

**THE INFLUENCE OF A CHANGING SOCIETY ON YOUNG ADULTS'
EXODUS FROM THE CHURCH OVER THE LAST FIFTY YEARS IN
SOUTH AFRICA.**

By

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DECLARATION

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Signature

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ABSTRACT

Today's world in the new Millennium is a far cry from church and home life for young people fifty years ago, where quantum change on top of change, and disconnectedness in family structures, have all contributed in various ways to an exodus of young people from mainline churches. To counteract this ongoing trend, significant effort has been applied by churches throughout the world, and South Africa in particular, to develop young people in the Christian Faith, all of which has resulted in young people continuing to exodus the church after confirmation or graduating from high school.

The challenge of young people leaving the church is however, more complex. The church has also not found an effective strategy for engaging with young people who have never been to a church as well as those who used to actively participate, but have now abandoned the church and its ministry. Parents of today's young people have, to a great extent, failed to understand that it is difficult for their children to adopt a Christian lifestyle if they do not observe their parents as role models, practising Christian living in the home. Similarly, if they don't help their children to see and understand how faith is applied and has meaning in their everyday lives, then the current status quo between children, family and church will continue to decline exponentially. The church, and more particularly parents, need to understand and listen to young people's postmodern views, and how it has reshaped their lives, in comparison to preceding generations. By adopting the broad practical recommendations from this research, churches may be able to reach out more effectively to parents, children and young people, to help them discover a life changing relationship in their walk with Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Statement of the problem and limitations

We are living in a time of great change in today's Millennium world where people are facing changes, not only in church life and congregations, but in families, the work place, society, education and many other aspects of life (Warshauer and Matuchniak 2010:179). Who are we, how we relate to each other and the world around us is defined by Luciano Floridi (2014:vi). The numerous developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are changing the answers to these fundamental questions.

According to Floridi (2014 vi), as the boundaries between our 'online and offline' lives break down and become blurred, we are becoming surrounded by smart technology. We are being integrated into a so-called 'infosphere' which feeds into our everyday lives and we begin to live more and more, 'on life' itself. Floridi defines this as our daily activity, – 'the way we shop, work, learn, entertain ourselves and conduct our relationships'. The manner in which we interact with the world in every part of life today (ICTs) have become man-made forces which are confronting and transforming our realities in all aspects. This in turn poses questions to the church and all people as to the implicit risks in today's ever-changing world. Are technologies going to enable and empower us, or constrain us? Floridi (2014 vii) argues that we must expand our ecological and ethical approach to cover both natural and man-made realities. The church, families, young people and the elderly especially, can deal successfully with the new challenges posed by our digital technologies and information society that is globally changing in front of our eyes, experientially and unnervingly.

As today's boundaries of life break down we are becoming surrounded by ICTs, where Floridi (2014:viii) advocates the various personas we tend to adopt in social media, defines how we socialize, develop our relationships and the way we interact with the world around us. In addition, Floridi points out, will these new technologies enable and empower people or constrain them?

Today's world is a time of shifting paradigms which for many have become the very heart of our understanding of life. Rendle (2002:6) advocates that church congregations are now finding themselves between the pre-Millennium assumptions of the paradigm of Christendom, and the new paradigm of an 'emerging' time. Because of the complexity of people's lives today, congregations, made up of differing cultures, will seek to determine 'faith' in this changing world of assumptions and paradigms. We do not live in a time of clear answers. As Rendle (2002:9) states, we live in a time when church leaders need to realign with these paradigms and use discernment and 'other' resources to guide their congregations through change. However, this is often easier said than done. Rendle (2002:2) notes that religion throughout the history of the church is, by its nature, highly resistant to change.

Changes in family life according to Edgel (2006:1) have radically transformed our society in the last three decades, where perhaps the most significant change in the family has been the loss or disappearance of the 'male breadwinner profile', to the dominance of the dual-earner couple. Due to the implications associated with change Edgel (2006:17 -19) also draws attention to the dual-earner household and changes in family life, where many are not organized around two parents rearing children. In addition, more and more couples are opting to remain unmarried in raising children, than was the case in the 1970's. Edgel further advocates (2006:17) that the so called

'time squeeze in the dual earner families has resulted in greater levels of stress and anxiety' especially for women'. According to a study by Statistics South Africa (2015) 31% of mothers were recorded as being married, advocating that it is possible the father might be absent in the household or the child's life. This aspect was further borne out with over 1.1 million births registered, with 64% having no information on the father, while more than 50% of the women who gave birth were single. According to a study undertaken by the South African Institute of Race Relations (2014), only a third of children in South Africa are growing up in a home living with both of their natural parents, while almost 100 000 children live in child-headed households, 81 percent of whom have a living mother, while nine million children are growing up with absent, but living fathers.

The South African Institute of Race Relations study (2014) also indicated that only 35% of children in South Africa grow up living with both their biological parents. Dysfunctional families were quoted as growing in number each year, impacting on the future prospects of the younger generations, who are more likely to have relationship problems and create fractured families themselves in the future. Notwithstanding the importance of the family being one of the fundamental social units, there is limited research available on how these family's function in South Africa. The South African Institute of Race Relations report (2014) concluded that 'the proportion of South African children with absent fathers increased between 1996 and 2010 from 42 percent to 51 percent. Almost half of all South African children are growing up without their fathers, though their fathers may be alive'.

According to Statistics South Africa (2017) with the growing trend of absent fathers in the lives of children, especially in the formative years, is seen to be contributing to our

generation's social ills and degeneration. To illustrate some of the above, Figures 1-3 below reflect current data obtained from Statistic South Africa 2017.

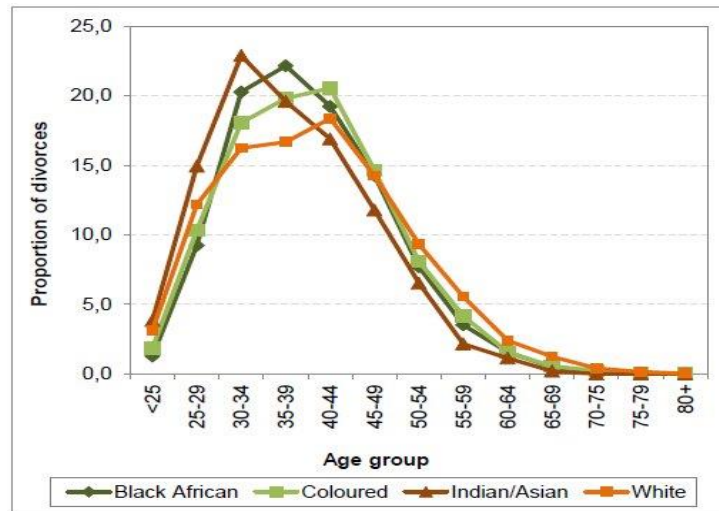


Figure 1 Percentage of divorces by age - female

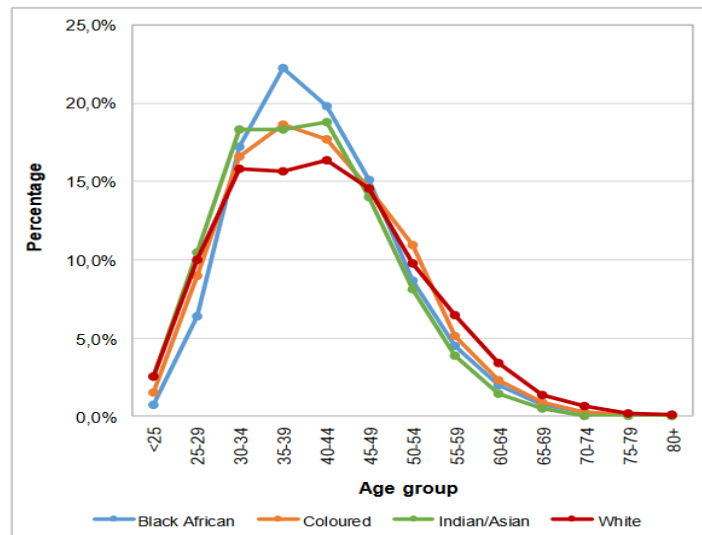


Figure 2: Percentage of divorces by age - male

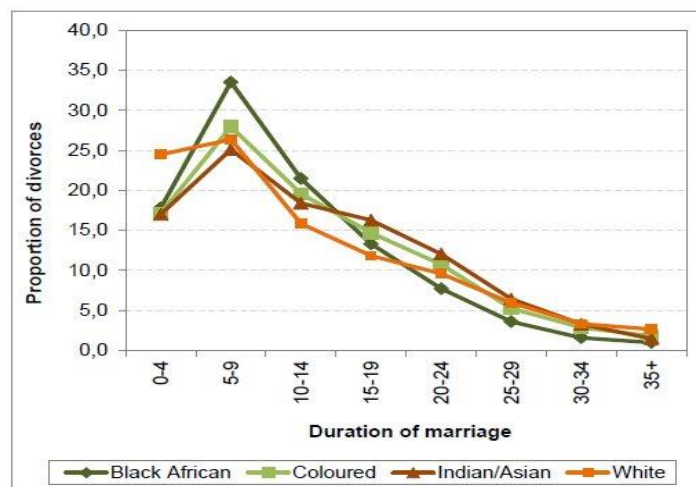


Figure 3: Percentage of marriage duration – ethnic group

Statistics South Africa 2017, indicates 56% of divorcing couples had children younger than 18 years, which amounted to more than 23,000 children affected by divorces that took place in this same year. Total divorces increased from 21 998 in 2012 to 25 326 in 2017. The SA Statistics report further indicates that, irrespective of population group, a higher proportion (27,9%) of divorces came from marriages that lasted between 5 to 9 years. In 2016, 13 922 (55,0%) divorce cases involved children aged younger than 18 years.

Reviewing the tabulated data in the South Africa Statistical Review of Marriages and Divorce (P0307172017) the number of children between the ages of 5 and 18 amounts to 15 785 343 (27%) of the total population. The report concludes This is one population group that could potentially benefit the most from faith and intergenerational transformation, through their growing years in the home and the church, especially those classed as cohorts generation Y and Z .In addition, it is also evident from Figure 3 above, that the church has not been effective in the area of marriage preparation and consolidation, in view of the percentage of marriages that are failing in less than ten years of wedlock, with the concomitant number of children who are affected as a consequence of marriage failure.

However, taking the above into consideration, South African society has experienced an enormous amount of change in the past two decades, where Friedman (2006:5) advocates, a human-rights culture has replaced a close and privileged society that benefitted the minority.

Research undertaken by Schoeman (2012) concluded churches are now operating in a culture and socio-political environment, which is very different from the situation

prevailing before 1990, where these changes, in the South African context have had far-reaching consequences, for the role and involvement of churches in communities.

1.2 The research problem

Faber (1990) advocates that in the 20th century the church provided initiative in the community. Everyone belonged in some form or manner to the church, in other words they were born into it. Thus, the church regulated and accompanied the various life stations of its people. Living in such a community, therefore, meant living in the church per se, where it was viewed as responsible for the morality of its congregants and exercised a strong societal control. This situation has changed radically in today's world, where the major concern of many Christians is that, rather than Christianity having an impact on society, there is a danger of the opposite being true, with today's culture having a noticeable impact on Christianity. According to Lenta (2009) a typical example being the legalising of same sex marriages by the state. This has placed pressure on the church to accept and change its attitude towards this issue.

Trisk (2007:77) suggests that following the demise of apartheid in South Africa, the church faced a double crisis – that of relevance and identity. In the case of the latter, so much energy is focused on the Sunday service, the church guilds, buildings and the various committees that many mainline churches have become inward-looking. In essence, a church must have some level of inward focus where healthy fellowship is a good sign for a congregation. However, churches can lose their outward mission focus and become too preoccupied with the perceived needs and desires of the members. Funds spent and the time expended can quickly become focused on the demands and wants of those inside the congregation, rather than the needs within the community. Trisk's (2007) example is the occurrence of prolonged meetings, where an inordinate

amount of time is spent in dealing with the most inconsequential of items, while the Biblical Great Commission and Great Commandment are rarely discussed. Consequently, a disproportionate share of the budget is often used to meet the needs and comforts of the members, instead of reaching the community beyond the boundary walls of the church.

With regard to the above, and retention of young people in the church, an extensive survey report entitled trends in 14 religious factors undertaken by Barna (2011), indicated that parents generally rely upon their church to undertake all of the religious training and teaching their children require to receive, while the majority of parents spend limited to nil time during a typical week discussing religious matters, or studying religious materials together with their children.

However, Barna's findings (2009) also indicate that parents are not so much unwilling to provide substantive teaching to their children as they are ill-equipped to do such work. In a follow up study, Barna (2011) indicated that almost nine out of ten parents of children under aged under 13 (85%) believed they have the primary responsibility for teaching their children about religious and spiritual matters. However, most parents have abdicated their God-given role to allow their church or religious centre to provide gospel teachings and related religious experiences for their children. The Barna research (2011) also highlighted, that parents typically have no fundamental plan for the spiritual development of their children, nor do they consider it a priority, as many have minimal to no training in how to nurture a child's faith, and experience no accountability for their efforts.

The above situation provides an important window of opportunity for churches to prepare parents for a more significant role in the spiritual development of their children. While Barna (2011) indicates that numerous mainline churches offer classes and other programmes for children, these are relatively limited in equipping parents to be effective spiritual guides. In addition, the Barna survey (2011) found that only one out of every five parents of children under 13 (19%) has ever been personally contacted or spoken to by a church leader, to discuss their role as parents and their involvement in the spiritual life and development of their families.

This research proposes to identify and summarise the influences emanating from society on young people on the one hand, and the role of the church on the other hand, in contributing to the exodus of young people aged 18-30 from its membership. This will be done by providing an historical overview and evaluation of research on this issue.

1.3 The church in decline

Christofides and Meiring's (2012) research advocates that life in South Africa has changed significantly over the last thirty years. Life today is quantum leaps beyond the situation prevailing three decades ago and eons from the 1970s. This has resulted from changes in technology, lifestyle choices, education, and family dynamics, etc. During the above periods, there have also been significant shifts pertaining to religious beliefs of mainline Christian churches in South Africa, as well as the religious beliefs of the population in general.

Research undertaken by Denton (2011) concludes with the substantial number of changes that have transpired during the above period, this has resulted in important

and observable changes in the spiritual life of young people within the nation. Many of these young people have left their particular church in significant numbers. Denton (2011) also points out that factors impacting on young people are; an 'accepting' environment within the church, relevance of the worship, opportunities for involvement, and study of the faith in a religious group of their peers. These are important predictors to be considered.

A key factor highlighted by Christofides and Meiring (2012), draws attention to society living trends, which indicate that people are living increasingly fragmented lives and require more time to sustain relationship networks. Home, family and leisure time have become high priorities for Sundays, as opposed to attending church. Christofides and Meiring (2012) cited the training and equipping of laity as imperative, where focus should be on training people of all ages to conduct dialogue and to play a Christian role in decision-making processes. Their research has also shown that the home is the principal venue for spiritual moulding, yet many churches appear to overlook this key aspect and do little to provide parents with active support in this regard. It is ironic that the crucial task of the education and upbringing of children in today's world is one of the very few tasks for which people are considered to be qualified.

Mobsby (2007:34-5) indicates that statistics show the church is failing to connect, or appeal to the post-modern elements in our culture/society today. Using selections from government statistics, the research draws conclusions as to how social changes between 1970 and 2000, significantly contributed to diminishing Sunday church attendance, especially among young people aged between 18 and 30 years.

To support the above, Oliver, Tsabele, Baartman, Masooa, Laister (2017) draw attention to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in his address at a conference at Stellenbosch University in May 2012 on 'The Reformed Churches in South Africa and the struggle for justice: remembering the '1960–1990' period' where he stated:

It is clear that Christianity is again due for a major makeover. It is not enough just to remember and celebrate the great and positive achievements and changes that Christians brought about in the past. It is necessary for Christians today to act and be and bring about the change that society needs.

In the past, the different mainline churches in South Africa were not involved in society in similar ways, and neither are they today. Some churches, according to Kumalo and Dziva (2008:172) were part of the liberation struggle where certain churches' stance could be understood as one of resistance to the apartheid regime, in favour of the transformation of society.

On the other hand, Kumalo and Dziva (2008) also point out that the so called 'White' Reformed churches were not in favour of the radical transformation of South African society. To a large extent, they associated with and supported the *status quo*. Thus, the advent of the new South Africa in 1994 changed the position of all churches and their involvement in society.

Within any church, the role of the pastor or minister is integral to the climate prevailing within the particular church and very important with regard to the problem of the youth leaving the church. Research undertaken by Dean, Hoge and Wenger (2005:4) indicated the 1960s – 1970s was dominated by secularization, which impacted on the role and identity of many pastors and ministers - 'focus and clergy work'. While Fichter

(1954:137) refers to clergy as specialists in performing specific functions within the church, they are generalists in meeting members' needs as they arise.

However, in today's world the everyday pace of life has accelerated tremendously compared to the previous Millennium. This in turn has impacted on clergy roles and responsibilities, including their time allocation and time management. According to Carroll (2006) these constituted involvement in traditional ministerial responsibilities such as the priestly roles of pastoring, teaching, organizing, and administrating. However, today their order and magnitude of importance has changed. Numerous new activities have been added resulting in increased time pressures on clergy, and in addition there is decreased volunteerism within the church and the fact that lay people are busier than ever as 'moderns live hectic lives.' (Carroll 2006:14). According to Fryling (2010:30), laity today are influenced by a consumer culture built on discontentment; while their once-automatic loyalty to church no longer applies in many instances.

From his research, Walker (2013:13) points out that Western culture (and now South Africa) has developed into a network society. The result is a consumer culture where contemporary people define themselves by what they consume and where choice is paramount. Walker (2013:32) elaborates further by stating that 'for such people, religion must fit them exactly'. In support of the above Moynagh (2001:32) concludes that consumerism tends to shape societal expectations, where each individual tends to invest effort, time and money to achieve a desired outcome – 'it must fit me exactly'. He argues that the church only offers a standardized product, to which they expect all people to conform.

1.4 Rationale and purpose of the study

The problems and outlook of our present-day church ministry must be viewed in the context of deeper and far reaching changes in today's society. In other words, in the 'old society' of four decades ago, more than in the new, and certainly in this current society, the church had a clear function according to Voas and Crocket (2005) – to bring and keep people together – giving a moral and religious background to one's life. In the new Millennium this appears no longer the case, for which further research is required to determine how far church and society have transitioned to the point where they are today, in order to make conclusions and recommendations on appropriate areas for realignment/change, as opposed to the threat of a future potential 'Empty Church.'

Voas and Crockett (2005) also concur, that young people are probably more unlikely to identify with any one mainline religious tradition than their older contemporaries, less likely to subscribe to the creed of a major world religion, and less likely to attend a place of worship on a regular basis. The most salient point that stands out in the past decade of numerous researches in the church and society, is that young people are less likely to identify with only one religious tradition.

Research on faith journeys undertaken by Jamieson (2002) suggests that spirituality has become decoupled from religion, with many people pursuing their own private, individualistic, and non-institutionalized spiritual journey, where the individual spiritual quest for fulfilment takes precedence over membership or commitment to a religious community.

