meanings. For example, when I asked what aspect of God has been important to him on his journey, at first he did not understand, but after clarifying the question, he referred to the importance of understanding events in light of God's Word:

> Let's say because as a refugee you need always to listen to the news they say this. But if you take your bible and reading it, or spending your time by studying the word of God,

> sometimes you cannot even trust what you are listening to the news. And its also this thing that I realized that helped me. (01:23:56)

His journey has been full of events that test and build his faith. He explained, 'if you know, if you are Christian, it’s also like you are passing through the tunnel. ... Its a time of difficulty’ (01:09:11).

The church is significant because of its people who have helped him through the difficult times. As an example, Jason told the story of his injury at work when he had to bandage himself:

> I had to take it myself to tie it with the teeth. And I, on that day, I realize I am very, I am just alone. Then I just called the pastor. I take my phone and I phoned the pastor. ... And I told him. Then he say, 'wait I'm coming'. ... And from that day I realized there is a difference (between the church community and the other people). (01:20:12–01:22:22)

4.4 Key Findings

In general the interviews probed the accounts of Christian refugees as they described their journey of forced displacement and the manifestation of their faith along the way. The two interview phases were important for understanding the FDP experiences but also for establishing the theory of correlation. While Appendix C provides sample data to illustrate the parts of a framework of decreation., Appendix D, F and G give a more detailed breakdown of the data used to support the theory of correlation behind this research.

The diagram in Appendix D illustrates the data used to support the aspect of creation in the correlation. I first classified the data into two kinds with the general topics related to all refugees grouped above and the specific issues related to Christians grouped below. I then identified seven categories that the refugees used to discuss their lives and the issues they faced. I grouped the data into spheres that I arranged in the larger categories to reflect their relation to one another. Each of these categories summarize the keywords and themes from among the interviews and are grouped together with dotted lines. The

diagram functions like a map. As much as the arrangement reflects a horizontal connection in each category, there is also a vertical correspondence where, for example, details about the person and culture correspond in a general way to existential causes that the person refers to in relation to their faith. This data leads to a whole person understanding which is discussed further in the following chapter.

Appendices D, F and G show the data at work to support the theory of correlation. Appendix D relates to the aspect of creation, while Appendices F and G correspond to the two following aspects of decreation and re-creation. Together this data illustrates the varied and significant experiences of faith and displacement. The next chapters will further highlight and draw from this data to support the argument that refugees correlate displacement and faith through a movement from decreation to re-creation. The remainder of this chapter will emphasize several key findings that are important to consider before continuing on to the next chapters.

4.4.1 Peace and Safety

Despite the diverse background, nearly all the participants, at some point, linked their experiences to the need for peace, safety and freedom (DeMarinis 2009). Five respondents referred directly to the lack of safety they experienced, and there were at least four other categories among the interviews related to the need for peace and safety, including: the threat to life; lack of protection; persecution and violence. Three of the respondents referred to God's plans for peace that are good and that are a sign of Christ's presence. In general the interviewees referred to God's peace as the characteristic of a faith oriented, whole and fulfilled life. Whether fleeing because their lives were at risk or because they hoped simply to live and work in peace, the need for a safe place

was a common denominator among all of those in the study. These concerns stand in contrast to the discussions of officials and experts who focus on issues relevant to them such as definitions, policy and systems. This reflects the gap between those in forced displacement and those outside of it that this research hopes to address.

There is a growing need to discuss the issues concerning refugees from the perspective of the person need to discuss the issues concerning refugees from the perspective of the person involved. Edward Mogire (Mogire 2009) illustrates this as he traces how refugee concerns have developed from humanitarian issues in years past to concerns related to state security today. He points out that the concerns are woven into the political landscape, and their issues are reclassified to such an extent that the refugees themselves are no longer connected to the original causes of their displacement (Mogire 2009). As Roger Zetter points out, there are more forcibly displaced people today than ever before, yet the meaning of the term is increasingly blurred. Governments that control and shape the understanding create politicized labels that lead to conflicting interpretations and conceptual confusion about the issues (Zetter 2007: 186).

Unlike politicians, the issues are clear for the FDPs. They see their situation through their well-being as human beings. Hamilton explained that he had no choice but to leave Eritrea and then once at the refugee camp, with a refugee status in Sudan, he again had no choice but to flee further (Hamilton 00:07:37 – 00:10:10). He links his forced displacement to the need for safety and not to some policy: 'The only choice is to leave Sudan and to find a safe place where you can be stable, have some residency permit, work, help yourself' (Hamilton 00:10:10). Monzini reports that migration for some sub-

Saharan countries is a way to get away from very 'harsh living conditions'. These migrants are looking to 'escape difficult situations and to find peace and security' (Monzini 2010: 18).

In describing his own condition as an asylum seeker, Jason explained he is not secure (00:08:47). He fled 'to claim asylum and have protection' (00:09:28) but learns, 'when you go to seek asylum, there is nothing safe for you' (00:10:10). Jason explained, 'In the night, the soldiers came ... (The neighbours knew we were refugees.) They said, 'We know you. You must see how you can save yourself' (00:11:04). Jason originally sought protection through the official channels, but when these attempts continually failed, he used unofficial means, and the need for peace and safety drove him further.

Commenting on his experience in Libya, Baldwin says, 'if you, you stay in Libya, you don't have, you don't have ... safety. So you will, you will always preparing to leave the country' (00:07:08).

The unofficial and dangerous journeys only increase the need for safety as the interviews further report: 'If you are slow or don't have food or water on their bag maybe they die in the desert. You can die' (Solomon 00:23:17).

Stanley said, 'we don't know what happened, but the boat just capsized, everybody inside. We were 28 in the boat and out of that 28 only 16 survived' (00:01:57).

Isaac said:

> They lost the cars, they lost, it take ten days. In desert, everything, it take everything is finished. Is too much hard. Some people are crying. Every people are suffer (Isaac 5:18). ... in my boat the same thing. I take one week in the sea. ... the same thing happened me in the desert. ... the food everything is finished in the sea. (00:22:23–00:23:16)

The context of peace is significant; it is the driving force for those in this study. While those on the outside might point to policy or issues that ensure peace and safety, those who go through displacement describe peace in terms of their

story. Like the examples above, they describe the events that have threatened their lives and driven them onward, and in this way they do not separate their vision of peace from the context of their lives.

4.4.2 Community's Emphasis

Another significant characteristic and a common denominator in the research is not simply the connection with their experiences but also with their communities. In the first phase, Oliver noted the reciprocal role his community played in giving him help. Ethan described how the group he was with protected a fellow traveller and helped him through the journey. Karl and Anton saw the love of God among the community. David was welcomed and taken in by a French church. Similarly, in the second phase, the participants came mostly from the same church in Malta where they experienced welcome and shared in the church leadership and family.

4.4.3 Practising Faith

Closely connected to the community there has also been an emphasis on active faith. Some of the themes among the respondents to express the importance of active faith have included: the reciprocal nature of community involvement; protection and support from the community in life-threatening situations; prayer, the love of God in practice; equality and shared leadership; family life and a welcoming place. Similar themes emerged as well in the framework of the MIRACLE project (CCME 2010). Likewise, Alesia Passarelli and Darrell Jackson inquired into the church's involvement with twenty-two migrant interviewees. The themes from their interviews emphasize that churches in general function as a tool for stability, a connector and bridge-builder that can make or break a person's integration (Jackson & Passarelli 2016: 115-122). The specific faith context is significant to note because while

there are generic themes that are important for all migrants, like the Jackson and Passarelli study show, there are also themes that emerge out of a particular community. Displaced Christians coming to Europe are actively practising their faith and getting involved in church communities. Just as forced displacement will likely affect a refugee's faith, the refugee's understanding and practice of faith will also affect the life of local churches. The faith values behind this research context are tied to the communities where the respondents are both givers and receivers in the nurture of faith.

4.5 Conclusion

The following statements summarize the key findings. In one form or another the respondents discussed themselves and their situation to reflect the following statements:

- I am a human being;
- I want to live in peace, safety and freedom;
- My suffering is part of the journey;
- I see myself in Scripture;
- My journey prepares me to serve in the family of God.

The content of these interviews reflects the development of faith. Telling their stories is more than simply giving examples that pass on information; it is also a way to make sense of their journey. To do this, I look at a correlation that connects their experiences and movement through stories. This is not to conduct a narrative inquiry into stories, but to use narratives as a vessel for traversing the bridge between the experience of displacement and the movement of faith. In general, the first phase emphasized the significance of understanding the journey in regards to the whole person, and the second

phase developed the understanding and significance of the journey to faith.

In summary, the interviews shaped my understanding and development of the research aims. Each interview has been like a new cycle for understanding the correlation of displacement and faith among refugees. The interviews have been key moments along the way that point to the framework and theories behind the research. To process the connection with faith that was made in the interviews needs a robust theory of correlation dependent on the worth and value of being created as human beings, by passing through displacement and discovering a place in God's story.

CHAPTER 5

Journey from Creation: Humanity and *Imago Dei*

This chapter builds on the key data of the interviews. Most of the respondents were stating: 'We are human beings'. This statement reflects the context of creation that originates from God and finds its end in God. Creation refers to the human reality of being made in the image of God. This gives freedom, worth and dignity to the person, which are driving forces behind refugee journeys. Creation serves as the starting point for understanding the correlation between displacement and faith that refugees make.

Decreation, as a reality of displacement implies that it was preceded by creation. Something existed that could be decreated.[1] Refugees live in the tension of being created in the image of God, yet at the same time being dehumanized by the results of affliction.[2] Decreation signifies the disorder and upheaval of forced displacement, while the image of God serves as the stamp of origin and key for meaning.[3] This chapter proposes that the person, created as a human being and rooted in the *imago Dei* drives the journey forward and connects the individual to the creator.

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[1] In *Gravity and Grace,* Weil explains, 'to re-establish order is to undo the creature in us' (Weil 2003 [1952]:34). In her Notebooks she says ‘we must destroy the *ersatz* (substitute) form of reality in ourselves in order to attain to the true reality (Weil 2004 [1956]:313).

[2] Weil’s idea of decreation is not directed so much at the undoing of what God has made as much as it is to expose the ‘creation’ of false realities. This is an important and difficult distinction in Weil’s reference to ‘decreation’ and ‘creation’. She is not so concerned with the primary creation as she is with the secondary one of an imaginary and inauthentic reality that becomes the primary focus of the person. I am writing this chapter with the understanding that Weil refers to creation in the sense of a human ‘construction’. This is different from the creation of humanity. Yet, as both involve human beings, the two are intertwined. The image of God helps to distinguish the divine creation from the human construction.

[3] In terms of a journey, decreation is like a hurricane that has blown across the land and changed everything. It reconfigures the map and the driver now navigates the territory full of dangers, detours and breakdowns. As human beings, refugees are like drivers who bear the stress of the journey, while the *imago Dei* serves as an unseen yet indispensable key for navigation. It is the undeniable point of reference that brings the person to say at each new turn, ‘I am human too.’

One of the difficulties in applying Weil's idea of decreation to a correlation is the ambiguous nature of the relationship between the creator and the creature.[4] How should the person hold onto the reality of creation as a human being when Weil's idea promotes a detachment and purification from the mirage of false realities (McCullough 2014: 7)? The decreative effort to expose and dismantle all that promotes the self seemingly runs against FDPs who embrace themselves as human beings. This chapter will discuss aspects of creation and decreation that exist in tension and the important role of the *imago Dei* in the correlation process. To establish these distinctions the chapter will:

- consider the importance of being human in the refugee experience, and use Maslow's theory of hierarchy to support human worth;
- highlight several aspects of decreation that are difficult to understand;
- and finally introduce the *imago Dei* as the mechanism to navigate the tension, launching the person forward on his or her journey through decreation to re-creation.

5.1 On Being Human

The significance of human beings shows up throughout the data such as the emphasis on worth and dignity, the effort to find work, and the need for peace and safety. The following excerpts provide examples.

5.1.1 Examples from the Data

Members of David's family emphasized their values and identity:

> Before a person leaves their country, they have something: a house, a family, and sometimes work. But when they come in the new country, they have nothing, no money, no

[4] It is not clear whether the concern to 'uncreate' applies to the works of creation or to the imaginations and pursuits of the created. I believe that decreation is directed at the construction of 'false realities'. McCullough explains that for Weil, the imagination is 'prone to uphold a false reality', and that it is the 'predictable and systematic quality of the distortion' that concerns Weil (McCullough 2014:20).

> work, nothing, nothing. ... when we first came here, I had a question which was very difficult for me. It was "Who I was?" If someone asked me "who are you?" I didn't know what to say. Am I one of my own people? Am I European? ... It was a great question cause it was like a fear. (David 01:31:46 – 01:34:00)

Karl and Anton sought asylum because 'we just wanted to live and work in peace and safety'. Yet even as asylum seekers, the two friends saw their personal freedom and safety endangered when fellow asylum seekers threatened to kill them because of their Christian conversion. Anton said:

> One night there was a riot in the detention centre. Cameras were broken along with other objects. A group tried to break into my room several times, but fortunately the door was locked and it held.

There was a fear of random imprisonment and mistreatment for all who passed through Libya. As a result of this Hamilton decided to assist fellow refugees who were stranded in Libya. Similarly, when Rachel experienced mistreatment in Malta, she said she is struggling and added, 'We are not free– we are not free.'

Oliver explained that when he assisted refugees in his own country before becoming a refugee himself, he saw himself as something better than the ones he helped. But as a refugee he realized like others have said, 'A refugee is a human being too. A human is human.'

Amin tied the difficult decisions in displacement to his own identity and sense of purpose that have been created in him by God. He recalled the story of his birth that has been passed down to him and given him meaning. His sense of the future has been rooted in his creation as a person. [5]

Esther explained the strength for her journey has come from knowing that her destiny is tied to God. She said, 'It's God who knows my destiny, whatever I'm going through, He knows. And He has plans for me, good ones for me'

[5] Amin said, ' to see what God has done for me' makes the difficult decisions easier (00:20:59). As an example, he recalled the story of being born that his mom always told him. He had died at birth but was miraculously revived. Becoming a person and living at birth is a creation event that he reaches back to for finding purpose in the present.

(Esther 00:30:16). She read from Psalm 24:1-2 as an example of how God is with her giving hope: 'The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.' Esther's comments illustrate a reality that envisions her identity and future destiny in God's plan.

5.1.2 Whole Persons

In general, the interviewees see themselves as whole persons who originate in creation. I discovered this understanding in the first phase, and described it as a holistic understanding. I identified two groups of data in order to correspond to the research question about how displacement and faith correlate. The first group includes the general categories related to all FDPs, while the second includes the specific data related to faith issues (see Appendix D).[6] This kind of arrangement emphasizes the whole person and it identifies categories that that are connected together.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the spectrum of categories that the refugees discussed. Approximately half of the interview time was spent discussing issues related to general topics common to all refugees, shown in the top half of the figure: person and culture, displacement causes, journey, and displacement effects. The other half of the discussion was focused on specific topics related to faith claims. These are arranged in the bottom half of the figure: existential causes, cognitive processes, as well as volition and action.[7]

[6] Appendix D illustrates the discussion about the key data in the first phase of interviews. It shows seven sub-groups of data gleaned from the interviews. I classified the data into two groups: the general topics related to all refugees are grouped above and the specific issues related to Christians are grouped below. The data grouped in spheres comprise the actual code classification assigned during the analysis of interviews. These correspond to the two groupings of displacement and faith. The sub-groups function as spheres that relate to each other like a map. As much as the arrangement reflects a horizontal connection in each category, there is also a vertical correspondence.

[7] The percentages represent approximately the amount of time and attention given to the topics in relation to the other categories. They emphasize the range of discussion and they should not

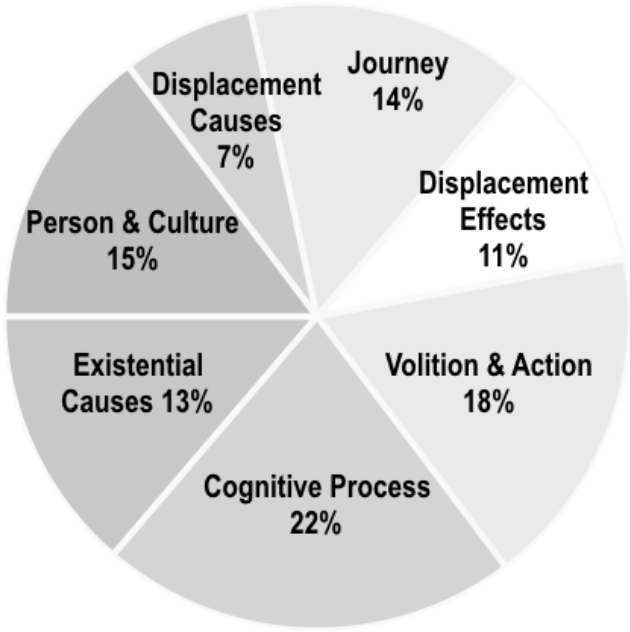

Figure 5.1 Occurrences of Categories in First Phase

i. Verification

Before I began the process of interviewing and coding the material in the first phase, my organization offered a training event for full-time workers among refugees and asylum seekers.[8] This event provided the opportunity to verify and deepen my understanding of the interview data. The purpose of the workshop was to improve the understanding of how refugees relate to the Scriptures and how this influences their lives. The event offered triangulation and resulted in a negative conclusion which nonetheless served to establish external validity and credibility of the interview data and conclusions (Robson 2002: 372-407).

Even though the workshop confirmed the categories identified in Figure 5.1, there was also a significant negative analysis of the discussions about

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be seen as quantitatively accurate. The top and bottom categories also correspond to the two general kinds of data illustrated in the Appendix D.

[8] The workshop was held in May 2008 among 35 practitioners who worked as NGO/church workers among refugees and asylum seekers in Europe. The workshop consisted of reflection and discussion to look at the connection between refugees and Scripture.

refugees and Scripture.[9] I observed that the practitioners had trouble identifying the themes that resonated with refugees. While they were aware of issues relevant to themselves, they had a more difficult time naming those related to refugees. I did not expect this from practitioners. This observation underlined the need for interviews that explore the issues related to refugees as human beings and how they see themselves in relation to their displacement and faith experience.

ii. Holistic Understanding

The specific details discussed by the respondents are connected with the whole person. For example, Amin's account of his mother's story about his birth relates to the category of 'Person & Culture', however, I classify it as an existential cause because it is foundational to his faith. It is a story that has nurtured faith. Likewise, the mistreatment along the journey that Hamilton and Rachel describe denies human rights. This mistreatment caused Hamilton in Libya to assist his fellow refugees, and in Malta, it caused Rachel to struggle. Both of these are classified as 'Volition & Action' of faith, but they also reflect the effects of displacement.

The theory is that to address any one category of a refugee's life must be done in light of the other parts. Figure 5.2 illustrates how this theory encompasses the beginning middle and end of a refugee journey.

[9] A negative analysis means that the overall evaluation and outcome of the workshop was different from what I had expected.

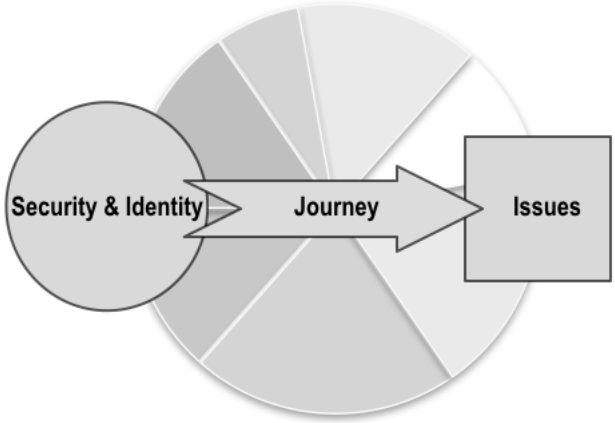


Figure 5.2 Whole Person Approach to Understanding Refugee Issues

In Figure 5.2 the journey originates in categories of security and identity, and it leads to other related issues. The whole person is connected with the journey. So, the stories and concerns about freedom, decision processes or future plans are connected to other aspects of the person as illustrated in the different categories of figure 5.1.[10]

5.1.3 Maslow's Theory

Maslow's hierarchy of need is an example of a theory rooted in a holistic understanding of the person. According to this theory, meeting a need at one level connects the refugee to a new level of need, and through this upward progression, a refugee can slowly actualize solutions to the issues of displacement that restore the person as a fully functioning human being. The following section will consider Maslow's hierarchy of need as an illustration of human beings functioning as whole persons. In the following chapter, I will consider the critique of this theory in light of decreation.

According to Maslow's theory, the gratification and denial of needs as well as the sense of self motivates the person further upward toward whole and

[10] Figure 5.2 depicts the image of a pie chart that is in the background. This represents the pie chart of Figure 5.1.

healthy lives.[11] The push/pull factor is 'the desire to become everything that one is capable of becoming' (Maslow 1943: 382). In the peak experience of self-actualization, the person progresses up the hierarchy of needs according to their sense of gratification and deficiency, where achieving one level of need leads to the next (Winthrop 1965). Figure 5.3 illustrates the upward progression in the hierarchy of needs.

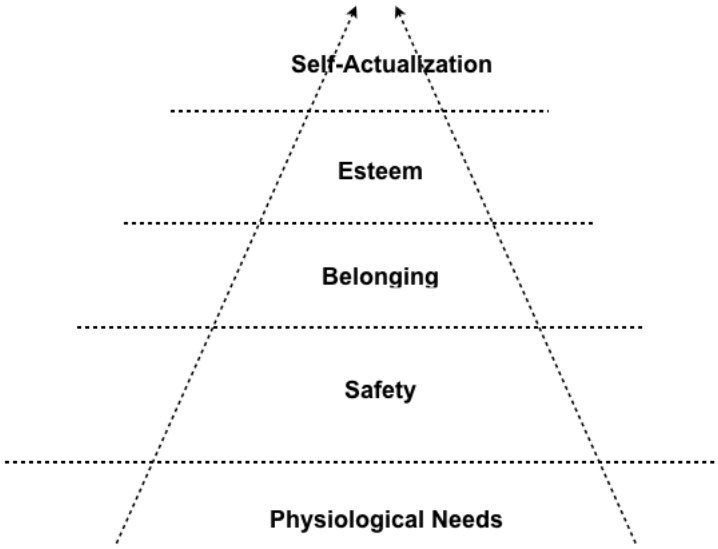


Figure 5.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's theory goes beyond the subject-object distinctions of behaviouralism as well as the psychoanalytical categories of Freud to a more integrated view of the person that is based on the freedom, dignity, and potential of the person. Maslow's theory represents a humanistic psychological approach to the issue of forced displacement in which the value of the human being becomes the measure of all things (Winthrop 1965). In this approach, the

[11] Maslow refers to 'D needs' and 'B cognition', which stand respectively for deficiency and being. Maslow uses these in relation to several key terms including needs, cognition, and motivation. According to the theory, D needs refer to deficiencies to overcome, while B cognition refers to the recognition of being. One of Maslow's summary points in *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962:202-203) is that immaturity and maturity (self-actuality) are seen by the gratification and denial of D needs and by looking at the world through B cognition. Maslow says, 'the external problems we deal with 'scientifically' are often also our own internal problems and that our solutions to these problems are also in principle, self-therapies in the broadest sense.'

motivations, responses, and understanding are built around the positive potential of human beings to grow and achieve. In his later writing, Maslow became more philosophical in his concern for a better world and the transformation of character that rises out of a whole system. Commenting on the achievements of existentialism at the start of his second book, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Maslow (Maslow 1962) notes that the authentic person builds on the existential belief that 'God is dead,' and in this place the self becomes 'godlike' seeing the world through the self and rebuilding the inner nature by meeting needs and growing into a healthy person (Maslow 1962: Pt. 1, Sec. 2).

5.1.4 Evaluation

Maslow's theory of motivation draws on an existential approach that does not split the world into subjects and objects but rather finds synergy through being in the middle of experience.[12] Maslow's hierarchy implies that integrated wholeness is foundational to motivation theory (Maslow 1943: 370), and that synergy is more holistic and correlates to good psychological health (Maslow 1964a: 52-3). The concept of a whole person is at the heart of many theories.[13]

[12] An example of the synergy is Maslow's discussion of the selfishness and unselfishness of 'my own' or the 'other'. This reflects two sets of needs that self-actualizers are able to fuse together into a single set as 'ours' (Maslow 1964:46-7). Similarly, his discussion of B psychology redefines altruism along with selfishness and unselfishness so as to transcend the dichotomies between them' (Maslow 1964:56). B-psychology refers to the theory of psychological development that Maslow develops in *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962). Maslow discusses his theory according to the contrast between needs or motivations that result from deficiencies – which are found in the first four levels of his hierarchy– and needs that are rooted more in a person's being. 'B-psychology' is Maslow's term for an existential approach of becoming a healthy person.

[13] Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Albert Mills look at 'workplace spirituality' around existential themes of epistemological roots, methodology, agency, instrumentality, and human connectivity. These are similar to Maslow's needs. The authors point out that religious worldviews have confirmed that whole person theories distinguish themselves as an ontology or methodology only after they make sense of incompleteness, irrationality, and inconsistency (Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2013:159). These kinds of explorations raise the question of what is at the heart of refugees' sense of wholeness and how does this manifest itself?

However, in a world without God– according to Maslow– the person becomes his or her own creator, and this too stands in contrast to decreation.

Critics fault Maslow's theory particularly in how the parts relate together. While identifying basic needs and the positive potential for human beings to grow and achieve, the hierarchy is unclear because of the parts that overlap and terms that contradict (Sapru 2008a: 220). It is difficult to see how the whole person is made of the different parts as Maslow describes them (Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2013: 159). Similarly, the FDPs in this research are whole persons who are aware of more than the sum of their needs; their identity as a minority social group is built on more than structural variables alone (Piff et al. 2010). Maslow's concerns raise the question of what drives those in this research forward in their faith. Is it the upward progression of humanism or something else?

5.2 Challenges of Decreation

This chapter explores the identity of refugees as human beings. This identity is not based on some stage or need in a hierarchy, but rather as one rooted in creation and connected to others. This contrasts to Weil's idea of creation that begins with affliction and the inhumanity of life. Seen alongside of each other, these are two different starting points. The refugees see themselves as whole persons, while for Weil, the essence of existence is decreation and this presents several challenges to overcome.

5.2.1 Mechanism of Necessity

Weil's view of creation as a renunciation challenges the refugees' emphasis on the value of being human:

> Creation is not an act of self-expansion but of restraint and renunciation. God and all his creatures are less than God alone. ... God permitted the existence of things distinct from himself and worth infinitely less than himself. By this creative act he denied himself as Christ

> has told us to deny ourselves. God denied himself for our sakes in order to give us the possibility of denying ourselves for him. (Weil 1959 [1951]: 145)

In Weil's scheme, creation confers on humanity a replica of God's initiative, and creates the need to renounce and give up the imaginary nature of human effort and to awaken instead to what is real and eternal (Weil 1959 [1951]: 159). Weil's view of creation clashes with the view of refugees. While the refugees look for ways to connect relationally to the whole of creation, Weil looks for every possibility to detach from false reality and to cross the threshold from the created to the uncreated (Robert 2005: 63).

Weil refers to a mechanism of necessity that is at work in creation in which God has abdicated power and freedom in order to reach the desired state of love, liberty, and consent (Vetö 1994: 35-6):

> God does not exercise his all-powerfulness; if he did so, we should not exist, nor would anything else. Creation: God chaining himself down by necessity ... In what sense is it a good that I should exist, and not God alone? How should God love himself through the wretched medium of myself?' (Weil 2004 [1956]: 190)

Weil sees creation as a volitional act that carries the person into the reality of decreation who then chooses to stay there (Robert 2005: 64).