The focus of this research is to discover what God is calling his church to be in today's world, in the face of an exodus from the church of young people. Since God's calling is focused on the future, a natural bias should be formed towards youth ministry. Such a ministry needs to acknowledge the rapid rate of change in today's world, which has given rise to complex social and cultural dilemmas for the youth.

The underlying assumption in this research proposal is that current attempts to bring young adults to a mature faith, are not working. One of the reasons may be that the adults who are involved in leading and directing young people, have in most instances fundamentally different and divergent world views to the young people themselves (Allen and Ross:2006).

In consequence, these problems and the outlook for our present-day church ministry, must be seen in the deeper and far reaching changes in today's society.

My thesis is that because fundamental changes in a society lead inevitably to changes in the fields of religion, church life and ministry to young people and congregants also needs to change.

1.5 The research question

This research aims to discover the primary reasons that contribute to a disconnect between the church's ministry and young people's lives within the framework of the church and community.

The primary research question is **'Why are young adults in the age group 18-30 leaving the church?'**

This is divided into the following secondary research questions:

1.5.1 The influence of a changing society over the past fifty years on the religion of young people.

- a) What has driven change in South Africa to the extent that statistical data points towards a disconnect between people and the church?
- b) What means are being deployed by the church to effectively pass on the faith to young adults?

1.5.2 The influence of family life on the religious faith formation of young people.

- a) What factors contribute towards faith (or lack of it) being integrated into the world in which young people grow and live?
- b) What role do parents play in the faith development of their children?
Why do they play this role and how can they be guided?

1.5.3 The factors that have an impact on ministry to young people within the mainline churches.

- a) How has the church functioned within a changing society as a transformation agency to meet the need for change?

- b) What is the role and contribution of the church within our current context?

1.6 Limitations of the study

Empirical research on the church in Africa is of great importance. However suitable case study research is limited in many areas. For this purpose, comparative analysis research has been used in certain instances of studies conducted in America and Europe, to make comparisons across our different cultures. A major problem recognised in comparative research is that the data sets in different countries may not use the same categories, or define categories differently. This research reflects that there are many similarities being confronted internationally and in the African context, but there are also many cross-cultural disparities. After comparison, differences that are unique to the African context are noted.

1.7 Literature review

One of the major purposes of a literature review is to identify the gaps in existing research, thus indicating the need for further investigation and study. In South Africa, as opposed to the Western World, limited insight/research has been done with regard to the research problem, specifically as it applies to South Africa. Existing research is much more readily available describing the situation in other parts of the world.

Extensive research and surveys undertaken by Kinnaman and Barna (2014), has focused specifically at young people from ages seventeen to thirty, in examining the various issues and reasons resulting in teenagers and young adults drifting away from the church. Additional research studies undertaken by Kinnaman have addressed the

spiritual attitudes and needs of today's teenagers, namely, 'Five Myths About Young Adult Church Dropouts' (2011), 'Six Reasons Young Christians Are Leaving Church' (2011) 'Four Tough Aspects of Spiritual Growth' (2012) and Churchless (2014).

From a South African perspective, results from a survey authorised by the Anglican Provincial Youth Council have been incorporated in the research findings. These are attached as Appendix C.

Other literature resources reviewed focused on the spiritual attitudes and needs of today's teenagers where Clark (2007), through his research 'Disconnected', offers insight into what teenagers really think about adults. According to Clark, today's adolescents believe they have largely been abandoned by adults and left to fend for themselves in an uncertain world. Consequently, teens and young adults have created their own world to serve as a shield against uncaring adults. The focus of Clark's research (2007) offers a foundation for parents to adopt, by describing exactly how the events of life in a rapidly changing world have evolved over the past four decades, walking them through the various developmental stage's teenagers undergo and providing workable paradigms for parenting. While today's teenagers live in a world vastly different from how it was three/four decades ago, adolescent spirituality and growing needs don't change, and that addressing those needs is a key component of an 'effective transitioning ministry'.

According to Durkheim (1957:47), Religion is an eminently collective thing; it serves to bind a community together, through a unifying system of beliefs and practices which unites people into a single community. Religion provides a purpose for life; it provides authority figures and most importantly as Thompson (1982:125), advocates, it serves

to reinforce the morals and social norms of society. Durkheim (1957) sees religion as a critical part of the social system, where he advocates 'Religion provides social control, cohesion and purpose for people, as well as another means of communication and gathering for individuals to interact and reaffirm social norms.'

Strauss (1979) outlines the importance Luther's 'House of Learning' had on the sixteenth century reformers, including the onus Martin Luther placed on parents in raising their offspring. Painter's (2010) works reinforce the main points Luther makes on religious and secular training of children. Both of these publications point out that Christian parents are an indispensable part of the Christian upbringing of a child, whether that child lived five centuries or five years ago.

Various authors refer to the need to revisit our understanding of the place and structure of children and youth ministries within the church, where De Vries (2004:21) advocates for a new understanding of the place for children and youth within the church community. Similarly, and specifically focussing on youth, Strong (2015:3) argues that traditional Youth Ministry has been practised as 'an independent ministry' leading to the isolation of the youth from the larger church community'. Knoetze (2017:1) elaborates this point further, focussing on youth and their parents and identifies a need to explore wider in reaching out to the youth within the church family to ascertain their specific contextual needs, thus enabling Youth Ministry practices to be more effective and aligned. Correlating with this viewpoint, and with the emphasis on children, Hendriks and Grobbelaar (2009) identify the need to develop new paradigms and new ways of 'doing' in terms of serving young people, moving forward in their Christian faith.

Faber (1990) points out that in the 20th century the church provided great initiative in the community, by regulating and accompanying the various life stations of its people. In such a community the church was viewed as being responsible for the morality of all its people and exercising a strong social control. This was especially advocated during sermons.

According to Friedman (2006) South African society has experienced enormous change during the last three decades; from an apartheid society to a democratic society. In consequence, the church community and its members now function in a cultural and socio-political environment, very different from the situation prevailing before 1990, where changes in the South African context have had far-reaching consequences for the role and involvement of churches in society today.

According to a study outlined by the Star Tribune (March 2014) leaders make or break an organization, where the church is no different. In instances where the pastor or church leaders come across as controlling, it creates an environment that doesn't feel appropriate or conducive to many people. Today, no one wants to be controlled or dominated within a church. Instead, people want to feel they have been heard and/or included in issues of decision making and strategic long-term vision.

Durkheim (1957) was concerned with social solidarity throughout his academic life, where he advocated Religion maintains the influence of society -- whereas society, represents the norms and beliefs held in common by a group of individuals.

The church has a mission clear mandate, to bring and keep people together – giving moral and religious input and support to people's life. However, Faber (1990:13) points

out that the church has often played a conservative, parochial and defensive role when coping with change and challenges in the surrounding community, advocating since the earliest days of the Christian church movement, the integrational nature of the local church has always been an important aspect of its existence.

Harkness (1998:41) builds on the above in concluding that

Ever since the development of Christian faith communities in the post-Pentecost era of Christianity, there has been a consciousness that such communities need to encourage and embody a genuine inter-generationalism.

The importance of the church's intergenerational calling, presents it with the challenge of perpetuating its faith tradition, from one generation to the next. Leith (1990:34-36) views this as involving a process of 'traditioning', entailing the incorporation of 'each new person and generation' into the community of faith. Research undertaken by Eberstadt (2013:34), makes use of a parallel drawn between the Industrial revolution, and the migration from rural to urbanization in South Africa, where people become separated from their extended families. This in turn has created new pressures on family structures, where many have devolved rapidly alongside the rise in divorce, and cohabitation.

According to Eberstadt (2013:11) history has shown that religious decline does not occur in a vacuum, neither does family decline, as they are intrinsically bound together. Just as the past has shown religious and family flourishing are linked, as took place following World War II up to the early 1960's, with the baby and marriage boom, which illustrated the fact that living in an integrated 'Family' home, draws people to Church.

Eberstadt (2013:36) also advocates that the greatest impact of the information revolution, particularly the women's revolution, has already had momentous consequences for the role of women in Christian churches in the West, where women spend more of their time in the office, and less time in the church (and in the home), as is the growing situation in South Africa today.

The impact of the above on the church has not been direct, but rather indirect, as the impact has passed through the family first and then to the faith. In consequence of the above, Edgel (2006:18-20) points out, that limited research has been undertaken into how local religious communities have responded to these changes, in work and family life. Similarly, the research into the effects of divorce and other forms of family disruption on religious involvement, together with blended families, or long-term singles, is limited.

According to Bass (1994:173–175), the church, as a bearer of tradition, endeavours to provide a role where individuals gain experience of faith and identity, in which successive generations might be incorporated and grow into the Christian tradition. However, Bass also points out that If the intergenerational process is to be effective, this requires the relevance of the church's mission and message must be re-appropriated, that speaks to the members of each new generation (Kraft 2005:224). Secondly, the congregation should empower each incoming generation with the freedom, to make their distinctive mark upon the shape of that tradition.

This is particularly relevant according to Faber (1990:21) in ministering within the church, and its relevance in the process of change, which the church is encountering today. The old traditional patterns which provided support in the past are no longer

appropriate in many cases. In consequence, it is advocated that the Pastor or Minister must endeavour to be trained and developed as a change agent, to lead the community to more openness, understanding and reaffirm commitment to God.

Building on the above in growing children and youth in the faith, Gribbon's (1990:34) research on this issue has indicated that, spiritual development begins and is solidified early in the development of children where;

- A young person's moral foundations are generally in place by the time they reach nine years of age.
- What a person believes about God at age thirteen, is what they are most likely to hold onto for the rest of their life.
- A person's response to the meaning and value of Jesus life, death and resurrection, is usually determined before age eighteen.

Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2008:5) advocate that the young people of today, especially those referred to as a cohort generation Y and Z, are characterized by freedom of expression in their lives, for various research has shown this period to be a time of self-discovery and exploration. A five-year project headed by Barna Group president, David Kinnaman, (2008–2013) extensively explored the opportunities and challenges of faith development among teens and young adults, within a rapidly shifting culture environment and society.

The Kinnaman studies aimed to provide reasons for the disconnection from church life after age sixteen plus. No single reason dominated the break-up between church and young adults, instead, a variety of reasons emerged. Overall, the research uncovered

why nearly three out of every five young Christians (59%) disconnect either permanently, or for an extended period of time from church life. The relevance of this research is supported from a South African point in a questionnaire, with a limited number of respondents, undertaken by the Anglican Church (See Appendix C).

According to Pew Research Centre (2010) research studies have indicated that Millennials (Individuals born after 1980 and coming of age in the 2000s), are attending religious services at the lowest rates of any previous generation, with generation defined as an age group cohort that shares a common position socially in history. The research undertaken by Smith and Snell (2009) also indicates that Millennials are among the highest rate of those who are religiously unaffiliated, where the largest switching trend from youth to young adulthood among Millennials, was in the non-religious category

According to Jones, Cox, and Banchoff (2012) conclusions, it is feasible that the millennial generation could have vastly different reasons for leaving their religious institutions than previous generations. If so, those reasons could possibly influence the likelihood of the number of returning Millennials to religious participation being much smaller than encountered for previous generations.

Köstenberger and Jones (2010:17) imply in neglecting the creator's purposes for marriage and the family, the church has to some extent lowered itself to the standards of the world in many ways, and has become a part of the problem. In consequence, Köstenberger and Jones (2010:18-20) challenge 'why should this be the case,' as efforts to build a strong Christian marriage relationship are in part due to the lack of

commitment on behalf of the church, to seriously engage the couple, in applicable Scriptures and relevance of marriage in the Bible.

In consequence, as families struggle to keep abreast in this rapidly changing world Van der Ven (1998) advocates that it is common for both parents having to work to maintain the family living needs. Consequently, teenagers and some young children are often left alone for periods during the day where their edification emanates from peers, school forum and television/media. In consequence, parents and children do not spend enough quality time interfacing together, for effective and adequate caring, support, understanding and guidance from parents to take place.

Ellis (1992:79) points out that instances of negative memories accrued during childhood can have a disturbing effect on later adult life, where any negative personal character traits formed, shaped and influenced by parents' behaviour, become powerful forces to contend with in emerging adulthood.

Bengston, Putney, and Harris (2013) focus their research on the family parents and how effectively, or not, they transmit their faith to the next generation, where the religious diversity of today's youth in generation Y and Z, represents a generation gap that is far wider today than it was three decades ago.

1.8 Summary of the literature review

The literature reviewed indicates there are numerous factors influencing the probability of young people attending, or leaving the church. Such factors include

- family influence,

- a re-evaluation of youth ministry with a bigger focus on the context and needs of the young people at their stage in their own journey of life,
- confusing values of parents and the community
- peer influence,
- youthful rebellion,
- ill-formed or immature faith, etc.

However, according to Balge (1980) rebelling against forms of authority, is seen as a normal part of teenage growing up.

In consequence, the question begs to be asked - 'Are these actually the real reasons as to why young people and teenagers are leaving the church?' and 'Which of these are true, and which are misleading myths?' In summary, young people don't seem to be leaving the faith, but leaving the church per se. In consequence, various initiatives appear to have been made by the church in an attempt to bring these young people back into the fold and keep them in contact with the means of grace. However, to bring them back, one must first examine why they are leaving the church in the first place – 'identifying the gap'. A number of other points are outlined in survey results at Appendix A and C.

1.9 Research methodology

1.9.1 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework provides a particular perspective or lens through which a topic can be examined. Golafshani (2003) defines qualitative research applicable with the aim to illuminate, understand and evaluate to similar research situations. This research

study will primarily seek to conclude the main contributing factors, regarding the exodus of young people from the church during the past four decades, while determining outcomes and practical recommendations on this issue, relevant to the South African context.

1.9.2 Research design

According to Mouton, (2001:55) the research design is a plan of how the researcher intends conducting the research, as this directs into the overall process to determine what the research objective questions seek to establish and conclude.

In view of the above and factors highlighted in the literature review, qualitative methods will be used in this thesis to validate interpretation of the primary and secondary data.

This section outlines the methodology used for this study. It is basically a confirmation that the problem under study has been analysed and addressed thoroughly that gives effectiveness and completion to the research.

There are two main categories of research design, namely quantitative and qualitative.

- Quantitative data

Quantitative data refers to that data type that is used to quantify and measure something. While undertaking a BTh in practical church history the researcher made use of a structured questionnaire. The results emanating from the information and data extracted from that research have been incorporated in

Chapter Six of this study. This is to indicate the relevance and correlation of material outlined, to the exodus of young people from the church.

- Qualitative Data

Qualitative data refers to data that cannot be measured. Rather it is something that can be used to describe social phenomena as they occur. Understanding is sought by taking a holistic approach, rather than looking at a set of variables.

According to Maxwell (2004.5) the research design depicted in figure 4 below, forms an interactive integrated whole, with each component closely tied to several others. The upper triangle is where the research question has a clear relationship with the goals of the study research. Similarly, the bottom triangle should be closely integrated to the methods used, to enable one to answer the research questions, for these connect to all the other components of the design.

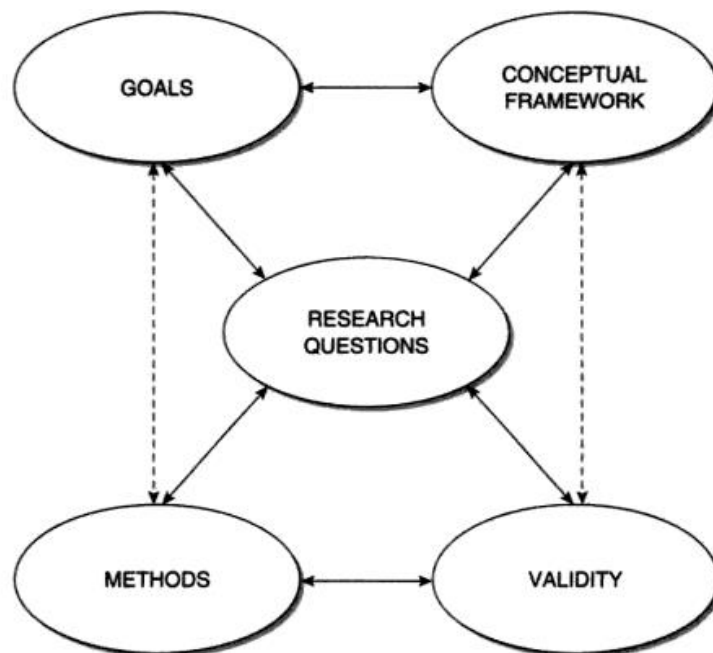


Figure 4 An interactive model of research design
Source: Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach.

Based on the nature of the research question, the selected approach is using a qualitative method. The reason being this study focuses on determining the variable factors that have contributed towards the exodus of young people from the church, where human behaviour varies greatly and is highly unpredictable. It cannot be mathematically calculated via a quantitative approach.

1.10 Research outline

Chapter One of this dissertation serves as the mind-map, introducing the relevance of, and background associated with the influence of a changing society on young people's exodus of the church over the last four decades in South Africa.

It provides the purpose, hypothesis, motivation, scope of research and methodology to be followed.

Chapter Two will focus on the role and position of the church in a changing world and society, coupled with faith development, which commences at an early age in a child's life and continually keeps growing throughout an individual's lifetime at differing levels. The role of the church in meeting both the parents and young people's spiritual needs is a key factor in this research that will be reviewed appropriately, together with assessing the needs of a congregation, coupled with intergenerational ministry within the church, in bringing youth and elderly congregants closer in their respective understanding of the faith.

Chapter Three seeks to review the 'family' within the home, associated with challenges confronting contemporary families, as well as the decline of the nuclear family will be examined, together reviewing the primary role of parents in relation to their children, and how this has evolved over the past four decades. How have parental

values changed over this time frame and how well are they equipped to deal with the growth of their children in a rapidly changing world, far removed from the time frame they themselves grew up within.

Youth ministry is an area within churches that require congruence alignment with the family, hence it is relevant to determine the impact, or lack of it, in the exodus of young people from the church.

Chapter Four explores various issues contributing to young people's exodus from the church, where children, who were brought up in the church, attended various teaching programmes and were baptized at a young age, are now choosing not to be involved as adults. This decision to leave and not return to church is a disturbing trend with significant outcomes.

This chapter research will endeavour to address 'What issues have contributed to the exodus of young people from church?' while the second aspect is to understand, 'What has caused them to stay away from church?' Areas of focus will cover life changes at home and the church, faith and spirituality, Impact of past generations and their legacy, intergenerational ministry, modernism and post modernism culture within the family and church.

Chapter Five examines the relevant factors impacting on youth, and this specific field of ministry within the mainline church

Chapter Six examines the evaluation of findings emanating from qualitative research data, and face to face discussions obtained while undertaking a B.Th. in practical church history. In this instance the researcher made use of a structured questionnaire

with applicable ethical clearance, coupled with face to face interviews with young people and parents, which are very appropriate with the research focus outlined in this chapter. The results emanating from the various information and data, will be used to indicate the relevance and correlation of material obtained during the research.

Chapter Seven offers conclusions emanating from the research, together with practical recommendation's based on the findings, for potential implementation in the church, and the home as outlined.

1.11 Terms relevant to this study

1.11.1 Church

The Oxford dictionary defines **the Church** as 'the institution of the Christian religion' According to the Cassell Dictionary of Christianity, **the Church** means 'of, or belonging to the Lord'. It denotes the whole body of Christians.

The meaning of the term '**the Church**' in the context of this research study goes far deeper than the definition of any physical structure, instead it captures the essence of human cohesion within the fellowship of the living God.

1.11.2 Youth/Young persons

Youth in South Africa are defined in accordance with the National Youth Act of 1996, as a cohort of young persons in the age group 15 – 35 years.

According to Nel (2008) this age group includes the discovery of social roles within their families, peer groups, communities, cultures and societies. According to Root (2007) the term youth came into being after the industrial revolution – by the late 19th and early 20th century. Before that youth was primarily part of a working community and as such there was not a sharp distinction between children, youth and adults.

1.11.3 *Ministry in a changing world*

The problem and outlook of our present-day ministry must be viewed in the perspective of the significant, and perhaps far reaching changes in today's world. Faber (1990). My thesis is that, fundamental changes in our world of today have led to changes within the various fields of religion, of the church life and concomitantly the ministry itself.

1.11.4 *Society*

According to Faber (1990) a society is not just a collection of people and associated happenings of trends and fields of action. It can best be viewed as an embryo that produces a culture of human interests and varied activities that are held together in a pattern. Therefore, in a given society, each particular element seems to be in a constant interplay with the others, which in turn, results in a change in one segment of the pattern influencing the rest.

1.11.5 *Exodus*

For the purpose of this research study, the term **exodus** refers specifically to the mass departure of young people from the mission of the Church. The Oxford Advanced Dictionary defines this term as

A mass departure, going out or emigration, usually associated with a large number of people leaving an unwelcome environment, to give up something you alone are responsible for completely, with no intention of returning.

1.12 Conclusions

According to Senter (1992) the last fifty years of church ministry have been characterised by an ever increasing division between people of different ages. Through the 1960/70s the local church itself made few age-based distinctions in ministry, relying almost exclusively on parachurch ministries, such as the Sunday School, Bible Study, Young Men and Women's Christian Associations and a host of others, to provide age-appropriate ministry to the young people in the church.

However, in the last three decades, parachurch organisations have moved their focus away from providing ministry to church-based young people, and focussed more on reaching those young people (18-30) that churches traditionally have not been able to reach, or retain in sufficient numbers.

The parachurch ministries have been fully justified in this shift, as churches have begun to implement church-based youth ministry as a key focus of the church's ministry structure. However, this has had a significant, negative spin-off effect for church-based youth ministry. 'The single strategy that has become the most common characteristic

of youth ministry today is the isolation of teenagers from the adult world and particularly from their own parents (De Vries 1994:41).

According to research undertaken by Barna (2014) over the past two decades, traditional mainline religions have been faced with a huge dilemma. Many young people are exiting the Church post adolescence, together with a decline in the number of Churches, especially in the western world. In view of this increasing trend in South Africa, and the demise of young congregants, there is a significant need to research the primary reasons why churches are failing to successfully transfer young people from child and youth ministry, into adult ministry.

Research undertaken by Foster (1994:86) points out:

During the past decades family and community involvement in growing the religious education of children and youth in the faith has diminished significantly, especially in developing young people to cope in a changing world.

Following confirmation and transition to higher education institutions the exodus from churches has been continually growing.

Today's parents are also finding it very difficult to keep abreast of the technological changes that dominate their lives, and more particularly their children's. The acknowledged role of a parent is to assist each child to prepare themselves for the world in which they must live and work. In the past, parents did this by knowing more about the world than their children, and by using their experience and life skills, to mentor and guide young adolescents on the road ahead. Similarly, if they don't help their children see how the faith is applied and has meaning in their everyday lives, then

the current divergence between children, family and church will continue to grow exponentially.

Following on from the above, Bengston, Putney and Harris (2013) draw attention to the critical intergenerational renewal of the church's traditioning processes. In other words, what are the issues and circumstances under which continuity or discontinuity is repeatedly occurring across the generations? How effectively are religious and spiritual values being transmitted to young people and are they having the envisaged impact, coupled with what processes and mechanisms are in place for family religious socialization? Are they helping to overcome the problems identified through previous research?

In order for the church and parents to address this exodus, both an effective family and friendly church interrelationship model interface, is of paramount importance. This will be discussed in Chapter 2 (The Role of the Church in a changing world and society) where it will be seen that the emphasis in society has shifted from a 'hands off' approach to youth care, to a more active role in the raising of children. Parents in particular are keen to be more involved in their children's lives, where they are also looking for help and guidance to assist them in the overall process of child rearing. The church is one organisation to which some have looked, especially those who have been attending church.

The most significant of these problems is that youth ministries in general seem to be failing to produce adult Christians. Youth ministries seem to lose their young people as they near the completion of their studies. These young people do not seem to be moving out of the youth ministry and into the adult ministries of the church. 'Churched

kids are not making the transition to mature Christian adulthood' (Haymond 1998:4). The reasons for this will be addressed in Chapter Five.

The role of the church in meeting both the parents' and young people's spiritual needs is a key factor in this research. This will be reviewed appropriately, together with assessing the needs of a congregation, coupled with intergenerational ministry within the church, in bringing youth and elderly congregants closer in their respective understanding of the faith.

In addition, the role of the church priest is a key link in faith formation and development of young adults. His or her skills in bridging the gap between church and family need to be adequate to meet changing requirements in a changing world.

An issue expressed by the youth, is one of seeing their elders using inappropriate means to assist them. In the words of Mead (1970:60), 'The young do not know what must be done, but they feel that there must be a better way'.

CHAPTER TWO

Role of the church in a changing world and society

2.1 Overview

The church has always formed a very important integral part of society, where interaction between congregation and community in mission outreach is key in the involvement of the church in a changing society. Bosch (1991) expands further on the above in concluding, congregations have the calling to serve society; where the *missio Dei* becomes the *missiones ecclesiae*, and missional by its very nature, that should address society's issues and problems in a holistic way.

Since 1994, South African society has experienced and undergone an enormous amount of change, where according to Schoeman (2012) a new democratic and human-rights culture replaced a closed and privileged society, that benefited only a few with all its implications. In consequence, the church, its members and the community, inevitably could not escape the impact of change, with churches moving into a cultural and socio-political environment, very different from the one before 1994 (Schoeman 2012). In a world of ever-increasing change over the past forty years, which has almost accelerated exponentially with the advent of the new Millennium, the cultural shifts within communities have been enormous. Hendricks (2004:105) advocates that each congregation has a unique culture and identity. To a certain extent this embodies its understanding of living the Gospel. Codrington (2000) builds further on this aspect by stating:

Never before in history, has the church and its people had to deal with so much change in a single lifetime. Change used to be a slow process, drifting almost imperceptibly over the course of an individual's lifetime, today, especially in the arena of electronics and computers, change is best measured in terms of hours and days.

These changes in the South African context, has resulted in far-reaching consequences for the role and involvement of mainline churches in society, for reasons that will be addressed in this research study. In the past, according to Kumalo and Dziva (2008:172) the mainline churches in South Africa were not involved in society in similar ways, and neither are they today, where some were part of the liberation struggle and their stance could be understood as one of resistance to the apartheid regime, and were in favour of a total society transformation.

On the other hand, many of the co called 'White' Reformed churches did not favour a radical transformation of the South African society. According to Kumalo and Dziva (2008;174) the new political situation after 1994 necessitated a new direction and involvement of the church. In other words, the church needed to develop and apply an appropriate theology for ministry in the new socio-political and economic context. To many churches, according to Ammerman (1998), when communities are confronted with significant change, congregations that choose to maintain their status quo of existing identities may survive for a generation or more. Over time, however, such congregations will remain untransformed and they will either die or move on (Van Gelder 2007). Either way congregations cannot escape change.

2.2 A changing world impacting the church

The church and its congregants in the current Millennium are living in times of uncertainty, where change is everywhere, both in the global village and perhaps more so here in South Africa. Sharma (2007:1) acknowledges this continual change cycle in that, 'times change, people change, things change, situations change.' and so in today's world, the church faces change.

Empirical research on the church in Africa is of great importance. However suitable case study research is limited in many areas. For this purpose, comparative analysis research has been used in certain instances of studies conducted in America and Europe, to make comparisons across our different cultures. A major problem recognised in comparative research is that the data sets in different countries may not use the same categories, or they may define categories differently. This research reflects that there are many similarities being confronted internationally and in the African context, but there are also many cross-cultural disparities. After comparison, differences that are unique to the African context are noted.

Today's world of the new Millennium is changing faster than ever before in preceding decades. As a result, 'change is recognized as an unavoidable part of life'. In our ever changing, developing and decision-making society, Brock and Salerno (1994:8) conclude that, 'change has been the only constant.' Thus, we are constantly required to make choices ushering in personal change in our lives. Beyond our control, external changes are often made for us. These changes inevitably leave us with varied emotions of joy, loss, anger, excitement or confusion amongst many others. According to Anderson (1998) these changes, whether personal or external, can have a

significant impact, either negative or positive, on an individual, as well as within a church community.

2.3 Historical overview – children as part of the church

According to Triana (2001) the argument of Thomas Aquinas, thirteenth century theologian who has exerted a deep influence on Church theology, was that, although the parents also play an important role in the spiritual formation of children, the church administers the sacraments to them. After baptism, children should continuously be instructed from God's word, so they can advance in their spiritual formation. However, as pointed out by Leith (2010) John Calvin held tenaciously to the doctrine that children bear the image of God, and must be treated with due respect. Calvin insisted that children be viewed as gifts from God, warning that 'unless men regard their children as the gift of God, they are careless and reluctant in providing for their support'. Parents are not to neglect caring for their children, but are to nurture and discipline them in the way of God's church.

In Strohl's review (2001:134) of the works of Luther, the theological focus with regard to children was on what they should become: 'mature, seasoned confessors of the evangelical faith and responsible members of the family and community.' Luther believed (Strohl 2001:142-144) that although spiritual growth is God's responsibility, the church and the parents in particular are responsible for their nourishment. Accordingly, he made his catechisms available to help parents educate their children.

During the Eighteenth Century, industrial revolution children were exploited in cruel ways. In response to the harsh treatment children were being subjected to, Kelly (1970:75) states that certain Christians started Sunday schools and orphanage's under

the influence of Robert Raikes in 1780, and by 1851, it was estimated three quarters of the working class children were attending Sunday schools in the UK, which focused on literacy and religious instruction.

Kelly (1970:2-5) reiterates that the earliest years of a child's life is of the greatest importance in the formation of attitudes and then, laying down of foundations of belief and understanding. For children are an important part of society, with needs to be met and a contribution to make to the life of the Church. According to Van Niekerk and Breed (2018), this view may not be held by all congregants or congregations. Some accept and welcome the children, some are merely tolerant, some are sentimental in their attitude towards them and some see children as of none, or limited importance. If our children are to continue in the way of faith, if they are to continue the path to which the church welcomed them at baptism, then they must be aided and supported by fellow Christians who are also on the same journey.

Each child in today's world is facing rapid change through each growth stage, compared to forty years ago, while the place of the child in the world is also rapidly changing. For these reasons alone, Van Wyk (2017) elaborates that it is critically important to reconsider the place of children in our churches today, and the responsibility of the church to place children in the way of faith. The child then, has perhaps greater freedom of choice than at any time in our history, which places a greater responsibility and power in their hands. This trend has shaped the child to be less of a conformist than in the past, with making unrealistic demands on many parent's time and budgets.

According to a church survey report National Society (2012) 'Children in the Way, today's children need to know where they stand, they need freedom to explore and discover. They need the opportunities to challenge the fixed and firm ideas of other people, and at the same time share their understandings of God and his world. The church has many rivals for the children's interests and time, and primarily only relate to those who come to Sunday school or to a specific group. Thus, the quality and means of what the church offers the children, is of prime importance.

2.4 Children - a focus point in mission of the church

According to Children in the Way, - New Directions for the Church's Children (2012), it is imperative for children to come into the way of faith with parents and to be grown into the mission objectives of the church. All too often the church may appear indifferent to the needs of the children and similarly, adults can be unsighted on the diversity of roles that children can contribute to mission and growth of the church.

In Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth, he describes the Church as a body that is called into a special relationship with God, while in his letter to the Ephesians he clearly outlines God's plan for this Body of Christ;

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:16, NIV).

Thus, the whole body is fitted together, each part in its own special way helps the other parts, so that the synergy of whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. With the outreach of mission, the nineteenth century brought about a revival in mission from Europe, and with it (via missionaries) a rapid growth of the church in the Southern

hemisphere. Du Toit (2007) states that mission organisations began to realise that the only way to bring about sustainable change in Africa, was to focus their attention on the children and youth.

Hancke affirms (2007:120-122) that children need to experience ownership, by being involved in the process of reflecting the purpose and character of their church. The implication is that children should be included in mission. However, looking back at history it would appear as if it took a long time before the church even started to grasp this concept, God has ordained that the family be the basic unit of society (Genesis 1:27, 28 and 1 Timothy 31:2 NIV).

Thus, one of the primary objectives of the church must be strengthening families to develop in faith and spirituality, who in turn will be good role models for their children.

According to Ratcliff (2004) whilst the child is to be 'in the midst' this does not mean that parents and the church should abdicate their roles as guides and mentors. The relationship between adult and children's spirituality needs careful consideration, as church history has tended to reflect a deep ambivalence regarding the nature of children, which contrasts with the view of children held by Christ himself.

According to the publication 'Children in the Way' (2012), growing in faith is a process that is common to children, young adults and mature adults. However, if children especially are to grow within the church, it is imperative that a congregation should undertake self-examination of its activities and ask what are we busy doing, and does it add value in developing and growing the children's faith and what else should be done for the children, to assist them growing in faith and spirituality.

2.5 Faith formation and development of young adults

The purpose of the church as defined by Smyth (1970) is to create in all people a love of God and a love of neighbour. According to Smith and Denton (2009) mainline churches have tended to struggle in nurturing a mature and lasting faith among their young people, where a key focus has been on creating 'youth groups' or 'youth ministries' that address the specific needs of young people in age appropriate ways. While this has been a positive step for church ministry, it has brought with it a number of problems, where findings concluded by Smyth (1970) are generally attributable to a lack of insight and understanding, as to how beliefs form in adolescents and thus provide the necessary ability to shape ministry accordingly.

According to Smith and Snell (2009), some blame the secular world in which young adults live, while others cite poor parental influence, together with a weak religious environment into which young adults have been socialized. In consequence, their spiritual lives are not fully developed for the challenges they face in today's world. The faith they received was not substantial enough to sustain them in all the multiplicity of change, on top of change they encounter, especially in the new Millennium.

In consequence, Kinnaman and Hawkins (2011) advocates that the faith children and youth inherited was not fully formed, and the consequent dropout problem is, at its core, a faith -development problem adding, 'The church is not adequately preparing the next generation to follow Christ faithfully.' For those who lead churches, this decline is not only a concern, but also a call for action, to develop a coherent spiritual formation programme, to strengthen young adults' faith as they transition in life.

According to Powell, Griffin and Crawford (2011), while the youth of today's world are deeply spiritual, they tend not to adhere to any one particular faith group. They desire to be able to choose from a variety of faith systems and ultimately make up their own. Many young adults have become disillusioned by mainline orthodox Christianity, in which prescriptive rules are seen as the final authority, and while these same youth do not necessarily call themselves religious, they feel a deep hunger for God. It is for this reason Powell, Griffin and Crawford (2011:108) conclude that community congregations need to do all they possibly can to engage the youth in faith development, helping them understand the significance of the adverse behaviours they gravitate towards, and engaging them towards the redemptive and transformative message of the cross.

Children need to know that they are loved unconditionally and that they are an integral part of a faith community. As a church, there is also a great need to provide direct ministry to parents and assist them in understanding that as parents they are God's primary relationships for children. According to Senter (2001), the task for the church (and parents) is to;

Understand how best to explain the gospel to children, while nurturing their spiritual interest, without pressuring or misleading. How to continue to nurture their spiritual growth in accordance with their development and how to fully cooperate with the Holy Spirit in all these things.

However, to communicate this one must understand and be able to relate with today's young people, in translating God's word in their language. Zacharias (2004) points out, a major core of concern rests in the fact that most churches are failing to successfully transfer young people's faith development, from youth ministry, into adult ministry, which is perceived as a contributing factor in the current exodus status quo.

According to Zacharias (2004) there are a variety of reasons for this, including;

- Lack of spiritual maturity in the youth,
- Too large a gap, between youth and adult ministries,
- Church commitment to adapt with emerging generations of young adults,
- Lack of desire to leave comfort zones by both young and old,
- Limited support of youth ministry structures by the church and many similar issues.

Leith (1990) expands further on the above by stating that 'the importance of the church's intergenerational calling presents it with the challenge of perpetuating its faith tradition from one generation to the next, - *involving a process of 'traditioning', which entails the incorporation of 'each new person and generation' into the community of faith*'.

Today, mainline churches need to take a backward step back and re-examine the following:

- Why certain things remain so bound up (repetitive/staid) in the liturgy/worship services. Is it because they are meaningful and enhance the worship of God? Or are they done simply because they have always been done that way?
- As a mainline church, does resistant to change involve the style or structure of the worship service, because it would upset too many people?

Ultimately, one needs to ask the question 'has church worship style become a God to our community, instead of simply being a process, a vehicle for coming before God

and worshipping God'? – This aspect is elaborated further in chapter six of this research study

Through his research, Keely (2010:72) concludes, that worship plays a formative role in the faith development of young people. 'Life is liturgy'. Life has patterns that shape young people more than we ever realize. Thus liturgy, the pattern of corporate worship shapes one's faith formation. As Keely (2010) further points out, nowhere is this more evident than in the life of a teenager. Yet many church leaders, youth group leaders, and Christian school chapel coordinators struggle to find effective ways to involve and grow young people in worship.

To address the above, Kelly (2010) advocates all churches, youth ministries, and perhaps to a lesser extent a high school faculty, need to synergize towards collaborating in exploring and clarifying the following issues;

- What impact does worship have on the life of a teenager, and do churches, youth groups, and Christian schools have a vision regarding the role of corporate worship in the life of a young person?
- What are the implications of having teenagers involved in leading worship in high school where possible, or church, and what is the time commitment involved? Is it worth the time and the effort?

In an article published by Veltema (2010:72) 'Youth, Worship, and Faith Formation.

The findings concluded;

The most consistent predictor of youth's religiosity was their experience leading worship by doing any of the following: singing or playing an instrument; participating in drama or pageants; leading the congregation in prayer or reading; serving as an altar boy/girl; teaching a lesson or meditation or sermon; giving testimony; and serving as usher or greeter or collecting offerings.

Young people who had undertaken several of these activities reported higher rates of church attendance, personal prayer, Scripture reading, and volunteer work.

In addition, they reported a greater influence of religious teachings on their commitment to their faith tradition, a stronger commitment to marry within their tradition, and a greater desire for others to know about their faith commitment.' - *Youth, Worship, and Faith Formation: findings (2010)*

The speed of innovation and development driven by technology according to Yarrow and O'Donnell (2009) is widening the age gap between generations, where Millennials coming of age are attending religious services at the lowest rate of any preceding generation.

In pursuit of an intergenerational approach to faith formation, Meyers (2006) suggests this should be an integral part of the church – where faith formation occurs in an intergenerational community and should be passed from older to younger generations, without which young adults grow up being 'out of church'. According to Seibel and Nel (2010) many churches in today's world are re-focussing on young adults as they have come to realise that there is a vacuum through lack of faith formation, that has impacted on the present state of mainline churches.