The mechanism of necessity describes this volition and highlights the absence of God in creation. In her *Lectures on philosophy* Weil explains:

> By definition...God is indemonstrable. God cannot be felt. 'Truly thou art a hidden God.' One can say that the very reason God has decided to hide himself is that we might have an idea of what he is like. Every attempt to base morality on theology destroys morality and theology. One shouldn't say: 'I have to do this because it is God's will', but: 'God wills it because I have to do it.' (Weil 1978 [1959]: 171)

While refugees point to the positive affirmation of their humanity in creation as the driving force behind their bid for freedom, Weil points to the necessity to model God's action in creation. To acknowledge creation as the abdication of freedom is like consenting to lose one’s whole existence; it is submission to necessity (Reed 2013: 27).

5.2.2 Negative Theology

The mechanism of necessity leads to a second challenge, namely Weil's emphasis on the void and affliction of life. This creates a difficult negative theology to overcome. Rebecca and Lucian Rozelle-Stone (Rozelle-Stone & Stone 2013: 5) point out the need to see Weil's theology as an 'atheology' of 'reflective-negative' thought. True human nature, according to Weil, means there is a void of incomplete human existence where any attempt to fill it is no less than the root of evil (Rozelle-Stone & Stone 2013: 70-71):

> Human misery and not pleasure contains the secret of divine Wisdom ... the knowledge of our misery is the only thing in us which is not miserable ... We can only know one thing about God: that he is what we are not. Our misery alone is the image of this. (Weil 2004 [1956]: 234-36)

As previously noted, Weil's emphasis on the withdrawal and sacrifice in creation leaves a space between God and God, where the humanity of creation becomes an obstacle between God and the Son (Vetö 1994: 12-13). While other existentialists take a negative view of being, Weil takes a negative view of existence in creation. According to Weil's view, 'We can only know one thing about God: that he is what we are not' (Weil 2004 [1956]: 236). This view recalls the relationship between God and humanity described in the Psalms:

> Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
> let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
> For he is our God,
> and we are the people of his pasture,
> and the sheep of his hand. (Psalm 95:6-7)
>
> Know that the LORD, he is God!
> It is he who made us, and we are his;
> we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (Psalm 100:3)

The unspoken implication of the Psalmist says, 'The Lord, he is God!', and 'we' are not God. Weil's concern about the relationship between creator and creature calls attention to a lack of balance and emphasizes 'we are not God.'

Unlike the idea of worship and community in these verses, Weil builds her view of creation around the withdrawal of God in creation.

5.2.3 Ontological Dilemma

Weil's emphasis on the void in human existence also creates an ontological dilemma for refugees by pulling the ground of humanity out from 'under their feet'.[14] Lisa McCullough notes that Weil is difficult to interpret because she is ahistorical and 'unanchored' in a specific communal context (McCullough 2014: 213), unlike refugees who are firmly anchored in their community. Psalms 95 and 100 stress the relationship with the creator and belonging together as a people (Psalm 95:7, 100:3). The implication that Weil makes, 'we are not God', is at best unspoken and hidden in the Psalm. Psalm 95 and 100 reflect a strong relationship between the creator and creature of enduring care and trust.

Rowan Williams (Williams 1993: 53) explains that Weil's effort to find a 'concordant composition' between need and desire makes her vision morally and socially resourceful, while at the same time she is ambiguous about the relationship between the finite person and infinite God:[15]

> If we are to take seriously those ways in which Weil helps us to grasp and reflect on the necessarily finite and vulnerable standpoint of moral thought and action, we need to understand also as fully as possible what it is that pushes her argument in the direction what I think is a morally and intellectually ambiguous, if not unsustainably paradoxical, account of what it is to love God and the world. (Williams 1993: 76)

Weil's effort to achieve nothing and to demote the person in the process begins to be her own *ersatz* form. She brings a self-loathing that approaches a false

[14] This idea comes from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 'After Ten Years' (2010 [1951]:20), who asked if there has ever been a people with 'so little ground under their feet'. His question addresses the tension of living in an evil age. Bonhoeffer implies, to disregard or deny any ground of humanity raises an ethical problem because it robs the person of what has been given through creation. While the interviewees emphasize their roots as human beings and all they can become despite displacement, decreation points to all that is missing as a result of displacement.

[15] Weil refers to the 'concordant composition' (2004 [1956]:151), and Williams, (1993:53-54) explains that this is the coordination of a person's need (as a result of the void) and the desire to meet the need (as Christ has modeled) in preparation for the supernatural.

bravado (Roberts 2011), and through this commits the same error of an imaginary reality that she identifies in her idea of decreation.

Like the writer in Psalm 95, the concern for humanity among the respondents reaches beyond the absence of God to recall their connection to God. Rowan Williams even argues that the relationship can be repaired through the language of praise and repentance and the acknowledgement of creation for establishing and sustaining the person (Williams 1993: 76).

5.3 Displacement and *Imago Dei*

The final part of this chapter looks at the *imago Dei* as the link between God and humanity. This link provides a basis for an ontological correlation between displacement and salvation. Understanding the *imago Dei* also addresses the ambiguous relationship between the creator and creature that critics have pointed out in Weil's thought. This section develops the significance of the *imago Dei* in terms of the essence and function of humanity, which correspond to the refugee's emphasis on being human, and also to Weil's emphasis on modeling God’s relation in creation. The *imago Dei* is important because it addresses the ontological dilemma. It raises awareness not simply for the essence of a person's dignity, but also for how a person acts relationally. The two aspects of essence and function correspond directly to appreciation for the whole person created in the image of God and the need to embrace the creator's example, thus mediating the tension between Weil and the refugees' view of creation.

5.3.1 Displacement and *Imago Dei*

The creation narrative in Genesis describes humanity's break with God and the forced displacement from the garden:

> So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of Life. (Gen. 3:23-24)

This narrative not only describes the first displacement in Scripture, but also shows the result of decreation that began when Adam and Eve constructed their own reality.[16] Like refugees, Adam and Eve flee the garden toward another reality coded with the image of God.

The emphasis among the interviews on finding peace and safety underlines the up-rootedness of displacement and the loss of place that characterizes the experience. The exodus in 2015 of more than a million refugees into Europe further illustrates the loss of place.[17] A place is not only a territory, but also includes the space for social processes; there is a connection between geography and identity that is more than territorialization (Brun 2001: 16). The *imago Dei* belongs on the map of displacement because it offers a route to wholeness that goes beyond geographic coordinates. As L. Malkii (Malkii 1995: 66) noted early on, we need broader terms to understand refugees in order to consider the socio-economic, personal histories and psychological or spiritual situations of those involved. The *imago Dei* is this kind of term, and while it does not take the place of a land, it does give the basis for broader understanding of the issues involved in forced displacement.

[16] Genesis 3:1-7 describes the conversation and reasoning of Adam and Eve as they considered a different reality from what their creator intended. Their conversation partner was the serpent. It involved knowledge of God and the self, and it constructed another reality around their own solution.

[17] In August 2015, the Prime Minister of Germany, Angela Merkel announced Syrian refugees would be welcome in Germany. By October, thousands had crossed into Hungary and its surrounding region. The small countries were unable to cope and opposition mounted against the influx of refugees, citing the refugees as a threat to European culture. Hungary soon put up a fence to control the flow and eventually closed its borders to anyone who did not have documents.

5.3.2 Imago Dei and Theological Connections

The *imago Dei* is a theological idea that originates in creation. It refers to the unique link between humanity and God that came into existence like the rest of creation when God spoke and created. There are relatively few references to the image of God in the Scriptures; however, the term dominates theological discussions and it is the basis for many of the key ideas in Scripture such as creation, procreation, Incarnation, redemption, and glorification (Johnson 2003; Curtis 1992). The *imago Dei* functions alongside other theological terms on which this research stands, such as the grace and incarnation of Christ. The *imago Dei* originates in the creation account where it makes a bridge from humanity's first displacement back to God's reality.

5.3.3 Imago Dei in Scripture

The concept of *imago Dei* occurs in the Genesis creation narrative at two points. First, Genesis 1:26-27 says, 'Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.' Second, Genesis 5:1 says, 'In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.' The relatively small amount of Scripture and the ambiguous nature of the ideas have made it difficult to define the image of God (Curtis 1992: 390). The creation narrative uses two words that together form the idea of *imago Dei,* and a brief review of these words reinforce the significance of the i*mago Dei* in connection to forced displacement.

The first word is *selem*, which means a 'representation' and is usually translated as 'image'. The second word is *demuth*, which conveys the idea of a comparison and is translated commonly as 'likeness.' *Selem* and *demuth* are used relatively few times in Scripture, and only in the Genesis creation account

do the terms occur together.[18] The combination signals that something more is going on than either of the two words alone can communicate (Clines 1968: 89). Used together, the two words signal the dignity and worth of human beings (Preuss 1978), which supports and relates to the refugee emphasis on human beings. While the exact meaning of the terms in Genesis may be ambiguous, the significance of the words becomes clearer through the surrounding context.

In the Genesis narrative, *selem* refers to humanity as a positive part of God's creation. The image is good like the rest of creation, and it is unique because it is used only in reference to humanity. *Selem* connects humanity directly with the creator, and this gives human beings worth and purpose, again supporting the refugees' emphasis on their humanity. The use of *selem* in the creation narrative of Genesis contrasts sharply with the use of *selem* in the remainder of Scripture. Elsewhere in Scripture, s*elem* occurs in the negative context of idolatry that falls under the judgment of God.[19] When *selem* is used in other Scriptures, the order is reversed, humans claim the glory that belongs to God (Daniel 3) and where there was once a relationship, there is now pride (Ezekiel 7:20) and infidelity (Ezekiel 16:17; 23:14).

The contrast of *selem* is especially apparent in Daniel. *Selem* occurs 12 times in Daniel related to idol worship. Daniel's use is significant because seven of the occurrences are qualified by explaining that this is the image that

[18] *Demuth* occurs 26 times in the Old Testament and in Genesis, the word occurs in Genesis. 1:26; 5:1; 5:3. The word is a noun derivative of the verb *dama* that means to compare something. *Selem* occurs a total of 30 times in Genesis, Numbers, 1 Samuel, 2 Kings, Ezekiel, Amos, Psalms and Daniel. The first combined use of these words appears in Genesis 1:26, and *selem* is used first, whereas in 5:3, the order is reversed.

[19] In finally entering the land of Canaan, the Israelites are instructed to destroy all the images hewn out of stone and used in the high places. (Num. 33:52) In 1 Samuel 6 and 2 Kings 11, the images of other gods take the place of Yahweh, and those involved ultimately fall under the justice of God. Similarly in Ezekiel, the end has come for the inhabitants of the land (Ezek. 7:7). There is a day of judgment for those who replace the true God with another.

Nebuchadnezzar set up.[20] The contrast in Daniel underlines that in Genesis, the image originates with God and not with humanity.[21] The connection in Daniel between worship of the image and the law and order set up by King Nebuchadnezzar contrasts with that of Genesis. In Daniel, reference to the image occurs on a human level and serves to cut off the created from the Creator. In Genesis, however, the image connects the human level with the divine.

The reference to *imago Dei* normally looks at the constitution of humanness (Kline 1999). Isaiah uses *demuth* in 40:18 ('To whom will you compare God? Or, what likeness compares with him?') to draw attention to the uniqueness and incomparability of God as Creator, and so too it indirectly speaks to the nature of humanity.

The *imago Dei* in summary characterizes the person substantively and relationally. To speak of the substance of *imago Dei* refers to essential qualities necessary for a person's being and to discuss the relational aspect of the term describes how a person functions to represent God in community with others (Clines 1968: 53). The use of *demuth and selem* in Genesis supports the understanding of *imago Dei* as the link between humanity and its creator.

5.3.4 Imago Dei in Liberation Theology

Liberation theology provides an example of a theory that is relevant to marginalized and oppressed communities, and also features the *imago Dei* as a subtle, but vital player in its theory. The *imago Dei* becomes the theological means in liberation theology to level the playing field and to speak for those

[20] The first use of *selem* in Daniel (3:1) is with the word *abad* to clearly say this is an image made by Nebuchadnezzar. The other seven uses of *selem* with *qum* emphasize as well the image that the King has set up and made. These are in Daniel 3:2,3,5,7,12,14 and 18. The connection of *selem* to the King in Daniel underlines the contrast of *selem* as the image of God.
[21] Kline (1999) substantiates this observation as well with his study of the theophanic cloud at creation which in the preface, Kline notes, God the Spirit is the divine paradigm in creation for the image of God.

who have no voice. It provides theological roots for liberation theology that are not always easy to see, which is similar as well in a context like forced displacement. Reference to the *imago Dei* signals that liberation theology addresses more than social or political concerns. Roberto Goizueta points out those who reduce liberation theology to a social commitment or a stand against injustice have not understood its grounds which lie in God's gratuitous love and Incarnation that has first encountered humanity and that has chosen to be present among the poor and marginalized (Goizueta 2003: 146).

The *imago Dei* provides the theological basis to advocate for those who have been marginalized. Similarly, the basis of understanding among FDPs in this study does not lie only in legal or social engagement, rather also in engagement on a theological level. When culture and identity have been deconstructed like in forced displacement, the context of *imago Dei* recalls the uniqueness of the person and provides the basis for a theological response that moves beyond the status quo. Theological considerations have often focused on the text, however, consideration of the *imago Dei* involves a turn to the context of humanity. This contextual turn emphasizes both the ontology and praxis of the person in the development and action of life stories (Vanhoozer 2006).

The FDPs in this research need liberation from the realities of oppression and violence as well as any of their own ill-directed hopes and dreams. In this way, the *imago Dei* becomes liberated from an ethnocentric identity, taking its identity instead from Christ (Vanhoozer 2006: 108). The challenge for FDPs is to re-establish the identity that has been lost through affliction, by bringing both Scripture and the context of displacement together (Dyrness 1990: 34). Christopher Rowland sees liberation theology as a new way of doing theology

in order to shift institutions and to liberate a person from dominant patterns (Rowland 2007: 5,10). Weil presents decreation as the avenue to a new reality, however, the *imago Dei* creates a bridge back to the creator to preserve the essence and function of the person as he or she navigates the displacement.

5.4 Conclusion

The first aspect for a correlation between displacement and faith among refugees is creation. Creation is relevant in two ways: through the refugees' repeated emphasis of their identity as human beings, and as a basis for the *imago Dei*. To develop the connection between the research data and creation, this chapter has first illustrated the holistic understanding emerging from the interviews, which is supported further by Maslow's hierarchy of need. Second, it has explored Weil's use of decreation to understand more fully the tension that it represents. This in turn sets the stage for understanding the connection between the creator and the creation. Third, the chapter has explored the implications of the *imago Dei* as the necessary link between the creator and the created in terms of a person's essence and function.

CHAPTER 6

Journey through Decreation: The Experience of Forced Displacement

With creation in the background, the second element for understanding the correlation in refugee experience considers the core experience of forced displacement. This chapter looks at displacement through the lens of decreation, and from the viewpoint of those who go directly through it (Amaral 2013: 5). It draws on interview material mainly from among the respondents in Malta. Over a third of the content in these interviews describes the experience of forced displacement. This chapter will first characterize the experience of displacement and then discuss this experience as a decreation.

6.1 The Nature of the Data

Nearly half of the content from the interviews relates to the experience of displacement and the journeys that follow. I initially divided this material into causes and effects of being uprooted. I further classified these experiences of displacement into one of five categories, which form the core experience of forced displacement illustrated in Figure 6.1.[1]

[1] Appendix E shows the distribution of the codes in each interview that were then grouped together to form the categories illustrated in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Categories of Displacement

Figure 6.1 shows five categories of experience, based on the interview data that converge in a hub to form the core of displacement. While any one category and its experience is a doorway into the core of displacement, there is also a mix of experiences that at its core reflects the affliction characterized by decreation. The categories are not only descriptive of the refugees' affliction, but they also represent actions taken in light of displacement.

- Conflict: navigate and reconcile cultural, political and religious tension, obligations, persecution, conflicted beliefs and conscience;
- Hopelessness: cope with daily stress of no options, corruption, physical stress, financial hardship, educational and job loss;
- Trauma: endure complex psycho-social situations of compounded stress; loss of protection, safety, and well-being; personal discouragement, crisis, dangers, regret, helplessness, fear, disillusionment, and suicide;

- Violence and death: face an interstitial existence that threatens life, a no-man's-land of vulnerability and helpless waiting;
- Sub-human: fight discrimination and endure mistreatment, prejudice, imprisonment, arrest, deception, and manipulation.

The idea of a core experience as a hub illustrates there is overlap in the different characteristics, so what was at one point a cause of displacement, could later be an effect or vice versa. A mixed group of migrants crossing the sea in a boat will have different reasons for their journey, but they share a common experience in the boat. The origin, asylum status or reasons to flee do not matter to those in the boat. For David Turton, this confirms the need to understand the situation of these forced migrants at their individual level apart from the cause of their flight (Turton 2003). These descriptions of the core experience reflect as well the essence and function of the *imago Dei* that are affected by the affliction of forced displacement.

Figure 6.1 illustrates the experience in neat categories but in reality the data is jumbled and interconnected at the core. At the individual level, the displacement experience is like a vicious circle with first one characteristic and then another presenting themselves. The following section describes each category. These descriptions begin with a story from the interviews to illustrate the nature of the experience. However, the category is not unique only to that person. It would be possible to pull together similar experiences from among the interviews and to illustrate the experience in a composite form. Although a composite story might include more of the interview material, it would not be authentic. Therefore, the following sections refer to single stories to illustrate a genuine and common experience.

6.1.1 Navigate Conflict: No Peace

i. George's Conflict

When rebels came to George's village, they gave him two options: join their group or be killed. He gave in to save himself and his family but he struggled with the force of that decision. For two years he held onto his conscience as best as he could and never killed anyone. When the fighting ended, he returned to his family but knowing the peace would not last, he resettled with his family in a neighbouring country.

George's father found a job as an oil worker, but he soon faced increasing pressure from a local mafia to turn against the foreign managers. The criminals insisted that George's father conspire with them to kidnap the foreign manager. One night, several of the gang members came to the door to coerce him further but he refused to join their plot. Suddenly George heard two shots as the men killed his father in the doorway.

His father had withstood the threats but now a flood of violent trauma, shame and guilt cast its shadow over George's life. Maybe he should have resisted the rebels when they came to his village? Why couldn't he stand up against the evil like his father had done?

The fear for his own life intensified as the authorities pushed him to testify against the criminals in court. George knew to do so would seal his own fate; his world was crumbling under the violence that he had experienced. The refuge his family had found in the next country was no longer safe and the very same hosts now threatened his life. Backed into a corner, with no other options, he fled together with his brother to save their lives.

ii. Range of Conflict and its Effects

George's story illustrates how conflict is one of the primary causes of displacement. It also illustrates that conflict develops on different levels, and contrary to common perception, the displaced ones are the first responders. George responded by joining the rebels in order to save his family from violence and conflict. First, this section looks at some of the ways to describe the conflicts such as political, economic, religious, social, familial, personal and internal. Second, it describes the personal response to conflict among the interviews and the significance of this for understanding.

Christina Boswell (Boswell 2002) describes a typology of theories to explain the various causes behind migration. These theories have guided a response in policy to forced displacement, and reflect three inter-related explanations for migration and displacement: a) macro-theories look at the structures and objective conditions such as push-pull factors; b) meso-theories consider the networks and connection in a given area, and are useful for explaining differences between movements and the relations and conditions; c) micro-theories focus on factors influencing decisions, the costs and benefits, the rational choice and the internal processes (Boswell 2002: 4-5).

These theories correspond to Stephen Castles' and Mark Miller's (Castles & Miller 2009) classification as push/pull theories connected to economies. For example, Marxist historical-structural theories focus on capital and not on individuals, while migration systems theories look at both ends of the flow prior to leaving as well as in the country of destination. Castles and Miller theorize that there are links between macro-theories including the economy, markets, laws, institutions and policies and the micro-theories related to the networks, problems and challenges facing migrants among family, friends and

communities (Castles & Miller 2009: 28). Similarly, the conflicts that surfaced in the interviews may reflect macro-causes, but they appear on micro-levels as situations to navigate, both to maintain life as well as to rebuild and restore what has been lost.

iii. Conflict as a Shockwave

Robert Schreiter (Schreiter 2012) notes conflict has a ripple effect in the person, like a shockwave that recurs along the journey. Charles Cohen and Erik Werker's (Cohen & Werker 2004) evaluation of relief work in forced displacement suggests several important insights for responding to the ripple effect of shockwaves including the need for prevention measures; de-centralization of the response; political development and cooperation; and positive reinforcement. While the conflict comes as a shock to the person, the disaster comes from the misappropriated response (Cohen & Werker 2004).

Many FDPs carry an ongoing burden of conflict that is as equally problematic as the original cause. Conflicts reflect a wedge that is driven into a person and between people. One example previously discussed is when the labels used to address an issue begin to separate the individual from the issues that originally caused the displacement (Mogire 2009). Conflicts become particularly problematic on a personal level as a result of missed obligations and expectations. These develop into a conflict of conscience expressed as guilt, regret or betrayal (Wiher 2003: 162).

The pressure of this kind of conflict came out in the interviews through two questions that the respondents indirectly addressed: 'Did I make the wrong decision?' and 'What will I do with my life?' These questions reflect ongoing and lingering personal conflict. Valerie DeMarinis (DeMarinis 2009: 569-70) reports that during and after the experiences that go with forced displacement, many

individuals will show a dissonance between what they formerly knew and what they now experience. According to Derrick Silove:

> Exposure to inexplicable evil, cruelty and extreme violence can shake and sometimes shatter the foundations of the survivor's existential worldview. The survivor and the community face a crisis of trust, faith and meaning ...The challenges that forcibly displaced people face are ones to the cultural and belief systems and values resulting in an adaptation strategy of either adoption of new identities, or the alienation and loss of faith. (Silove 2005: 46)

As David Turton points out, 'migrants make their decision to migrate in response to a complex set of external constraints and predisposing events' (Turton 2003: 7).

iv. Examples of Conflict in the Data

There were several internal conflicts expressed among the interviewees. A number of respondents described the economic burden to support the family which forces them to move and find work. They live under the pressure of family expectations to provide and send money back home. Amin described the psychologically unstable relationship with another refugee that eventually broke apart in Malta after crossing the sea separately and their child was born. What would have been a community issue became a transnational crisis with the parents in different countries and the child in state care. Interpersonal conflict creates unmanageable crises.

Several of the respondents faced impunity and threats to their lives because of their faith. These are spiritual conflicts due to rejected beliefs and customs. Rachel reported she and her husband fled as newlyweds when they refused to follow certain traditions. There was also a steady report of social conflicts. Rachel described the difficult environment at work and how this made her want to quit. She acknowledged the larger conflict saying, 'the local people are really angry at refugees' (Rachel 00:16:53), and this makes her ask what is she doing and how will she ever make it in Malta with the laws and institutions

the way they are. The conflict shapes Rachel's identity and demonstrates that larger conflicts of national and economic interests are also worked out on a personal and individual level. This corresponds with Castles' and Miller's (Castles & Miller 2003) observation that some categories of less skilled workers in a country might be impacted by the migration process that has resulted from colonization, modernization and uneven development.

Franklin described a conflict in his conscience while in detention because he was never in prison before and did not expect this. Similarly, Jason, after being forced to travel illegally, said he would not do it again, while others suggested they face guilt and regret for the journey. Esther explained, 'Sometimes you can feel like 'why am I going through this? Where is my God?' (Esther 00:32:01).

Several of the interviews described conflicts that surfaced as confessions while on the boat crossing. The respondents link these confessions to pressures experienced from witchcraft and other cultural beliefs and obligations. This internal conflict pushes some people to a breaking point and even to suicide. Studies make a link as well between confessions, accusations and the burden of conflict that people suffer (Schnoebelen 2009). George describes the internal conflict that spills out in accusations and confessions among those in his boat:

> Many people in Africa, you know, they have been, they live with the witches. They participate in these things. Yeah they go through many, many things for that. They cannot cross sea ... because sea, sea you don't tolerate anything nonsense. If you are do bad you cross the sea. You must die. ... You know the story, if you heard the story from one, two, three, four, five, – you know the same story. They will give it to you about the sea. ... If I cross the sea, it will affect me. ... Some of them, you know, some of them, they do many, many bad things. Bad things. You know. ... inside the sea they started fighting, all of the boat that come to us, maybe they just perished in the sea, fighting. ...Yes. some of them they are fighting. You know, they are fighting, the other will confess. (George 00:42:22–00:44:27)

Similarly, Isaac described a man who took his life by jumping into the water from his boat (Isaac 00:26:20 – 00:27:52). Some on the boat wanted to

accuse the man of witchcraft, yet Isaac understood that for many people the burden of fear, guilt and shame forces them further and deeper into displacement. The pressure and conflict as a result of the obligations arising from witchcraft weighs heavy in the lives of some FDPs. Descriptions and stories like these show there is internal and unresolved conflict that George says 'will affect' the person.

The conflicts described may have begun on macro-levels of civil war, failed economies and misguided institutions but they often end up in personal lives and leave long lasting effects in the individual. George and his brother fled together in order to save themselves and preserve their family. Eventually they would stand on the beach waiting to board two boats for Europe, and they faced a conflict once again. 'What if the boat does not make it?' They decided to split up as a way of preserving their family's future. One brother made it to Italy and the other was stranded, rescued and taken to Malta (George 00:09:45).

6.1.2 Cope with Hopelessness: No Options

i. Jason's Coping

When Jason learned the police were coming to arrest him because of his father’s political activity, he had no time and no option but to flee to a neighbouring country for safety. He found work in a restaurant, washing dishes and lived nearby in a simple room. One evening, as he returned to his room, he stepped into the building and suddenly faced three men with knives. Were they there to rob him or worse? Glancing in the corner, he grabbed a stick to protect himself. One of the men slashed the air with his knife, glancing Jason's arm. Jason stepped back, but before the next man could attack, an older woman opened a door and stepped into the hall. The men seemed more surprised than she was. She blurted something in a fury and the men lowered their knives and

slipped out the door into the night. Jason knew he was not safe and in the morning he fled again for the border.

ii. A Lot of Problems

The second category to describe displacement is the struggle to cope with hopelessness. Persevering through continuous hardship, the refugees in this study often describe their experience as a struggle to overcome everyday problems:

> There are a lot of difficulties that come on you in being a refugee ... the moment the name comes on you as a refugee, I tell you, there are a lot of problems around you. (Stanley 00:39:07)

> When you have to pass through this journey or have to live this life as a refugee. ...It's also like you are passing through the tunnel. It's a time of difficulty. So once you're out ... through those times of difficulty, ... it's like a kind of testing. (Jason 00:01:08)

> It's a difficult one, it's totally a difficult one, and its better if then you remain in your country and face whatever you have to face back home. It's better–but this life, so difficult. (Esther 00:23:27)

> The world of illegal it's not good. It's not good. I don't like it. Because I don't deceive you. I'm tired of it. I'm fed up. What to go. It's not easy, you know, if you left ... it's not easy for you, it will set you back. It's not easy. (George 00:12:20)

As these sources show, it is common to hear the displaced person say, 'We face a lot of difficult problems.' In a context of uncertainty and tension, with closed doors at every turn, the displaced are left to cope on many fronts. The data embodies this category as a continuous lack of options that eventually force the person to flee across another border in a bid for hope. Jason's story underlines the hopelessness and difficulty he faces as a stranger.

iii. Obstacles

The immigration systems are a continuous obstacle that FDPs face. The spectrum of forced displacement in Chapter One (see Figure 1.1) shows a range of terms to define FDPs. It also depicts a progression in the terminology, suggesting that FDPs move from one stage to the next until finally reaching a durable solution. Theoretically, the UN has identified three durable solutions for

those in forced displacement: a) repatriation to the home country; b) integration into the local community; and c) relocation to a new country (Kälin 2010). In reality, less than one percent of refugees will be resettled; there is no progression of status, and durable solutions are not available to the majority of displaced people. While efforts are made to protect vulnerable persons, for most of the millions of FDPs in the world, there are few solutions (UNHCR 2010; WCC 2005).[2]

In 2011, the European task force for irregular migration in Germany, estimated there were approximately a half million illegal migrants in Germany. The majority of these were failed asylum seekers who had not left the country. These people may or may not be genuine FDPs, however, the report highlights the precarious circumstances that give little chance for a secure residence status (Laubenthal & Pielage 2011: 11).