However, creating an intergenerational community calls for a change in the ethos and perhaps traditional structures of the church, where Snailum (2012) advocates this can create potential tension between those who appreciate retaining the status quo of traditionalism, and those who seek to be more relevant towards the postmodern challenges the church's face. To bridge the 'gap,' Siebel and Nel (2010:4-6) suggest older members need to make a commitment to view the new generations classified as cohorts Y and Z, not as competitors wanting to change the church, but rather as collaborators in sharing resources, equipping them to contribute actively towards leadership roles and decision making processes, and enabling a discipline of positive dialogue to emerge that enables members of all generations to collectively try and view varying differences from one another's viewpoint.

According to research undertaken by Voas and Crockett (2005:67), today's young people are less likely to;

- Identify with any religious tradition than older contemporaries.
- To subscribe to the creed of a major world religion.
- To attend a place of worship on a regular basis.

Whilst the term 'youth' is a helpful generic category for analysing broad trends and monitoring patterns of religious change, there is a danger of over-generalizing and treating young people as if they constitute a distinct homogenous group.

Youth or young people, are constructed differently in societies' hierarchy, and the experience of youth within different societies varies according to social class, gender, ethnicity, ability etc. Keuss (2014) concludes, one must remember that as adult

Christians, it is imperative to remember we are called to walk alongside of these young people, this means, even when they travel outside of what one might determine the boundaries of faith.

This is where the role of mentors becomes so important in young people's lives, to assist them in interpreting culture, helping them in grounding their experiences in a larger context of faith, while journeying with them to explore and deeply experience the ways that God is in fact reaching out to them. In all of society today, the youth are often the centre of attention – especially with the changes that have transpired here in South Africa since 1994. According to Nel (2008:9) this attention is sometimes because of their numbers, at other times as a result of their rebellion, poverty, or involvement in crime. Sometimes as a result of their academic and /or democratic frustration. Whatever the case, churches are challenged to notice the youth, to know them, to sense their respective needs and to serve and grow them accordingly.

2.6 The church and the family – areas of interface

What are the respective roles of the church and the family? How do they interface with each other? The family is of integral importance for the continuity and sustainment of human society, and families that model themselves after God's will and gospel messages, are critical for sustaining a vibrant church and a morally intact society. However, Köstenberg and Jones (2010) advocates there should be no degree of confusion as to what the family is and is not. The family is not the church, nor are the two to be 'united' in the normal sense of the word of two, the family and the church becoming one.

Köstenberger and Jones (2010) further concludes that both the family and the church have distinct roles and serve specific purposes in God's plan. While there is a certain degree of overlap, these two entities should not be confused with each other or unduly collapsed into one. Having advocated above the need for respective roles and proper relationships between the church and the family, the question begs to be asked, how, then, can the church support the family? And how can the family undergird the role of the church? The Old Testament outlines that marriage and family have been in God's plan from the very beginning, thus it is incumbent on the church to do everything it can to strengthen the marriage bond and family ties.

Köstenberger and Jones (2010) conclude that ongoing trends and change in today's world is resulting in the weakening of marriages and families. This seems indisputable. In addition, the church often fails to counteract these disintegrative forces by neglecting to conceive of its mission, in ways that would strengthen marriages and families. It must, however, be noted that many churches are well aware of this need and are making a sincere effort to encourage and strengthen families.

For young couples intending entering into marriage, the church should reaffirm the biblical roles and interaction of husband and wife and God's plan for them to establish a family when they are ready, and should encourage existing marriages and families to reaffirm witness to God's goodness, wisdom, and faithfulness in Christ. It is also evident from facts established during research (outlined in the document) that the church has often not performed a significant role in nurturing marriages and natural family units. It has frequently failed to affirm the husband's and wife's Biblical position in the home and the father's central role in the family.

2.7. What can we learn from baptism

- Significant onus is placed on the parents (and Godparents) of the children who are brought to baptism. The parents (and Godparents) have to take responsibility, to teach and nurture the child in their faith formation.
- In view of the above, it is imperative that parents grow to remain disciples as well as to be able to teach their children. It is advocated that parents must 'live' the faith in order for the children to 'learn' the faith.

However, in today's world, perhaps the aspect of Baptism preparation classes is not enough to sustain the obligations made by the parents at the Baptism ceremony itself.

It is evident from research outlined in chapter six of this study, that there is a great need to follow this up (after the Baptism Service) with at least the next 12-15 years of Biblical Parental classes/workshops, to help parents to develop the skills necessary to raise their children the way God intended parents to raise them.

Köstenberger and Jones (2010) also advocates that an effective church model is required that strengthens and supports marriages and families, on the basis of biblical understanding of the nature of the church and the family's respective roles and interaction, and for children to acknowledge their parents are part of this. Köstenberger and Jones (2010) also support the vital importance of intergenerational or multigenerational ministry, which does not unnecessarily segment the church into disjunctive, isolated individual units, but builds on natural affinity groups, including flesh-and-blood ties, is vital as well. However, Köstenberger (2010) also points out that using a peer group structure does not necessarily mean that the natural family structure is subverted, but may helpfully complement and supplement it. In today's world, many

parents and older adults in the church see the future as simply an extension of the past. They view the current situation of youth and adolescent growth as nothing more than an extreme form of the 'generation gap', they may equate from their own youth.

However, according to Dunn and Senter (1997:187) this gap contributes toward tension and frustration for young and old alike, which is a contributing factor in some respects to the alienation of some youth ministries, and causes young people to lose faith in their elder's ability to understand them, and guide them into their future maturity within the church. In contrast, older generations have tended to become frustrated because young people simply don't seem to want to listen to their advice, or follow in their lifestyle footsteps.

Consequently, as described by Codrington, and Grant-Marshall (2004) they attend less and less, then eventually leave. When they do this, they not only abandon the institutionalized church, but very often also abandon their Christian faith, judging it to be equally irrelevant in their lives. To overcome the above and demonstrate effective youth ministry, Nel points out (2001:66) that this requires a similar in-depth analysis to be undertaken, as the church does of itself, when planning for its future.

For no one can really know in which direction the youth movement should take place, how it should take place, or who should make it happen without a thorough analysis of who and where the local church is, or how it is doing in embracing young people in faith today and the future. De Vries (1994:142) describes this situation clearly;

In essence, this deprives the young people of the very relationships that can most effectively lead them to a Christian maturity within the church. But, undergirded by Christian families understanding and the extended family of the church, well defined and structured youth

leadership programmes, can greatly enhance a young person's growth in Christ.

The role of the church in supporting and caring for vulnerable groups, such as children and youth, is, among others according to Flint, Atkinson and Kearns (2002:7) to alleviate suffering, to empower them with knowledge and skills related to healthy living (including spiritual health) and to practice caring for others

However, Knoetze (2017:1) points out that although the largest part of the South African population consists of children and youth, the church in Africa still needs to identify a contextual framework for Children and youth ministries, to ensure effective services to children and youth. In consequence of the above, many Christian churches are struggling to keep young adults and teenagers in church.

2.8. The role of a priest today

In the mainline church tradition, the priesthood cannot be understood without consideration of the essence of the church, since both are intertwined but are not one and the same entity. Hence it is important that the role required of a priest today cannot be understood without taking cognizance of the nature and role of the church and what its functional outreach is today. During the 1970's, according to Mbaya (2015) the missionary clergy were esteemed with an image often associated with their influence in the community. The rector/priest was not only a priest-in-charge of a mission, but might also be superintendent of the mission schools, chairperson of the clinic, etc. Consequently, in rural areas, even tribal chiefs looked to the priest, almost like a senior chief. In today's world, those images and status are now gone.

Today in many congregations Mbaya (2015:2) concludes, one finds the emergence and development of important specialized roles that previously fulfilled a role played by a priest, who subsequently today plays a much more modest role.

Trisk (2007) in, citing Moltmann (1974), noted the church seems to be re-discovering its identity and relevance in post-apartheid South Africa, as so much energy is expended into the Sunday services, church guilds, buildings, committees, etc. The Church has become inward looking as opposed to being missional in the communities, where the role of the pastor or minister is integral to the climate prevailing within the particular church.

Research undertaken by Hoge and Wenger (2005:4) indicated the 1960s – 1970s, was dominated by secularization which impacted on the role and identity of many pastors and ministers - 'focus and clergy work'. Fichter (1954:137) refers to clergy as specialists in performing specific functions within the church, but as generalists in meeting members' needs as they arise. The everyday pace of life has accelerated tremendously compared to the previous Millennium and this has had an impact on clergy roles and responsibilities, including their time allocation and other skills.

Traditional ministerial responsibilities remain, but their order of importance and time management has changed, while numerous new activities have been added according to Carroll (2006:14), resulting in increased time pressure on clergy e.g. decreased volunteerism within the church and the fact that lay people are busier than ever as 'moderns live hectic lives.' According to Fryling (2010:30) laity are influenced by a consumer culture built on discontentment; while automatic loyalty to the church no longer applies in many cases.

Linked to the above are the Barna research findings published in *Leaders and Pastors*, (2017) where the median age of clergy during 1992 was 44 years, while at the bottom of the age scale one in three pastors were under the age of 40, while one in four was over 55, and at the top end of the scale 6 percent were 61 or older. However, comparative findings twenty-five years later in 2018 (see Figure 5 below) reflect the average age is now 54 with only one in seven pastors under 40, while more than half are over 55. (www.barna.com/category/leaders-pastors/). Very significant is the change at the top end of the scale, where the percentage of pastors aged 61 and older has almost tripled, indicating there are now more pastors in the pre-retirement age bracket, than there are leaders younger than 40, to understand and grow the youth for the future church.

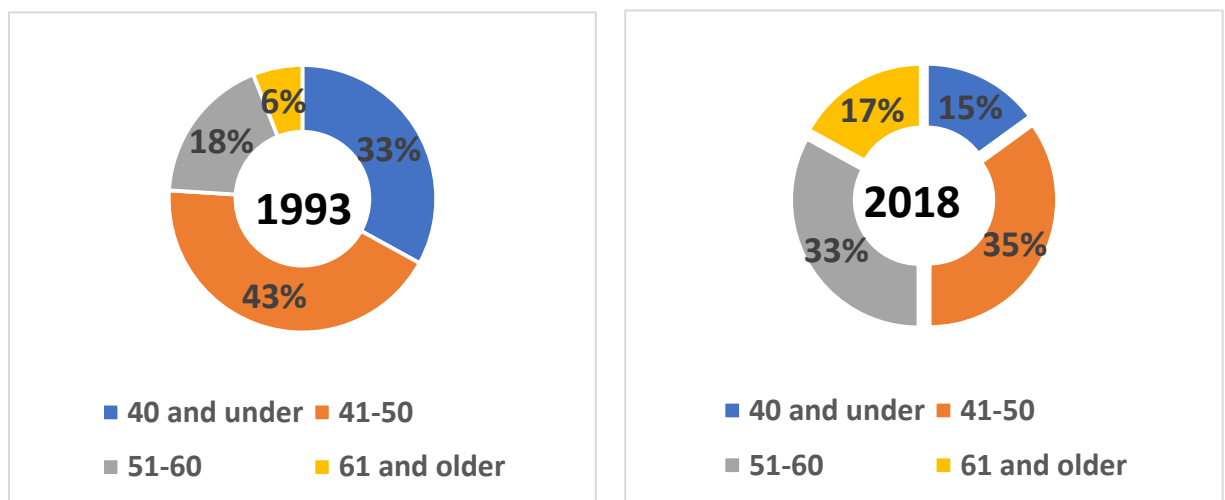


Figure 5a Barna Research Report Findings - Pastor /Minister Age: 1993 vs 2018

The Barna survey (2017) findings reported that the upward climb did not begin in the 1990s, for in 1968 their findings indicate 55 percent of all Pastor clergy were under the age of 40, that is, the *majority* of all church leaders were in their 20s, 30s and early 40's. In 2018, only 15 percent are under 40.

The Barna research findings have been compared with research findings of a Anglican mainline church diocese in the Western Cape Province for the same periods (1993 vs 2018) in South Africa, where the situation of an aging priest profile may be indicative of other provinces, where only 3% are aged < 40 years, while approximately 65% will be retired in the next ten years.

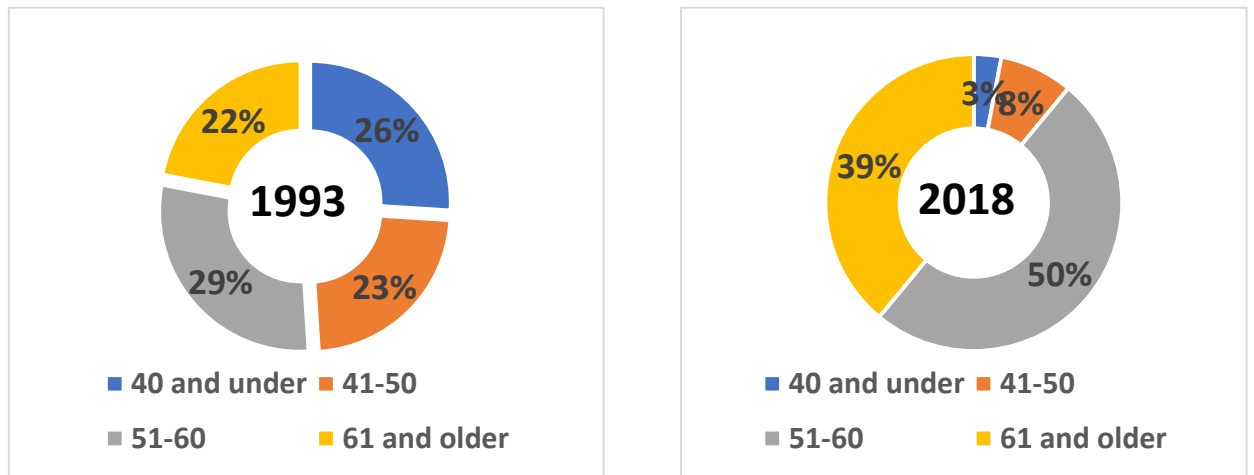


Figure 5b Research Findings of an Anglican Provincial Diocese (SA) Priest Age: 1993 vs 2018

While numerous churches are without full time appointed stipendiary ministers. The above situation is compared to Jackson’s research (2002:72-78) which indicated that churches with clergy aged <45 were 26% more likely to grow than church pastors aged 45 – 54> and 50% more likely to grow than churches with ministers 54>. All of the above is indicative that the numbers of young adults pursuing a calling into church ministry is on the decline, which impacts on growing future pastors/priests capable of ministering with the necessary insight, to effectively communicate and grow the faith of young people classified as cohort Generations Y and Z into the future.

According to Children in the Way, - New Directions for the Church's Children, (2012) not all clergy will feel particularly gifted or competent about working with children nor is it suggested they should be, as this function can be delegated to competent persons.

However, for many Clergy aged of 51- 61 and older, their training and education may have been through didactic and tutorial methods.

In consequence, their ability to revision requirements for children growing in today's world may need to be re-aligned thorough appropriate training, to be able to stimulate strategic thinking for developing a framework of spiritual development, for both Children and Youth.

This aspect was raised at an Anglican Diocese Youth Indaba on 16 June 2018, where clergy had requested the Provincial Youth Coordinator, of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa for assistance/enlightenment to explore some of the following:

- How do I cope with my discomfort/lack of skill, in terms of young people's involvement in Parish life?
- How do I encourage intergenerational co-operation in the life and ministry of the Parish?
- How do I help young people to feel valued and respectful in the general life in the Parish?

Points emanating from the clergy workshop discussions were

- Questions youth are asking in a postmodern world:
 - Where am I? What is real? What is the nature of the world?
 - Who am I? What is my purpose for being on this earth?
 - What is right and what is wrong? How do we explain the bad things that happen in the world? How can we differentiate between the bad and good?
 - What happens when I die? Is that it, or is there something else awaiting me when my heart stops beating?
 - Is there a cure for the evil and brokenness in the world? Will things get any better? If so, how?

- And, in South Africa, why is there no hope for a good future for us? Why study and gain Matric if our universities are burnt down?

- **Core characteristics of effective ministry to the emerging generation**

- Approach youth ministry as a cross cultural mission venture.
- Be IN but not OF this world
- Always evaluate (and where necessary, abandon ineffective) methods
- Use popular culture as a communication tool – stories, video, legends, heroes,
- Understand your own cultural biases
- Be intent on building relationships
- Love without conditions or limits

At conclusion of the workshop a process was developed for the clergy in developing lasting relationships with the youth.

Create safe spaces, or, meet them where they are - infiltrate	<i>Building bridges and relationships – leading to authenticity and trustworthiness (from both sides). There is no short cut. Building relationships take time, space and effort. But, the rewards are enormous and lasting. After all this is the Biblical way.</i>
- Listen	
Ask questions	
- Listen	
Evaluate	
- Listen	
Understand	
Collaborate on the solutions	
- Listen	
Agreement	
Action and Disciple	

2.9. Transmitting intergenerational faith

Walker’s (2013) research into the Church’s identity and transformation, identifies the church as a community in which a distinctive culture of shared beliefs and values is sustained, where newcomers are welcomed and integrated. Walker’s (2013) research evidence suggests that where this is ongoing and maintained, then churches tend to grow and where this becomes eroded, then churches tend to decline.

However, in addition to the above, Wilson (1982) suggests that when the above qualities are identified with a strong internal culture, incorporating friendship, inclusive participation etc., then church members are likely to stay, as maintaining a sense of intimacy and significance is a fundamental for growth.

In contrast Francis and Richter's (2007) research findings suggest that church members begin to leave when they no longer identify with the internal culture of a congregation, or alternatively experience a sense of disconnect within the church. According to Hendricks (2004:105–106), each church congregation develops a unique culture and identity that embodies its understanding of living the Gospel in a certain context.

In researching the emerging generation or the post millennial generation, both Carson, (2005:12), and Bolger and Gibbs (2005:18) provide a clear description of the problem between culture and church. They advocate that an understanding of outside culture is not that critical to the church if the culture is static.

However, during a period when culture is undergoing rapid change, the church cannot afford to be ignorant of these changes. As stated previously, rapid changes in culture have caused the church to drastically review its focus. Elaborating further, Bolger and Gibbs, (2005:18) conclude when the church remains distant from these factors, it becomes irrelevant and finds itself increasingly marginalised

According to Martineau, Webber and Kehrwald (2008), to gain insight into the house of God as intergenerational, requires one to revisit Old Testament Scripture

(Deuteronomy 6:4-8), where God spoke through Moses to the people of Israel regarding their responsibility to the young among them

Hear, o Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9)

God's design is to use families and the larger body of Christ to point young people to their divine purpose. But teenage life in today's culture leaves us wondering if we have heeded Gods command, Families, even those in the church, are falling apart and malfunctioning. While many in the church have not intentionally turned their backs on the young, the youth are leaving the church in droves' in some cases according to De Walt Mueller (2006:24 – 29) the family and church are present but unaccounted for.

In other words, we're there but we are not paying attention. Even though members of the emerging generation try to connect, it seems to them no one is at home. More than likely as adults' people have not been listening. The fact of the matter is young people have very little experience in how to effectively communicate what's on their mind but they are painfully aware when adults fail to hear what they have to say.