Root causes force people initially to flee, but then failed systems force them to flee further and to cope on their own. Weiss-Fagan comments:

> 'The majority of displaced people are invisible because they are not found in camps and settlements. They have found their way into villages, towns, friend's homes and large cities, and the state is unable to protect them.' (Weiss Fagen 2003: 19)

Institutional reports regularly confirm the unavailability of adequate protection and that state efforts to combat irregular migration force migrants to make dangerous journeys (Cimade 2009). These irregular migrants become stranded along the way increasing their vulnerability to arrest, detention and exploitation (Monzini 2010: 8).

[2] The limited solutions available have been the norm in many reports for a long time. For example, the annual UNHCR *Global Trends* report regularly notes there are few solutions. This report by the UNHCR provides a regular update of the current state of those in forced displacement including those who have found solutions of resettlement, asylum or return. Another example is the public Issues Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC 2005), which noted in 2005 that over half of the world's displaced people have been displaced for more than ten years.

The driving factor among all the interview participants in this study has been the lack of options for peace and safety, and this in turn plays a major factor in the participants' conscious decisions throughout their journey. Hamilton received refugee status in a Sudanese refugee camp. He originally decided to leave Eritrea because he had no choice but to serve in the military regime or to flee. Once at the camp in Sudan with no way to find food or to change his situation, he was not 'safe' and he again had no choice but to flee further (Hamilton 00:07:37–00:10:10). From Sudan onwards, Hamilton faced the same challenges and his decisions to flee mirrored others among the mixed group of migrants in Malta. Franklin as an economic migrant, in describing the temporary status he received in Malta, points out that while he is able to stay in Malta, he cannot leave because if he leaves, he cannot return. He says this is 'no option, no option' (Franklin 00:37:59).

Munro's claim (Munro 2009) that the refugees who have fled to Malta are not destitute is debatable, however, more important than this are the persisting challenges that reveal a situation without options. The situations faced by migrants highlight the disparities of a global world, where the causes of the dislocation reappear at every turn and have themselves crossed international borders (Harrell-Bond 1986). FDPs cannot easily return home where there is no safety. They are stuck, and the systems often do not deliver the protection, but only compound the lack of options.

The highlights from Jason's interview in Chapter Four illustrate his three-year journey to find safety in Malta. The events of his displacement illustrate a larger problem of hopelessness that affects him both mentally and physically. He said, 'to remember it all can make him sick.' The events show the action he has taken in spite of the opposition; they are noteworthy because they help to

analyse the everyday events as a refugee that have psycho-social effects (Crites 1989: 71). Re-calling events like these describe the bigger picture from the respondent's point of view (Lucie-Smith 2007). They describe actions that show the person's character and the internal dynamics at work (MacIntyre 2007 [1981]: 149-150). Understanding this perspective reverses the subject–object relationship, so that rather than the person becoming objects of aid, he or she is the subject of their own stories (Culler 1980).

As an example of this reversal, Jason's events illustrate five kinds of coping skills that make him more than a victim. As the agent of his journey, Jason demonstrates efforts that:

- Develop practical skills – solve problems of a practical nature such as what to do and how to get from place to place;
- Take risks – face and persevere through varying degrees of danger and fear;
- Form strategies – deal with the burden of mental and emotional stress, personal crisis, internal conflicts of doubt, regret and questions of conscience;
- Deny personal and emotional realities – overcome rejection and loneliness;
- Resist injustice – exert themselves in a fight to hold onto their sense of dignity.

These coping skills are significant because they reflect not only survival skills, but also the unique strengths and responsibilities of the person that contribute to finding solutions. For example, Rachel's struggle to cope with daily life in Malta and being cut off from a community was connected to her identity as a nurturer (Rachel 00:22:10). Those who describe their experiences do so as

students, care-givers, workers, sons, daughters and parents, and the hopeless circumstances they endure also become the breeding ground for character, resourcefulness, resilience and responsibility identified by the actions the person takes.

6.1.3 Endure Trauma: Complex Psycho-Social Situations

i. Isaac's Grief

Isaac's small shop was broken into and robbed when his wife was in the middle of a prolonged illness. He lost everything and had no means to support the family or to pay for the rising medical needs. He decided to leave at that time to find a job and to send money back to pay the medical costs. As he crossed into Libya, with a group of migrants, the police stopped the vehicle and arrested everyone. Isaac was placed in handcuffs and sent to prison. On the way to prison, Isaac's vehicle crashed. A police escort was killed and several of the refugees were injured including Isaac. One of these refugees later died as well from the injuries while in prison. Isaac slowly recovered in prison, but he had no way of contacting his family. There were more than 600 prisoners from many countries and the conditions were very bad. After three months, a representative from his country visited the prison and Isaac could prove his citizenship. Isaac was released, however, when he was finally able to contact his family, he discovered that his wife had died. Isaac said, 'This was a sad one for me because, I could never talk to her, I could never hear her voice or how she died. It was a difficult time, because I knew nothing' (Isaac 00:15:37–00:18:37).

ii. Range of Issues

As the story of Isaac demonstrates, the experience of displacement leaves the FDP in recurring situations of stress. The stress compounds further when

personal safety or that of friends and family are concerned (Short et al. 2010: 202). When refugees flee, they face the loss of value and identity and an avalanche of daily stress such as powerlessness, changes in their way of life, unachieved goals, economic concerns, loss of community and loss of meaningful roles (Goodkind et al. 2010: 44). More challenges faced by refugee groups include:

> Isolation, language barriers, discrimination, loss of social status, high unemployment, socio-economic deprivation, acculturation difficulties, bereavements and separations, traumatic events, social problems, poor access to healthcare and residential mobility (Bhui et al. 2010: 289).

People travel with their culture, religion and traditions, health beliefs and micro-communities, which place demands on existing local systems (Bhui et al. 2010: 287). The complexity of forced displacement leads to a range of problems related to psychological health.

iii. Compounded Pressure

Specific psycho-social issues identified in the narratives included stress of physical hardship, fear of arrest and prison, grief, rejection, discouragement, violent trauma, depression, suicide, uncertainty and regret, physical exhaustion and financial pressure. According to Jessica Goodkind (Goodkind et al. 2010), refugees bear the burden of social inequities and health disparities with typically 'higher rates of distress, limited material resources, lingering physical ailments and loss of meaningful social roles and support, all of which are often compounded by racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination, and marginalisation of their cultural practises' (Goodkind et al. 2010: 41). Describing the desperate state of refugees, Derrick Silove and Susan Rees (Silove & Rees 2010) note:

> In reality many refugees encounter grave difficulties in securing the protection they seek. ... confined in camps or living as stateless persons, their status remains uncertain for many years. ... the key experience is one of insecurity and anxiety. (Silove & Rees 2010: 265)

The individual struggles are compounded further by insufficient social understanding (Harrell-Bond 1986), misconstrued and inappropriate labelling (Zetter 1991), and the rootless transnational nature of a chaordic diaspora (Werbner 2005). Reflecting on the trauma of his own experience, Jason's comment is an understatement, 'I need like to forget these things so I can just live normal life. Cause if you think more about it ... sometimes it's not good, you can get sick' (Jason 00:56:59).

iv. Suicide

Stories of suicide were told in three of the interviews, testifying to the complex and unbearable nature of the dangerous journeys to Europe. There is a lack of adequate studies among refugees and asylum seekers concerning suicide but available studies report a rate of suicide from 3.4% to 34% (Vijayakumar & Jotheeswaran 2010: 198). After Isaac lost his wife, he smuggled himself out of Libya across the sea. He reported six people died on his boat, one of whom was a suicide:

> In the night everybody is sleeping in the boat. And the man give me the money. He take the money from the pocket. He give me. Take the money to keep the money for me. 'Why, why you give your money to me?' ... everybody is starting to sleep. I see the man who put the hand to my shoulder. This thing, he take my, this thing, ...Yeah, he put to the hand to my shoulder and spring [jump]. (Isaac 00:26:20–00:27:52)

Loss, trauma, violence, physical abuse, torture and economic hardship have been linked to suicidal behaviour. Refugees experience loss and many have suffered multiple traumas, and combined with post displacement difficulties and the socio-cultural context, refugees and asylum seekers are more vulnerable to the risk of suicide (Vijayakumar & Jotheeswaran 2010: 195).

iv. Vulnerability

The climate of deception, corruption and manipulation throughout the journey also leaves the individual vulnerable to arrest and deportation and exploitation.

The vulnerability is further characterized by confusion and uncertainty. Munro describes the journey from Africa to Malta as uncertain and dangerous:

> Besides the very real danger of being abandoned by their handlers in the middle of the Sahara or Mediterranean Sea, there are also the dangers of robbers, slave traders and corrupt policemen or military who will demand some form of payment before the journey can be continued. The migrants can also be abandoned by their handlers at the harbour who run off with their passage fee. Needless to say, the environment of the Sahara can be very hostile, from lack of food and water to storms, cold, heat and ruthless guerrillas, *passeurs*, the military, police and border officials who either squeeze the 'illegal's' to the very end or abandon them. (Munro 2009: 10)

Not only are refugees uncertain within themselves about what to do, but also most of those in this study are often only given a temporary status by the state. This leaves them waiting for years in limbo about their status and allowing them to leave but not to return. They are unwelcome strangers, and often in a vulnerable context like this, personal problems become a major crisis.

One interviewee told the story of a relationship with another refugee who became psychologically and emotionally unstable. Together they had a child, however, the mother struggled to take care of the child. He said:

> When we arrive here in Malta … we stayed in the family centre and … there was a situation. She faced a lot of troubles and problems, she was not able to look after this baby... so she went outside, but she does not have a place to stay. She has to struggle to find apartment to live and our life is a bit critical, so I see it is difficult. (Amin 00:09:41)

Challenges like this leave little means to address the needs, and what was once an issue to solve in a local community has now turned into a transnational issue with international implications.

A story like this describes the vulnerability in forced displacement that has been further compounded by personal decisions and struggles. From the state's perspective, the issues are illegal border entry, compromised state security and transgressed sovereignty, however, for the FDP these are issues related to themselves as human beings. The core experience of displacement triggers psycho-social issues that make the gap between the state's concerns and individual vulnerability seem impassable.

6.1.4 Face Violence and Death: Interstitial Existence

i. Stanley's Death Boat

Stanley originally went to Libya with documents to work but when he was stopped at a police check, the Libyan police ripped these documents apart. Stanley punched the officer in the face and was immediately sent to prison. During an uprising, he was able to escape from prison but knew he needed to leave Libya for his own safety, so he arranged to be smuggled across the sea to Europe.

Smugglers led Stanley and a group of 28 people to a remote place along the harbour's edge. The group stopped in front of a small rubber boat, with an outboard motor on it. One of the smugglers showed a person in the group how to work the motor and drive the boat. Several in the group began to argue, 'This is not seaworthy. We won't go in that. ... We want our money back.' They complained as the smugglers pushed the group towards the boat. Suddenly, one of the smugglers pulled a knife out and jabbed it into one of the protesters. The man fell to his knees clutching his stomach. Stanley explained:

> They drove us at knifepoint towards the boat. We left the one man there on the shore, and I think he surely died. We had no choice but to force ourselves into the water. We knew it was a poor boat, but we had no other option. Some people got in while a few others pushed the boat further out. The driver started the motor, and we climbed over the side.[3]

Stanley slouched in the bottom of the boat. He felt cast into a dark and hopeless place, and he doubted his decision to have ever left his country. He was trapped at sea, and before the journey would end, thirteen more would die.

ii. Zone of Death

The threat of death was a major experience in every interview, and this is the fourth category to describe forced displacement. The interviewees referred to

[3] There is no timestamp, because Stanley told this story at the start of his interview before I noticed that the recording was not working.

death in the following contexts: through war; dangers on the journey such as sinking, accidents and storms; hunger and thirst; lost in the desert or at sea; persecution; murder; kidnapping; torture; imprisonment; mob violence; witchcraft and suicide. These experiences describe the loss of options where there is no safety or personal well-being. Forced displacement includes an interstitial existence, which is a life of vulnerability that falls between laws and borders in a zone of interstice. This zone is unprotected and like a no-man's land, unseen and unknown to those outside, and where seemingly nothing touches those in it except for death.

According to the International Organization for Migration, in 2013, more than 7000 migrants died at sea or while crossing deserts. AIDA reported in 2014, 3279 people died in the Mediterranean alone and 2015 would likely be higher (AIDA 2015: 26). The director-general of IOM, William Lacy Swing, notes the true total is not known because so many die anonymously. Swing commented, 'Why do people risk their lives ... over and over, despite the frosty reception? ... The answer is simple: desperation' (Nebehay 2013). A psychologist, Lillian Pizzi, who works with *Terre des Hommes* and counsels survivors from such tragedies commented, 'It is something that happens all too often. It has to be read politically. This is not an accident at sea. It is something else' (Yardley & Povoledo 2013).

In a story similar to those told in this research, Kingsley Meekness describes how smugglers leave stranded and injured travellers in the desert to die (Meekness 2012: 1-15). In Libya, Kingsley also struggled to board an overcrowded boat only to fail in the end and to be left on the shore. He watched the boat sail out of the harbour where it entered rough water and suddenly rolled over and sank in the heavy seas with 670 people perishing on board. The

refugee crisis in 2015, when over one million refugees fled to Europe, has helped expose these events, but largely the general public has been unaware of the loss of life Kingsley describes in his story.[4]

iii. Camp, Bare Life, and State of Exception

Giorgio Agamben's (Agamben 1998) description of bare life and the state of exception offers a theoretical basis for imagining an interstitial zone. Bare life stands for the idea of human life at the intersection of political sovereignty that 'may be killed but not sacrificed' (Agamben 1998: 12):

> Excluded from the religious community and from all political life: he cannot participate in the rites of his gens, nor ... can he perform any juridically valid act. What is more, his entire existence is reduced to a bare life stripped of every right by virtue of the fact that anyone can kill him without committing homicide; he can save himself only in perpetual flight or a foreign land. And yet he is in a continuous relationship with the power that banished him precisely insofar as he is at every instant exposed to an unconditioned threat of death. (Agamben 1998: 103)

Agamben uses the term 'camp' to represent the experience known in the Nazi concentration camps where prisoners lost their humanity in a place out of touch and removed from society. The camp is a space where bare life exists in the political order only to be excluded.

In exploring this place of bare life, Agamben asks:

> What is a camp, what is its juridico-political structure, that such events could take place there? This will lead us to regard the camp not as a historical fact and an anomaly belonging to the past (even if still verifiable) but in some way as the hidden matrix and nomos of the political space in which we are still living. (Agamben 1998: 95)

Agamben explains the exception for bare life does not come as a rule but because the rule suspends itself in a zone of indistinction. He calls this an interstitial zone of meaning that is not within certain parameters, rather 'between' jurisdictions, and in this sense untouchable (Agamben 1998: 9).

[4] When Kingsley arrived in Malta, he joined other migrants at the St. Andrew's Scots Church community. In the foreword, Reverend Doug McRoberts notes that in 2012, 1500 migrants lost their lives while crossing the sea to Europe – the same number as those who died when the Titanic sank – and he calls for their story to be told. But, what he did not say is that the church community has provided the context for this story to be told and heard.

According to Agamben, the reality of camp with its bare life and the state of exception brings with it the idea of a 'sacred life' that presents itself as an enigma in the paradigm of political life in the West (Agamben 1998: 13). Agamben thus looks at how life can dwell in a political realm as a paradox between political and social order. Agamben's point is that the state decides and limits everything about life. He identifies the problem Aristotle introduces that human life has 'the additional capacity' to live in community (Agamben 1998: 11).[5]

After *Homo Sacer,* Agamben considers the *State of Exception* (Agamben 2005), as a crisis mode that has become the normal paradigm for governments concerning its law or the absence of law. It also deals with the philosophical and strange relationship between law and lawlessness, which is a blank empty space in the legal system. According to some critics, this characterizes the state of forced migration today (Raulff 2005).

The exclusion of FDPs has been magnified by the recent crisis in 2015. The UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees notes the eroding space for asylum in the face of state sovereignty (Guterres 2010). Agamben asks who has the power of life in a state of exception, and his aim is to warn against power over bare life, as blind power unable to see those living in a state of emergency as if in a no man's land hidden and unknown (Agamben 2005). Agamben's concern is for the question of life (Kishik 2012: 6), and stories from FDPs illustrate the particular human context under the threat of death by the disregard and exclusion of the state's power.

[5] Kingsley's story is an example of 'sacred life' whose narrative takes shape in the context of a church community. Chapter Four describes these capacities of a Christian narrative. The implication that Agamben does not develop is the uniqueness of community, which in Kingsley's case is the church.

David Kishik (Kishik 2012) explains this kind of power cannot see ones like irregular migrants because it has turned away its collective back. Kishik goes on to say about the state of exception:

> Bodies come together but are no longer protected by the law. Instead, they are marked not by their capacity to speak and act but by the capacity of their bodies to be killed with impunity. This Agamben boldly claims is 'the new political body of the West.' These no longer look like respectable citizens but like what Agamben calls homines sacri, sacred men, who are ready for the massacre. ...the killing of homo sacer is considered neither as homicide nor as a sacrifice, since it is banished to a space that lies outside both human and divine law. Politics thus transforms into biopolitics: the political power over the bare lives of those sacred men, women and children. (Kishik 2012: 21-22)

Based on the findings and descriptions in this research, the power that Agamben describes has also lost its capacity to see or appreciate the distinguishing features of humanity and the *imago Dei* described in Chapter Five.

iv. Power over Bare Life

Robin Cohen (Cohen 1994) observes that the state of exception is a space between inclusion and exclusion that many undocumented migrants in Europe occupy. The significance of this experience from the refugee perspective is not the state's sovereignty, but rather their own appreciation for the sanctity of life that finds its place in connection to a community. The stories show that while bare life is an accurate description of forced displacement, the FDPs have not lost their agency, which is empowered by community. Even though they are limited and reduced in inhumane ways, the displaced still show determination and will to order and improve their life in the community. Despite the interstitial existence, the underlying theme for the interviews was, 'We are human'. This was the protest to the smugglers who drove Stanley's group to board a boat that was not fit for people to travel across the sea.

Agamben contrasts the bare life with the sovereign power of the state. For him, the state has power over life. Agamben's idea of 'bare life' caught in the

camp raises the question of whether this is an adequate description of the condition of undocumented migrants (Lee 2010: 57). Charles Lee (Lee 2010: 61) points out in Agamben's model, ones like forced migrants occupy a grey zone where they are neither fully recognised as members nor excluded as strangers. 'They are unpeopled: ones whose human suffering may not be seen or recognised' (Perera 2002: 6). While this describes the reality of bare life among FDPs, Lee also points out that Agamben's model leaves the displaced ones with no political life as nothing more than victims (Lee 2010: 62).

The FDPs might live a bare life, but they still possess their own sovereignty. They are left alone to cope with no options, no protection, no safety and no intervention even from those with power to intervene. Everyone, like a submerging vessel, slips out of view and out of reach, and they are left to contend alone with the reality of death.[6] Unlike Agamben's description, the FDPs in this study show determination and agency to undertake yet one more journey, or even to stand up and end it all like some who jump over the side of their boat.

It is a problem when systems, smugglers and circumstances de-humanize uprooted people. However, despite the state of exception like Agamben describes, the forcibly displaced themselves insist on their humanity and the power of life. Existence in the interstitial zone, therefore, calls for a power of life above and beyond other powers. It is fuelled by resilience that says, 'as long as there is still hope, we are willing to risk our life to find life'.

[6] When Jason's boat became stranded at sea, the boat floated into the path of a submarine that had surfaced on the water. As the refugee boat approached the submarine, the submarine submerged.

6.1.5 Fight Discrimination: Sub-Human Status

i. Rachel's Job Struggle

When Rachel first arrived in Malta, she found a cleaning job in a hotel. Soon the other employees began to make false accusations by blaming her for poor work that was done by others. Rachel said that none of the local national workers would back her; she said, 'when it comes to you as a lonely refugee, they only say what you are not' (Rachel 00:18:29). Eventually, the other employees accused her of stealing toys from the playroom, and when the supervisor asked Rachel about this, he would not believe what she said. Rachel then complained to the manager but even this did not help. She realized they treated her this way because she was different from them, and they would continue until she left.

ii. Detention, Discrimination, and Destitution

The story from Rachel gives an example of the final characteristic of forced displacement found among those in this study: a fight against discrimination. Throughout the interviews, the respondents referred to the experience of discrimination and prejudice, like the following examples.

In answer to the question, 'What is difficult as a refugee?' Lani said, 'Sometime that people tell us, black people they are nothing. ... (They) take my skin, say, I'm poor; I'm nothing … not go to school, not know everything' (Lani, 00:27:12–00:31:36). Lani also raised the issue of prejudice and connected this to the fear that it creates in him, saying 'Sometime people say, no one again black here. Outside, black ... I'm afraid' (Lani 00:17:46).

In response to the question, 'What would you say to others about your experience?' Esther responded:

> I would want someone to know about the difficulty or how I'm facing, in finding, (when people don't accept you) ... Its not good, you don't feel good, because okay, you get a chance, you

> go, you know you can do (the job). You go ask for it, say okay, I will get back to you. So when you go and come back, tell you. I mean the chance, I mean you find that the person who is there is white, maybe a Maltese, or what, so you feel like maybe okay, its because of my colour. (Esther 00:17:40–00:19:52)

In discussing the issue of discrimination, George explained the migrants themselves begin to reciprocate the same attitudes and mistreatment that they receive:

> Maybe inside your bus for example, –Maybe you sit; you sit next to them. They will get up, immediately they will get up. ...They will begin to use their own language to curse you, to insult you.' ... This thing (discrimination), ... that's why they go back home. They want to run. ... (They) grab the gun ...they say, if I go back, if I see any white man in my country. Oh, I will treat him the way they treat me here. More than!' (George 00:14:38–00:18:32)

These examples illustrate the lack of human dignity and as some have pointed out, the right to asylum has lost its significance (Mogire 2009) (Pace 2012a).

In 2009, the newly constructed European agency for reporting on discrimination among minorities in Europe published a report called the EU MIDIS Survey (EU-MIDIS 2009). The report divided the incidents and prevalence of discrimination into nine groups in three overall domains including: work, public services and private services. Immigrants were one of the minority groups surveyed and Sub-Saharan Africans were specifically interviewed at the semi-open centres in Malta (EU-MIDIS 2009). The second highest average rate of discrimination in the combined Europe was among the Sub-Saharan African respondents in Malta. Sixty-three percent of Sub-Saharan Africans surveyed in Malta reported they had been discriminated against in the 12 months prior to the survey (EU-MIDIS 2009: 36).

The use of detention in the European asylum process is another example of prejudice towards immigrants that erodes trust and denies a place in society.[7]

[7] The EU regulation No 604/2013 also known as Dublin III replaced the Dublin II of 2003. The new Regulation updated the criteria and mechanism related to the EU countries responsible for examining asylum applications. Article 28 clarifies that detention should only be applied for transferring applicants between countries and not for the purpose of carrying out the asylum process. As a result in December 2015, Malta ended the compulsory detention of all irregular migrants.

During the length of this research, detention was an automatic procedure for every irregular migrant that came to Malta by boat. Hamilton describes the detention experience in Malta as sub-human:

> Nobody wants any refugee to be here in Malta. And the detention here, it's I mean a very bad place. I mean it's not where a human being could live. You know? And we were allowed only two hours per week to stay in the sun. You know? We were not allowed to stay on the sun. But we have no choice. We have to stay like that.' (Hamilton 01:00:55)

Detention has been seen by its opponents as unproductive, harmful and unnecessary (Amaral 2011); it injures human dignity and affects mental health (Pace 2012b).[8] In 2010, Médicins sans Frontières (MSF) reported on the health of migrants in Maltese detention. During the six months of their study, only 32% of the migrants were reported in good health. While this has something to do with the difficult and dangerous journey prior to arrival, it also has to do with the dehumanizing conditions of detention.

MSF reported unacceptable conditions in detention that reflect neglect of basic rights associated with human dignity. These included: lack of adequate shelter, poor hygiene and sanitation; limited access to outside; lack of ventilation; poor food distribution; lack of contact to the outside world (MSF 2010: 19). For migrants hoping to find a safe place, detention comes unexpectedly. Franklin said, 'I had never been in prison before, so this was a shock.' According to MSF, when these people have escaped war and other traumatic events, they expect to receive humanitarian protection. Detention like this is particularly cruel and unjust and can become the trigger of further psychological suffering (MSF 2010).

[8] In 2002, Malta began receiving an increased number of irregular migrants arriving by boat. The country introduced legislation (The Refugee Act 2002) that would aid the government in determining the status of those arriving. The compulsory detention has been part of the process of determining status. (Ragonesi 2012) Dublin III has taken steps to change these kinds of policies and it remains to be seen how it will affect the detention policy in Malta as well as the attitudes that drive this policy.

The examples of discrimination among sub-Saharan Africans together with the use of detention in Malta illustrate the sub-human status and the lack of dignity shown towards the FDPs in this research. The stories and reports of discrimination confirm the downward and dehumanizing spiral of life as an irregular migrant. They document a problematic situation of inefficient systems in societies built on the basis of human dignity, yet unable to provide for the same or overcome the fear of outsiders.

iii. Subaltern and the Other

The stories of discrimination and prejudice raise the question of whether the experience of displacement is a subaltern one. Ideas of the subaltern have been used to describe the subordinations in South Asian society such as class, caste, age, gender and office (Guha & Spivak 1988). Consideration of these terms does not take place without also acknowledging counter-conditions such as dominance, power and privilege (Guha & Spivak 1988: 35)

Originally subaltern was a British military term referring to a subordinate officer. In the Concise Oxford Dictionary, the subaltern refers to 'inferior rank'. In critical studies, the term refers to a disenfranchised person who is socially, politically and geographically outside the power structures of society. Edward Said, in his ‘Foreword to Selected Subaltern Studies’ (Guha & Spivak 1988), explains that a subaltern approach asks why certain societal groups are classified in particular ways:

> As an alternative discourse, the work of Subaltern scholars can be seen as an analogue of all those recent attempts in the West and throughout the rest of the world to articulate the hidden or suppressed accounts of numerous groups–women, minorities, dis-advantaged or dispossessed groups, refugees, exiles, etc. (Guha & Spivak 1988: vi-vii)

Gayatari Spivak, in her ‘Introduction’ (Spivak 1988), highlights several distinctions about the subaltern that seem relevant to the marginalization experienced in forced displacement. In order for systems to improve, the agent

of change is in the subaltern, and often it takes the force of a crisis or confrontation to initiate change. When this happens, a link in the regular chain of events is broken. Spivak's ideas suggest that the experiences in forced displacement are like links in a chain (Spivak 1988: 3-5). Spivak's image helps to understand the stories of displaced persons as piles of broken episodes, like chain links that need to be relinked and fitted back together.

In a Marxist context, the subaltern represents the class struggle where the power and the effort to bring change originate in a particular view of the person. Timothy Brennan offers a helpful critique on contemporary subaltern studies that points to the focus on being (Brennan 2006: 256). The emphasis on a person's being means the subaltern approach faces a dilemma similar to the Agamben's concerns about the bare life. In order for these views to raise their concerns and to give the person a voice, there needs to be people who are without a voice. By emphasizing a class of people, there is a danger of perpetuating the very thing it wants to eradicate. As Brennan notes, in giving voice, the hope is to alleviate problems, but the question is whether concepts of the subaltern are actually more focused on replacing one power system with another. The subaltern approach to the issues may actually be insufficient because it stands more on the backs of others instead of giving the other a voice.

Edward Said's analysis of these disenfranchised groups offers insights. He describes a process of Western hegemony predicated on a dichotomy of 'us' and 'them' (Said 1978: 54).[9] Said develops the theory that modern orientalist theory was only a secularized version of the previous religious view of

[9] Said's thesis is that while Europe has gone to great extremes to distance itself from its religious past, the current day orientalist praxis is a re-formation of the old patterns and ways that have been secularized in new terms (Said 1978: 120-22).

‘embattled believers facing barbarians,' with ‘notions of human association and of human possibility’ that acquired a very wide legitimacy (Said 1978: 120). Said's theory explains the power and effect of people seeing others as different from themselves; this is often referred to as othering (Vogel & Leiprecht 2007; Triandafyllidou 2010).[10]

Concepts of the subaltern and others may help to understand the dynamics at work in prejudice and discrimination, however, the concepts do not adequately describe the exclusion of asylum seekers in Europe. As Zetter shows, the labels among displaced persons more often serve the needs of NGOs, states and social agendas alike (Zetter 1991: 180-183). While FDPs might be marginalized as others and cast as sub-human, they are not without agency.

In contrast to the image of a powerless subaltern group, FDPs in this study generally emphasize the doing more than the being. Ideas of alterity and the dynamics of exclusion enlighten the nature of forced displacement, however, the aim of this research is to give the final word to those who go through the experience themselves. Their stories show the extremes they will take to do what they need to find a place of safety and dignity. When Stanley discussed what refugees can do to rejoin a community, he stressed the need for refugees to:

> Share whatever is on their heart ... and what is the purpose of coming, of becoming a refugee ... And then the act of the refugee (in them) will be materialised for everyone to know. And there the family or the people with you being a family member, will also recognise you are one of them. (Stanley 01:02:36)

[10] ‘Othering’ is a form of social exclusion to distinguish one social group from another. The exclusion of others produces stigma and leads to oppression, defensiveness and inequality (Barter-Godfrey & Taket 2009). Social exclusion refers to the extent that individuals are unable to participate in key areas of a society; it considers the relation an individual has to a place and time; it looks at who is doing the excluding and how the exclusion operates across time (Boardman 2010: 10-13).

For migrants like Stanley, the issues are also related to their identity. Castles and Miller explain that immigrants become the product of both 'other-definitions' and self-definitions (Castles & Miller 2003: 33). The data in this research confirms that othering casts the FDP into a sub-human identity, making them a vulnerable and untouchable group (Duvell et al. 2008). Also, according to the self-definition, the migrants see themselves as fellow human beings with a capacity and potential.

Rachel, in describing her experience at work referred as well to her own struggling identity among the Maltese:

> Being among them ... especially going with their buses, their transports. We're the blacks, once they see us they act different to us, They don't say kind things to us. ... No joy. No joy. Because I can't work, ... can't do anything. So no joy, no way off your seat. You can't do something. I'm not fulfilled. I'm just in one place every day. I'm struggling. Struggling. (Rachel 00:13:02–00:15:09)

George said:

> We are human being. But here they don't recognize it. Even here, they like dogs more than we. We are black. I can't deceive you. Our kind is it, because I see a lot. (George 00:13:57) (On the bus) maybe your seat is the only left. You have to sit, they will not sit, they will just stand up! They will begin to use their own language to curse you, to insult you. ...They don't treat us like a human being. But, I cannot deceive you. That is true. People, as many others, they would say the same thing. (George 00:14:38–00:15:04)

The FDPs may be seen in Europe as others, illegal detainees, marginalized victims, queue jumpers, unwanted and unqualified deportees, but in their own eyes they are human beings.

Each of the categories in Figure 6.1 reflects issues that separate the person from their humanity. The conflicts act like shockwaves that increasingly separate the person from themselves and their communities, while the lack of options betrays the resourcefulness to develop coping skills. Psycho-social issues highlight the vulnerability of displaced people and the need for coping skills that can endure displacement, especially in the face of death. Finally,

despite the daunting obstacles, the displaced people in this study engage in an active fight for dignity against discrimination.

6.2 Core Experience of Displacement

Figure 6.1 suggests an ordered description of displacement, however, in reality these characteristics are intertwined. The final part of this chapter gives an assessment of the core experience of displacement in light of decreation.

6.2.1 Needs of Displacement

The categories of displacement reflect both needs and motivation that: a) cope with life to embrace it as it unfolds; b) navigate conflict often as a result of seeking personal freedom; c) deal with the multiplicity of psychological stress; d) face death in an absurd no man's land; and e) fight for dignity in a show of personal initiative. These categories correspond to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Figure 6.2 shows the categories of displacement on the left and Maslow's hierarchy on the right. [11]

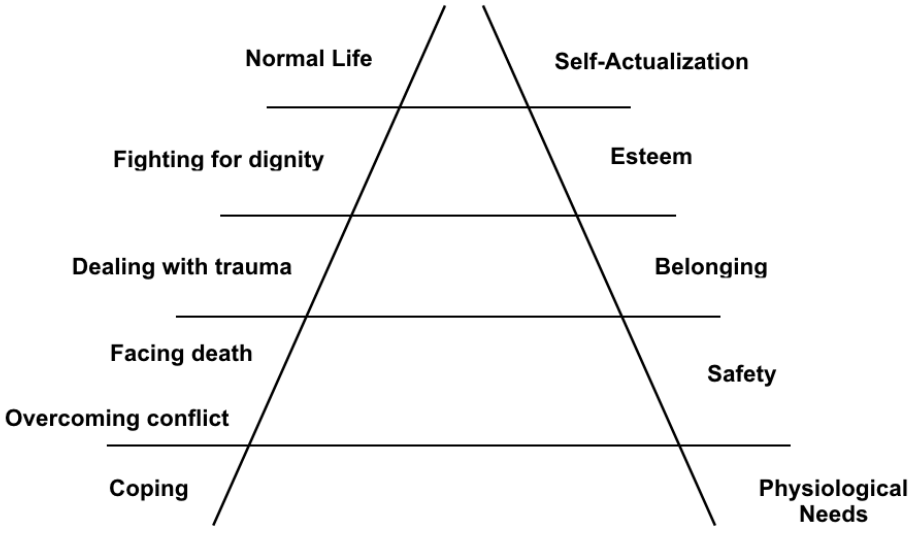


Figure 6.2 The Needs of Displacement and the Hierarchy of Needs

[11] There are needs reflected in each of the categories. For example, the struggle to cope with a lack of options, expressed as 'coping', reflects the deficiency of basic physiological needs such as shelter and food. Navigating conflict and facing death correspond to deficiencies in safety. Fighting for dignity shows a need for belonging and recognition as fulfilled human beings.

Related to the experience of displacement described in this chapter, the hierarchy of needs suggests that the FDP is able to progress through the different existential challenges and levels of need.

6.2.2 A Reversed Hierarchy

Although there are similarities with Maslow's idea of a hierarchy, the description of forced displacement in this chapter reflects a reversed hierarchy. A humanistic existential theory suggests a path for development and achievement within the person, whereas, this research shows a regression in the development and movement of FDPs. As much as the hierarchy of needs suggests there is an upward movement for the person, displacement functions as a downward force on the person. This is like a decreation process that leads downward through afflictions to deconstruct the person. Maslow's hierarchy reflects an upward progression towards a normalized life, whereas the reality of displacement is a reversed hierarchy that spirals downward toward a loss of humanity (see Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Decreation at Work in Displacement

Figure 6.3 highlights that the experience of forced displacement exists as a vortex. Decreation is significant in this experience because of its role in changing the direction from gravity to grace.

6.2.3 Nothingness of Human Life

Decreation describes the essence of forced displacement that isolates and disconnects the person from life. Unlike Maslow's hierarchy of needs that drives a person toward a peak experience, for Weil, the process of decreation functions like gravity and the force of a law, pulling the person down to nothing (Roberts 2011: 317). Its effect for Weil is positive:

> Once we have understood we are nothing, the object of all our efforts is to become nothing. It is for this that we suffer with resignation, it is for this that we act, it is for this that we pray. May God grant me to become nothing. In so far as I become nothing, God loves himself through me. (Weil 2003 [1952]: 34)

The term underlines the defenceless and vulnerable nature of human beings in displacement, but also that there is something or someone more important in the world than the self (Reed 2013: 28).

For Weil, the gravity of decreation is a step towards supernatural grace that can fill the empty space of nothingness. In comparison to a humanistic approach to understanding the motivation involved in displacement, Weil's theory is rooted in the contradictions of life and a dialectic of opposites including the transcendence of God. Weil sees decreation in life as internal and external forces between the grace of God that leads to hope, and the gravity of this world that brings suffering and affliction (Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2013: 157).

6.2.4 Undoing of Creation

Weil’s notion of decreation carries force with it, as it makes something pass to the uncreated. This is similar to the biblical idea of suffering and affliction as results of the fall. In Scripture the term refers to the undoing of creation

(Levenson 1988: 10), and one of the first examples occurs in the narrative of the flood. Henri Blocher calls the flood a 'de-creation' that reflects God's judgment; it is creation in reverse and a return to chaos (Blocher 1984: 206). Genesis 6-7 describes the decline of humanity when corruption and violence filled the earth and God nearly annihilates humanity (Gen. 6:13). Creation is blotted out until all that is left is water covering the earth. (Gen. 7:19-23) Finally, utilizing the same wording and image as at the start of creation in Genesis 1:1, God makes a wind to blow over the waters (Gen. 8:1) and the undoing of creation is complete (Mobley 2012: 20).[12]

Another example of the undoing of creation is in the Exodus account of God's people fleeing from Egypt. Having fled from Pharaoh, the people have reached the sea and can go no further (Exod. 14:9). In this passage, the decreation theme appears in a positive way where God's control over the water does not constitute destruction but rather salvation for the people to pass through onto dry land (Exod. 14:13-14). The Exodus account is important because of its parallel to other situations of forced displacement and decreation. The writer repeats several times that the purpose of this undoing of creation is to show God's power and control (Exod. 14:4; 14:13; 14:17-18; 14:31).[13] God's control over the sea, seen in Genesis 8:1-13 and Exodus 14:21-22, illustrates the decreation theme that serves as a prelude to God's restorative power.[14] These examples illustrate a decreation process in the Scriptures, and they remind the reader of God's control over those things set into motion at creation and that threaten humanity. These examples show that although decreation

[12] Gregory Mobley (Mobley 2012:20), notes that the creation order had been breached and lost, the world was flooded and the chaos and nothingness of the first creation events returned.
[13] These events in Exodus are recalled throughout the Scriptures, for example: Ps 18:15; 66:6; 74:13; 106:9 and Is 51:10.
[14] Dave Mathewson (2003) links the removal of the sea in Rev 3:21 to numerous OT parallels that show God's control over the sea and other things that are equivalent to chaos and evil and that threaten God's restoration plan.

appears regressive, it is theologically progressive because it opens the door and sets the context for a new creation, from gravity to grace.

Jeremiah's vision in 4:23-28 provides another example in Scripture where the promise of restoration is preceded first by a decreation process characterized as a reversal of creation. The prophet's vision in 4:23-28 occurs in the midst of God's people forced into exile. In this context, the prophet sees the earth as a formless and empty void (v. 23a); light is gone (23b); land is moving (v.24); there is no life and the earth is fruitless (v.25-6). God's mercy is all that will hold back complete destruction (4:27). Weil's decreation resembles Jeremiah's vision in which God's creation has been replaced with the destruction of displacement.

The scene in Jeremiah also resembles the core experience described in the first part of this chapter, in which FDPs are not simply victims, but also active participants in the events. Weil understands decreation as a desired experience that leads to a second creation. A decreation raises the importance of a holistic understanding of the person, the idea of unity in disunity, and the paradoxical relation to God that opens up a spiritual reality. Sandra Hollingsworth and Mary Dybdahl call Weil's approach a 'union-amid-breakage', in which God is present in the world through absence (Hollingsworth 2013: 209).

6.2.5 Trauma and Brokenness of the Soul

The apparent absence of God amidst decreation and a world in crisis highlight other important aspects of displacement: the trauma and brokenness of the soul. In *Waiting on God,* Weil refers to this kind of experience as affliction:

> The great enigma of human life is not suffering but affliction. It is not surprising that the innocent are killed, tortured, driven from their country, made destitute ... It is not into an image of death, ... But it is surprising that God should have given affliction the power to seize

> the very souls of the innocent and to take possession of them as their sovereign lord. At the very best, he who is branded by affliction will keep only half his soul. (Weil 2009 [1951]: 69)

Affliction is the experience of 'physical pain, distress of soul, and social degradation, all at the same time' (Weil 2009 [1951]: 81). For Weil, decreation reflects the essence of spiritual trauma and affliction as a condition of physical pain, exclusion, psychological, and spiritual distress (Kruk 2006).

Weil addresses the possibility of God's involvement amid the hardship and brokenness of displacement. How can God be present in such a destructive experience? The context of decreation looks at reality and notes there is an 'intensifying distance and oneness of Creation, Incarnation and Cross' (Hollingsworth 2013: 204). Decreation introduces the possibility of God's presence amidst abandonment and isolation, and in this context the person is like Job who says, 'God broke me apart ... and dashed me to pieces' (Job 16:12) or like Jesus who asked, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34).

Through decreation, Weil ties the paradoxical withdrawal of God in the affliction of this world to the experience of God. Critics reflect on decreation as 'the stripping of the I; the surrender of the last vestiges of selfhood; and the embrace of the cross' (Hollingsworth 2013: 224). Decreation describes a fragmented reality as the state of being. But it also describes action which Weil compares to the fly behind a glass pane whose effort to escape is continually blocked (Weil 2004 [1956]: 483). This is desire confined to one world yet attracted to the light of another and the only way out is for a transcendent power to come and break the glass (Hollingsworth 2013: 229). Decreation is more than a description of displacement; it becomes the avenue for experiencing a redemptive reality where God transcends to break the glass.

6.2.6 Need for Roots and the Obligation to Respond

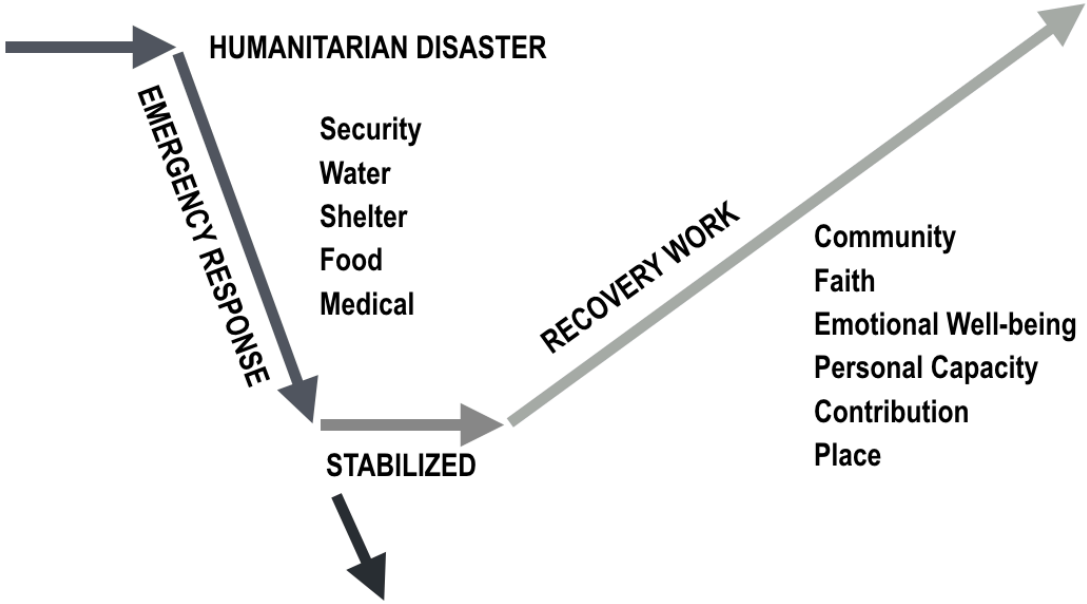
Decreation addresses the needs and obligations that form around the core of a person. This is similar to the descriptions of the categories of displacement described in this chapter that also contain prescriptions for action. In *The Need for Roots*, Weil (Weil 2005 [1952]: 40) clarifies, 'to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul'. *The Need for Roots* distinguishes between needs of the body and needs of the soul. The first refers to physical needs which are 'easy to enumerate' and are concerned with 'protection against violence, housing, clothing, hygiene and medical attention,' whereas needs of the soul have 'no connection to the physical side of life;' yet, they are necessary for life on earth and 'the life of the soul' (Weil 2005 [1952]: 7-8). For Weil, the reality of these needs of the soul corresponds to an eternal obligation:

> The fact that a human being possesses an eternal destiny imposes only one obligation: respect ... so it is an eternal obligation towards the human being not to let him suffer from hunger when one has the chance of coming to his assistance ... consequently the list of obligations towards the human being should correspond to the list of such human needs as are vital, analogous to hunger.' (Weil 2005 [1952]: 5-6)

Decreation is significant because it raises awareness of need and gives attention to affliction. Likewise, these needs correspond to the obligation to make compassionate efforts to intervene. Edward Kruk (Kruk 2006) clarifies that those experiencing characteristics of spiritual trauma, which is similar to the core experience of displacement, will ask, 'Why is this happening to me?' He proposes a charter of social obligations that correspond to the physical and metaphysical needs of the displaced.[15]

[15] Kruk argues the awareness of spiritual trauma is a neglected component of social work. Spiritual trauma is the result of violation of the sacred core of a person. Kruk's paper includes a draft charter that proposes obligations that correspond to vital human needs. The list of physical needs have corresponding metaphysical needs. Kruk explores social work that is based in responsibility and not rights. He notes a rights-based response asks 'Why don't I have these rights?' and it leads to entitlement. A charter like this builds on the work of Weil as well as

The Continuum of Response in Figure 6.4 illustrates basic needs and obligations in forced displacement. Developed by Tom Albinson (Albinson 2017), the continuum shows the relationship between the urgency of an emergency response and the long-term nature of recovery.[16] Albinson characterizes forced displacement as a free-fall of dehumanization, while recovery rehumanizes the person, building on the strength and resilience of the FDPs who are more than victims in need.



Source: IAFR 2017 Used with permission

Figure 6.4 Continuum of Response

The continuum in Figure 6.4 reflects the tension in decreation between need and obligation. From an NGO's perspective, the emergency response reflects needs to meet. From a displaced perspective, these needs are the source of motivation for recovery. Figure 6.4 resembles a vortex with all the parts swirling among each other at the point where the two lines touch.

Maslow who have identified needs and it develops responses in light of spiritual aspects of the whole person.

[16] Tom Albinson is the President of the International Association for Refugees, which is the organization that I work for. Further explanation about this continuum is available at www.iafr.org and recorded presentation at: https://vimeo.com/152972791.

Like the example of a fly, in the reality of decreation, there is more at stake than solutions and recovery. Decreation is more than simply the decline into need or the pathway to provision. The vortex of displacement is not only where needs and responsibilities are seen, but it is also where the person turns toward the creator. Without this relationship, the recovery remains one more effort to construct an imaginary world.

6.3 Conclusion

Through a small group of refugees from a mixed background, this chapter has highlighted experiences of displacement that together describe forced displacement. When confronted with conflict, hopelessness and other aspects of forced displacement, these refugees face repetitive needs and obstacles. These needs drive the person down as in a vortex forcing them to take yet another risk to reach their goals. There may be geographic progress, but the experiences have only repeated themselves, and the need for peace and safety continues to shape the journey. After a close analysis of the experiences, the chapter highlights several categories that describe both the needs and the actions taken. FDPs navigate conflict, and relive the conflict again in their conscience; they deal with stress and trauma that can develop into complex psycho-social issues; they exist in an interstitial no man's land marked by death; and finally, they fight for dignity and recognition as human beings.

On one level, Maslow's hierarchy of needs visualizes the drive and determination for life, but in actuality the core of displacement is like a vortex that pulls the person down through a decreative process that results in a loss of humanity. Decreation represents both the gravity of dehumanization but also the pathway to grace; it emphasizes a hopeless experience, characterized by a

traumatized soul and calls for the recognition of need and obligation. From the perspective of faith, the experience resembles the inhumanity of a world that has lost touch with its Creator. Just as this chapter has explored the experience of displacement, the following chapter will outline the possibility of re-creation.

CHAPTER 7

Journey To Re-creation: Transformation through God's Story

This chapter draws on the decreation framework and the correlation theory of Chapter Three to explore the redemptive connection between faith and displacement. It suggests that when the realities of faith and displacement meet, the result is salvific and redemptive in nature. This produces a re-creation in which something destructive is ‘rewoven’ and a new, redeemed reality is created through a salvific connection.[1] This chapter considers how the salvific themes and motifs of Scripture take on the significance of a re-creation in the experience of FDPs. Ethan's story below provides an example. The chapter will discuss the dialogical process as key for making conscious the often subconscious correlation of displacement and faith conscious.

7.1 Introductory Story: 'God, keep us alive'

Before Ethan fled, he owned a small multi-purpose shop that also sold Christian merchandise. During a political crisis in the region, a religious mob burned the shop down and murdered Ethan's father. Within days of this trauma, Ethan had fled to the local port city and paid to be smuggled onto a ship. For 20 days with 18 other people, Ethan hid among the containers on the freighter. He explained:

> We had to hide in the bottom of the ship and a man would bring us water and biscuits. ... You don't know how long it will be, ... so you save your biscuit. ... We don't know day and night. ... One of the guys wants to go out, ... to run and kill himself, to jump over the side in the sea. ... But we just held him there.

[1] Weil writes in her *Notebooks*, 'our souls should be undone in order that they may be rewoven in us by God with our consent' (Weil 2004 [1956]: 544). In this process, these souls 'accept to be and still more not to be, for we realize it is God who fashions our being. God has created us without our having wanted it. He has to re-create us with our consent,' (Weil 2004 [1956]: 544)

> All we could do is wait ... so we used to discuss our situation. We don't know where we are going, and we are just believing that we will find a good place.
>
> Only I and one other boy have the fear of God. ... So, we talk together about God, ... and we pray a lot. We pray for a safe journey to where we are going and that God should keep us alive.
>
> ...We discussed our movement and if this is where God really wants us to go. We try to encourage ourselves with Scripture, so we remember Jonah and we used to laugh that we are like Jonah now. ... I also remembered the verse from Romans 8:28 that says 'God works all things together for good to them that love him and are called for his purpose.'
>
> I thought about how things worked out. ... and why my father was killed. ... So we took courage with these verses.[2] (Ethan 00:27:00 – 00:44:46)

Ethan's experience in the ship casts him deeper into the destructive journey of displacement where as a person created in God's image he experiences what Weil calls 'the fulness of the absence of God' (Weil 2004 [1956]: 342). As Ethan himself implies, his journey raises questions about God. Weil herself asked: 'What is the quality that is attached to (God's absence) and which we call a redemptive quality' (Weil 2004 [1956]: 343)?

What does salvation among the respondents look like when Christians in displacement approach what they know about God? Generally, they see themselves reflected in Scriptures; their lives running parallel to God's story, with a special emphasis on salvific themes. The experience, allowing them to see God active in their own lives, becomes redemptive as a re-creation through God's salvation power. Salvation in terms of re-creation juxtaposes faith issues and experience to make a connection between God and humanity. To explore how salvation functions as a re-creation I will:

- clarify the meaning of redemption and salvation;
- describe how the refugee' stories run parallel to stories from the Scriptures;

[2] Ethan took about 15 minutes to discuss and answer questions related to the experience of being hidden and smuggled in the bottom of a large freighter. Prior to this story, Ethan told how he had been forcibly displaced. The excerpts keep some of the original syntax while other parts are corrected for coherency.

- provide examples from the interviews of this theory;
- and consider the significance of this theory in light of a dialogical process.

7.2 Salvation and Redemption

There are numerous ways to look at forced displacement and its issues (Berry & Sam 1992).[3] These relate to identity but also include theological, psychological and social categories. The comprehensive terms of salvation and redemption extend throughout the Scriptures. These expressions encompass a collection of concepts such as sacrifice, justification, atonement and deliverance to describe how God accomplishes victory over evil, satisfies divine justice, makes a substitution and heals the human condition. Similarly, there are a host of related sub-themes such as rescue, freedom, forgiveness and adoption (Hubbard 2000: 720). Salvation and redemption are relevant in forced displacement because together they refer to deliverance from dangers and ills, particularly in a context where human power is helpless to overcome life-threatening situations such as death, mortality, war, sickness and famine (Kirn 1949; Marcoulesco 1987).

The respondents in this study bring perspectives of faith into the reality of their journeys that uncover a connection to a spiritual space and place, and ultimately the presence of God in their lives. This relates directly to one of the primary meanings of salvation, which is to bring a person into a more liberating environment (Liefeld 1979: 288; Wenham & Milne 1982: 1057).[4] The

[3] Similar to the ideas of the previous chapter, my concept of correlation raises the question of whether this is what the refugees identify or whether it is my notion imposed from the outside. The theological ideas and issues discussed in this chapter originated with the respondents. However, they also reflect my perspective looking in from the outside. Both are important and validate each other.

[4] Liefeld (1979) notes that, *yāša*ʿ as the main OT word for salvation, carries the idea of enlarging and providing space. For Wenham (Wenham & Milne 1982) the basic meaning of

respondents discover redemptive meaning when they connect their experience to ideas of salvation.[5] The assumption throughout this research has been that refugees relate their journey to theological issues, yet the validity and significance of this is not always evident. There are two important objections to first address.

7.2.1 Objections to Theological Connections

i. Irrelevance of Salvation

One objection to the concerns of this chapter is that a theological issue like salvation does not relate to the durable solutions for addressing the psycho-social and humanitarian issues of displacement; it is impractical and irrelevant.[6] In rebuttal to this, the FDPs themselves do not separate their concerns from theological issues. The extensive POLITIS study in 2007 noted that immigrants who arrive in Europe (which includes FDPs) come with a holistic view of life in which personal, social, psychological and spiritual concerns link together (CCME 2010; Vogel & Leiprecht 2007). Likewise, the Refugee Study Centre workshop noted the need to understand the theology of those affected by forced displacement (Refugee Study Centre 2010). Significantly as well, the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees described the role of faith during the UNHCR dialogue on faith and protection in 2012:

> For the vast majority of uprooted people, there are few things as powerful as their faith in helping them cope with fear, loss, separation, and destitution. Faith is also central to hope and resilience. ... Religion is very often key in enabling refugees to overcome their trauma, to make sense of their loss and to rebuild their lives from nothing. ... As such, faith contributes much more than many people think to the protection and well-being of refugees and other persons of concern to the UNHCR and eventually to finding durable solutions. ... The requirement to act neutrally in accordance with humanitarian principles has sometimes prevented us from considering the full potential of these organizations in helping us to address protection challenges. (Guterres 2012c: 4-5)

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salvation is to bring into a spacious environment in the sense of deliverance from what restricts and hinders.

[5] I use salvation to refer to the action of God in a person's life according to the Scriptures that both saves from death and transforms.

[6] The durable solutions identified by the UNHCR include: resettlement, integration and return.

Indeed, the idea that faith issues do not mix with humanitarian concerns is a modern development. For most of history, belief and ethics have not been separated. The disciplines today are separated into individual topics such as the study of Scripture, church history, dogmatics and practical theology (Hauerwas 1997: 32). The modern approach to ethics contrasts with a theological one such as Karl Barth's, whose ethic depends on God's imperative (Hauerwas 1997: 34). The imperative in this context refers to the expectation in Scripture to love the stranger and is inseparable from the understanding of God as creator.[7] In Barth's scheme, moral conception relates to the idea of ontology and not simply justice or political action. Both Hauerwas and Barth highlight the relevance of theology to refugee issues, where according to an ontological understanding, issues of being have been compromised and marred in the refugees experience.

ii. Assumptions of Redemption

The second objection to a theological discussion originates with the meaning of redemption. According to this objection, it is problematic to recount God's interaction with refugees in redemptive terms. The understanding of a redemptive history comes out of a particular time and culture, and may not be relevant in every culture. This objection notes that a redemptive understanding carries a host of assumptions placed on the text and reader. It sees a danger to refer to a certain understanding or only one perspective. To be sure, there is no approach or culture that has a monopoly on God (Vanhoozer 2006: 91). More accurately, this objection does not refute the idea of theological significance, but rather it raises the important question of how to approach human circumstances

[7] See the note in Chapter Three on the example of Romans 6:1-4 and the centrality of the cross. The note introduces the discussion of the indicative and the imperative in Scripture and how these ideas are relevant in this research.

in a theological way. The idea of redemption is not problematic, rather the question of how to understand it.