However, Siebel and Nel (2010:1) conclude that; 'The church as an intergenerational community is evident in terms of retrospective reflection and hopeful expectation' where the Church per se has the responsibility of transmitting the faith between consecutive generations.

Adding further to the above, Snailum (2012) points out that over past decades, the church has introduced division in its service's between youth and children on one side and adults on the other, which in turn has led to disintegrated ministries and total separation. In consequence, many churches today according to Snailum (2012:176) believe that this separation is totally appropriate for both groups – educationally and developmentally.

With the exponential growth of the internet and 'other' sources of information, this has posed a significant challenge in today's postmodern society, on the validity of passing on appropriate text within the household of faith.

During family interaction within the home and church, May, Stemp and Burns (2011:278) stipulate that parents should reflect more on their own faith journey when engaging with their children. This is because there is transformative power in sharing, as opposed to lecturing as a parent to a child. This also places more emphasis on parents listening to their children's free flow of thought and not simply dismissing their ideas.

2.9.1. Responsibility to disciple children and young people?

In summary, the Bible is quite clear on the following fundamental principles where Children are important to God and therefore, the church and parents/caregivers need to give due priority and emphasis to their development, especially spiritually.

In other words: Parents need to be intentional and responsible. The church children's ministry needs to 'refocus' its efforts to less programming and more equipping, and encouraging parents to disciple in the home.'

According to Barton (2001, 5-8) the primary concern for family discipleship, is that the family per se has failed to embrace the privilege and biblical responsibility of discipling their children.

From a theological perspective, the primary responsibility to disciple the children of the Christian home does not fall to the church or to a youth minister. According to certain passages of Scripture (for example Deuteronomy 6:7, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4) the primary responsibility for the discipleship of children falls primarily to the parents, and to the father in particular. Jones (2008, 34) advocates that the church culture of the past four decades has slowly minimized the role of the parents as primary teachers in the life of the child. The church has established programmes for the various generations, systematically separating the children from their parents, and subtly communicating to the families that the church would provide adequate instruction to disciple their children.

Research undertaken by Land and Duke (1999:98) advocates that churches have not done an effective job of informing/teaching parents that they are to disciple their children, let alone teaching parents how they are to disciple their children. The primary problem with family discipleship, according to Land and Duke (1999) stems from within the church. They conclude that a primary reason for the failure to raise up men as disciplers, is due to the fact that churches have not adequately taught their families about core family issues, like the fathering role as advocated in Scripture.

2.10 Conclusion

Just as churches need to integrate young people into the church community, so too must old people be integrated into welcoming and mentoring the young. The world in

which we live tends to discard the old very quickly. In today's terms, they are 'past their sell by date' as opposed to being recognised as the elders, referred to in Scripture. They have accumulated a wealth of insight and knowledge of the path of life that they have walked. The church cannot discard them as the need for transitioning is a key factor for sustaining the future. In fact, we are commanded in Scripture (1 Peter 5:5) to value the wisdom of the aged, and to submit to their wisdom.

Tension, confusion, frustration, and even spiritual defeat often confront the Christian who tries to balance church ministry and home ministry. The Church needs to re-evaluate as a priority the importance of 'family' in its various forms and definitions in this changing world. There are limited means in place to disciple and guide couples in good family home building and parenting as a continuum soon after the marriage ceremony. For couples to become good spouses and consequently good parents takes time and patience with ongoing nurturing to ensure that adequate foundations are in place for them to grow the gift of children in God's Word.

The Bible is clear that men and women, are called to different and equally important roles in marriage and the church. God has called men to serve as leaders in marriage and the church, and women to submit themselves willingly to that leadership, as they labour together in their distinctive roles (Ephesians 5:23-24; 1 Peter 3:1-6; 1 Timothy 2:12 and 3:1-13).

It used to be the case that it was enough to bring your children to the school for religious education programmes for them to begin to receive the Christian faith. Today there are many more challenges to being a believer, since the culture young people encounter does not see the world from a Christian perspective. Studies show that where the

church has not interacted with parents to create a culture in the home, the children will succumb to a contemporary and non-Christian way of seeing the world when they become adults. The parish, the school and the youth programmes are all helpful, but the churches inadequate religious influence in cited instances, provides the environment for other influences to take hold.

The question for clergy going forward is whether we can effectively engage the soul of youth culture. The answer is YES, if one is willing, committed and has the courage to step out and meet the youth where they are. The change in youth, starts with a change within oneself.

Chapter Three seeks to review the family within the home and the associated challenges confronting contemporary families. The decline from the nuclear family into the various sub definitions of family will be examined. This needs to link together in reviewing the primary role of parents in relation to their children, and how this has evolved or devolved over the past four decades. How have parental values changed over this time frame? How well are parents equipped to deal with the growth of their children and as a family in a rapidly changing world, which is far removed from the times in which they grew up?

Youth ministry is an area within churches that requires alignment with the family. In Chapter Three we will examine the impact of this alignment.

CHAPTER THREE

Overview of a family

The past three decades according to Köstenburger and Jones (2010:16) have been witness to a major paradigm shift with regard to marriage and the family, where one of the negative consequences has been rocketing divorce rates. While children of the marriage many not show the effects of this in the short-term, the negative longer-term outcomes have been well documented.

For many decades, society has been used to a normative view of the family, constituting a man and a woman married in church, together with children born from their marriage union, which Brown (2001) terms the nuclear family. Today this view needs to be reconfigured, especially for the church to see family in as inclusive way as possible, where all types of people in varied walks of life can feel included and acknowledged. According to Brown (2001), this incorporates among others: single persons with children, unmarried partners and their children, couples in a secondary relationship, those living apart from their family, same sex partners, bereaved and separated people living alone would feel acknowledged in coming together, belonging to a living family.

Strommen and Hardel (2000:15) indicate God's desire for families has to do with *relationships*. In this regard, Scripture focuses not only the family per se, but rather on the parent/children inter-relationship. Hence what is written in Ephesians (6:2-4) is intended to apply equally with any configuration that constitutes a family. However, the varied cultures of today's world displays so much diversity that the term 'family' is often difficult to define. The South African National Census statistics classifications (2017)

define the various ways in which a family may be delineated to include nuclear, a wider group of relatives, a group of blood relatives, extended cousins, grandparents, uncles and aunts, and child headed families, among others.

Adding to the above, God has chosen the church to bring the good news to the world and to all generations. It is, therefore, a key issue as to how the church needs to transition itself. According to Moynagh (2001), it is notable how minimal focus on the family figures in mainline church discourse in today's world. It is not necessarily that the family is not present in the liturgy, spirituality, youth caring community etc., it is a case that its total presence is not taken in sufficiently in bringing the people to Christ. This is critically important for the church to embrace in encouraging and building quality family time together, enabling effective interactive loving, direction and spiritual guidance from parents with children to take place.

One of the key factors that impacts on the above, is how the nature and structure of families has undergone change upon change during the past thirty to forty years. According to Edgell (2006) it is no longer easy to define or to understand traditional family life as the father working, and mother looking after the children. In consequence, many families struggle to keep ahead in this changing world where Van der Ven (1998) advocates that most families are under pressure to earn enough money to sustain themselves above the poverty line. In consequence, the love and caring which used to take place in families from the mother is slowly being eroded, as more women enter the labour market by necessity. According to Kurzman (2008:314) women who engage in the working world soon find that work and family are not separate worlds and what occurs in one situation, inevitably affects what happens in the other. This means that

mothers are part of different systems that shape their lives, and the lives of their families.

In view of the above where both parents are working, family structures and dynamics have changed accordingly where Vandivere, Tout, Capizzano and Zaslow. 2003:5) conclude that children who spend time on their own while their parents are working, may become involved with other unsupervised children and become willing/unwilling participants in at risk activities as they get older. This is borne out by Mertens, Flowers, Peter and Mulhall (2003) research, who advocate they are likely to invite friends over, or go to a friend's house who are home alone and become involved in abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs.

Eberstadt (2013:15) adds that peer pressure, the media and older siblings are often influential factors in early sexual involvement and drug experimentation with young people. In consequence, learning and social interaction has gravitated from the family spending real time together, to one of children seeking life skills learning and education from their peers, the school environment and television media. All of which has impacted on the effective transfer of faith from parents to children.

Taking this aspect a step further, Beckwith (2004:102) stipulates that mainline churches that focus on advocating family values, appear to have almost disappeared and concludes

Have churches extended themselves enough at empowering parents to model faith in the home and to provide appropriate teachable methods when appropriate, to positively nurture their children in spirituality and growth, into well balanced young people who are able to cope effectively in today's changing world?

3.1 Family composition

The composition of South African families comprises of nuclear, multigenerational, extended and re-constituted families. According to Makiwane, Nduna and Khalema (2016) the historical overview of families reveals significant changes brought about by the impact of colonisation and apartheid on traditional African family systems.

In addition to the colonial impositions, the processes of development, modernisation, and globalisation have all impacted to a greater or lesser degree on established family systems.

The majority of families in South Africa today according to Makiwane, Nduna and Khalema (2016), are multigenerational, extended and single-headed in nature. This is in contrast to earlier predictions for a growth in couple-headed families, which according to Statistics SA (2017) have only emerged as a small section of family society.

Taking cognizance of the above, when one examines the entire scope of the Bible, it does not have a lot to say about families, parents or even children. When looking at Scripture one finds that the family culture of the Old Testament period is very different, from the family culture we find today in South Africa.

Zimmerman (2008) in his work *Family and Civilization*, outlines how changes in family structure brought about changes in other dimensions of society, and indeed changes in civilization itself. His thesis indicates there was indeed a close relationship between religion and family structure, but he advocates that religion was the main causal factor shaping the family, which in turn shaped civilization.

Eberstadt (2013: 34) points to a similar correlation with the decline of the Christian faith in the West, corresponding in time and degree to the decline of the traditional (specifically, the nuclear) family, and advocates that this correlation can be converted into a new theory of causation. The decline of the faith conveyed through God's church, is a consequence of the decline of the family as it existed forty years ago.

However, Eberstadt (2013:38) goes further in pointing out that the traditional family, not only the extended, but the nuclear one as well, has long played a dominant role in supporting the Christian faith within the church. The family, in a sense, has been the ongoing nursery of Christianity.

Eberstadt (2013:47) further contends that nuclear families, and especially families with children, are more likely to be Christian believers and church members, than persons who are not in such families. The conclusion that may be made is that the real demise contributing to young people's exodus of the Christian faith and the church, has ultimately been the collapse of the traditional family.

Elaborating further on the above, Strommen and Hardel (2008) undertook a study involving 8 000 adolescents, whose parents were members of congregations in eleven different Protestant and Catholic denominations. They concluded that only 10% of these families discussed spiritual faith and religion with any degree of regularity, while in more than 50% of the families, it was never discussed at all. This is elaborated upon from a South African perspective in Chapter Six.

Thus, according to Sisemore (2000:57) Christian parents today are often adrift as they seek direction in raising children, where many readily assume that they are to raise

their children by providing significant possessions and assets, so they can entertain themselves and 'be so called happy'.

These same parents according to Dawn (1997:62), have much to learn looking back to the Godly focus the doctrine of original sin gave to the parenting of the Puritans, who believed it was vital to instruct their children in the faith and in life skills, targeting the central goal of the glory of God.

Linked in the above focus, Parker (1954) indicates that Calvin also held tenaciously to the doctrine that children bear the image of God, thus parents should treat them with due respect to nurture and discipline them with love and firmness, and advocates that with so many conveniences available today, children are not bonded into the family in the same sense that they were in the Puritan era.

3.2 Family unit

In order to expand further on a Family Composition within South Africa, it is important to take cognisance of what constitutes the respective categories for families, as defined and reported by S A Statistics (GHS:2016). Fuller and Scott (2003:446) define a family household consisting of a person or group of people living in a particular residential unit. However, on the other hand a family may consist of unmarried parents and children, while an extended family may include other members such as grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws, cousins, aunts and uncles, etc.

According to Statistics SA, General Household Survey (GHS 2016), many children do not live consistently in the same dwelling as their biological parents. This is a long-established feature of childhood in South Africa and is related to many factors,

including historic population control, labour migration, poverty, housing and educational opportunities, low marriage rates and cultural practice. According to Coertzen (2015) it is common for relatives to play a substantial role in child-rearing, while many children who experience a sequence of different caregivers, are raised without a father’s guidance, or live in different households to their biological siblings. Although many children live with just one of their biological parents (usually the mother), this does not infer that the mother is a single parent, as other adult members such as aunts, uncles and grandparents, may contribute to the care of children.

The General Household Survey (2016), indicated below in Figure 1 indicates that children aged 0–5 years constitute 15% of the total population of South Africa, which is close to 6,2 million children. Furthermore, 86% of the child population in this age group were black Africans, 8% were coloureds, 2% Indian/Asian and 4% white.

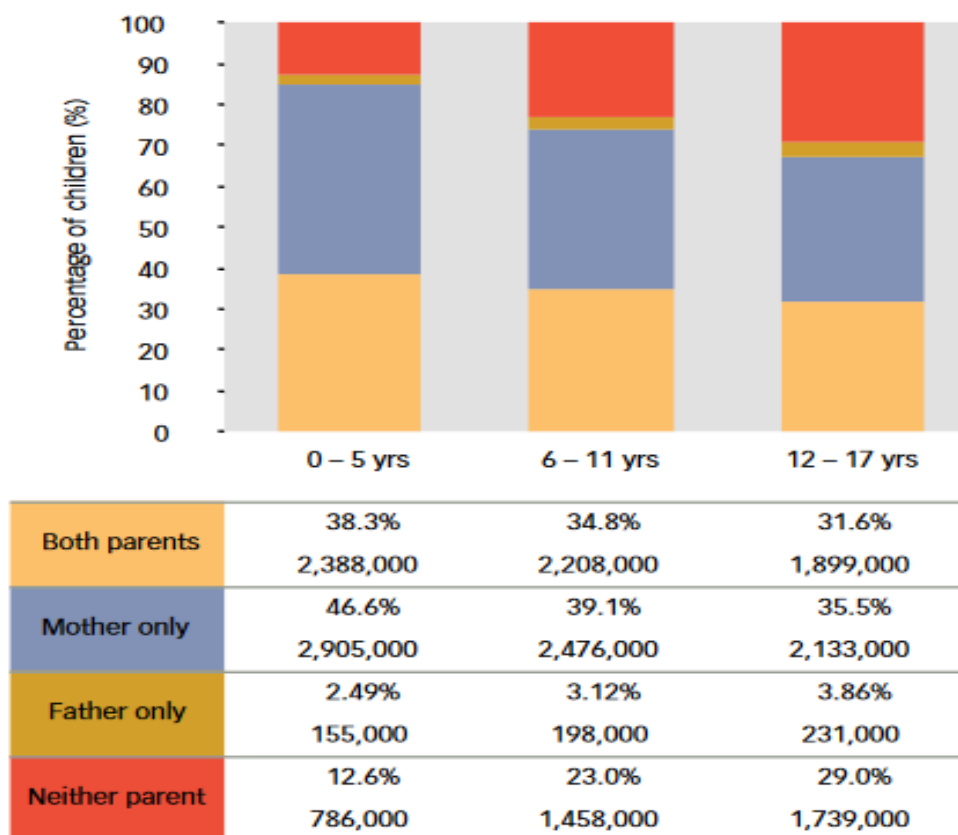


Figure 6 Parental co-residence by age group, 2017

Source Statistics South Africa (2017) General Household Survey 2016. Pretoria: Stats SA.

The statistics reflected in Figure 6 above are indicative of many issues highlighted confronting South African children's ability of growing in the faith. According to GHS (2016), these figures are significant as they imply a limited presence of biological fathers in the home lives of many children, as shown above. Older children are more likely to live with neither parent, but are left to their own devices to grow up and enter society. Equally significant is the fact that almost 13% of children aged 0 – 5 years (786,000) live with neither parent, which escalates to 29% (1.74 million) for children aged 12 – 17 years. The various categories of designated families by General Household Survey (GHS 2016) are outlined below.

3.2.1 Nuclear families

According to Statistics SA (2017) the proportion of children living as a nuclear family (regarded as parents with their own unmarried children) has steadily decreased overall from 40% in 2002 to 31% in 2017. For many decades this has always been seen as the typical family, where close relationships are formed between the respective members seen as a defined unit. In this type of family, the parent's roles are designated educators of children's ethics and values that the home represents. (Fulcher and Scott 1999)

3.2.2 Single parent father

According to Dowd (1997), single parenthood is a phenomenon that has always been in existence and carries accountability for most of the day-to-day responsibilities in raising the child of children. The increasing number of single parent families (Stats SA 2017) has become a matter of great concern, primarily associated with the high divorce

rate, where only 3.1% of children live in households where their fathers are present and their mothers absent.

3.2.3 The impact of absent fathers on families

Following on from the low percentage of fathers who raise their children alone, the issue of widespread fatherlessness has been well documented and recognised as a growing trend, that is seen to be contributing to our generation's social ills and degeneration. Building further on this issue, according to Dowd (1997) there are two types of absent fathers, designated as the 'committed' and the 'uncommitted' father. The committed father is advocated to be actively involved in the child's upbringing, while the latter tends to maintain low contact with his children. According to research undertaken by the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) (2013), the findings conclude that insufficient knowledge is known about the driving causes of the widespread father absence in households in South Africa. Moreover, research in this field has largely failed to present the voices of absent fathers themselves in order to capture their perspectives on fathering their children.

Although a father's physical presence alone is not necessarily a positive outcome in itself, according to the CSDA findings (2013), widespread father absence has proven to be of detrimental consequences for families and for society as a whole. Absence of the father in the home impacts on the necessary caring, direction and guidance of children, especially in the 12 – 17 age group leading them to seek the love and guidance of a father figure in all the wrong places, together with behavioural, emotional, social, financial, spiritual and cultural consequences. From his research, Smelser (1988) implies that children having contact with their fathers occasionally tend to suffer

more behavioural problems, while responsible and engaged fathers who undertake their share of parenting work, are significantly beneficial to the development of their children (especially males) and towards building families and societies that reflect gender equity and protect child rights. According to the CSDA findings (2013) it is understandable that fathers may be perceived as being less emotionally connected with their children, but this may not always be the case.

According to Smelser (1988), it is probable that many men, due to their particular upbringing, are unable to express the way they feel about their children, or how it affects them when they are separated from them. These are very pertinent issues the church and communities need to confront to develop an effective action strategy, taking cognisance of the varied issues, when reaching out to both churched and unchurched children, adolescents and parents themselves, especially in view of the increase in gangs that have attracted youth to crime, violence and abuse of women and children in South Africa.

3.2.4 Female-headed households

Divorce is one reason why women often head families. However, while a mother provides emotional caring and love for her children, according to Henslin (2001) the absence of a father in this context may result in inadequate socialization, particularly for boys and advocates that single parents per se have been the focus of much discussion amongst sociologists, where not so much the fact that a single parent rears the children, but the fact that most single parent families are poor, or living below the 'bread line' with concomitant knock on consequences.

Statistics SA (2017) indicate that 41% of all children – 7.5 million in total live with their mothers, but not with their fathers. An added issue associated with poverty within the context of the single parent family has been well documented, often resulting in serious social problems for children as indicated above, such as crime, dropping out of school and varied emotional problems, all of which impacts adversely on their faith and social development.

3.2.5 Extended families

According to Statistics SA (2017) 62% of all children grow up in this situation. However, the extended family has some advantages such as the help that grandparents may offer with caring for children. According to Statistics S A (2017), Twenty-one percent do not have either of their biological parents living with them. This does not necessarily mean that they are orphaned: in most cases (83%), children without any co-resident parents have at least one parent who is alive but living elsewhere.

3.2.6 Blended families

The blended family, according to SA Statistics (2017), is referred to as a group of people sharing one home who originate from 'other family Homes', an example is children whose parents divorced and then remarry. While this may suit the new married parent's, it has the potential for creating rifts where children are thrust together from the first family and have to inter-relate. Henslin (2001) concludes this situation can often complicate the new family relationship if unresolved problems carried by the children from the first marriage are not addressed with some sensitivity

3.2.7 Child-headed families

A child-only household is defined as a household in which all members are younger than 18 years. According to the statistics of The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2016), there are an estimated 3.7 million orphans in South Africa - close to half of them have lost their parents to AIDS-related diseases and there are many more children living with sick and bedridden caregivers. According to Statistics SA (2016), approximately 150,000 children are believed to be living in child-headed households. The number of children living in this extreme situation is of grave concern to society and the church, as the percentage of population may be low, but they are significant in number growing into society, who need the same guidance as other 'family children' in faith and social development

However, Research undertaken by Hosegood and Newell (2008) suggests that child-only households are frequently temporary arrangements, and often exist just for a short period, for example while adult migrant workers are away, or for easy access to school during term-time, or after the death of an adult and prior to other arrangements being made to care for the children, such as other adults moving in or the children moving to live with other relatives.

3.2.8 Marriage and raising a family.

Long before God instituted his church, he created the family, where Anderson (2007:189) aptly remarks, that within the first few chapters of Genesis God starts operating from a 'family context, and this family operandi continues in the New Testament. He concludes that 'God is family'. Anderson (2007) also remarks that God

created the family and that the family model he instituted, is the way he wants us to understand and define the concept of family. De Vries (2004:10) uses a very familiar African saying in order to bring this point across: 'It takes a village to raise a child.' The first village for every human being is the family of origin. Strommen and Hardel's (2000:90) research supports the importance that parents need to help develop, sustain and pass on a Gospel-oriented faith to their children, and advocate that God has placed children initially in the hands of their parents while. Anderson (2007:23) states that parents are God's covenant partners.

In view of the above, Köstenberger and Jones (2010:18) outline that those who are seriously engaged by Scripture will know and understand God's will for marriage and family, and be able to transpose this in building a strong Christian home and family life. This aspect is supported by research undertaken by Strommen and Hardel (2000) who conclude that close family relationships are very important, as growth in children's faith is developed through personal and trusting relationships. God decreed the family to be of significant importance towards the survival and flourishing of human society, where the family and the church each have distinct roles and serve specific purposes in God's plan. In essence, while there is a certain amount of overlap, these two entities each have particular spheres of operation, powers and authorities decreed and vested in them.

How then can the church support the family, for the church and family are not identical. In this regard Köstenberger and Jones (2010) stipulate that due to the vital importance of marriage and family in God's plan from the beginning, the church should do everything it can to strengthen the marriage bond and family ties. Before entering into the solemnity of marriage, the church should focus on making use of appropriate

programmes/means to align scriptural biblical roles of husband and wife appropriate to our changing world, and elaborate God's plan for them to establish and raise a family, witnessing to God's goodness, wisdom, and faithfulness in Christ.

In view of the above not being undertaken well enough in today's world, Köstenberger and Jones (2010) conclude the Judeo-Christian view of marriage and the family with its roots in Scripture, can be viewed as a civilization in crisis in today's world.

However, Köstenberger and Jones (2010) also point out that the cultural crisis is symptomatic of a deep-seated spiritual crisis that seeks to erode the foundation of societal values. In the same way, the Scriptures are not silent in regard to the issues confronting men and women and families today. Outcomes of Köstenberger and Jones (2010) research further indicates that recent decades have witnessed a paradigm shift with regards to marriage and the family, that elevates human freedom and self-determination as the new principles for human relationships. In consequence, the world around us is weakening marriages and families in many ways, where even the church often fails to counteract these disintegrative forces by neglecting to conceive of its mission, in terms that strengthen marriages and families.

Köstenberger and Jones (2010) also conclude that the above situation is indicative of the climbing divorce rate and associated outcomes, not only for the children but for society at large, and while children may not show the outcome of divorce in the short term, serious long-term effects have been well documented. Today, it is not only the world that is encountering the consequences of neglecting God's purpose for marriage and the family, but also the church to an extent, for having adjusted itself to the

standard of the world in many ways, has also become part of the problem as a result of not providing the necessary direction and guidance needed.

Aligned with the above, an important point that is so often overlooked is highlighted by Mueller (2007:440) who points out that Children are not casual guests in the home. They have been loaned to us temporarily for the purpose of loving them and instilling a foundation of values on which their future lives will be built. In addition, parents need to leave a spiritual heritage to their children who need to be taught and shown that God occupies centre stage in their parents' lives and home. This should be accomplished through interactive family prayers, spiritual discussions and family devotions, and by setting a godly example as parents. However, Mueller (2007:422), also points out that even if parents do everything correctly, there is still no guarantee that their children will grow up to be spiritually healthy. Children will at a certain point make their own choice regarding the route they will follow in finding God.

The distinction of understanding the role of parenting and raising a family has been well highlighted by Barna (2007) through their ongoing research into *Revolutionary Parenting*. This divides parents into two groups namely: *Revolutionary parents* and *Typical parents*. The former understands that their role is to guide their children to honour God and advance his purposes. Success in this regard is measured by the transformed lives of children. In contrast, typical parents, are those who have no defined plan for spiritual development of their children, nor consider it a priority, plus they have little or no training in how to nurture a child's faith and experience no accountability for their efforts. In understanding the above Anthony (2005) advocates historically the family has had a powerful influence on society, where many of the problems in today's world reflect the values and quality of family life, where traditional

values of moral conduct and teaching right and wrong are aspects that are not being effectively communicated broadly enough, from the parents to a child. Anthony (2005) further concludes by stating what is needed is a church model that strengthens and supports marriages and families, and does so on the basis of a robust biblical understanding of the nature of the church, where parents need to learn and teach each child Christian attitudes, values and ethics they want their children to take to heart and use in their lives, when they transition to adults.

3.3 Factors impacting on the family

The many changes in family life according to Edgell (2006), have been a central concern for religious leaders, activists, and local communities of faith. Throughout history, religion and family have been intertwined and interdependent institutions. However, family life today is significantly different from the 1960's, that was driven changes in commuting patterns, rising marriages and birth rates, changing child-rearing patterns and new found prosperity which allowed more and more families to adopt the male bread-winner lifestyle. In this regard Edgell (2006:40) advocates that churches embraced these developments during this period by expanding their ministry programmes to cater for children, teenagers and women and developing social activities for the whole family. Women's ministries generally met during the daytime period, which allowed evenings to be free to spend time with their families.

In contrast, today's world has evolved with numerous changes in family life that has transformed our society, which according to Edgell (2006:44) working wives and mothers face numerous questions about their choices on their children's welfare, and their own health under the strain of work and home responsibilities, while husbands to

an extent have responded in a variety of ways to construct a masculine identity, that is not focused exclusively on being the sole bread winner.

Linked to the above, Casale (2004) points out that the gradual increasing number of women in the workforce is part of a global 'feminization' of the labour market. South Africa is no exception in this regard. Casale and Posel (2002) indicate that South African women are being forced to join the workforce, out of sheer economic need, whereas in first world countries the demand is for female labour equity in numerous occupations.

Theunissen, van Vuuren and Visser (2003) conclude, how historically in nuclear two-parent families the father was viewed as the main breadwinner, while the mother undertook the role of nurturer and homemaker. These roles have evolved over recent decades with more women accepting the role of paid employment in their lives and men beginning to take on household and parenting duties. As a direct result of this growing change Robles (1997), advocates an inevitable increase in social and economic responsibilities, with wide ranging outcomes.

Grzywacz, Almeida and McDonald, (2002) point out, that structural features of the family, like parental and marital status, are likely to influence work and family dynamics, then it follows that working mothers may attempt to keep family conflict at a minimum so that their financial contribution to the family is not threatened.

In understanding implications of the above Kurth (2013:484) points out the information revolution is proving to be as momentous and transformative in its broad consequences, as the earlier industrial revolution. Thus, according to Edgell (2006)

this new revolution has resulted in momentous knock on consequences for the Christian faith and the church, where the Women's revolution has already had momentous consequences for the role of women in Christian churches in the West. In consequence, women now spend more and more of their life in the office, and less and less of it in the church, (and especially in the home!).

The impact of the above on the church according to Edgell (20016) has not been direct, but rather indirect: as the impact has passed through the family first and then onto the faith. When both parents are working full-time outside of the home, less time and energy are available for the nurturing activities, like talking, family interactive meetings and eating together as illustrated in section six of this thesis.

In addition to parents working more hours away from their families, Edgell (2006) points out they have the increasingly hectic schedule of the children themselves to contend with, adding further stress and ensuing potential for conflict in the family home.

In view of this quantum change, Henslin (2001:448), concludes the redefinition of such defined roles poses a daunting task for both parents and children where some mothers 'end up doing most of the housework' following a day of travel and work with little or no assistance. The heavy schedule endured by women has a concomitant impact, resulting in less time to spend as a faith carer with their children – especially when they arrive home from school. Strommen and Hardel (2000:42) refer to well documented stress in the lives of working mothers as 'multiple role stress', where husbands have not significantly increased their own household and childcare responsibilities. This is elaborated further by Hochschild (2003) where this un-equal sharing of parental responsibilities is one of the most important causes of marital conflict. In consequence, the family in the modern world, perhaps more than any other institution, has been beset

by many changes that have affected society and culture. Hochschild (2003) further advocates that many families are living this situation in fidelity to those values that constitute the foundation of the institution of the family. Others have become uncertain and bewildered over their role or even doubtful, and almost unaware of the ultimate meaning and truth of conjugal and family life.

Building on the above, according to Cloete (2012) many South African people do not think of their family as having a 'culture'. They associate culture with countries and ethnic groups etc. But the family is a group of familiar people doing what they always do — a characteristic way of thinking, feeling, judging, and acting — that defines a culture. Taking this a step further Cloete (2012) points out that in many families, norms are the spoken and unspoken rules of cultures. Reinforced over time, they operate as invisible constraints on family members' behaviour. Norms set standards for how family members dress, talk and act. They also set limits on what is permissible or impermissible behaviour under different circumstances and conditions.

Finally, there are others who are hindered by various situations of injustice in the realization of their fundamental rights. According to Collins (2005) many people today worry about their safety and that of their families and despair hope for the future. Almost every day the media hype focusses on the increase in various types of crime, poverty-stricken families, single parent frustrations, neglected children and schools where children abuse and drugs are rife, even killing of other children.

This is elaborated further by Collins (2005) where in numerous homes (including Christian homes) there are many forms of conflict, tension, breakdown of

communication and abuse, which emanates directly or indirectly due to forces of change in people's lives

3.4 Effects of divorce on families and children

Throughout past decades, there have been well documented images of a young couple who are madly in love and vow to spend the rest of their lives together, filled with expectations of a perfect marriage - what fairy-tale weddings are made of. However, based on the S A department of statistics release (2017) the truth is many marriages do not end up being this stereotypical fairy tale, where in fact, 25 326 divorces were granted in South Africa during 2016.

The SA Statistics release (2017) indicate the median ages at which men and women marry has increased since 2002, indicating an upward trend in the median age of bridegrooms from 34 years in 2012 to 36 years in 2017 and that of brides from 30 years to 32 years during the same period, suggesting that couples may be delaying matrimony, or that the role of marriage may be shifting again as millennials (those born in the 1980s and 1990s) are either not marrying at all or marrying much later.

However, a matter of significant concern is the actual duration of marriages where in the SA statistic (2017) almost 46 percent of marriages did not reach their tenth wedding anniversary as indicated in Figure 7 below.

The proportions of divorces by population group and duration of marriage, 2017

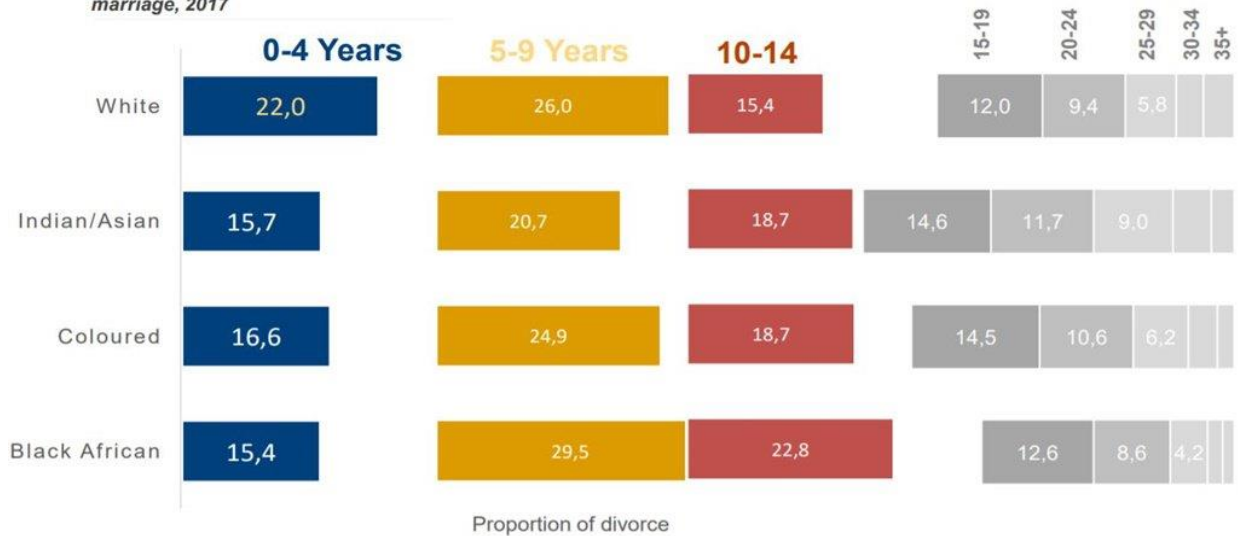


Figure 7. Median ages of divorces by years and population group

Source Statistics South Africa (2017) source General Household Survey (2016). Pretoria:

Perhaps equally important according to SA Stats (2017) is the fact that 55 percent of divorce cases handled in 2017 involved children aged less than 18 years, who are part of 18.5 million children that constitute 34 percent of the total population recorded in 2017. The impact of this and the stigma attached to divorce makes it difficult for individuals and especially children, to adjust and face a new life successfully.

3.5 Impact on children

According to Worthman and Loftus, (1992:299) most of the environmental factors contributing to differences in children’s reactions to divorce are related to the amount of stress the child experiences at the time of the divorce. In addition to the above, Long and Forehand (2002:5) conclude that short-term effects of divorce on children can include guilt, anger, depression, anxiety, and withdrawal. While in the longer term many cases can result in adolescents from divorced households dropping out of high school, engaging in antisocial behavior, associate with delinquent peers, or be referred for clinical treatment, as opposed to those children from intact families. In addition.

Lauer and Lauer, (1997:401-402) add further to the above, citing other significant factors such as depression, withdrawal and other problems that are likely to be greater for children who live in a home characterized by persistent conflicts and unhappiness, than for children living in single parent homes.

According to Allen (2008), the above traits may lead towards boys being unable to effectively adjust to life when they become adult males and the concomitant knock-on effect when they become married or cohabitate in raising a family, as their spirituality may have been adversely affected due to having experienced poor parental childrearing, poor supervision, physical abuse, neglect, and separations from their parents. Further research undertaken by Eysenck (2004: 607) concludes the majority of women/girls in their twenties who had experienced divorce in childhood were more likely to be severely depressed than those whose parents had not divorced. However, boys were more likely to be aggressive than children whose parents stayed married. Erwin (2006: 240) adds further to the above, that boys growing into adults are likely to suffer from depression, react with anger or aggressive behaviour more than women/girls.

3.6 Equipping parents in a changing world

According to Beckwith (2004:22) we are now seeing a world where old certainties are rapidly dissolving, and being replaced with a new cultural and intellectual paradigm shift in the way human beings process information, and in the way the external world is viewed. The church must recognise this issue among many others and develop strategies to help parents and others understand this, and how to deal with it. Many of today's parents find it very difficult to keep up with the technological changes that dominate their lives, and more particularly their children's.

In addressing the above, Beckwith (2004:81) indicates that the role of a parent is to assist each child to prepare themselves for the world in which they will ultimately live and work. In the past, most parents did this by knowing more about the world than their children via the journey on the road of life, and by using the experience and life skills gained, to mentor and guide their children on the road ahead.

However, the above has rapidly changed with the advent of the technology age. In consequence with today's ever-changing world the question begs to be asked, 'how many parents fully understand all there is to learn about the Christian Faith through the study of Scripture'. As a result of research on this aspect, Hudson (1995:29) points out that parents need to feel free to talk interactively with their teenage children on sharing their own faith stages, and understand their questioning 'why as a parent do you want them to reach a mature faith'. Through an iterative process of conscious acceptance and rejection of parent's ideas, Hudson (1995) points out that this conducive climate sows the seed for teens to grow and develop a personal faith of their own.

Building further on the above (Smith and Snell 2009:93) parents are the most crucial and powerful socializers in the lives of their adolescent children. During the formative years it is important not to disengage or abdicate responsibility as a parent. Smith and Snell (2009) further point out that if adolescents experience parents who are religiously withdrawn and functionally absent, then the faith of an emerging adult will likely be vacuous, directionless and empty.

As adults, parents need to be role models, not of completed faith (because one never fully arrives at that) but of a growing faith process as concluded by Smith and Snell (2009:104). Parents need to realize that each individual child must work through his or

her own faith process. Thus, the major role of parents with teenage children is to '*listen to their children*', and then above all else, to love them without reservation.

According to research carried out by Barna (2013) they concur with the above, where parents believe that they are primarily responsible for the spiritual development of their children, but few parents actually spend sufficient time during a typical week interacting with their children on spiritual matters.

These findings correlate and underscore the conclusions outlined in chapter six of this research, where there is a significant need for the church to help parents to reach out in understanding of their children and address the spiritual needs and vacuum that is evolving in their lives

While the Barna survey results (2013) revealed the majority of parents do not spend sufficient time during a typical week, interacting and discussing religious matters, or studying religious materials with their children, it indicated that the majority of parents generally rely upon their church to undertake all of the religious training their children will receive. Thus, parents were not so much unwilling to provide more substantive training to their children as they are: - '*ill-equipped to do such work*'.

Further critical aspects emanating from the Barna survey (2013) indicated that:

- Parents typically have no plan for the spiritual development of their children;
- They do not consider it a priority to have one,
- Parents have little or no training in how to nurture a child's faith,
- Many have no related standards or goals that they are seeking to satisfy,
- Parents experience no accountability for their efforts.

Conclusions emanating from the Barna's research (2013) reflected parents were confident that their children were well adept at prayer and worship. While somewhat less assured, parents of children under 13 were likely to believe that their youngsters are able to understand critical biblical principles.