These objections express the valid concern that outside frameworks and ideas will take advantage of the FDP's vulnerability. This is an issue of imposing categories on understanding, construing the concepts, and making labels to serve the convenience and needs of more dominant cultures and perspectives (Harrell-Bond 1986; Zetter 2007). 'Imposing aid' is a reality that FDPs face on many fronts including: political opinion, policy development, and lifestyle decisions.[8] According to Castles and Miller, good migration research examines the basis for understanding the issues (Castles & Miller 2003: 10). Attention given to the theological concern of this chapter qualifies as good research because the concerns of faith are one of the core issues that refugees identify with in displacement.

7.2.2 Salvation and Redemption Defined

At the root of salvation in the Old Testament are God's saving acts of grace that deliver, save, help, protect, give refuge, sustain, free, and restore.[9] The terminology reflects two major aspects for understanding salvation: first, salvation is the action that delivers, restores and redeems from something, and second it saves, helps, and rescues for something (O'Collins 1992: 907). The New Testament develops the terms for salvation as a religious idea to save, rescue and redeem, and the context connected to the terms is important

[8] *Imposing Aid* is the title of Harrell-Bonds book (1986), which studied the impact of aid on Ugandan refugee groups and local hosts in rural Sudan in 1982. She argues that many of the concepts for understanding and assisting refugees are artificial ones that serve the aid's groups more than the refugees. Many of the refugees rejected the assistance, opting instead for self-settlement. Uganda's previous refugee experience is influencing its response in the current South Sudan crisis, which is to allow refugee groups to settle and integrate as communities. This is an example as well of the role personal experience plays in shaping action–which is at the core of the issue addressed in this chapter.

[9] Liefeld (1979), Wenham (1982) and O'Collins (1992) provide helpful introductions to salvation. The list of words are their translations of the key terms behind salvation. The full discussion of redemption and salvation go beyond the scope of this study. I define the terms according to the context, but the focus is on how refugees experience redemption.

(Liefeld 1979: 292).[10] Salvation in the Christian experience refers to God's action to fulfil the promises given, to establish God's kingdom on earth, to deliver its people from evil, and build a covenant relationship with them (O'Collins 1992: 913-914).

Redemption develops in a context of ransom and it is closely related to salvation.[11] Redemption recovers something that has been lost or forfeited, and in order to do this the mediator pays a price (Exod. 21:28-30; Lev. 25:29-34). The redemptive act occurs in the Old Testament to restore life as well as property by paying a price. In the New Testament, redemption is linked to the death of Christ, as a ransom (1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:7). Redemption carries the implications of payment, and it conveys the idea of an effort made at great cost (Morris 1982: 1014). Anthony Thiselton clarifies, 'usually redemption denotes transference *from* a state of bondage or jeopardy *to* a state of well-being *by* a costly act (my emphasis) (Thiselton 2007: 321).

Thiselton refers to salvation and redemption as the 'hard currencies of biblical language'(Thiselton 2007: 320). They depend on each other, but they are not synonymous terms that fold into each other. Together, they distinguish the issues of faith as more than liberty, or a political order, and more than a technique or ritual for greater freedom (Wenham & Milne 1982: 1057). Salvation

[10] For example, *sǭzō* is used in Mark 5:23, 28 and 34 to mean 'make well'. The context is Jesus healing Jairus's daughter and the woman who touched him (Mark 5:21-34). This context helps to convey the salvific significance of God's power over suffering and in the face of life and death. It is an important message for the early Christians in Mark's day in light of their own persecution. In addition, the use of *sǭzō* is happening in the present as Jesus goes with Jairus (v. 23); it will happen in the future for the woman when she determines to touch Jesus (v.28) and it happened in the past as Jesus assures her and sends her away in peace (v. 34).

[11] There are two terms in the Old Testament that signify redemption, redeem and redeemer, *pāda* and *gāʾal*.

demonstrates the grace of God through mighty acts in history including the work of Christ, while redemption underlines that this action came at a great price.[12]

Salvation and redemption call attention to the value of God's action in a person's life. Similarly in the case of FDPs who are forgotten, exploited, trafficked, abused and killed, the connection they find to God's salvation also has great value. This is not to say the person's experience is in itself an act of divine grace, but rather, making a connection between life and faith leads to a re-creation. The events and personal stories serve as a stage for God's redemptive action.

7.3 Redemptive Theory among FDPs

I believe that FDPs have a redemptive experience when they see themselves reflected in Scripture. Refugees in this study understand God's salvation through their own story, by placing themselves in the Scriptures and seeing their story in the light of God's own story.[13] How does this happen? This approach to salvation comes through a visible reflection of Christ in their lives, either through events that run parallel to Scripture stories, or through Scriptural themes such as seeing God as an advocate, or a provider. In this way the refugee journey becomes something akin to an allegory of Scripture, enabling

[12] Redemptive suffering calls attention to Weil's awareness of necessity as a force in this world that brings with it a mechanical order. Bringing redemptive suffering to light does not mean that the concern in this chapter is for theodicy of some kind or that decreation is a framework for redemptive suffering. These ideas are beyond the reach of this chapter. Indeed Weil's idea of decreation carries with it a realism of humanity in a world of suffering. The hope for redemption is a realistic response.

[13] I observed this significant perspective beginning with the first interviews in 2009. In describing their own journey Ethan and Oliver both noted that a refugee sees himself in the Scripture, and David said he sees himself in Job's story. Daniel Groody verifies this theory as well by noting in his article 'Crossing the Divide' (2009:651) that 'for compelling reasons many migrants reframe their story in light of Jesus' journey'. Also in 'The Spirituality of Migrants' Groody observes that migrants 'often see their own story in the Jesus story' (Groody 2013:150). Robert Schreiter explains that one of the distinctives in reconciliation is to pattern personal suffering on the suffering of Christ. Through this the person connects to something larger that leads to redemption (Schreiter 2012).

refugees to intimately connect to God. In terms of Galations 2:20, this is to find themselves in Christ as Christ lives in them. This is not to make a divine claim, but rather a divine connection.

7.3.1 Journey of Reflection

The journey makes refugees vehicles of theology in which the displacement experiences become mirrors of meaning reflecting a specific salvific reality. The story as a reflection functions like a conduit of ideas, concepts, thoughts and feelings (Lakoff & Johnson 2003; Reddy 1993). In this way, the refugee story is not simply a linguistic depiction of events, but it also has an ontological purpose. The following section will explore to what extent reflections of savific themes in refugees stories reflect the primary way of expressing salvation.

7.3.2 Association of Text and Context

There are three parts involved for identifying the use of stories in the data. Appendix F highlights specific examples of these parts. The first part references an event or aspect of decreation in the displacement context, which I identified as a 'decreation theme' in the analysis. The second part is a reference to God's salvific action. This could be a Scripture, such as Ethan's reference to Jonah and Romans 8:28, or biblical motifs the respondents remember or hear from others. These are events and words in Scripture that show God at work in the world, and I identified this material in the analysis as a 'salvific theme'. If both of these parts (the reference to salvation and decreation) occur in the narratives then there is the potential for a redemptive experience. It is significant to point out that these redemptive experiences are usually in a decreative context. Therefore, the third part in the correlation takes place when the person connects the salvific and decreative aspects together which leads to a redemptive effect. This reflective association and Scripture shows how the

correlation theory in Chapter Three works in practice. Refugees correlate their experience when they make a redemptive association between their own context and God's Word.

The three parts–salvific reference, experience of displacement and redemptive effects–move the person from decreation to re-creation through correlation. The effect of God's redemption becomes a new reality, like a re-creation, and does not simply balance displacement and salvation, but bridges the gap between them to create one whole, redemptive experience.

7.3.3 Scripture Pattern

The significance of refugee stories functioning as reflections of God's greater story, or even running parallel to the Biblical stories, follows a pattern also found in Scripture. Luke alludes to the larger redemptive plan in Luke 4:18-19 when Jesus placed himself at the start of his ministry in the context of salvation history (Pao & Schabel 2007: 287).[14] In Luke 9:18-27, the disciples compare Jesus to John the Baptist, Elijah and other prophets as well as the Messiah (v. 19-20). Similarly, in Matthew 25:34-40, Jesus identifies with humanity and describes how he entered this story saying, 'I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick and in prison (Matt. 25:35-36). The bread, water, clothes, visit and welcome reflect the redemptive effects, which have come only after the association of Word and context. The one reality has first been embraced before the new reality has come. Drawing on this image in Matthew 25, Weil explains, 'we must not help our neighbour *for* Christ, but *in* Christ' [sic] (Weil 2003 [1952]: 45). The obligation described in Matthew 25:35-36 presumes there

[14] Jesus not only associates his ministry with the salvific nature of Isaiah's passage, but in verses 24-29, he makes it clear that the examples of Elijah and Elisha are analogies of his own ministry.

is an identification process in which the other person becomes more than the object of some principle or rule of action.

In this process the person becomes present with the other as a subject. In her Notebooks, Weil explains this identification with regard to the presence of God in suffering and she makes the point that a 'human co-operation' is necessary (Weil 2004 [1956]: 343). In a similar way, Christ embraced his incarnation,identifying with humanity as well as with the plan of God. Likewise, understanding redemption in the lives of displaced people takes place in the context of their relationship and community in Christ.

7.4 Interview Examples

I identified over forty instances in the primary material that juxtapose the displacement story alongside salvific stories and motifs of Scripture. Some of these incidents describe the relationship directly while other descriptions are more indirect.[15] Below are examples to illustrate finding the personal story in God's story.

Franklin makes a direct reference to his story in God's story in relation to the mandatory detention that he experienced in Malta. He explains it was the first time he was detained by the police and the experience was harsh. During this time, Franklin met regularly with others for prayer and preaching which had a redemptive effect on his life:

> In detention, sometime they preach and I put in my heart, or I make encourage from it. About Joseph, when his brothers sent him to they just sell him to Potiphar and his wife, ... And I said, oh God, it is true. If you can do this one for our ancestors, I know me too you can do that one for me. (Franklin 00:46:53)

[15] See Appendix G for a sample of this source material. I have underlined the text to show the juxtaposition of the material..

Amin's narrative describes the interpersonal conflicts he faced on his journey and the doubts that this caused. It was redemptive for him to see and understand God's provision described in Matthew 6:25-26. He went on to say:

> So I have this faith. No matter how it is or no matter what the situation I am living. I, in the past, I am doubting, but I see what God have done for me. I sit down and I try to count where I am coming, out of nothing. But God even in my sin, he were there. (Amin 00:18:53)

Before Baldwin left his country, he had a dream that he would go to a small country. As he crossed the desert in Libya, he dreamed again he was on a sinking boat, but he would not die. After being rescued at sea, 18 months of unexpected detention and continuous rejection in Malta, Baldwin credits God directly for his survival. His understanding of redemption has been like a guarantee of life despite the threat of death:

> Because you know, what I have passing through, I know because of God, if it's not because of God, I would be dead already. ...before he revealed dreams to some people, and he is a everlasting God, and today God, what he is doing in past, he is doing it today.' (Baldwin 00:22:58–00:26:23)

Esther also indirectly refers to her story in God's story. It was difficult for Esther to recall the trials she passed through in coming to Malta, and these difficulties have caused her to ask 'Why?' Yet, she finds herself in God's plans and this gives her strength:

> It's God who knows my destiny, whatever I'm going through, he knows. And he has plans for me, good ones for me. And so I, whenever, I get a chance, I try to talk to him, to give me strength, to whatever I'm passing through. ... ...That happened when I was in this January of coming to this place. That is when God was really, because I was really crying for him for the help. That is when he was totally with me. (Esther 00:32:01)

In these examples, the refugees see their personal story in connection to God's story. For some this means identifying their own circumstances as running parallel to Bible stories; for others, it means to identify God's action in their lives. In all examples, their personal story becomes a reflection of God's greater story.

The detention experience was difficult for Franklin; it was unexpected and unjust. For him, this was like Joseph's experience in Genesis 39 when he was forced into slavery and unjustly held in prison. Amin described his situation as coming from nothing, and he described God as coming to this nothing, so that God was there in a time of conflict. Baldwin described his own dreams about the journey alongside the dreams God has given others in the past. Similarly, Esther described the experience of coming to Malta and crying for help while knowing the good plans of God that give strength. In each of these examples, the speakers relate their experience as refugees to God's activity.

Figure 7.1 illustrates how these examples reflect God's story. It shows the three parts of the theory next to each other. The first and second columns show different domains of decreation and salvific themes, followed by the third column to show how these correspond and connect. The connection shows the creation of a redemptive experience.

	Decreation Theme	Salvific Theme	Connection
Franklin	detention in Malta	Joseph in prison	parallel experience
Amin	Inter-personal conflict	divine provision	provision in time of need
Baldwin	danger at sea	promise of life	personal guarantee
Esther	cope with trials	good plans	talking, crying, give strength
Ethan	uncertain future, loss	Jonah, called for a purpose	similar experience

Figure 7.1 Redemptive Connections

These parts together show the correlation theory at work through the journey of decreation leading not only to a redemptive connection but also to a re-creation of the person. The following section looks more closely at how the correlation

develops from a subconscious meeting of realities, to a realized redemptive effect.

7.5 Dialogical Process

The theory above describes the details of the correlation, but it does not show how these parts relate to the whole idea of a journey and the elements that are involved in understanding the redemptive experience. The dialogical process is a symbiotic discourse between two or more parties that leads to a conscious understanding of God's connection to life. Conversations are the primary indicator of a dialogical process, but the range of this process in the material also includes listening, telling and hearing others, prayers, 'putting it into the heart,' dreams, preaching, songs, learning, going to church, and reading Scripture. A dialogical process indicates a turn to conversation that takes place with others in community, and thus it emphasizes relationship and carries the condition of those involved belonging together (Risser 2010: 5,17).

The idea originates with Hans Gadamer who describes the hermeneutical circle as a back and forth between the different parts towards ontological significance (Gadamer 2013 [1989]: 279). The process is not an assimilation or unification of the different parties; rather, it is like the etymology of the word, *dia-logos*: a living conversation 'through word' among others (Risser 2010). A dialogical process differs from a dialectic process, which focuses on the contradictions and tensions of a discourse and can be very much of a monologue within the person.

The dialogical process shows how the correlation theory works practically to connect decreation and salvation and how the person becomes conscious of the connection. The process draws out the aspects of faith of the decreation

framework discussed in Chapter Three. Figure 7.2 shows the process as a centrally located,hub. In a dialogical process, refugees engage in a discourse individually, with God and their community.

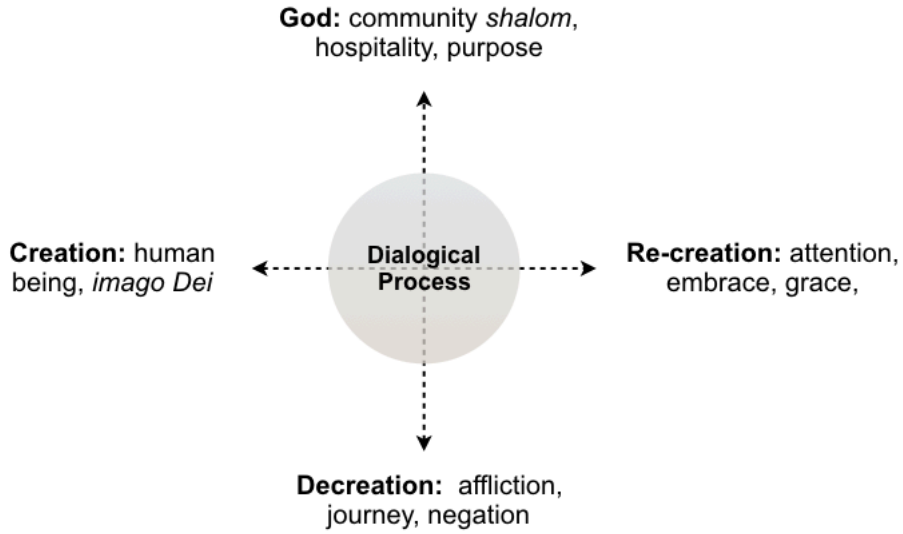

Figure 7.2 Dialogical Process

At the centre of the process is Gadamer's theory that understanding develops through the back and forth of listening and conversing:[16]

> To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were. (Gadamer 2013 [1989]: 386)

A dialogical process relates to redemptive concerns because of its

[16] Chapter 2 introduces several influential aspects of Gadamer's thought including the fusion of horizons. These thoughts reach far beyond the aim of my argument here. However, they provide impetus for the dialogical process described throughout this section. Two of Gadamer's ideas are that humans are situated in history, and the concern solely for scientific method detaches the person from his or her context. Part 1 of *Truth and Method* argues for the need to understand more than theory but also aesthetic dimensions of truth. Chris Lawn explains, (2006:61) understanding of truth cannot be captured in a theory, instead it has to be encountered and experienced. Part 2 of *Truth and Method* looks at elements of the hermeneutic circle and the different historical horizons that need to be fused together for understanding. Part 3 looks at the use of words for connecting horizons. Words name a being in Gadamer's thought (2013 [1989]:423). This idea supports why it is significant when refugees see themselves in Scripture. The connection not only reflects their reality, but it becomes a bridge to understanding. Similarly refugees reject the labels given to them because these do not belong to them. This argues that the labels are not reflective of them because there has not been a dialogical process.

emphasis on transformation. In describing the nature of a dialogue, Gadamer states:

> The more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner ... it is generally more correct to say ... that we become involved in ... (a conversation). The way one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own twists and reaching its own conclusion, may well be conducted in some way, but the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led. No one knows in advance what will 'come out' of a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like an event that happens to us ... a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it– i.e., that it allows something to 'emerge' which henceforth exists. (Gadamer 2013 [1989]: 401-402)

In a dialogical process there is a concern for the text, but also a turn to context. This represents a shift from epistemology to ontology (Vanhoozer 2006: 93). The dialogical process highlights a redemptive understanding rooted in 'a re-thinking of who we are, where we have come from and where we are going' (McCarroll 2014: 5).

One of the problems of the experience of displacement is the gap it creates between the person's identity apart from their journey, and the impact the journey of displacement has on their identity. The correlation theory at work in this research makes a connection between text and context. The dialogical process is a conduit for this connection; it serves as a bridge between the different parts. In this way, the dialogical process takes the theory to its practical application. The dialogical process creates a context for this connection to happen which Gadamer calls the 'fusion of horizons'.[17]

7.5.1 Examples of Dialogical Process

Several samples from the primary material further illustrate the dialogical process. Appendix F includes some references to 'dialogue' to illustrate the

[17] Gadamer (2014 [1989]) refers to the fusion of horizons in his discussion of the hermeneutic experience in Chapter Four of *Truth and Method.* A fusion happens when historical concepts and a person's comprehension of them join together for understanding. According to Chris Lawn (2006:61-66) the fusion of horizons is a key idea for Gadamer that suggests a breadth of vision that incorporates many perspectives. For Paul Ricoeur this is the place where text and reader merge into one world (Ricœur 1977:319), further illustrating the unifying, mediating, and bridge building role of the dialogical process.

connection that occurs in a dialogical process. Ethan's experience in the bottom of the ship becomes an allegory for his experience of faith. This image and experience connects him to God's story and the dialogue for understanding this includes prayers, conversations and humour. In fact, these parts are crucial in order for the correlation to function.

As Isaac crossed the desert, was sent to prison for two months, and adrift in a boat for one week, he found symbolic significance in these difficult journeys through the dialogue with others. In both the desert and the sea, those who were with Isaac knew that he prayed and were often asking him to pray. In reflecting on this, Isaac said:

> Yeah, you see the God is doing in my life. I started to crying because it's too much. ... I remember in desert, ... the water is finished, and everything is finished. ... And one man told me, "Elder, pray. Because I know you are praying, your God listening. Praying, and your God rescue us". I remember that way, and that man told me, and every time, every time I remember that way, I started to crying. God, you are God. Because, that situation, our passing is not my might, is not my power. (Isaac 01:02:10 - 01:03:13)

Isaac referred to the conversations with his fellow travellers as well as with God, which helped open his eyes to God's power and might. At one point, he said his Christian life is 'going down' (00:45:38). but again later that he received encouragement from God through prayer, dreams and 'talk' with God (00:54:53; 01:17:20). His account reflects the repetitive nature of a dialogue in the form of prayers, songs, questions, and conversations with others.

Jason found encouragement in his ten days' crossing of the desert. When the group stopped to rest one evening, Jason took time to pray and read in the small New Testament and Psalms that he carried with him. Psalm 136 became meaningful to him that night:

> Give thanks to the God of gods, his love endures forever ... to Him who alone does great wonders ... But swept Pharaoh into the red sea, his love endures forever, to him who led his people through the desert. (Psalm 136:15-16)

When Jason realized the Psalm described a similar situation to his own, he said, 'This point is the one who encouraged me the more. And all my prayers were bathing in this one. Because I was inside the sea, the desert [sic]' (01:15:01). He explained:

> I discover it when I was in the desert. And that night, because I was reading the bible, and that night I pray, I pray, I pray. The guide, the one who used to guide us was watching. All of us must sleep, In the morning he call me, ... he give me a piece of bread and say, "Nothing wrong. You will go. You will be okay, because I watch how you were praying. It's good." Then he asked me, "You are Muslim?" Then I say, "No I'm Christian". But the way he told me, encouraged me I could not understand that a Muslim could say it. [sic] (Jason01:11:07)

Besides the parallel to Scripture that Jason saw in his own situation, the redemptive experience came particularly through conversation. First, in prayer and second, with the guide who became part of the way, Jason found strength for the ordeal. Jason went on to explain that he would never forget that place which he described as an oasis in a valley, with trees and a road running through it (01:15:31). Jason's account illustrates how people and places are significant factors in a dialogue for giving him redemptive understanding and encouragement. Several other refugees name the importance of a place. It is significant because it marks a kind of spiritual oasis, a place where they connect with God to discover either for the first time or anew that God is with them.

7.5.2 Significance of Divine Presence

Another indicator of the dialogical process includes the presence of God. While the dialogical process describes how the redemptive theory takes shape, the presence of God signals that God's salvation is active in the person's life. The occurrence of God's presence not only shows awareness of God, but also creates a bridge to the *imago Dei*.

The presence of God is the promise, blessing and sign of salvation all at once. Also referred to as the divine presence, it is the essence of biblical faith (Morgan 1992: 463). For some critics, the emphasis on God's presence would

seem pietistic, as if this discounts the theology in some way (Morgan 1992: 450). However, just because there is a subjective meaning does not mean there is no objective significance. Paul Ricoeur explains that an objective meaning in a text is distinct from the subjective intention (Ricœur 1977: 318). Therefore, the presence of God ties the person to God's salvation and the Word of God spoken. When God gives the Word, God does not leave people alone with it, but is present and nearby (Fretheim 1992: 965-66). N.T. Wright explains, that Christ anchors the person to the presence of God (Wright 2011: 66), and in this way holds the person in the redemptive experience. The awareness of God's presence is not only a sign of biblical literacy, devotion and prayer, but also an important element that forms the theology and shapes the understanding.

The presence of God manifests itself in the data through expressions that range from noting the proximity of God to the nature and function of this presence. The interviewees refer to 'God is there,' 'in me' and 'with me', and they note further qualifiers of this presence such as, ‘God's hands in my life' that give 'purpose'; God is 'very near' and 'closer than breathing'; God is 'totally with me,' 'still with me,' and 'never leaves'. Expressions like these function as formulae to indicate that God is active and relevant in a person's life.

The presence of God lends further support to the relational nature of the dialogical process as seen between Moses and God in Exodus 3. When Moses doubted God's call for him to lead the people out of Egypt, Moses asked, 'Who am I to do this?' (Exod. 3:11). God reminded him, 'I will be with you and this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you' (Exod. 3:12). This critical moment establishes for Moses and the reader that everything to follow will come out of who God is. Moses would remind the people of 'the Lord, the God of your fathers' (Exod. 3:15). The same God who has been present with their

ancestors will be with Israel as they flee from Egypt. God's theophany is with the people as they wander through the desert, and finally God is with Moses on the mountain as he gives him the Commandments. The formula 'I am the Lord' is the promise of God that will serve as the basis of faith and relationship, and the presence of God recalls this basic promise.

7.5.3 Re-creation Reality

The dialogical process underlines the ongoing nature of redemptive experience among FDPs, in which the movement from gravity to grace happens throughout the journey and not only at one point. The redemptive effects remind the person that other horizons are continually at stake in relation to themselves and God.[18] Through the dialogical process, peace, welcome and purpose become realities of a life re-created in the image of God, as Chapter Eight will further explore in detail.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described the process of transformation that occurs in the context of the decreation framework and through the the application of the correlation theory. The result is a re-creation in which the person sees their reality in a new way. The chapter began by establishing the nature of salvation and redemption that call attention to the value of God's action in a person's life. The chapter first described how the correlation theory occurs practically when the person sees their experience reflected in the Scriptures. It identified three parts through which this connection is made: a salvific reference, an experience

[18] Anthony Thiselton (2007:4) explains there is a 'continuous flow or movement' that characterizes understanding. Thiselton's extensive hermeneutic introduces the image of 'free-floating problems' (Thiselton 2007:4), which are like the issues of displacement. To address these problems requires a dynamic process as described in this chapter, which carry the person deeper into a redemptive experience.

of displacement and redemptive effects. It also gave examples in Scripture of a similar pattern as well as examples from the interviews.

After describing how the correlation functions, the chapter emphasized the relational nature of the process. It described the dialogical process as a necessary component for a practical application of the decreation framework and how the different parts relate together. It described the process as relational with God and with others that holds the parts together. Through various forms of conversation, the subconscious redemptive connections become conscious in the refugees' lives. Finally, the chapter emphasized the important aspect of divine presence and related the displacement context to salvific themes. The next chapter will explore the nature of re-creation through three categories (*Shalom*, welcome and purpose) that further apply the work of salvation in the lives of the refugees.

Chapter 8

Journey of Redemption: *Shalom*, Welcome, and Purpose

Chapter Seven described the correlation in which FDPs see themselves reflected in Scripture and how this reflection is made conscious in the refugees' lives through a dialogical process. While the previous chapters have described the parts involved in a correlation, this chapter shows how it develops thematically as a redeemed voice.[1] The story from Hamilton offers an illustration.

8.1 Introductory Story: Hamilton's Journey

Hamilton spent over a year in Libya as a refugee, and was imprisoned twice for not having documentation. He continued to stay in Libya in order to open his room as a refuge for fellow travellers. He advised them not to make the journey and he assisted those in need. Hamilton's story carries a sense of purpose that propels him forward into each new event. He left Libya on a small boat, six meters long with 25 other people. He travelled in October, which he noted was a dangerous time because of rough water, 'but I had to go,' (Hamilton 00:56:06). After three days, they were stranded at sea and a large ship passed by. Hamilton explained:

> We were asking for help, but they don't want to, and instead of helping, rescuing us, they were filming us. We keep on asking and then we sink. I don't know how to swim, so I hold on to the shirt of my friend for over two hours ... It was a big vessel with a large propeller in the back that would rotate like this and make all the water into a foam. So if you are somewhere around there it pulls you and takes you into the, this big–very sharp ... So it happened to one person and he was killed ... It was finally my turn to be rescued. ... So they were pulling us like this. I don't know, maybe I felt heavy for them ... I nearly reached to the top, nearly to the

[1] Every conscious correlation becomes a redemptive voice. In Chapter Two I refer to the voice as the third element of narrative theory that connects the person to the events in a story.

> edge and the rope broke, like cut. So in my mind the shaft, is rotating like this, and I am falling straight to it– someone who don't know how to swim. There's nobody to save in this situation, unless God helps. And if you know he stretches his hand and then covers it from this end ... Before I reached the water I saw that there was this plastic there. And I managed to hold the plastic just above the shaft and I was saved ... And then they sent another rope. ... So, I can say, I see my life and how God protects us. (Hamilton 00:56:06–00:59:19)

Hamilton's story shows the connection between the themes of salvation and displacement. The chapter will explore the redemptive voice among the respondents according to three themes: *shalom*, welcome, and purpose. The story demonstrates all three themes. He remained in Libya with a sense of purpose to assist fellow travellers (welcome). Likewise, he crossed the sea feeling like 'he had to go' (purpose), and he experienced God's blessing of protection (*shalom*).

8.2 *Shalom*

Shalom is one of the primary themes of a redeemed voice among God's people, and it correlates to the need among FDPs for peace and safety. In the Old Testament, *shalom* conveys a sense of wholeness, completeness, harmony and fulfilment in all of life, and it refers to the unconditionally positive result of God's blessing (Stendebach 2006). *Shalom* is commonly translated as peace.[2] It relates to a person's well-being and to the reward for doing the right thing.[3] Gerhard von Rad notes there is no specific Old Testament text that points to 'the specifically spiritual attitude of inward peace ... *shalom* is not something concealed and inward; it manifests itself in the form of external well-being ... we

[2] *Shalom* occurs 267 times in 238 verses of the Old Testament, in approximately nine different derivatives. There are over 25 different words for *shalom.* The *Theological Wordbook (*1980:931-2) notes that 50–60 times the word means the absence of strife–not only violence or war–but also so there is completeness, wholeness and harmony, and 25 times it refers to a greeting or farewell and thus a blessing. The largest use of shalom, 80-90 times, relates to God's presence, as in a covenant of peace, with God as the source of peace.

[3] This useage signifies first that a person has blessing, protection and safe passage as in a refuge. This use carries a sense of dignified destiny in life where future hopes are fulfilled and completed. Second, *shalom* is the reward for doing the right thing. This affects a person's position, they are not only receivers, but also doers with a role and responsibility of walking in the ways of God,

are forced to say that in its most common use, *shalom* is an emphatically social concept' (Von Rad 1964). The Scriptural use of shalom occurs in the context of relationships and responsibilities and it encompasses a place as well as promises. In this research, I use *shalom* to mean peace, satisfaction and well-being as a whole person in community with others. It reflects both outward and inward wholeness with practical and tangible results in relation to a community on both temporal and eternal levels.[4]

8.2.1 Two Aspects of *Shalom*

There are two characteristics of *shalom* that are important among displaced people. These are the aspects of connection and position that together move the person deeper into redemptive relationships. The connection aspect describes a broad range of social and interpersonal categories and second, the positional aspect refers not only to locations, but also to the capacities of a person. Characteristically, both the connection and position have been lost or made inaccessible by forced displacement. The experience of peace is redemptive because it takes the person beyond material and physical peace; it becomes like Groody describes a focus on life according to the v*isio Dei* that shapes people's volitional and ethical decisions and lives (Groody 2009: 661).

i. As a Connection

God's covenant with Abraham connects him to God (Gen. 12:1-3). As time passes (Gen. 16:3), Abraham is displaced through famine (Gen. 12:10-20); he faces conflict including war and abduction (Gen. 14:1-16) and he sees no sign of the promise (Gen. 15:2, 8). It is in this context of sojourning, displacement

[4] In tracing the use of *shalom* in the Old Testament, the word does not occur in some texts about the presence of God – such as when Moses was on the mountain and God put him in a safe place where his presence could pass by. This is a reminder to be careful about spiritualizing the term to make it mean something it is not. In other words to imply or say that *shalom* refers to the inward place of relationship with God is fallacious. Likewise, to suggest that whenever the Scriptures develop the idea of a religious place or the covenant relationship, it is referring to *shalom* is also fallacious.

and conflict that Abraham loses hope and faces a dead end. Similarly, Isaac is forced out of the land, once by famine (Gen. 21:1) and again when he becomes successful as a sojourner in Philistine (Gen. 26:14-15). His success and the opposition against him force him to leave the region as an unwelcome migrant (Gen. 26:16-21).

In these difficult, discouraging, and decreational contexts, God confirms his promise and covenant to both Abraham and Isaac as sojourners (Gen. 15:1-10; 26:22-25). In Abraham's context, the connection to God through the covenant along with its fulfilment and completed promise will bring *shalom* (Gen. 15:15). In Isaac's context, *shalom* comes at the end of a long conflict that has finally been resolved bringing peace between the parties (Gen. 26:26-31). In each instance, the reference to *shalom* reflects the aspects of connection.

This aspect of *shalom* emphasizes what a person has as a result of relationships and a community with others. Through the connection there is safety, promise, and blessing. This aspect of *shalom* characterizes the story of Jonathan and David's friendship in 1 Samuel 20. When David flees for his life (1 Sam. 20:1), *shalom* occurs four times in the passage in reference to David's safe passage out of danger (1 Sam. 20:7,13,21, 42). However, it is the long-lasting connection between Jonathan and David that will guarantee this safety, and ultimately the safe passage of God's promise to the descendants of David (1 Sam. 20:42).

The connection comes again years later through Mephiboseth, who as the son of Jonathan and the last descendant of Saul, has remained loyal to the House of David. As Mephiboseth finally explains what has happened, David comes safely to his house (2 Sam. 19:24-30). David experiences *shalom* in the context of his connection with Jonathan through Mephiboseth. The positive and

fruitful connection to the surrounding community is essential for safety and well-being, and the recurring experience of re-creation carries the person deeper into these relationships like David experienced with Jonathan.

ii. As a Position

The aspect of position in *shalom* refers to places of peace and safety. The use of *shalom* in Jonathan and David's friendship conveys the idea of David's safety and protection as a place to find refuge. Reference to the safety, security and salvation of God are in Psalms like 4:9, 122:7 and 147:14. These Psalms develop the idea of a refuge and they remind us that God stays intricately connected to the community and brings them safely through to peace and security.[5] The complexity of *shalom* as a position and place in society conveys the idea of 'placedness' that comes through the incarnation and Christ's work on the cross to accomplish salvation (Inge 2003: 50-58). Groody notes that the description in Matthew 25:31-46 describes the social location of many migrants and refugees and that similarly *visio Dei* moves the person beyond identity based on territory (Groody 2009: 663). The redeemed voice in the data finds peace in the awareness of *shalom* as it positions them in more than a place.

The place of refuge that God's *shalom* brings also carries with it responsibility. The use of *shalom* in the Psalms often relates to the result of right living, which highlights the important distinction of responsibility in the aspect of position.[6] In Psalm 34:8-14 the writer praises God as a refuge. But the verses also call the reader to 'fear the Lord, to depart from evil and to do good,

[5] See Psalms 4:8; 35:20, 27; 28:1, 3; 29:11; 55:18, 20; 69:22; 120:6,7. At least 26 Psalms refer to ‘refuge’. Many of these develop the idea even though they do not include the use of *shalom*. In commenting on the significance of *shalom*, Von Rad adds that it is such a comprehensive term that it must 'take its meaning from the contexts in which it occurs and we should not leave out accounts where the thought of peace is central even though the term is not used' (Von Rad 1964:402).

[6] Stendebach (2006), describes the thrust of Psalms 34:14; 37:37; 72:3,7 and 85:8,10 as related to proper conduct and doing what is right.

seek peace and pursue it' (v.14). In this use, those who experience *shalom* as a result of right living take on a fully positive and important position of responsibility in the development of God's Kingdom. As Psalm 147 says, 'The Lord gathers the outcasts of Israel ... the Lord favours those who fear him ... He makes peace in your borders.' (v.2, 11, 14).[7] The aspect of position in *shalom* highlights that FDPs not only have a place of refuge and safety, but also a position of responsibility to walk in the ways of God and accomplish God's purposes.

Isaiah prophesied the Prince of Peace would bring a new order; he will be a suffering servant to bear the iniquities for the sake of well-being (Isa 9:6; 53:5).[8] In the prophets, the aspects of connection and position in *shalom* reflect what the person has and what they do. With an eschatological emphasis, these aspects of *shalom* become redemptive ones that bring promises and hopes of restoration and eternal life. Christ promised peace in a place of fear (John 14:27), and through this, believers are connected to God at the cross and positioned for eternity in Christ. With the prophets, the people of God become rooted in much more than simply the land. These are the rewards of *shalom.*

John Ahn, in his comprehensive study, *Exile as Forced Migrations* (Ahn 2011), highlights Jeremiah 29 because of the hope and restoration that it introduces among the 1.5 generation in Babylon.[9] Contrary to the popular message of the false prophets, the people would not be returning so soon to

[7] These Psalms demonstrate a holistic understanding that is reflected in the redemptive voice of refugees and that connect refugees directly to the primary concerns of God. The Psalms highlight that *shalom* with its aspect of position, not only stands for the substance of faith, but also is inseparable from the practice of faith, and the responsibility that comes with it.
[8] See also Ezekiel 37:26; Nahum 1:5; Haggai 2:9; Zechariah 8:12; Malachi 2:6.
[9] The 1.5 generation refers to children of immigrants who were born in their parent's country but have grown up for most of their lives in another country.

Jerusalem.[10] Instead, the passage occurs in the midst of their displacement as a call to act and live out their faith based on who they are and where they have been positioned. Jeremiah 29:10-14 describes this hope, and *shalom* occurs in verse eleven in the context of remembering God's connection to them (v.10), and God's plan for their peace and hope (v.11). As John Ahn (Ahn 2011: 157) explains, 'Hope is always welcomed in an immigrant community; it always has a place in the home. Hope stands in the midst of psychological, physical and even emotional suffering.' This hope comes through a recurring redemptive connection that a dialogical process makes in regard to *shalom*.

Shalom occurs three times in Jeremiah 29:7 as part of the imperative for good relations in the Babylonian community, and this corresponds to the aspect of position in shalom. With this imperative, the faith identity of those in Babylon shifts from a faith based in the temple to one based in prayer (Ahn 2011: 145). The command to 'build houses ... plant gardens ... take wives ... and to pray for the welfare of the city' (v. 5-7) are clear steps to break down isolation. More than this, they are efforts to integrate, and become part of the community in Babylon for the long term (Jer. 29:10). Specifically, *shalom* is the focus of their prayers where their own peace and well-being in Babylon, based on their covenant relationship to God, will depend on the same *shalom* being lived out in the larger community (v.7).

8.2.2 Among Refugees

Figure 8.1 illustrates *shalom's* redemptive effects in the experience of displacement. The bottom corner refers specifically to divine action and corresponds to the aspect of connection in *shalom*. The significance in this

[10] See Jeremiah 29:8-9 The fears and predictions of current day 'prophets' about refugees sound like false prophets because they have overlooked God's plan for the nations and his crossing borders in this world on behalf and for others.

comes through the faith relationship with God and a community. The top half of the triangle encompasses the aspect of position reflected not only in places but also responsibilities. The top left corner includes steps that overcome isolation. For example, these are efforts to dispel suffering and effects of destitution that FDPs face.[11]

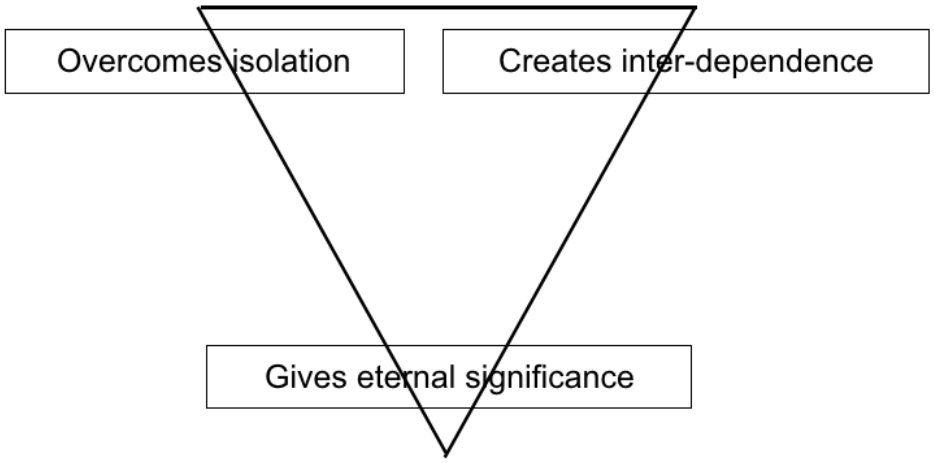

Figure 8.1 Effects of Shalom

The top right corner represents an inter-dependent community that does more than give aid. This is a community characterized by mutual understanding and reciprocal efforts, and *shalom* acts as the mortar for this cohesion. In this kind of community, both sides understand the other's perspective.[12] Visually, the diagram depicts the continuum of response in Figure 6.4. *Shalom* encompasses the transcendent relationship that originates in the vortex, as well as the responses projecting out. *Shalom* reconstitutes the safe place to

[11] The JRS report in 2011 about detention measures among asylum seekers in Europe brings to light the need for efforts that instill a sense of community and safety:

> People who feel safe, have a regular roof over their heads, a place to sleep and access to food – for themselves and their families – appear calmer and better prepared to handle the administrative complexities of asylum and immigration procedures. It is insufficient to merely provide for asylum and immigration procedures without ensuring migrants' basic needs are suitably and consistently met. (Amaral 2011:6)

[12] Miroslav Volf (1996:207-213) considers the complex issue and need for cohesion in a just community. He notes that in plural societies there is an overlap of traditions. The overlap that Volf describes has not only led to the conflicts behind displacement, but also in a new society the overlap confronts FDPs again. Volf calls for the 'double vision' of an 'enlarged thinking' that leads to 'embrace' and is capable of seeing not only one's own perspective, but another as well.

encompass more than what others give, and it moves FDPs into purposive roles of a new reality (Turton 2003).[13]

Shalom crosses the many divides that refugees face that characterize the redemptive nature of re-creation. In his book subtitled, *Navigating a Path to Peace*, Daniel Groody (Groody 2007a: 31-58) has characterized the biblical narratives of empire, poverty, Yahweh, idolatry and gospel from the perspective of the poor.[14] The goodness and mercy of God's initiative in these narratives are similar to the context of asylum seekers and forced displacement. *Shalom* comes where the two dimensions of the human and divine action intersect. To approach *shalom* in this manner, recalls God's initiative, and it puts human hopes and responsibility in the light of God. Gustavo Gutiérrez (Gutiérrez 2007) calls his reader to the memory and prophecy of God as part of the responsibility among the poor. The responsibility is part of 'remembering their humanity: the fact that they are not simply objects to pity or help but, above all, persons destined to be the subjects of their own destiny and history' (Groody 2007a: 31).

8.3 Welcome

The second theme of a redemptive voice is welcome. Also referred to as hospitality, this category considers both the need as a human being to be

[13] David Turton (2003:9-10) notes that when FDPs are seen as 'purposive actors', then it is easier to see them as members of a moral community. From a geographer's perspective, Catherine Brun (2001) explains that the essentialist view sees displaced persons as 'out of place', where the only solution is either to return them to their place of origin or to integrate and naturalize them into a new place. Contrary to this view, Brun believes like David Turton, that the displaced person needs to become an active agent who can function socially in reconstructing their place and identity (Brun 2001:18). In a study of agency, Joseph Zapater questioned the practicality and consistency of trying to prevent forced displacement in Columbia. He focused on how the flight acts as a mechanism of protection. His study not only illustrates how the FDPs found peace with their displacement, but more importantly how the solutions originate in and among those involved (Zapater 2010).

[14] FDPs are among the poor of this world. For example, the JRS report on destitution identifies asylum seekers who are outside of the social systems as the most destitute people in Europe. (Weernink et al. 2007)

welcomed and to welcome. Apart from the complex administrative systems required to intervene in their lives, the concern for asylum seekers often stirs debates related to fundamental freedom, human rights, detention, repatriation and non-refoulement (Triandafyllidou 2010: 28). However, from the refugee perspective, to be welcomed lies at the top of the list because it is an affirmation of their humanity that crosses the distance between themselves and others.[15] The current section considers the source material related to the need for welcome and hospitality. Second, it looks at the biblical perspectives, and third, it describes a redeemed welcome as one that identifies with others.

8.3.1 Examples of Welcome

The importance of being welcomed as a person shows up at several points in the data but especially in connection to discrimination and detention or prison. All of the Interview respondents in Malta had been in detention for a maximum of eighteen months as a mandatory consequence of entering Malta irregularly (UNHCR 2013a). According to the EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey in 2009, the second highest rate of discrimination in the EU takes place among Sub-Saharan Africans (EU-MIDIS 2009). More needs to be done to address the obstacles and social categories that 'welcome' refugees in their effort to rebuild their lives and to engage with others (Aditus 2013).

Hamilton recognized in his journey that he was not only unprotected but also unwelcome. He experienced rejection as a human being but he found consolation to know that God cared. While Hamilton was in prison in Libya,

[15] The issue of being welcomed as a human being relates to the divide between theology and migration that Groody discusses in his article ‘Crossing the Divide’ (Groody 2009). He identifies four kinds of divide to address and two of them relate to issues of hospitality: first as the divide between humans and God in terms of the Incarnation and second as the divide between humans in terms of reconciliation. The first dimension follows God's 'border crossing' into this world to identify fully with the otherness of humanity, and the second dimension follows Jesus' example again beyond borders to overcome the divisions between 'insiders and outsiders' (Groody 2009:652-4).

when others were visited by representatives and lawyers, as a stranger he had no one to visit him, and in these times he connected the situation to his faith:

> Always, you know, God is always alerted, to look his people, listen to the people, to stretch the arms, you know, to say welcome. But many times when we have difficulty and so on, we forgot that always help from God. We try to solve our problems. ...during those times people feel hopeless. People feel like helpless; people feel like there nobody...And I just want to tell them, God is the only, our ambassador.' … When the situation in Libya started, all the western countries ... ordered to evacuate their people. And believe me ... we say God is the lawyer of our people, and the embassy doesn't come and so the people doesn't have any help. (Hamilton 00:24:51–00:26:52)

Hamilton's example illustrates God's movement even into prison as his representative. For Hamilton, God identifies with him, explaining that unlike lawyers who understand the evidence, God understands the internal motivations of a person (Hamilton 00:35:41). Hamilton correlates the rejection he experiences as an asylum seeker whether in detention or in discrimination, with the significance of a welcome by God.

To be visited by others was important especially for those in detention. Franklin, commenting on his detention experience in Malta, was encouraged by church members who came to visit him:

> The church helped me, because when I was there, they come and give us encouragement well ... (The pastor) visited, visited in detention one time. And even I heard about him, but I didn't see him, I didn't know him. So one time, he came and told the verse, encouragement well, and he used himself as an example for us, and taught about Malta or Europe life. (Franklin 01:18:20)

Visits like this while in detention characterized a holistic concern for Franklin as a fellow human being in need of support, spiritual fellowship and fair treatment.

Esther has struggled to find a job, and she has felt that the local people have not accepted her (Esther 00:17:16). She said she too needs the help of another person (Esther 00:21:21). Similarly, Rachel has not been welcomed in Malta, and she told the story of working in a hotel and eventually being falsely accused by fellow employees. When she complained about this to her supervisor, she realized there was no support and she eventually quit her job

(Rachel 00:18:29).

Rachel says these situations are difficult:

> We are not free to do what we want to do, because we are not citizen of the place, it's what...how would I say. We are not free. We are not free. We are not free. We are not free at all. (Rachel 00:12:25) ... (We are) not accepted with love cause some don't show us love at all.' (Rachel 00:13:29)

In describing the effects of not being welcomed and experiencing the animosity towards her, Rachel said:

> No joy. No joy. Because I can't work, I'm just at home, no physical, can't do anything. So no joy, no way off your seat. You can't do something. I'm not fulfilled. I'm just in one place every day. I'm struggling. Struggling. (Rachel 00:15:09)

Rachel noted that some of the Maltese 'are really angry at us. Some of them are really angry at us.' Moreover, reflecting on this, she said:

> Everybody has challenges, has difficulties, everybody has problems, one thing or the other, somebody is in one condition or the other, that we have to accept the way you see them. Let them come close to you. Know what they are going through, if you can help with words of encouragement, with any other thing. Not just help because we are refugee.' (Rachel 00:16:53)

These experiences and comments raise issues such as injustice, prejudice, employment and acculturation, however, they also reflect struggles because they have not been welcomed and identified with as fellow human beings, and are rather isolated in the community. The source material illustrates the importance of being accepted and welcomed as asylum seekers. These situations reflect issues that a redeemed sense of welcome addresses.

8.3.2 Hospitality in Scripture

To welcome others in Scripture refers to the practice of hospitality. Contrary to many experiences found in this research, the stranger in Scripture is welcomed. In Genesis 19:1-11, Lot welcomes the two strangers to his city, and takes them into his home for their protection. The townspeople, on the other hand, reject the visitors from God and show their intent to abuse and mistreat them. In a controversial and often misunderstood show of hospitality, Lot pledges his

daughters as assurance for his visitor's protection. This early example of hospitality in the Scriptures already includes the exchange of one person for the welfare of another (v.8). Lot's concern in his position of power was to treat his guests humanely and fairly (Morschauser 2003). This is comparable to God's own exchange of his Son's life for the world. Lot's welcome and effort to protect his guests ultimately saved him and his daughters from impending destruction, demonstrating the mutuality and reciprocity in biblical hospitality (Gen. 19:12-29).

Hospitality is significant because it not only shows the love of God towards people, but it connects others to God's desire to save the nations. In 1 Kings 17:8-16, the widow of Zarephath welcomes Elijah when he flees from Ahab. As her guest, Elijah reciprocates her generosity through the miracle of the flour bowl and oil jar (v. 13-15). Another example is Elisha, who would heal Namaan of leprosy (2 Kgs. 5:1-19). Unlike the King of Israel who wanted nothing to do with the man, when Elisha hears, he invites Namaan to visit (v. 7-8). Namaan is cured of his leprosy, professes the God of Israel (v. 15), and pledges his faithfulness (v. 17). These episodes of hospitality are so significant that as Jesus begins his own ministry, he not only proclaims his programme for the poor, the captive, the blind and downtrodden (Luke 4:18-19), but also he reminds the religious leaders that even in the days of Elijah and Elisha, God reached out to the nations, (Luke 4:25-27)– and it happened through hospitality.

In the Scriptures, love for God parallels love for the stranger and the foreigner. 'When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God' (Lev. 19:33-34). Similarly, the two great

commands of Scripture instruct us in the love of God and the love of others (Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:27). Hospitality links these two commands.

Hospitality recognizes the least accepted ones in society as fellow human beings, and to limit this recognition of the other makes the mistake of the lawyer in Luke 10:25-29. Having asked about salvation (v. 25), and wanting to justify himself (v. 29), the lawyer makes an issue of the stranger's identity. Jesus sees through this and tells the story of the Good Samaritan. The story is not about salvation nor about the stranger, but rather about the lawyer's lack of mercy and the need to reach out and to welcome the stranger (v. 36-37).

The widow in 1 Kings 17:8-24 experienced transformation in welcoming Elijah, and we find this in the New Testament as well. One example is Peter's visit to Cornelius in Joppa, who had invited Peter to hear his message (Acts 10:23-48). The visit would prove transforming to both men as well as the theological understanding that developed around God's love for others beyond the Jewish nation. Hospitality engages life in a practical way that can replace one set of values with another.

Hospitality reflects God's own journey into this world to restore the image of God and reconcile creation. In *The Way of the Son of God Into the Far Country* (Barth 1956), Karl Barth turns away from the humanist theology of his day to take a radical view of atonement centred on the Trinity and Incarnation. He underlines the nature and character of God as the humble Son of God who comes into the world as a reconciler and obedient servant. As a stranger and one who goes to a far country, Christ leaves his home in heaven to find a new one on earth. The very ministry of Jesus is filled with time and space among others that becomes the means to show the mission of Jesus and to develop

the purpose of God (Denaux 2011: 99). In terms of the world today, Christ comes as an asylum seeker who would be rejected, and to grasp the magnitude of this is to understand the significance of hospitality that welcomes others. Jesus says, to visit those in prison, the needy, and the stranger, is to visit him (Matt. 25:34-40).

8.3.3 Need for Belonging

To be welcomed by others is to belong. Belonging refers to the level of acceptance a person has as a result of the socialization process and the interaction with their community (Richard 1984: 396). Membership in a political community is one kind of belonging, often formed by exclusion or inclusion on the basis of who a person is. However, to welcome and to be welcomed by both the host and the stranger moves beyond categories of a social system to ontological ones related to the person.

At the root of the problem in accepting others is the notion of 'othering' that creates distance between the host group and the guest. Edward Said (Said 1978) uses the picture of farmers who set up boundaries between themselves and their surroundings. The land beyond they call 'barbarian'; that land is 'theirs'. In this way, it creates a dichotomy between one group and the others. Said suggests that the idea of 'othering' in which the image of those who are different promotes the domination of one cultural system over another (Said 1978: 227).

When groups relate to others in this way, the shortcomings and failures they see in others strengthen their own sense of identity. Like the lawyer in Luke 10:25-37 whom Jesus confronts, the guiding maxim for most people becomes, 'We know who we are by who we are not' (Cohen 1994). The issues that drive people into other countries are complex and dependent on many

inter-related issues (Harrell-Bond 1986: 65). [16] Yet, the rejection or acceptance of others is often limited to a personal preference. Miroslav Volf points out that the exclusion of others should be based on an objective evil and not on people's preferences (Volf 1996: 71-5). The mistake of the lawyer in Luke 10 is to make a preferential option about others based on his own incomplete and misinformed ideas.

8.3.4 Redeemed Welcome

A redeemed welcome offers hospitality by re-creating and identifying with the dignity and worth of another human being. Following the redemptive pattern, it moves from a level of indifference and entitlement to active engagement. Hospitality is one of the primary expressions of the gospel message rooted in the love of God and the love of others that leads to a decisive involvement with others (Bretherton 2004). A redeemed hospitality speaks to the physical, social and spiritual dimensions of a person. It provides a context for connecting theology to the church's concern for issues like poverty, pain, suffering and inclusion of others (Pohl 1999: 9). This practice radically contrasts with the normal human tendency to treat outsiders and those who are different as un-welcomed guests and even non-humans who should be suspected and discriminated against (Denaux 2011: 98). A redeemed welcome is a two-way street that practises and receives hospitality like Jesus has demonstrated. It functions as an expression of the love for God and love for others, and in this

[16] The film *Welcome* by, Phillipe Liorret (2009), portrays the complex divide in Europe. The French context is about the state's law in regards to the asylum process and its prosecution despite the inhumanity of this process. This contrasts with the welcome offered by the swimming instructor who redeems what has been lost in the system. The context for the Kurdish asylum seeker includes more than receiving asylum. It is also a global and human one that is driven by the love for his girlfriend that he knew while in Iraq. Yet, she is now in England, and he is stuck in Calais, with no way to reach her except to swim across the Channel. These two very different contexts illustrate the problematic situation among asylum seekers in Europe. It is often a lose–lose situation with no way for those involved to reconcile or interact and both approaches are doomed to fail. Hospitality offers a new basis for belonging through the identification with and acceptance of others.

light, hospitality is not an option for God's people, but rather the primary way that God will save the nations.

8.4 Purpose

For the respondents to make a connection between their story and God's story leads to a redeemed purpose which is as Manas Buthelezi explains, God saying 'I accept you in Christ', (and) effectively suggests ... the acceptance of God as one in whose hands we place the affairs of our very existence" (Buthelezi 1987: 98). A redeemed purpose is connected to the idea of responsibility in *shalom,* and it also refers to awareness for mission and service. Purpose shows up in the data particularly in reference to destiny and involvement in prayer, fellowship, worship and other kinds of community activities.