The Barna research (2013), also noted that millions of parents are unaware of the breadth of spiritual needs their children have. Of the 51 million children under the age of 18, more than 40 million of them do not know Jesus Christ as their saviour, which suggests that there are some basic unmet spiritual needs that parents are overlooking. This is supported from similar findings in Section Six of this research conducted in South Africa.

Barna's research results (2013) also indicate that numerous parents are not able to guide their children spiritually because parents themselves are struggling with their own faith development. This situation represents an opportunity for churches to prepare parents for a more significant role in the spiritual development of their children.

However, no matter how hard a church tries, it is incapable of bringing a child to complete spiritual maturity on its own. This is ultimately the task of the parenting family. Barna concluded (2013) the more willing churches are to play the co-dependent role in this drama, the more likely we are to see spiritually healthy families and a generation of young people who grow into mature believers.

However, a significant conclusion emanating from the Barna survey (2013) found that only one out of every five parents of children under 13 (19%) had ever been personally

contacted or spoken to by a church leader to discuss parent's involvement in the spiritual life and development of their family.

A combination of the above according to Dames (2006), has led to the collapse of family life in the new Millennium in becoming a key factor in the direct cause of the moral decay in society, where church leaders and parents need to step out of their comfort zones to become 'significant others' in the formation and transformation of young lives and their society.

3.7 Primary role of parents in shaping children's faith

The Bible contains many references to children (Zuck 1996:13–15) and uses quite a number of children-related scriptural terms. Strommen, Merton and Hardel (2008) expand on this to reveal God's desire for families is embodied in relationships, where Scripture focus is not on the family as a collective unit, but rather on the interface established between parents and children, which the authors indicate applies equally to single-parent, blended -family or any configuration that makes up a family.

In this manner, God decreed families to pass down the 'faith' to succeeding generations, and thus the cycle would start again with each new generation. In the New Testament, White (2008:358). Points out that God again made a new beginning with this world and all people with the birth of a child, placing Godself through the birth of Jesus.

By example, Luther and his reformers of the sixteenth century recognized all of the above and the importance of teaching children about the word of God. According to Arand (2000:94-95): Martin Luther outlines the 'who' that are responsible for the

fostering, inspiring, directing and teaching in this process of faith development, between pastors and parents to take responsibility for the teaching of the children who form part of their faith communities. Of these three groups Arand concludes (2000:95) that Luther placed the greatest emphasis on the family. From the very beginning of the evangelical movements, parents were enlisted as valued allies in the formation of holy households

However, according to Brown (2001) the Reformers did more than recognize the importance of Christian training of children, they knew this aspect was key to strengthening family life and the church.

As Painter points out (2010) the Reformers envisioned a family setting where Christian truth was taught and understood. Both parts were essential for building a strong lifelong faith, as this was seen to be fundamental for bonding the family, where strength in the home led to strong church congregants culminating in the 'Family of God.'

However, according to Köstenburg and Jones (2010) many parenting adults have a great concern regarding their standing before one's family and the teaching of Biblical truths, while being commanded to live them out. In addition, they also advocate the family's primary role is *to care for the physical, social, and spiritual well-being of its members*. This includes the kind of provision, protection, and care with which the familial head was charged in Old Testament times and was characteristic of New Testament families.

3.8 Transfer of faith to children

Family is everything to a child, for family is the first place any child forms and experiences relationships. According to Beckwith (2004:101) it is a child's first

experience of community as family, where a child learns and develops an understanding of the world. It is also the first place a child experiences love, intimacy, forgiveness and physical care. It can conversely be the place where a child experiences their first emotional violence, neglect, indifference and physical hurt. Thus, the family forms the most important link for a child's spiritual development and soul care.

In reviewing the above, the question arises if churches have extended themselves enough to empower parents to model faith at home and to make use of appropriate teachable methods to positively nurture their children in spirituality. Research into families and parent child relationships undertaken by Beckwith (2004) advocates that families with high levels of Intergenerational Religious Interaction (IRI) made committed time as an investment to ensure their children remain active members of the faith community, where families need to encourage warm and affirming relationships between children and parents and also parental religious involvement.

Further conclusions emanating from Beckwith's (2004) research speak to the awareness within communities of the challenges facing families today. Parents in these communities demonstrate an eagerness to support and nurture their children's religious journeys. This attitude is contrasted with religious leaders and parents in communities under severe generational pressure that are aging, and many younger people who do not see the reason to follow parental patterns.

In the above, the attitude was found to be more fatalistic, as if the eventual demise of the faith community is inevitable and little can be done to reverse it. Digressing from the above, Arnett's (2004:174) findings illustrate the limited relationship children

experience between the religious training they received from parents throughout childhood, and the religious beliefs they hold by the time they reach emerging adulthood. In consequence, many parent families worry about how they will effectively transmit the faith to the children of the next generation in today's religious pluralism.

King and Roeser (2009) follow up on this aspect in their research comparing young adults with their parents, concluding that the evidence clearly indicates that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents, is their parents. Of the mainline churches, Beckwith concludes (2004) the modus operandi with children's ministries hardly take the child's family into account, as most ministries associated with children begin to segregate them in appropriate age groups, providing teaching and activities for them while parents are segregated to do 'adult' happenings. In consequence, it is not surprising that when parents leave church, they have few tools to help them in the spiritual development of their children.

According to Beckwith (2004:104) mainline churches children's programmes are often used as a marketing tool to attract adults to the church, where the large attendance numbers these churches crave are built on programmes that have little to do with the soul care of the children, and everything to do with what the consumer wants.

Beckwith (2004:30) also advocates that these generations of children believe in inclusion, not exclusion. Thus, millennials have an intellectual openness not seen in preceding generations, where they value personal freedom of choice. Millennials seem to believe intuitively that each person should do what is right for him/her, that each person should discover his/her own story of the world and live that out with integrity.

This tolerance of other views and values according to Barry and Nelson (2005:115) is classically postmodern, as it refers to the role of religion in the transition to adulthood. Young people tend to question the beliefs in which they were raised, placing greater emphasis on individual spirituality than affiliation to any religious institution. The post-modern tends to pick and choose the aspects of religion that suit them best.

Following on from the above, Kirkpatrick Johnson and Monserud (2009:387) describe individualism as an orientation towards one's own welfare. The result of this focus on the 'self' appears to be a search for an ultimate meaning in life. In distancing oneself from formal structures and from the church, the young emerging adult protracts to be rootless and yearning for spirituality unique to postmodern times of the new Millennium.

3.9 Conclusions

Parents today must recognize that it is impossible for their children to accept the moral truths about life if they do not live and practice this in their homes. Without this, they are failing to help their children to see how the faith is applied and has meaning in their everyday lives. While it is true that there is no such thing as perfect parents and that children should not expect perfection, parents must be coherent. Kurth (2013:72) points out that children have every right to expect their parents to live a lifestyle that reflects the faith values that they proclaim to teach and believe. However, with the decline of the nuclear family and the emergence of a diversity of single-parent and no-parent families, this is a key area for the church to engage in mission with all parent groups in development of spiritual life with their children.

In this respect, Sisemore (2000) points to the theology of John Calvin who tenaciously advocated that children be viewed as gifts from God, warning that 'unless parents

regard their children as the gift of God, they are careless and reluctant in providing for their support'. Parents are not to neglect caring for precious little ones but are to nurture and discipline them in the way of the church.

Much has been written and debated about the rights and duties of family, of parents and of children according to Lawler (2002) for Christians the duties and rights are primarily theological, and their theological formation is clear: and thus the cycle would start again with each new generation.

Throughout the Bible, we see that God's intent has always been that parents should provide the basic spiritual instruction. For example, in Deuteronomy 6:5-7 we read:

You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

The church has an important role in the life of every child that is a part of it. Every child brought into the church comes under the influence of the entire fellowship of faith. It is the task of the entire congregation to pray, work and live in such a manner that these children come to know the Lord and His ways. But parents always have the major influence upon their children, so much so that if parents are not converted, children who profess faith often do not continue to follow the Lord.

Further, if a child is abandoned to the world, it makes little difference to the child whether the parent was involved in sin or in good works, the child is still abandoned. The duties of Christian parenthood flow from the nature of their God. Just as God is love, the first duty of parents is to love their children (1 John 4:8). Because all children are wanted by God and are important to God, Christian parents seek to bring their

children into God's presence, and God's presence into their children's lives through prayer (Luke 18:15-16).

Sometimes in their zeal to promote evangelism and missions, Christians have belittled the importance of the ministry of parents in the home. The truth is that there is no better place to teach and develop future Christians. It is in the home that we have a chance to show how Christianity applies to every part of life. In addition, when families are falling apart throughout our nation, there is no more important Christian duty than to model Christian homes to our culture.

Children are seen to be different from adults because they are in the process of growing and developing. They understand the world differently to adults and relate to the world differently as well. As Beckwith (2004:41) points out, it is incumbent upon adults to understand something of the way a child develops spiritually.

Parents need to get into the minds, emotions and spirits of children at various stages of their growth, to understand who they are and how God relates to them as pre-school or grade school age children, through to emerging young adults.

With the rapid change of culture and environment in today's world, many parents have forgotten what it was like to think and feel as a child. In consequence, adults tend to fall into the trap of treating children as if they do not understand life and what is happening around them. Allen (2008:361) elaborates further by reminding the best way for adults to learn to be childlike is to spend quality time with them, so they can influence the adult component, as the adult seeks to influence them.

In other words, the church needs to re-focus on equipping and sustaining all categories of parents to effectively deal with growing the child in the faith. This is essential in the new Millennium in order to determine the impact, or lack of it, in the exodus of young people from the church.

Chapter Four elaborates further in exploring various issues contributing to young people's exiting from the church. Children, who were brought up in the church, attended various teaching programmes and were baptized at a young age, are now choosing not to be involved as adults. This decision to leave and not return to church is a disturbing trend with significant outcomes.

The connection between identity formation and faith formation, as well as the community seeking character of Christian faith-formation, is vital for youth ministry today. Cloete (2012b:70) agrees that identity formation and faith formation are interrelated processes necessary for becoming who we already are in Christ. Youth ministry sometimes neglects this connection and tries to focus on the spiritual without recognising how these two processes are interrelated. Youth ministry should help to focus on real life issues and experiences of young people and not only on cognitive processes of knowing or behavioural changes, by creating a space where the youth can discover themselves in the face of God (Cloete 2012b:70).

Chapter Four will endeavour to address the issues that have contributed to young people exiting the church. The second aspect is to understand what has caused them to stay away from church. Linked to this is the aspect of the intra-generational gap that exists between the elderly and the young.

The concept of a generation is found often in Scripture. In the New Testament, a simple word search reveals 163 usages of the word 'generation' or its plural. In the Old Testament, there are 61 usages in the Pentateuch alone, and 128 in total. This does not even begin to look at the concept as used in other contexts or linguistic structures, such as the concept of 'families' or 'inheritance'. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to deal with the Biblical and cultural usage of these concepts.

Areas of focus in the next chapter will be life changes at home and the church, faith and spirituality, the impact of past generations and their legacy, intergenerational ministry, modernism and post modernism culture within the family and church.

CHAPTER FOUR

Young people exiting the church.

Determining the root problems/issues of young adults dropping out of church life is significant. However according to Jones (2008) most young adults classified as a generation cohort of Y and Z no longer follow the typical path of leaving home, getting an education, finding a job, getting married and having children of their own, all before the age of 30 (as referred in Chapter Three). This chapter will endeavour to address the issues are causing the exodus of young people from the church, and to understand, what has caused them to stay away from church. In this regard, Jones (2008:182) states that 'young people have been seen as a social barometer, as indicators of the state of the society they live in'.

4.1 Overview

According to Schoeman (2012), mainline religious denominations are greatly concerned at the ongoing decrease of membership in their congregations. Small rural churches are experiencing a shift in attendance. Members of the congregation are becoming older, while young people who have grown up in the church are leaving with limited new members being received. Research undertaken by Black (2006:19) concludes that numerous strategies to reach out to a younger generation have seemed to fail, and that the reasons for this are complex.

This aspect is further highlighted by Codrington (2000) who points out that between the age of teenage confirmation and the end of their twenties, young people move from a period of adolescence to midlife. In these intervening years, young people tend to

focus energy on their new-found freedom, creating a perceived niche for themselves as adults in the world.

Young people of today are classified as millennials. They are significantly influenced by a combination of marketing, media, technology changes and other factors within their social environment. According to Codrington (2000) these young people are similar to a first-born generation in a new country. They have no memories of the past, nor the means by which to understand their parents' and the elderly's lives in relation to preceding generations.

Building further on this aspect Codrington (2000) points out that there has been a growing divide between the life experience of today's middle-aged and older adults, and the world in which today's young people are growing up. Established ethics and values held for decades are falling by the wayside, while ideas and methodologies that used to work no longer appear to achieve the desired results in the new Millennium.

These factors include communal relationships, the influence of parents/guardians, friends and church leaders. Other factors include the area where they grew up, their schooling, culture and the media. Zacharias (2004:167) adds to the above in advocating that today's youth, possibly has greater social freedom than at any other point in South African history – with concomitant greater responsibility, disposable income and lifestyle being placed in their hands. This significant shift of polarity in lifestyle and many other factors, has tended to influence young people's decision to either stay within the framework of traditional mainline churches or not. Consequently many have left.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the attributes that contribute to the lack of young adults' participation in churches and their eventual demise and departure. According to Stromen and Hardel (2008) the development of strategies to reach young adults depends on the manner church leaders view the concepts of spirituality and religiosity. In response to prevailing situations, church leaders have tended to develop programmes and strategies based on the *perceived* necessity to fulfil the spiritual needs of young adults. The downside of this occurs where spiritual needs are being defined by older adults without the inter-generational input of young adults. The failure of their outreach efforts is reflecting the call for an understanding of the young adults' spirituality. In consequence Stromen and Hardel (2008:16-17) conclude the traditional youth ministry is in crisis mode, due to the church not being able to lead the youth to Christian maturity

Dreyer (2004:920) quantifies and expands on the above. He advocates that church membership is decreasing globally, concomitant with the decline in numbers of young adults that attend services, where young people are becoming less involved with the church as an institution. Young adults appear to have greater work pressures to contend with and in consequence they have an abundant choice with allocation of their personal time to leisure and social activities, which in turn could detract them from attending a church. Dreyer (2004:922) expands further implying reasons for decreased church attendance among young adults is their postmodernist views, where they believe they are more informed about life and services available due to their greater accessibility of information. Hence young adults can decide whether or not they want to attend church services coupled with what type of church resonates with their views on life and their ability to contribute per se.

Dreyer (2004:921) also points out that efforts regarding falling church attendance is not a new phenomenon, as this emerged in social sciences as early as 1960, which indicated high attendance during childhood was common, then tapered during adolescents with young adults opting to leave the church altogether, with small numbers returning in their thirties and forties. The mere fact that such a low percentage returns is a grave concern to Dreyer (2004:936). Continuity of faithful congregants is the life-blood of the church, which in turn is imperative if religious communities are to continue into the future.

In consequence mainline churches need to respond by formulating an appropriate paradigm shift in reaching out to them, welcoming this new generation who are God's children with new ideas and different life styles.

If we don't wake up in the church and begin to radically examine the issues and change direction in what we are doing to connect with today's youth - then we've lost them (De Vries 1994:10).

4.2 Children and youth

The term 'children' is defined by Louw and Louw (2007:388) as being aged between ten and fifteen years, during which period they undergo many changes in their lives. At this age they are confronted with numerous social, physical and psychological aspects for the first time. Adding to the above, Newman and Newman (2001) conclude that some children in this age group may also be subjected to a variety of risk factors during this development phase, associated with minimal parental supervision, substance abuse and stressful encounters, impacting on their lives.

The term youth as defined by the National Youth Policy (2015), is any person between the ages of 15 and 35 years, which according to Louw and Louw (2007:488–495) is

the transition phase between childhood dependence and adult independence, where the individual comes to terms in building a social identity, gaining acceptance among peers and developing opposite sex relationships. It is during the above period that Louw and Louw (2007) strongly advocate the role of the church to embrace the youth in assisting with the above, in connecting with God's calling of a Christian identity, and address the challenges outlined above. This aligns with Scripture (John 17:3) which highlights that God wants all human beings to know him and have an eternal life relationship with him.

Taking cognisance of the above, according to Hendriks and Grobbelaar (2009:363), the current trend with children and church youth ministry in South Africa, is based on a 'school type model'. This is based on a teach and listen component as opposed to one of interactive cognitive orientation learning, where an individual's experiences and acquired knowledge all contribute to who that person will become.

In understanding the church's role and function of children's and youth's ministry in regard to the above, De Vries (2004:21) postulates for a new understanding of children and the youth within a church community. In the same context, Strong (2014:3) points out that for too long youth ministry in mainline churches has been structured as an independent ministry, resulting in its isolation from the larger church community. Adding support to the above conclusions, Hendricks and Grobbelaar (2009) have also identified the need for developing new structures that seek to embrace the spiritual growth of vulnerable children and the youth.

4.3 Identity formation - adolescence

Erikson (1968) describes the psychosocial task of identity formation at this stage of an adolescent as a crisis, or a turning point, a temporary period of confusion, during which adolescents explore, question existing values and experiment with alternative roles in order to develop an own set of values and goals.

Davis (2012) adds to the above by advocating that peers have an increasing impact on adolescent identity formation as they move towards becoming independent from their parents. They begin to spend more time with their peers, developing identity, interests and values that grow into a sense of belonging.

These aspects are reaffirmed in the findings of a study conducted by Nel and Van der Westhuizen (2015:14) that indicates how significantly parents play an important role in the faith development of their children. In consequence, the parenting tasks during adolescence are in some ways harder than giving the simple yes and no of earlier childhood. However, when parents are in partnership with God during this process, one can cope better in moving forward and enjoy the rewards discovering the adult relationship that emerges within the family between parent and child.

Research undertaken by Romano (2004) illustrates how parenting and identity are significantly interlinked, where parents can help or hinder the process of identity formation by means of their childrearing behaviours that facilitate identity formation, including encouragement of self-expression and an authoritative, yet loving, discipline style.

In today's world, many parents and older adults in the church view the current situation of youth and adolescent growth as nothing more than an extreme form of the generation gap that they equate from their own youth.

However, according to Dunn and Senter (1997:187) this gap contributes toward tension and frustration for young and old alike, which is a contributing factor in some respects to the alienation of some church youth ministries. This causes young people to lose faith in their elders' ability to understand and guide them into future maturity within the church.

In contrast, older generations have tended to become frustrated because young people simply do not seem to want to listen to their advice or follow in their lifestyle footsteps. Equally so, the young appear frustrated because they perceive no guiding light or words of wisdom applicable to the path they are on and into the future.

Chapter Six contains comments from young people interviewed face to face, where views expressed show that the easy solution to their problem is to equate the church with the attitude of their parents/adults. When they do this, many conclude that the church is outdated, irrelevant and does nothing to help or retain them in transition to adulthood. This is elaborated on further in Appendix C

4.4 Understanding generational differences and intergenerational ministry

The Theory of Generations, as highlighted by Piltcher (1994) was originally posed by Karl Mannheim in his 1923 essay *The Problem of Generations* in which he defined a

generation as a group of individuals of similar ages whose members have experienced a noteworthy historical event within a set period of time.