Like Ethan illustrates in the bottom of the ship, some of the respondents discussed the problems they face by relating their journey to awareness of God's plan and destiny for them. Lani said:

> God have many projects for you. Because he says, "I have project for peace. Not bad for you." (Lani00:39:19) ... Yes, for me I pray my God help me, because I want to serve God, even me I'm refugee. I want to serve my God.' (Lani 00:54:08)

Likewise, Esther said:

> It's God who knows my destiny, whatever I'm going through, he knows. And he has plans for me, good ones for me. And so I, whenever, I get a chance, I try to talk to him, to give me strength, to whatever I'm passing through. At least, when you talk to him, you pray, you feel like, you feel that you're okay. I mean the problems are no more. And you feel good. (Esther 00:30:16)

8.4.1 Destiny *en* Route

After Hamilton crossed the desert, he waited in Tripoli preparing to leave for Europe. During this time, the police raided the house where he stayed and arrested him. They sent him to a deportation prison where he was held for over

four months. From there the police took him back across the desert to the far side of Libya, 2000 km away to be deported out of the country. Before the deportation, Hamilton was in a final camp, together with forty others where they were held under guard for several days. During this time, Hamilton organized a constant prayer vigil with others in the cell-block. Finally, on the last day, the soldiers came into the jail compound to take the migrants away. Hamilton reported:

> We were praying, and I heard the door was making a noise. And we continued praying and when they saw us praying they said let them finish, and they wait us until we finish. And imagine they are Muslims, Libyans and there are soldiers and they wait us, and as soon as were finished then they asked us, all of us to stand outside and to make a line. We stayed there on the line, it was all the room, the forty people. And they told us to go outside the door and to go to the bus. And then they told us you are free from today.' (Hamilton 00:21:12)

Rather than being deported out of the country, Hamilton crossed the desert again back to Tripoli where he soon met four other Christian believers. Together they began a fellowship for worship and prayer, but especially to give assistance to fellow immigrants who arrive in Libya. They contacted churches along the route to advise people not to make the dangerous journey. For those en route, they arranged to meet them on arrival, to give them food and a place to stay. This was not only an important service for the immigrants, but it protected those who came from being exploited or making mistakes (Hamilton 00:41:08).

This ministry gave Hamilton and the others in the fellowship a role to fulfil, which they saw as a work of God. As an example Hamilton said, 'I want to tell you about what God did' (Hamilton 00:46:03). A Libyan doctor had contacted Hamilton to say there was an immigrant who had been paralysed in a car accident and was alone in the hospital with no one to take care of him. The doctor asked if Hamilton's group could help the young man to be evacuated

from the country. Hamilton's story shows the sense of purpose and service that guided his life:

> As illegal immigrants who don't have documents, we live in fear, so how will we pass all the checkpoints to go back (to help the man in hospital). And going back again, what also it was harder. And then we prayed with the church, and with our brothers. And then you know, I felt like I have to do it. This is my task you know, I have to take it. I trust God and I said to this doctor, no problem I will go with you. (Hamilton 00:46:03)

Without documents, Hamilton was eventually stopped and arrested as he travelled between cities to make arrangements for the paralysed man. He was held in jail again where he experienced once again being freed. Hamilton's awareness of his own story in God's story worked in combination with his service and the connection to God through this ministry.

Jason's journey gives another example. Reflecting on the ups and downs as a refugee, Jason described destiny as a tunnel of difficulty, which he sees as an opportunity for faith and growth. In Jason's story the critical words are to pass through, grow and pray. He ties his purpose to practising faith along a difficult 'journey':

> When you have to pass through this journey or have to live this life as a refugee. It is a chance for you to grow in your faith, to pray ... a chance for you if you are a , if you know, if you are Christian. It's also like you are passing through the tunnel. It's a time of difficulty. ... So most of people I know, they were praying through those times and when they arrive here they just stop. So some also through those times of difficulty, they fed up? But it's a time like, it's like a kind of testing of your faith. (Jason 01:08:00)

The redemptive understanding for Jason does not simply begin and end with his story in God's story, but continues with his own active involvement. Recalling the strength he found in God's word through prayer while passing through the desert, Jason said, 'Like an oasis in the desert, the Lord is my security, and just as I have been helped on my journey, I want to assist others in their time of need' (Jason 01:35:54).

8.4.2 Church Community

Thirteen of the participants in the second phase of research were part of the same church and community. The church community was the primary context to develop a purpose as a redemptive experience. Hospitality was a service for the respondents to both receive and practise. The pastor and his wife made the following observations and comments related to the church's purpose.[17] Their comments provide an example of how service develops as a redemptive experience.

- The church welcomes others to break isolation;
- If God could accommodate all of us, then we too need to show the same attitude toward others;
- The aim is to build Christ's church and not a Maltese church;
- The church members are free to share their mind because they feel supported by the community;
- The concern is not for individual recognition or gain, but rather for the life of the community;
- The church has encouraged women who are faced with family and work needs;
- The church accompanies the person in their journey;
- The person needs to identify the issues and decisions they face as asylum seekers;
- The tendency is to imitate the same practices that they knew before they came to church;

[17] I interviewed both the pastor and his wife (Adam and Martha) for over an hour each. The pastor focused on the development and purpose of the church while his wife commented on the issue of integration in Malta. The list is a compilation of their comments directly related to service.

- The church has a plurality of leadership to promote different gifts and voices;
- Connecting stories with one another finds common ground, and creates a broader basis for service and acceptance among others;
- Education breaks the lies and stereotypes; it creates equality with others, and it shows there is a purpose in the journey;
- The church builds on an awareness of strength and gives opportunities to contribute to the community;
- The church serves as a bridge that preserves faith.

These collected comments drawn from separate interviews characterize the redemptive experience of purpose. The refugees are situated in complex situations of acculturation and the rebuilding of their lives that require a learning curve to understand, make decisions and function in new ways. To experience purpose in the church context follows God's own example in this world, which Groody describes as 'movement into the broken territory of human life' (Groody 2009: 651). The recurring experience of finding purpose is a redemptive experience that follows the reciprocal nature of God's salvation.[18]

8.4.3 Characteristics of Redeemed Purpose

There are three characteristics to note about the experience of purpose that is redemptively effective.

[18] This recalls Ricoeur's idea (1984) that the subjects of narratives are the ones who have lived the experience and then find order in this experience by describing this action. In *Time and Narrative, v.1,* Ricoeur develops this idea through his description of emplotment as the representing of events by the narrator (p. 31-36), and also in the threefold description of mimesis1,2 and 3. (p. 54-74) These revolve around the action that develops a plot –first to understand what the action is, second how the action creates a bridge back to the events and third for facilitating understanding.

i. Missio Dei

First, there is the focus on *missio Dei* to affirm the reality of God's story not only at work in the person but throughout the ages that has always welcomed the nations (Bevans 2013: 160).[19] Groody refers to *missio Dei* as the redemptive work of Christ and the Great Commission that the church takes up through the Holy Spirit (Groody 2009: 653).

The experience of purpose among the respondents focuses on their being and life. As the example of Hamilton shows, it is in doing that he not only finds himself in God, but also finds a purpose. He sees his story in God's story, and he finds God's mission lived out through him. 'The task', as both Hamilton and Jason describe (Hamilton 00:46:03), is not simply the power of seeing themselves in Christ, but also the perseverance of faith.

A focus on *missio Dei* follows Christ's example, which was to do the work of his Father.[20] He entered the human story and said at the end of his ministry. 'I was a stranger and you visited me ... I was in prison and you came to me' (Matt. 25:35-36). *Missio Dei* signals that salvation comes from God.

Similarly, the church ministry that the church pastor and his wife describe is one that consciously rejects the ethnocentricity of focusing on either the Maltese nationality or any other ethnic group. *Missio Dei* is Christocentric; it focuses on the goodness of God who joins the church together. This is difficult in many cultural contexts and no less so in Malta.

[19] *Missio Dei* recalls that God's work in this world has extended across the ages, and that it is greater than any one expression might give it. Likewise, the obedience of Christ is the sum of this mission, in which God in Christ became like humanity so that we might be like Christ. (Placher, 2009:27).
[20] John 5:17; 10:37-38.

ii. Kenosis

Second, a redeemed purpose takes place in an attitude of *kenosis*. This attitude follows the example of Christ, summarized in Philippians 2:5-8 as selflessness:[21]

> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 2:5-8)

Groody describes the spiritual journey of migrants as one rooted in Christ because like Christ they have relinquished everything they own, knowing that God has entered into their vulnerability with them ((Groody 2013a: 152). The journey of the migrant mirrors a Christ-like *kenosis* in the face of rejection, vulnerability and suffering which accompany the journey.

As much as the journey requires self-sacrifice, it also requires a determination for self-preservation. In matters of faith, self-protection needs to be tempered with humility. Just as local societies need to temper their own mono-cultural concerns, so too migrants need to lower their own judgments, which require humility. The church community plays an important role in shaping the faith of the migrants to help them make important adjustments or decisions related to faith and life. The church community needs to guard against not only the ethnocentric ways of culture, but also the equal force of egocentric tendencies.[22] In this age of migration, the pride of a nation and the pride of a person do not mix.

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[21] The attitude of *kenosis* refers to a practice of relating to others that follows the example of Christ who emptied himself. The understanding of *kenosis* in Greek means to empty oneself and to divest oneself of a position or prestige. (Arndt, W; Gingrich, FW; Alsop, JR; & Bauer,*Greek-English Lexicon*, 1957 Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

[22] Daniela DeBono (2012:258) suggests that Malta has failed to adapt a cosmopolitan approach for understanding the issues of migration. This reflects a view that the world ends at the country's borders and shores. It can also lead to a conflict when the ethno-centric concerns of a nation confront migrants who by virtue of their displacement have been driven to put their own

The attitude of *kenosis* reminds those who serve of the cost that goes along with the migrant journey. The cost requires humility, and embracing this path brings challenges for all those involved. The path is often unmarked and those along the way need more than simply permits, jobs and money to support themselves and their families. The data confirms they also need a redeemed destiny expressed in service and nurtured in the faith of a church community.

iii. Reciprocity

Third, a redeemed purpose shows reciprocity among FDPs who as actors in mission and service are both givers and receivers. As much as some FDPs might receive assistance, in a redeemed sense of purpose they are ones who also give and initiate mission. Jehu Hanciles reminds that Christianity itself is not only migratory in nature, but every Christian migrant is also a potential missionary (Hanciles 2004: 99). The relationship between different cultures and people is a two-way street. The pastor said, 'The church is not a social charity. We are willing to share, but we want you to share with us.'

Reciprocity offers the basis for serving and learning from one another to address the issues in a balanced way. It establishes the needed common ground between the different people. The impact of poverty and the concern for family are areas that many in the church have in common. The integrity of faith and life in these areas does not end only with prayer and counsel, but it continues in the day-to-day living and reciprocal interaction with one another. Shared leadership demonstrates reciprocal interaction that encourages multiple voices within the community. Reciprocity that gives a voice to others helps the church to see the relevance of Jesus's teaching. As Martha said, 'We could see

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concerns above others. With the aim to reach safety at all costs, they are willing to take risks and measures to cross borders and muster their own strength for the journey. These are like ego-centric concerns that clash with the ethno-centric ones of a nation. Both perspectives stand in contrast to an attitude of sacrifice.

first-hand that if one group of the church is ignored, such as the women, then the whole body will suffer.'

As much as the respondents find themselves in Christ's story, they also need to see Christ in their own story. This does not happen magically or instantly, but rather through reciprocity. It happens where there is give and take in a relationship with the community and with God, where self-sacrifice and humility are prioritized and where integrity is built up through a healthy challenge and critique.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has described the redeemed experiences of *shalom*, welcome and purpose in the lives of refugees. These experiences illustrate the dialogical process from Chapter Seven as an ongoing development of a redemptive voice. Whereas the correlation theory in the previous chapter describes how re-creation takes place through a reflection of God's story in the refugee story, this final chapter emphasizes the on-going nature of re-creation. The re-creation recalls God's salvific work and relates the person to the saviour, which has to be rediscovered and applied again in each new context along the journey. The redeemed voice described in this chapter includes a concern for peace in relationship to others; it serves by welcoming and being welcomed by others and it finds purpose among others that is Christocentric, humble and reciprocal.

Chapter 9

Research Conclusion: Finding Home in the Journey

This study has set out to explore the connection between forced displacement and faith in the lives of a small group of Christian refugees in Europe. In an age of migration marked by refugee crises, the research has gone beyond the urgent consideration of policy and solutions to concentrate on the dimensions of faith among a mixed group of asylum seekers. It has pulled back the curtain on the experiences of displacement and faith, to find the redemptive connections, and to underscore common themes that have shaped the refugees' voices. Not only are these connections the key to a new reality in their own lives, but they also make a theological contribution to missiology and diaspora studies on behalf of refugees. The research has considered these realities from the refugees' perspective and uncovered connections between their displacement journey and faith journey. In order to explore these topics, the research answered the question: how do refugees correlate the experience of faith and displacement? This final chapter will: highlight the context behind the study, review the research findings, consider the implications, and note future ramifications.

9.1 Background Ideas

Two ideas have shaped the research. First, the study has been set against the backdrop of a journey that is unique and specific to each person. I have limited my study to a small group of Christian refugees mostly in Malta and other parts of Europe. They have described the events of the refugee experience through their individual stories that became the building material and basis for the

research. Extensive reading and various ideas have been equally relevant.

The journeys in this research have taken place on different levels that showed movement and action. A journey in a theological way not only describes the move away from God but also the way back to God. As faith journeys, they are paths through displacement to a new reality with God and others. The journeys become significant when the person connects to God and a re-creation takes place.

The second influential idea has been decreation. This corresponds directly to the context of displacement but it also highlights the conceptual issues which I have considered from the angles of creation, decreation and re-creation. Humanity and the *imago Dei* are the roots of creation in decreation, while re-creation is the connection to God that leads out of decreation. The reality of displacement parallels a homelessness of the soul and its journey home. Simone Weil provided the impulse to consider the displacement reality as a decreation, but the idea in this research stresses that through the journey, refugees are moving from the weight and hardship of displacement to a new reality of redemption.

9.2 Research Findings

The study used in-depth interviewing among a small group of asylum seekers in Malta, Austria, France and England. The locations in Europe were secondary to the themes that emerged. The respondents provided rich descriptions of their realities as refugees. They described similar themes that united the group regardless of their origin or location. The common themes were the hope for a safe place, more opportunity, a better life, the significance of Scripture, and above all a sense of their own humanity. The refugees took approximately

equal amounts of time to discuss both their experiences of faith as well as displacement. In general, their discussion of displacement reflected a core experience categorized as conflicted, hopeless, traumatized, violent and sub-human. The salvific stories and themes of Scripture came alive when connected to their own situation. The respondents reported meaningful faith experiences in terms of eternal significance–described as *shalom*, community acceptance–described as welcome, and purpose.

9.2.1 Complementary Ideas

The data converged around two ideas that work together to answer the research question of how faith and displacement correlate. First, it established a framework of decreation with three perspectives to interpret the data: creation, decreation and re-creation. These correspond to the realities of the respondents, which I describe as human, dehumanized and rehumanized realities. Decreation has provided the structure to consider these realities not only in terms of the human and spiritual journey that begins and ends with God, but also the displacement journey experienced as a decreation.

The second idea is that the data correlates through a continuous process of synthesis. The respondents made connections between their faith and experiences of displacement throughout their journey and the result of this, explored through a dialogical process, was redemptive, providing a new understanding, leading to a new reality. The reality of *shalom* characterized the refugees' connection to God as well as their position in a community. The importance of being welcomed gave a sense of belonging, and they found purpose in their communities.

9.2.3 Elements of Correlation

Four crucial elements of the correlation have developed through the course of the research.

i. Holistic Understanding

First, the emphasis in the data on humanity results in a holistic understanding of the person. This kind of understanding considers the different parts of life in light of the whole. The respondents do not only consider political or humanitarian aspects, but also link their concerns to faith. Holistic understanding underlines the *imago Dei* as the basis of the connection to God. While the respondents do not refer directly to God's image, their accounts are driven by a sense of human dignity and divine presence.

ii. Transformative Relationship

The notion of human beings with worth and function serves as an important motivator. The decreation of displacement actually shows this as a reverse hierarchy that leads to the diminishment in both worth and function. The force of displacement drives a person away from well-being and leads to both needs and responsibilities. However, the experience of displacement as a decreation reveals that there is more at stake than need or responsibility . It highlights the vortex out of which a relationship to God can emerge. The second insight therefore is that displacement sets the stage for a transformative relationship.

iii. Personal Story in God's Story

The third consideration develops out of the displacement experience. It is the idea of a spiritual synthesis that takes place through the association with God's story. Practically, this functions in the background like an invisible structure without the person being aware of what is happening. The details of this structure are not the focus, rather, what matters are the practical effects in

which the biblical story takes on a spiritual significance. The reframing of the story puts the story into personal and relevant terms.

iv. Dialogical Process

The fourth consideration proceeds from the connection to Scripture. The association with God's story describes what the correlation is, however, without a dialogical process everything remains only theory. This process is crucial because it makes a correlation in a person's life. This is an ongoing process of relating to others throughout each stage of the journey; it is the context of a relationship expressed in multiple ways. The respondents are aware of this process whether as prayer in the desert, songs at sea, church groups in prison or a community role, and this ultimately brings a redemptive change in the person.

9.3 Implications and Applications

There are several implications and applications that follow from this research. These highlight the unique contribution of the research with its emphasis on an understanding that originates among those most directly affected.

9.3.1 Holistic Responses

More variables such as faith and community need to be incorporated in the approach and understanding of the refugee issues. Additionally, a holistic response has to incorporate FDPs as partners for developing strategies.

9.3.2 Ontological Experts

FDPs wrestle head-on with the challenges and consequences of a secular global and technological world. In this world, identity is redefined and many people struggle to know who they are, what their purpose is and where they have a place. The struggles of FDPs are not far removed from those in Europe,

and as ontological experts, FDPs can make significant contributions.

9.3.3 Reflexive Learners

The redeemed voice of those in this research comes about through a reflective process of seeing themselves in Scripture. Their action becomes reflexive of what they observe in God's stories. The reflexive activity connects and positions them in a community that gives earthly purpose and eternal significance. The implication is that FDPs are not passive recipients of a foreign grace but active participants in salvation who above all else need to take stock of where they are, and what they do and have. FDPs have a role to play in applying the research for themselves. They can contribute more understanding through case studies of their redemptive realities. This kind of research will help to build an environment driven by the FDPs' strength and contribution rather than their need.

9.3.4 Theological Makers

Researchers and critics have given labels to refugees such as 'illegal', 'floods', 'swamped', 'undocumented', and others. These are terms that have shaped opinions about refugees. In terms of theological understanding, the FDPs in this study are creating their own labels. They do this by making a redemptive connection through living encounters with God's Word.

As theological makers, the refugees contribute a practical understanding rooted in an ontological understanding of their identity in God and God's community. The theological contribution has not been placed on them, but rather rises out of genuine experiences and relationships. This differs from conceptual doctrines for envisioning the connection between God and humanity that are handed down as dogma.

The contribution to theology has enormous implications for European perspectives. A redemptive understanding is not so much a concept that is passed down or embodied in an institution, but a lived reality in a person who actively associates with God. This makes theology an ongoing endeavor embodied in practical efforts that nurture humility, community, sacrifice, and other actions. More needs to be done to understand the nature of these theological contributions by asking questions like: What makes the theology in the person? and How can they be better communicated and conveyed in a European context?

9.3.5 Caution and Call

This research underlines both a caution and a call to European Christian communities and incoming immigrants alike. The analytical cognitive approach to faith and practice among European communities and the experiential reflective approach demonstrated in this research are like two ships passing in the night. In a pluralistic society, either approach does not suffice to generate understanding and common practice. Both approaches need to build bridges toward the other. The research calls for more caution and care as refugees and local hosts interact toward a connection in community, a validation of the other through inclusion and welcome, efforts that break isolation, mutual solutions to conflict, interdependence, and eternal significance.

This research has envisioned uprooted and displaced people across the map of Europe, at borders and along the roads in search of home. These are people on the move who navigate a journey with little more than themselves as human beings, in hope of a new home. In God’s image they carry a vision of

God’s story and when they connect this to their own story, they turn toward redemption and home.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Second Phase Interview Questions

March-August 2011

Number: _____

1. **Personal Background**: Tell me about yourself.
    a. NAME: _____
    b. Where are you from? Age? Family status?
    c. What is your education and work experience?
    d. Why are you a refugee? For example: personal reasons, political reasons, threat of war & violence, or economic reasons. Would you like to explain further?
    e. Do you have a story or memory from your life before you became a refugee, How does it affect you?
2. **Journey experience(s):** Describe your journey and experience as a refugee.
    a. Can you briefly tell how you got here?
    b. What does it mean for you to be a refugee?
    c. Has your experience as a refugee been difficult? What makes it difficult? Can you give an example?
    d. What do you need as a refugee? What does it look like in your life when these needs are unfulfilled?
    e. Who would you like to tell about your situation as a refugee? What would you do or say?
    f. Can you compare your journey as a refugee to a picture? Is there a picture to describe your journey?

g. Is there a song that you like to sing and means a lot to you as a refugee? Can you sing it or translate/tell any of the words for me?

3. **Faith Experience:** Tell me more about your faith as a Christian.
    a. How does your faith relate to what you have already talked about?
    b. Were you a Christian and were you active in your faith before you became a refugee?
    c. Has your journey as a refugee affected you as a person of faith, or in other words, how has your experience as a refugee changed you?
    d. Are there aspects of God that seem important to you as a refugee? Can you describe how these aspects affect you?
    e. What is your favourite passage or part of the Bible? How does this affect you?
    f. What do you pray for?
4. **Church Involvement:** Tell me about the community of faith around you.
    a. What comes to your mind when you think of the word 'church'?
    b. When did you begin coming to church here?
    c. What is important to you about a church?
    d. How is this church different or similar to other churches you may know?
    e. What can other churches learn from this church that has welcomed so many refugees?
    f. How are you involved in the church? What are the gifts, strengths, talents and abilities that you bring?
    g. If you have to leave the country, what can this church do to equip you for what you might face?

5. **Miscellaneous:** Discus other issues.
    a. Are there any other issues for refugees that you feel are important to raise and discuss?
    b. In closing, is there anything else you would like to say?

Appendix B: Interview Process

Step One–Pre-interview: Explain the research aim and ask the person if they would like to give an interview. This step includes the following:

- Describe my research purpose:
    - understand what participants have gone through as refugees.
    - ask about the refugee experiences and related themes and issues.
    - invite participation.
- Explain about the interview material and use:
    - make a recording to help me recall and understand.
    - use some of the actual words and stories in my research.
    - preserve anonymity by giving a different name.
    - interview only voluntary participants.
- Confirm a time and place to interview.

Step Two–Interview: The actual interview involves the following:

- Review at the start the research aims and how I will use the material.
- Reminder: they can withdraw at anytime or choose not to say anything.
- Take notes and record the session.

Step Three–Post-interview: Complete the notes, transcription, coding, and analysis. This step includes:

- Review the notes and recording; add further notes.
- Note initial impressions, keywords, themes, and ideas.
- Transcribe each interview using Transcriva software.
- Continue to add notes from observations and connections.

Appendix C: Summary of Interview Data

This table gives highlights from each interview according to its number (Nr) and order of occurrence. Interview numbers 1-6 comprise the first phase of interviews, and numbers 7-23 the second phase.[1] Beginning with the 'Interview Theme', the categories across the top give a small sample of data to characterize the interview and how the information illustrates a decreation framework. The category related to 'Personal Information' emphasizes the person's background and humanity and corresponds to creation. The 'Displacement Experience' corresponds to decreation themes, while 'Songs, Quotes & Topics' highlight interview data corresponding to re-creation. The table also notes various 'Scriptures and Themes' of scripture that occurred as well as highlights of other 'Observations' including my own.

Nr	Interview Theme *(key topic, repeated phrase, quote)*	Personal Information (Creation) *(identity, background, emphasis on humanity)*	Displacement Experience (Decreation) *(formative experiences along the refugee journey)*	Song, Quote or Topic (Re-creation) *(reference to redemptive themes)*	Scripture & Themes *(Scriptural references)*	Observations *(other information)*
1	• Life as a refugee is like life as a human being. • 'God humbles me'	• From a minority group. • Other family members have been refugees. • Active Christian before leaving.	• Difficulty saying goodbye • Unexpected experiences • Humbling experiences	• 'My way as a refugee has been a call to God.'	• Matt. 25 –'serving people serves God' • 'I remember God's promise to provide'	• He volunteered in his country to help refugees before he was one himself. • He also volunteered as a refugee and notes the difference is his pride.
2	• 'I call to God in these difficult places' • 'But this time it was all about God.'	• Wife and children remain in home country	• Smuggled onto ship for almost a month • Uncertain destination • Grieves the events and asks 'why has this happen?'	• Jonah's story • God's purpose, 'This movement [fleeing] might where God really wants me to go.' • Community and fellowship with other believers	• Encourages fellow travelers with Scriptures • Jokes, 'we are like Jonah' • Received as a refugee like Joseph was; • Romans 8:28 • Rev. 20:1-10; 22:17	• The events leading up to his leaving were chaotic and difficult for him to understand.

[1] Interview Nr. 3, and 6 are missing because these interviews were not analysed in the first phase. Likewise, Nr. 22 and 23 are missing because these were interviews with the pastor and his wife and the data was a different nature from the other interviews. The data from interview 22 and 23 is considered in Chapter Eight.

Nr	Interview Theme *(key topic, repeated phrase, quote)*	Personal Information (Creation) *(identity, background, emphasis on humanity)*	Displacement Experience (Decreation) *(formative experiences along the refugee journey)*	Song, Quote or Topic (Re-creation) *(reference to redemptive themes)*	Scripture & Themes *(Scriptural references)*	Observations *(other information)*
4	• 'The love of Christians has shown us the love of God.'	• The two respondents met as refugees and have been supportive friends. 'We can't imagine being separated'. • They have no formal education •	• Moved 3 times in 6 years as unregistered asylum seekers • They were in detention and threatened with death by other countrymen for their Christian conversion	• 'For every one step we take to God, God takes ten steps to us.'	• Meaningful Scripture: 'When Jesus speaks in John, it feels like he is speaking to me.'	• I had arranged to interview one man and when I arrived for the interview, he had invited his friend to also participate.
5	• 'The finger of God is on my life.'	• One of the children said, 'I struggled for identity when we first came here… "Who am I?" My mother said, "You belong to Christ, and don't forget that."'	• 'the way I left Syria was by the finger of God … I mean God has chosen me.' • 'For the immigrant, … you want to be a successful man … good cars and good house and after you have all these things, you say OK God, I have all and I find that I have nothing.'	• 'I was at a church meeting for the first time and the woman behind tapped me with her finger and showed me the Bible. I didn't know what to do, so I took the Bible and I kissed it.'	• Job – 'I love this person … because I find him like me.' • 'When I read Matthew, I understood that Jesus sacrificed his life for the disciples … with time I realized this was for the whole world.'	• David invited his family to join the interview. He had received asylum and was settled. His perspective was looking back more than the other respondents who were in the middle of asylum.
7	• 'God is faithful and mighty even when I am struggling.'	• From Nigeria, married • secondary education, • wants to work with children • 'Don't just help us because we are refugees, but because we are humans'	• Life threatened by family, for refusing to accept pagan worship. • Fled with husband to Libya together; no freedom for women there • Stranded 4 days at sea, • Faces discrimination and racism in Malta: 'As a refugee it's not easy,' there are no opportunities	• A song: 'Jesus will be there. Jesus really cares. No matter what I am going through. Jesus will be there for me. Yes he knows just what to do.'	• 'Being a refugee, I still thank God, because God is still seeing me through...I know that God has been really there, 'cause things that have happened.'	• Unclear what happened to her husband • The interview was short because the children made it difficult to hear and concentrate.

Nr	Interview Theme *(key topic, repeated phrase, quote)*	Personal Information (Creation) *(identity, background, emphasis on humanity)*	Displacement Experience (Decreation) *(formative experiences along the refugee journey)*	Song, Quote or Topic (Re-creation) *(reference to redemptive themes)*	Scripture & Themes *(Scriptural references)*	Observations *(other information)*
8	• The Church is the beauty of God • Pray always and serve God.	• Auto-mechanic • Refugee for political reasons • Family members killed, fled with father • Children still in Africa	• Faces discrimination and racism in Malta and feels people judge him for being a refugee. • Lonely, 'It's difficult, because no one helps us. Cause sometimes no job,.' • No certainty • Asking 'why, God?'	• 'Sometimes sing I to tell God my problems.' • Song: 'Glory to God, we hope in you …' • Faith changed after becoming refugee: 'I change because I see many things, before I leaving my country, not see them. I come here and see many things again. My faith opened.'	• God helped Israel and supported them in the desert for 40 years • Jesus blesses me like he blessed the woman (referring to John 4:4-26) • Jesus calmed the storm • David and Goliath • Daniel 12:4 and 6	• Difficult to understand the interview due to limited English and heavy accent.
9	• 'I have decided.' • 'But if you trust in God, God will provide...I see the hand of God is real strong in my life.'	• From Cameroon, • Single parent; child currently lives with him • As a baby, he was saved from death, and the story has given him identity and purpose.	• Fled after father went missing, and life was threatened. • Saw hopelessness at sea; 'it was dark, dark, dark.' • Sees he is coming out of nothing	• Song: 'I have decided to follow Jesus…' • Experiences protection and presence and peace of God (John 14:27; 16:33)	• God takes care of the birds in the sky • Sees parallel in Joseph and Abraham • Fellowship in unity as the body of Christ	• Spoke repeatedly of his desire to know God more: 'I pray God to draw me close to him.'
10	• Values sacrifice and sharing with others	• From Philippines; left daughter as a baby to work. • has worked in several countries	• Sacrificing to provide for daughter	• Church means to be with God • 'Church is a place to share your problems'	• The family of God • receives encouragement through prayer	• while not directly a refugee, she was nonetheless part of the church, and shared similarities in her story to those of other refugees.
11	• Like an oasis in the desert, the Lord is my security, and just as I have been helped on my journey, I want to assist others in their time of need.	• From Congo; single; • Raised Christian; • Father involved in politics; entire family had to flee after violence • To be with family is good	• Unsafe: 'When you go to seek asylum, there is nothing safe for you.' • One week through desert to reach Libya by foot • Loneliness: 'I was just thinking it was my first time to pass the New Year just passing like that, no body? So very, very sad.' • Difficult sea crossing to Malta; 5 days, no food and water	• Regarding the refugee experiences, 'It cannot affect my faith because we read the Bible we find those kind of things. Because through this difficulty we need to persevere.' • God calls him to arrange a group of prayer in Malta, and wait. • The refugee journey is a time of testing	• '[The sea crossing was] long long, we say all of us, we prayed the last prayer.' • Psalm 136, especially the verse about God sweeping Pharaoh into the red sea, and leading his people through the desert • The church teaches and encourages	• Described all people as refugees: 'We are all refugees, and so God's teaching is applicable and important for all of us'

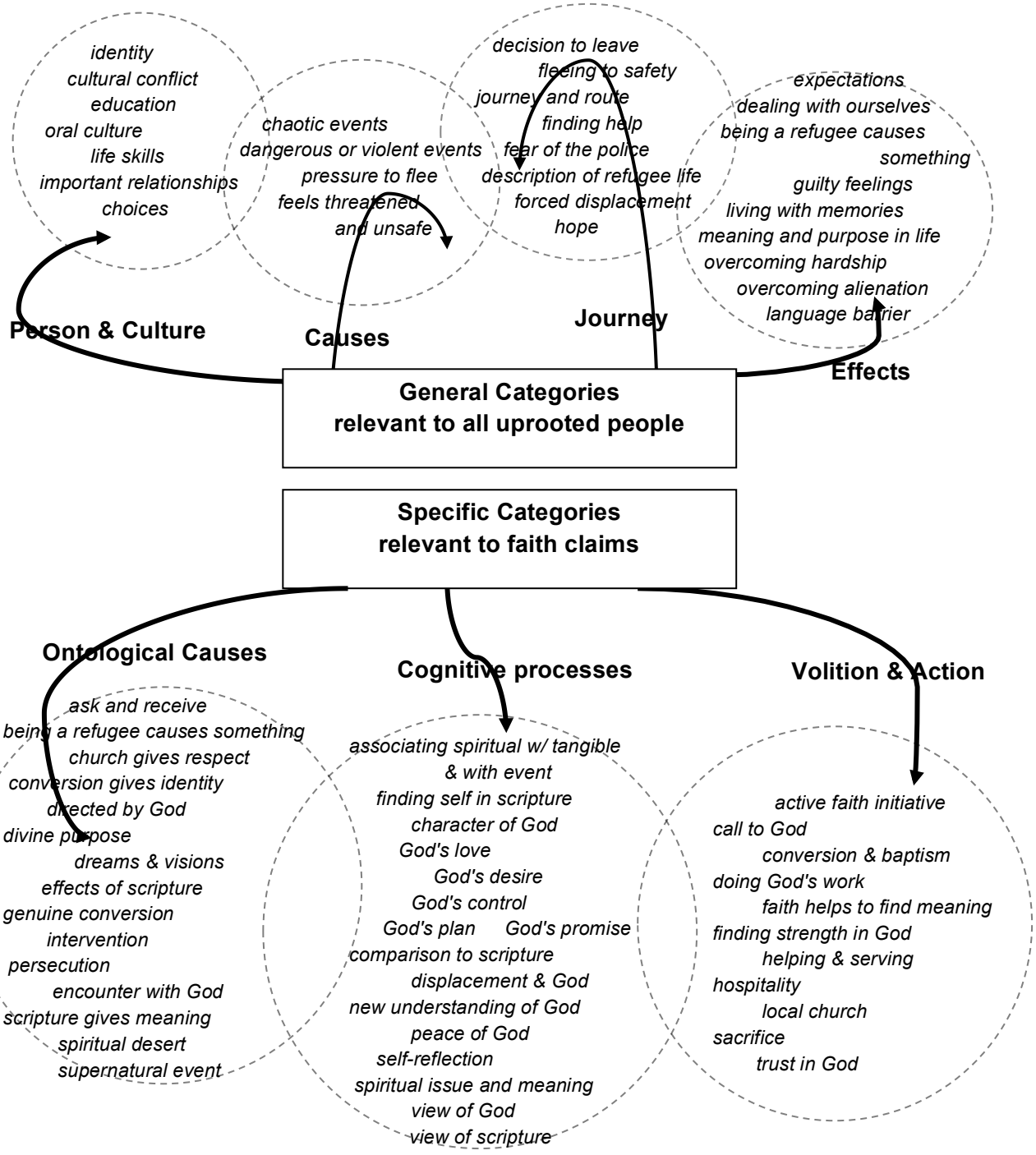
Nr	Interview Theme *(key topic, repeated phrase, quote)*	Personal Information (Creation) *(identity, background, emphasis on humanity)*	Displacement Experience (Decreation) *(formative experiences along the refugee journey)*	Song, Quote or Topic (Re-creation) *(reference to redemptive themes)*	Scripture & Themes *(Scriptural references)*	Observations *(other information)*
12	• God strengthens me and he will take me home.	• From Ghana; • Refugee because family conflict; rest of the family dispersed across Africa as refugees; • Sunday school teacher in Ghana	• Experienced religious persecution in Libya • Feels the weight of responsibility of providing for other siblings	• A song: 'God wants my destiny to be something like a healer.' 'God have protect me all my ways, and he bring me back to home, without anything touching me.' • Encouraged in faith by witnessing answered prayer and miracle (crossing desert)	• Paul came to Malta (Acts). • Regarding his growth of faith, 'Before [my refugee journey] I say I haven't faith, but now I get it more.'	• He noted Europeans do not want to hear anything about God, which is difficult, but it pushed him to seek God more.
13	• God fills my life, fills me like a vessel, restores my purpose and unites me with a family.	• From Ghana, married; • In Malta for 5 years, no papers • 'If you are with Christ you know that every human being on this earth is already a refugee, because this is not your home.'	• Injustice: Left for Libya with passport and papers to work. Libyan police tore up his passport, was put into prison; escaped and left country. • Threatened at knife point into taking boat across ocean. • Faces racism and discrimination in Malta	• The refugee life is a two-sided picture, 'where depending on the angle...you see it sometimes as a very nice picture, or you see it sometimes as very horrible.' • A song: 'I'm just an empty vessel, fill me, use me and mold me.' • Actively serves in the church; tech crew, preaching, etc.	• God is a source of comfort; I am not alone • Church is 'the communion of the believers together'	• The first 10 minutes of the recording were lost • Refers to all people as refugees:
14	• God is my helper, 'When totally you are in problems, you think there is no help, that is when God is totally with you.'	• From Kenyan • High school education • 6 siblings	• Fled because 'I had no other options.' • Problems on boat, on sea 1 week • Faces discrimination and racism finding work in Malta • Describes times when you question, 'why am I going through this, where is my God?'	• Song: 'I have had many tears, and sorrows...but in every situation, God gave me a blessed consolation' • 'At least, when you talk to him, you pray, you feel like, you feel that you're okay.' • The church should encourage each other in fellowship, spiritually and practically	• 'He [God] say that okay, keep knocking...so I normally knock for him to hear, because I understand I know one day he will.' • Psalm 24: The earth is the Lord's	• Unable to talk about the journey to Malta.

Nr	Interview Theme *(key topic, repeated phrase, quote)*	Personal Information (Creation) *(identity, background, emphasis on humanity)*	Displacement Experience (Decreation) *(formative experiences along the refugee journey)*	Song, Quote or Topic (Re-creation) *(reference to redemptive themes)*	Scripture & Themes *(Scriptural references)*	Observations *(other information)*
15	• God will lead me and I will follow. I need to focus on God in order to persevere.	• From Ghana, married with child • left for financial reasons: 'we have seen a lot of problem.' • Financial responsibility for younger siblings	• Sandstorm for 2 days in Saharan desert • Loss: friends died on journey to Libya • Helpless: received work status in Malta, but no papers to travel; feels stuck	• Song: '...anywhere you lead me, Lord. There I will go...Jesus lead me, where you lead me I will go...until I reach the promise land.' • 'Since I travel my faith grow in my life.' • Called to preach through a dream	• Encouraged through Joseph's story, 'if you can do this one for our ancestors [free Joseph from prison], I know me to you can do that one for me.' • Timothy	• Family's financial demands and expectations make it difficult • Referred to all people as refugees: 'Everybody in this world is a refugee in this land, or in this place.'
16	• 'I am alive because of God. If there is no God, I would be dead already.'	• From Sierra Leone married, one son • Became refugee when war started in 1999; forced to join army • Raised Christian; • Father killed in Nigeria	• Discrimination: 'the name of illegal immigrant or here, refugee, is not a good name,' speaks of discrimination faced in Malta because of status as illegal immigrant; • 'We are human being we are human being. But here they don't recognize it.'	• Sees many die in sea. 'But you, you are alive today. You realize that, there is God.' • Coming through the sea is like a rebirth to his faith. Seeing God alive and present alongside the death at sea	• Read Genesis to Revelation after coming to Malta. • A true Christian: is someone who does everything for God • John 3:16	• Particpant emphasized encouraging others in faith, 'brother have patience, God can do everything for you.'
17	• 'God rescued me in the desert and in the sea, and he will rescue me here in this land.'	• From Ghana, married with child • left in order to find work to help pay for medical costs of wife.	• Caught by police entering Tripoli, in prison; suffered discrimination and malnourishment, freed by gov't representative • Finds out wife died while he was in prison; sister caring for their son • On the sea for 1 week, 6 people die	• Prayed for people on boat. • 'God encourages. He give me courage, encouragement in my heart.' • Dreams: 'God speak to me in the dream' • Church is important for the fellowship and encouragement	• Acts • God freeing Paul from jail • Joshua Chapter 1: God's promise of a home, and a place • John 4: Jesus asking for water, 'Why, Jesus is a refugee, like me.'	• Referred to other people as refugees as well: Everybody is a refugee...Because when they go there one home [in heaven], and Jesus prepare. That one is everybody home. They stay there forever. But here, is a transit.'
18	• 'God is the everlasting God: what He is doing in past, He is doing it today.'	• From Niger and Ghana • Parents are dead • Left home because he felt responsible to help provide for siblings;	• Discrimination and corruption in Libya • Lost on sea for days; saved by Maltese police • In detention centre for 18 months	• 'There is nothing we can do without prayers.' • 'Through my journey, it makes my faith come strong.'	• God given dreams • Ezra	• 'I know that Jesus is in control...and if you have God, nothing can hit you.'

Nr	Interview Theme *(key topic, repeated phrase, quote)*	Personal Information (Creation) *(identity, background, emphasis on humanity)*	Displacement Experience (Decreation) *(formative experiences along the refugee journey)*	Song, Quote or Topic (Re-creation) *(reference to redemptive themes)*	Scripture & Themes *(Scriptural references)*	Observations *(other information)*
19	• 'I must give myself to God because I have seen what God has done for me.'	• From Ghana • Shoemaker • Raised Christian Pentecostal	• Stranded 5 days on ocean, with no fuel, water or food. • Loss of control, 'The night it is difficult. You can see nothing. You can do nothing. The night time is difficult.'	• 'I pray my last prayer to die on the boat, because I don't know what is going on. But God help us to meet one boat to come to help us to give us something.' • A song: 'He can never change, He can never never change, Jesus is here forever.'	• Church is for service • Prayer strengthens faith • Job went through many difficulties like me	• In answer to what it means to be a refugee to him, 'When you travel you see many things, you learn many things. So if someone can travel, then you can see how God do everything by his way.'
20	• God's mighty arm is able to save	• Married a fellow refugee after arriving in Malta	• The journey is not the difficult part. More difficult to know what to do afterwards	• From Eritrea, Became	• 'I am the light of the world.'	• The interview was interrupted because of children, we finished it on another occasion
21	• 'God is our lawyer … the only lawyer who could be is Jesus, and God.'	• From Eritrea, • Became Christian in college, served in family's church as an elder • Met wife, also a refugee from Eritrea, in Malta • Went to prison several times • Can't swim	• No options: forced to enter forced military service or flee. • Caught by police in Libya, went to prison for 4 months, very bad conditions; • Many dangers: Told churches in Sudan not to follow, journey too dangerous. Detention in Malta, 'its I mean a very bad place. I mean its not where a human being could live.'	• 'The only thing you have is hope of the God, you know, I mean God can make it this journey.' • Finds hope in fellowship and worship in prison • Because God is our advocate, we also must advocate for others	• John 8:36 • Isaiah 64 • Compares experience of God to God's care for the people of Israel • Genesis 13 • Paul's teachings to Timothy • Hosea • '[The refugee experiences] makes you to understand practical what is written in the bible.'	• Wants people to know, 'When you make God your lawyer, he's able to do everything, no boundary can stop him.' • Wants to use his experience and sufferings as a refugee to help people know, 'in difficult circumstances the only solution that we can have is God.'

Appendix D: First Phase Interview Data

The diagram shows the codes assigned to four interviews from the first phase. These have been combined and arranged into two kinds of data and seven categories that are related together.



Appendix E: Second Phase Displacement Categories

The following tables illustrate data from the second phase about the displacement causes and effects that the respondents named in their interviews. These responses formed the basis of analysis for understanding the categories of displacement described in Chapter Six. The numbers refer to how often the classification occurred during the interview. The tables do not include the pastor and his wife nor Agnes whose interview was not yet completed.

Displacement Causes

	arrest	corrupt. exploit. & mistreatment	deception & manipulation	deportation	educational need	family conflict	fear of deportation	financial need	forced to flee	freedom of conscience	imprisoned or detained	life threatened	no freedom	no home	no human rights	no job	no legal status or chance	no other choice	no representative	no safety	non-functioning system	nobody helps	persecution	prejudice and discrimination	relig. conflict / cult. obligation	unclear details	unfair treatment	unprotected	violence
Amin	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	9	0	0	0	0
Baldwin	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Esther	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	1
Franklin	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
George	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	3	0	4	1	5	
Hamilton	1	5	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	4	1	3	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Isa	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	
Isaac	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	0	0	0	1	
Jason	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	7	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	3	1	5	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	
Julie	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Lani	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	
Rachel	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	
Solomon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Stanley	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	1	

Displacement Effects

	angry	abuse & poor treatment	complex problems & crisis	confused	cope w/ continuous difficulties	cultural conflict	dangerous and unsafe	deception	depression	desparate	disillus. doubts & discourage	distrust	endure hardship	face fear & death	faith is weakened	financial pressure	hopeless helpless & alone	illegal activity	language need	loss	loss of ambition	manipulate situation for gain	no options	physical limit	refugee label	refugee life to be pitied	regret guilt & confession	rejection	sad and alone	split up from family	stress of daily life	suicide	temptation	trafficking	traumatic stress	unable to change situation	uncertain	unexpected difficulty	wandering lost & stranded
Amin	0	0	7	2	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	0
Baldwin	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Esther	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Franklin	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
George	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Hamilton	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	1	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Isa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Isaac	1	2	1	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	3	1	0	0
Jason	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	6	1	1	2	2	1	3	0	1	0	0	4	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Julie	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lani	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Rachel	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Solomon	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stanley	0	0	0	0	7	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	5	1	0	1	1

Appendix F: Personal Story in God's Story

This table gives a sample of the data to illustrate the personal story in God's story. Figure 7.1 draws from this data, and more like this, to show how the person makes a redemptive connection between displacement and faith.

Name	Interview Text	Decreation Theme (Reference to the context, event or aspect of decreation and displacement)	Salvific Theme (Reference to a salvific action such as a scripture or theme from scripture.)	Connection (Evidence of redemptive effects and connection between the two themes, including aspects of dialogue.)
Amin	'So, I read, and then I go through, and then the situation that I am seeing. I am seeing even now how God is acting.' (00:40:33) 'I am seeing that God is in me. He is helping me. And, then I am seeing that I am not wrong in the position, in this situation that I am standing. So, I'm seeing that even the child of God, Joseph and Abraham they went through similar situation and then that made their faith increase and be so.' (00:41:14)	• 'This situation' – difficult to go through and to be alone as a single parent. • 'Not wrong in the situation' – reflects an internal conflict.	• 'God is acting … helping me' • 'Child of God' – 'Joseph and Abraham' • Referred to Matt.14:28-32 as an example of how faith helps him	• Sees God acting and that 'God is in me' • Similar situations • Faith increased • Remaining faithful in difficult times • He explains that he comes to these conclusions through talking with others around him
Baldwin	'God is wonderful. Because He said before He revealed dreams to some people, and he is a everlasting God, and today God, what he is doing in past, he is doing it today.' (00:26:23) 'Everything here, if this one , if it come? It makes me come to remember the Bible. It makes me come back to remember the Bible.' (00:44:10)	• He dreamed he was saved in desert and also at sea; And this really happened. • He sees promises of God in Scripture.	• God revealed dreams to some people • Baldwin was protected in the desert and at sea • Encouraged by Ezra 9:1-9	• The dreams strengthened his faith • He sees the past in his present dream • Sees God is present with him in desert • Humbled by the events
Isaac	'I tell my people. That time I came outside, I call my sister, I said it's wow. I see God's hands in my life. Because the situation I'm going, I'm passing, it's God' hands. It's God power. Because it's too much. Some people are dying, me like that people, I can die in the sea But God rescued me. I see God hands in my life.' (01:00:00) 'You see the God is doing in my life. I started to crying. Because, it's too much. Because in the desert. I remember in desert, and why? That time I told you in the water is finished, and everything is finished. ...I remember one thing. In every time I remember crying. And one man told me,	• Passing through trials of the journeys. • Some people dying • Faces death – 'I can die'	• God's hands and power • God rescues • God listens • Water is all finished • He quoted Joshua 1:1-3 as an encouraging Scripture. • Sings a song about God rescuing Paul from prison	• Asked by man on the boat to pray • Overwhelmed with emotion • Calls his sister to tell her • God's rescue is a picture of his own life.

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	Elder. Pray. Because I know you are praying, your God listening. Praying, and your God rescue us.' (01:02:10)			
Franklin	'In detention, sometime they preach and I put in my heart, or I make encourage from it. About Joseph, when his brothers sent him to they just sell him to Potiphar and his wife, ... And I said, oh God, it is true. If you can do this one for our ancestors, I know me too you can do that one for me.' (00:46:53)	• In prison – he explained this was difficult because he had never been in prison before	• He with other for worship and heard the Story of Joseph; Gn.37:28; 50:15-21 • Encouraged from the preaching	• Story encourages him • 'If God helps Joseph he can help me.' • In detention prison, he took part in a church group and they ask him to preach. From this he recognizes a call to preach.
Lani	'I pray I tell God help me for that many place, God helped me, ...the people from Israel, God supported them 40 years. ... God there. Any person can touch Jesus Christ today. Jesus Christ never change. ...I want Jesus Christ for my life. I touch him, and bless me like he bless that girl.' (00:15:25) 'God have many projects for you. Because he says, "I have project for peace. Not bad for you."' (00:39:19)	• He explained that he faces discrimination and many problems that cause fear.	• Israel wandering 40 years • David & Goliath • Plans for peace – Jer. 29:11 • Prov. 12:20; Isaiah 25:1 • Woman at the well – John 4:4-26	• I pray; I tell God… • God is there
Stanley	'I see the need of moving to a world where the word of God is not poured from the bible direct to you. But, it's just been given to you in the form of your own life activity. So in that sense, it helps you to see how you are going. ...you know that God is with you, God is way more close than the other, so how do I say it... I got to here now, I got to know the real meaning about Christianity. it's not everything about you you, you. ... Those are the things that helped me a lot. I believe when I get home I'll be a different person, not being somebody so big. But, I'll be in a different attitude than I was.' (00:22:36 – 00:25:16) ...I don't read the bible to understand it for me. I just look at the way we live our life. See it, before I go back to the bible to read a passage that relates to it (00:50:46).	• Traumatized through the smugglers who kill one person and force him at knife point • Faces 'problems everyday.' • Detention experience • Experiences 'not being somebody big' • He explains that being separated from his family makes him 'very down.'	• He explains, in detention he reads the Bible as a 'storybook'. • God 'helps everyday'. • And in detention everyday was a 'blessed day.'	• 'moving to a world …' • 'God is with you … way more close.' • Sees passage that relates • Joins church family and this gives important fellowship
Solomon	'The time [at sea] I think I will die, he save me and that makes me want to serve God now.' (00:18:22) 'There is a song that we singing in the church, the words are, 'He can never never change, He can never never change, Jesus is here forever.' That song I always sing,	• Difficult times make him ask if he should leave God.	• God saves him at sea • Job's situation is example of his own.	• He connects his desire to serve God with God saving him at sea. • Also, 'if you give yourself to God, He will never change.' • In his description of Job, he switches to himself and speaks

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	because it's good. And it's true God can not change, when he dying for me in my country, he is still here with me. ...If you give yourself to Him. He can never change. That song is a good song for me, always I sing this song.' (00:29:59) 'Why now when he (Job) get difficult thing should I leave God. No, I can't do that, God is my God. Even if I have or I don't have. God is my God. I can't leave God. So that one maybe you have more difficulties or more trials, you must go back to seek the Bible, and he can give you strength and courage to stand firm.' (00:31:08)			from his own experience. • Job's example gives 'courage to stand firm'. • 'He [God] is still with me.' • The church is a place to serve God
Agnes	'The boat sank, and I was stuck ...I knew I was going to die. ... I cried out 'Jesus'. ...I suddenly saw a light and I began to swim towards it. This is how I was saved, and today I always remember God's strong arm is able to save me. ...the hard thing is no know what will happen.' (no time)	• Hopeless on the boat • Faces death • Uncertain about what to do	• God's strong arm • Psalm 18:2-3 Refuge, rock and deliver; call on the name of the Lord	• Fellow travellers ask her to pray and sing
Esther	'I've had many tears and sorrows, I've had questions for the mind, there have been times I didn't know my right from wrong, but in every situation, God gave me a blessed consolation, I try to depend upon his name.' ...It's God who knows my destiny, whatever I'm going through, he knows. And he has plans for me, good ones for me. And so I, whenever, I get a chance, I try to talk to him, to give me strength, to whatever I'm passing through. ... ...That happened when I was in this January of coming to this place. That is when God was really, because I was really crying for him for the help. That is when he was totally with me.' (00:29:02 –00:34:53)	• Passes through trials coming to this place • Tears, sorrows and questions • Crying for help	• Psalm 24 – The earth is the Lord's; this gives a promise of blessing. • God has good plans	• Sings and talks with God • God is 'totally with me.'
George	But now, it affect me a lot! Because I know that God can do everything. Now if you go through difficulty, you'll know that there's God. And when I passed through the sea, I know that there is God. Anybody say that there is no God is dead. Is dead, already. ...I know what did God do in my life to make that change happen to my life … when I was coming in the sea, I saw many, many people die. That is why I know that God is alive. Because I'm about to die in the sea! ... this is my life. This is where all my life been. God kept me up until now. I'm not die, I'm safe.' (00:27:04–00:36:42)	• Passed through the sea • Saw people die • Experiences discrimination • About to die	• John 3:16 –reminds him of God's love • Saved and kept by God	• Sees he is nothing without God's love • Talks with friends who want to discriminate like they have been discriminated against, but he sees this is not an option.

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Isa	'So the time I arrived Libya, I call my mom, and I say, 'Go to church and thank God for me, because I have seen a miracle.' Because in the beginning I don't believe that I can reach Libya, but the name of God, now I reached Libya.' (00:28:57)	• He broke his foot while crossing the desert to Libya. He survived but six people (out of 70) died. • It surprised him to meet and talk with Europeans who do not want to hear about God. • Has nothing in Malta; wants to return home but cannot; feels stuck	• Favourite Scripture includes Psalm 25:2 'Let me not be put to shame'; and Psalm135:13 'The Lord endures … he will vindicate his people' • His song: 'God will bring me home…'	• When he reached Libya, he called his mom to tell her to thank God. • The experiences reinforce his faith • Conversations with Europeans • Church is a place to meet others and pray.
Jason	'Sometimes because we are human beings, you get discouragement. Sometimes you are praying to get something, but people are just closing the way for you. But it cannot affect my faith because we read the Bible we find those kind of things. Because through this difficulty we need to persevere as the bible say ... long time, very, very long time. ... And all my prayers was bathing in this one. (Psalm 136:15-16) Because I was inside the sea, the desert...I discover it when I was in the desert. ... and that night I pray, I pray, I pray.' 01:02:15 –01:11:07	• Difficulty of opposition and problems; he explained at another point in the interview these are like a tunnel to pass through for a 'very long time' • Loses security through displacement • Discouragement • Passed through the desert and the sea • Misses the family	• Psalm 136:15-16 • Sees similar situations in Bible	• Family gives safety • Through prayer he sees that he was in desert like in Scripture
Hamilton	'My message ... first of all to all refugees ... Bible says 'God is my refuge,' ... (we need to) trust to God ... God controls ... God call Abraham and ask him to leave. He doesn't know where he is going. The same thing happen to us ... we find a shelter in God … God sees and hears We try to solve our problems. ...during those times people feel hopeless. People feel like helpless; people feel like there nobody, ...And I just want to tell them, God is the only, our ambassador.' 00:40:51– 00:42:59 'We pass through different circumstances and different difficulties. Almost 99% of all of us, we can see that if it was not by God's help, nobody could have survived or make this journey. It doesn't matter how much money you have, it doesn't matter how much you are healthy. I mean, we have seen that a very strong people dying in the sea, and very little children was crossing the sea. ...Then it makes you to understand practical what is written	• Uncertain about the journey • People feel helpless and alone • Different difficulties • Survival is not easy • No regard for life: very strong and very young are dying. • No respect for the person	• God is my refugee and shelter • God calls Abraham • God sees and hears • God is ambassador • God helps	• He knows the things about God by 'passing through the experiences'. • The church organizes and communicates to find solutions

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	in the bible. Because, many times before I left from my country, since I don't experience these things, I know them only here. When I was back at home, when I pass those difficulties, I don't really, you know, trust onto God, to say, no God is. But I don't experience them so.' (01:14:09)			
Rachel	'[I turned to God because of] ... the challenges of life, what I've been going through ... [My faith is] not changed, but made stronger in faith.' (00:24:24–00:25:58)	• Challenges in Malta • Not treated as human being • Struggling • Lost memories	• Her Song: 'Jesus cares … knows what to do.'	• Strengthened faith • Remembers God will be there to see her through difficulty