The understanding of difference in generations and the gap between them, has many applications in all aspects of life, from parents interacting with children, to interaction with members of the church and community, as well as many other areas.

During the past century, and more especially the past forty years or so according to Codrington (2000), the world around us has been both shrinking and expanding in many aspects due to the impact of global forces, combined with international media, news channels, communication technologies and the increasing interconnectedness of the world at large. All of which has spread rapidly to increasing numbers of people around the world being impacted by defining events, in facing similar issues, and sharing similar experiences.

Cohort terms such as Baby Boomer, Generation X, the Millennial Generation, Generation Y and Z - and other similar designations, have been widely used as outlined by Codrington and Grant-Marshall (2004:102) and others, to describe groups of people within different age groupings. These terms have become fairly well known and used in recent years.

These particular designations arise from numerous theories that attempt to explain how different generations develop different value systems, and the impact that this has on how young and older people interact with the world around them, and with each other.

Thus, according to Codrington and Grant-Marshall (2004:114) generational theory attempts to explain some of the important differences between people, and how they act, react and interact according to different environments. As one moves through the journey of life our value systems are shaped by various factors such as culture, religion, gender, personality, class and socio-economics etc. However, Codrington and Grant-Marshall (2004) point out they are also shaped by the era in which we are born, and moulded by our parents, peers and world events, all of which have contributed to defining our formative years as a child.

Simply stated, Codrington and Grant-Marshall's (2004:120) generational theory explains that the era in which a person was born affects the development of their view of the world. Our personal value systems one takes with into the journey of adulthood, are shaped within the first decade of our lives, by our families, our friends, our communities, significant events around us and the general era in which we are born.

Definition of the word generation as observed by Nash (1978) explains a generational cohort may span a period of up to twenty years where each generation is identified by birth year, while members have varying outlooks and intentions. Nash (1978) also points out generations are influenced by significant life experiences, where understanding of the above is depicted in figure 8 below, reflecting the various cohort groups spanning over the last eighty years.

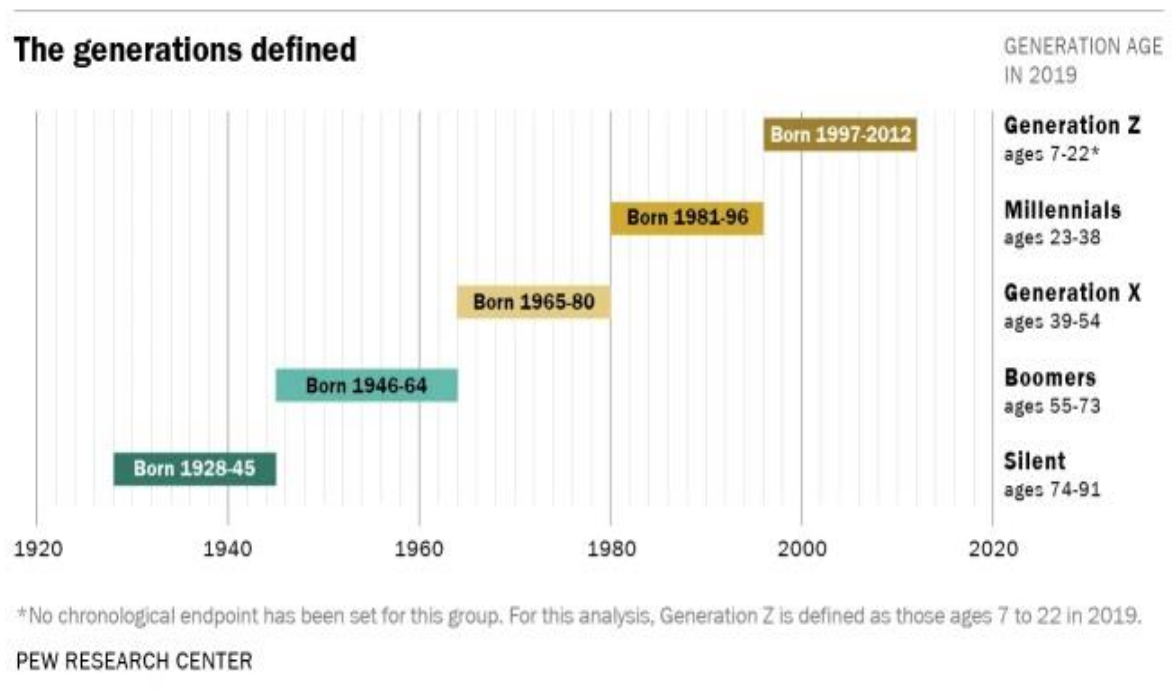


Figure 8. Generations Defined (Sourced Pew Research 2019)

In order for the church to understand a generation's general similarities and differences within and between cohorts as being similar to cultures, Papenhausen, (2006) points to common values, beliefs and shared experiences that form the basis of the definition of the cohort.

Based on their individual experiences, according to Seaton and Boyd (2007), many people from a distinct generation have been 'programmed' to view the world and filter information through their own 'generational lenses' This development of personality traits as detailed by Loughlin and Barling (2001) is primarily formed on the basis of their experiences during their formative years, together with own their degree of creativity.

According to Kolbada (2015) an understanding of generational differences can be particularly helpful for churches trying to determine how to reach millennials and other

young people. Theologically, different generations have been influenced in different ways and bring a different understanding to Scripture, with both spiritual strengths and weaknesses.

Shaw and Kolbada (2015) also point out that when young people aged 14 and under are taken into account, churches today for the first time have five generations among their members. In consequence many churches don't know what to do with twenty - somethings, who are probably the most complex part of the church to minister to.

Shaw and Kolbada (2015) also conclude that their research has shown that taking an older adult and matching them up with a young person and texting them in maintaining some kind of connectedness, the likelihood they will drop out of church was shown to be radically reduced.

Building upon this, the number of Gallup surveys conducted over the past 30 years that use a similar measure of religion's importance, confirm that religion is somewhat less important for Millennials today than it was for members of Generation X when they were of a similar age. A Gallup poll research survey (2010) conducted on religion in the millennial generation, indicated that 40% of respondents replied religion is very important, as did 48% of Gen Xers in the late 1990s. However, the survey concluded that young people were compatible with Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 64) at a similar

point in their life cycle; in the Gallup poll survey correlation, only 39% of Boomers said religion was very important to them as indicated in Figure 9 below;

Importance of Religion, by Generation

Percent saying religion is very important in their lives

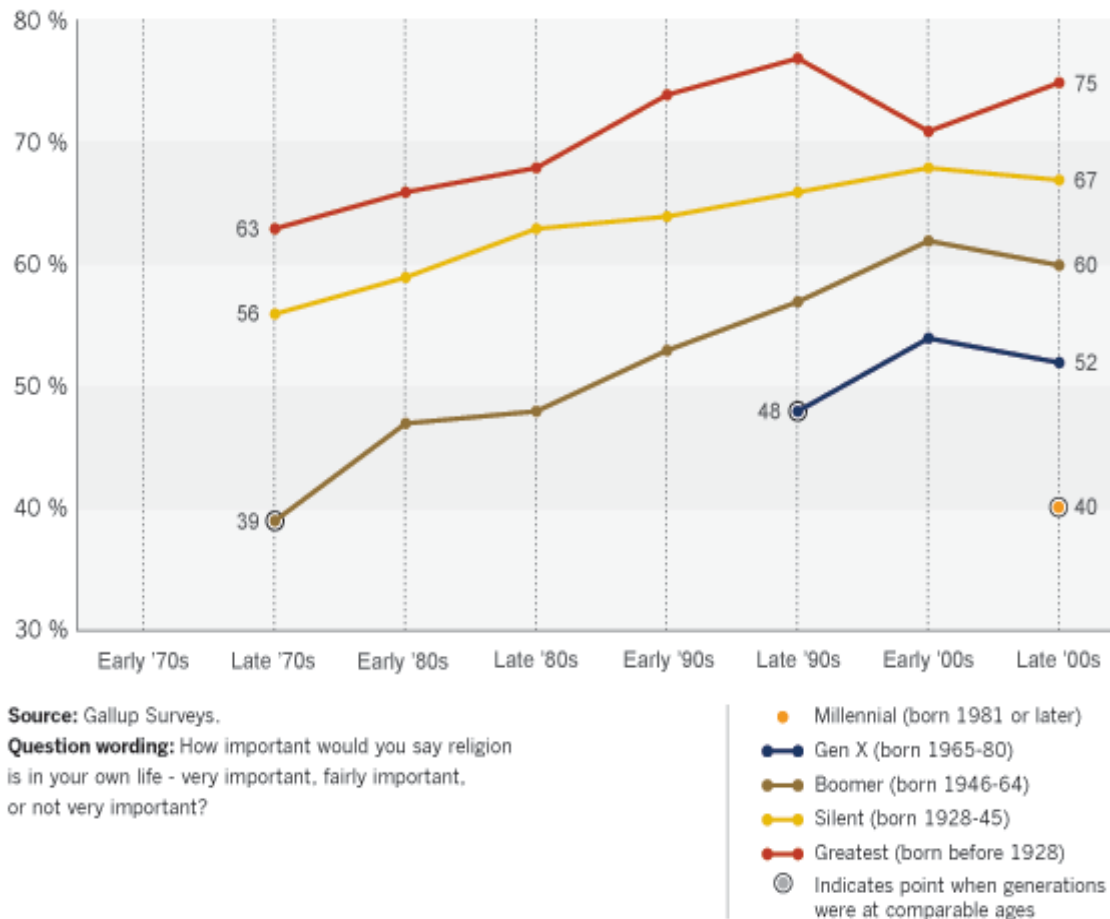


Figure 9. Pew Research Centre Forum on Religion in the Millennium Generation. February 2010.

4.5 Generational cohorts

4.5.1 The Greatest Generation

According to Strauss and Howe (1993:39) the Greatest Generation born before 1928 are those who grew up when the term - 'children should be seen and not heard' was used frequently by both parents and mature adults.

For the Greatest cohorts, according to Strauss and Howe (1993:279) reflecting their faith was expressed best in 'doing'. Their ministry focus was on building the institution, while extension of the church was a primary goal, often achieved by collaboration and liberalization, in practice and theology. Prominent ideologies were the same as the generation before.

With this cohort group, many demographers have grouped the GI and Silent generations together, as they believed that a sound knowledge of the Bible was the fundamental key to living a good Christian life.

In contrast, McIntosh (1995) concludes this generation of society had become somewhat disillusioned, as they saw the protective family structure of their youth disintegrating around them, caused mainly by their own families that were falling apart as a result deterioration of family structure and values.

4.5.2 The Boomers

The generation born between 1946 and 1964 has become known as the Baby Boomers. According to Strauss and Howe (1991) many Boomer children were raised on Dr Spock permissiveness, which, in conjunction with advent of the Birth Control Pill, was one of the influences leading to the sexual revolution of the 1960's.

Thus, in terms of early experiences of faith and religious life, according to Regele (1995:149) they were the focus of the greatest generation's move towards structure and institution, especially of how church should be done.

Regele (1995) comments, the baby boomers primary focus was on the experience of living in the moment, coupled with values of freedom, self-realisation and autonomy. This included a 'modernism' perspective on life and a do it yourself outlook towards Spirituality.

According to Anderson (2000) this new found self-awareness and social freedom allowed the boomers to break any ties or expectations of preceding generations seen during the 1960's. In consequence, older generations had great difficulty understanding the fickle spirituality of the boomers. Anderson (2006) elaborates further in pointing out that these ongoing life changes left many boomers disillusioned with tradition, authorities and autocratic institutions, explaining that boomers became increasingly unwilling to take any orders from pastors, or church organizations that excluded them from the 'ownership process'

Adding to the above, Olson and Beckworth (2011:389) concluded that baby boomers were religiously less active than their parents/grandparents and in turn may have lost confidence in the mainline denominations in which they were raised.

4.5.3 Generation X

This cohort termed generation X, were those born between 1965 and 1980, where according to Collins-Mayo and Savage (2006:6) this generation arrived during a time of significant upward prosperity and quantum leaps forward in technology. This resulted in growth of tendencies, towards self-entitlement of what their parents had attained – but without having to wait years to achieve this, resulting in the new style tendency, to 'have now and pay later'.

In consequence, this was a generation that often arrived to an empty home, as both parents were working, or in the case of a single parent home, where the remaining parent had to work to just to survive.

Consequently, according to Anderson (2000:107) many Generation Xs often grew up in unstable family relationships, or blended families.

According to Van Zyl Slabbert (1994:20) nearly a third of Johannesburg's children and nearly half of Soweto's fell into this category during the above cohort time period.

Savage, Collins, Mayo and Cray (2006) provide an insight of the ideologies of generation X, which includes prominent ideologies of post modernism, consumerism, pluralism, individualism, spiritual introversion, and new age theology. Much of this may have had a significant influence on children's outlook, growing up in their formative years and into their teens.

4.5.4 Generation Y - The Millennial Generation.

In a South African context, this generation consists of those who have no personal memory of events preceding this time frame. However, according to Savage, Collins, Mayo and Cray (2006) Generation Y have experienced many aspects that earlier generations would only see at a more mature stage, such as abortion being a common event and divorce of parents requiring readjusting to a new family style relationship. Rainer (2006:23) distinguishes this generation as those growing up in a global village world where nothing appears out of reach to them.

Savage, Collins, Mayo and Cray (2006) term them as an instant generation ready for anything, yet struggle with the idea of mainline religion. In addition, they have a disdain for the hypocrisy they encounter in some churchgoers who have a holier than thou attitude who do not demonstrate what they preach.

As a result of the above, many of this cohort have regarded church services as being 'staid' and indicated this was the start of their decline and eventual departure from church. Anderson (2000:82) advocates that in consequence of the above, the attitude of this generation can leave many previous generations frustrated and confused. This generation cannot come to terms with their parent's devotion that settles for perceived lesser quality out of devout loyalty to the church.

4.5.5 Young Children Today

According to Pitman (2009:11) the generation born after 1990 are referred to as Generation Z. or the Emerging Generation. According to Codrington and Marshall (2004:98) there is great interest in this generation. For each generation over the past twenty – thirty years has contained more and more of a postmodern worldview. While Kimball (2004:9) comments that emerging generations are being raised with a different philosophical outlook, values and worldview. Perhaps more than generations X and Y, technology is an integral part of generation Z lifestyle, where perhaps there is a reasonable assumption that this generation will probably exhibit a greater percentage of postmodern sensibilities than even Generation Y.

Adding to the above, Stark (2016:63) points out that this generation are increasingly resistant to simplistic black and white views of the world and the church, and it is

critically important how you communicate with them as a significant majority experience modern-day Christianity to be judgmental in nature.

This in turn necessitates the church to look to the future of ministry in understanding this worldview, and developing strategies toward the unique challenges of this generation and how to effectively grow them accordingly in the faith.

4.6 Intra-generational gap

The speed of innovation and development driven by technology according to Yarrow and O'Donnell, (2009:79) is widening the age gap between subsequent generations. As outlined above, significant differences exist between different age groups in today's world where cohorts share fewer commonalities. This is very evident as pointed out by Yarrow and O'Donnell (2009:100) in the Millennials generation Y and Z, as they emerge from teens to early twenties and thirties, their reasoning skills improve, they become less self-centred, more confident about who they are, and less reliant on others for reassurance.

However, as Snailum (2012:176) points out, numerous mainline churches focus on implementing differentiated programmes for adults to grow and mature in Christ, in the belief they need to be free of childcare responsibilities, and furthermore for children to develop properly the need to experience age-appropriate activities.

Adding to the above, Wuthnow (2007) stipulates that many churches are marketing themselves to target the unique needs of individual age groups. Breaking down the church family into categories based on age, education, and social need which is a rather new phenomenon within the history of the church. Wuthnow (2007) further adds

the benefits of a ministry that is customized for each group is that there is literally 'something for everyone,' or at least everyone under 18 years of age. However, on the downside when ministry is structured for each age group or developmental stage it then becomes isolated into silo's, where each are not aware of what the respective groups of children are undertaking in Sunday school, while the youth group do not know what their parents are doing, as a result of being in a different worship space.

White (1995) adds to the above in concluding, that ministry based age-specific developmental needs and the uniqueness of this present generation, the church has isolated the respective generations from each other, and from the wisdom of those who have gone before them. Wuthnow (2007:20) observations and conclusions are important for the mainline church to understand in the ongoing search for new models of ministry, where Wuthnow (2007) advocates that religion is embedded in the social environment, and consequently it becomes influenced by this environment. 'What people do religiously depend what they believe is shaped by their own life situation.' Consequently, understanding their life situation and the opportunities available to today's generations, may well be the starting point for strategizing an effective ministry, embracing an intergenerational ministry.

4.7 Conclusion

In the South African Census 2018, those under age 30 accounted for 56%, and those over 60 for 8% of the population. Both of these percentages are expected to grow considerably in the next few years. Gerontologists have focused on the elderly, and youth specialists on the young, but these two groups have hardly ever worked together.

There is certainly a great need for this to happen, however, this dissertation does not allow scope for this.

Research in this area shows that having regular intergenerational interactions can benefit younger and older alike – and there are good Biblical principles which shed light on how God would have us operate. God’s commands for his people in the Old Testament clearly identify the Israelites as a relational community where the children were to grow up participating in the culture they were becoming. In the religion of Israel, children were not just included; they were drawn in, assimilated, and absorbed into the whole community with a deep sense of belonging.

The task that Scripture lays at the feet of the older generations is to be the guiding lights for the young - to hold the torch up to illuminate the path which must be travelled. This can only be done if those following are continuing in the same path. Unfortunately, all of the changes in society over the last 20 years in particular, and the last 50 in general, mean that the path that today's young people are walking is very different from that of the older generations. The older generations are frustrated because the young don't seem to listen to their advice or follow their footsteps. The young are frustrated because they see no guiding light or words of wisdom applicable to the path they are on.

The findings in Chapter Four especially in the areas of culture and sub-culture flow into Chapter Five which examines the relevant factors impacting on youth, and this specific field of ministry within the mainline church.

CHAPTER FIVE

Youth and ministry

Nel and De Waal (2000:100) conclude that youth ministry is a ministry 'to' youth and 'with' youth, but it is always conscious that ministry exists 'through' (by means of) the youth. Adolescence is the time for youth to find their identity and to form a peer group, with youths that are on a similar developmental level. In addition, Nel and De Waal (2000:101) point out that according to Christianity, identity-finding means to become the person who you are, as you are created, and recreated by God, which is about guidance to find your given identity.

In reviewing research into Youth ministry, Senter (2001) contends since its inception in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, youth ministry has had an inside-out and outside-in relationship to the church. However, in the mid-Twentieth century, youth ministry was a strong force. In consequence, youth leaders had a free hand to do as they wished, as long as the actual church remained unaffected. Thus, discipleship was good for the young people, but not readily accepted from the older generation, who judged according to their cultural upbringing.

In reviewing the status of youth ministry, De Vries (2004:21) raises concerns that this has been structured as an independent ministry, leading to young people being isolated from participating with the larger community and roles of the church, especially with their parents. This aspect is supported by Dunn and Senter (1997) who advocate that this independence of youth ministry by the church has led to the perception of youth being part of a set programme in the body of the church, and not being part of it.

Nel (2001:3) concludes that youth ministry and young people themselves are part of the total congregational ministry, and not a separate entity. It is an integral part of the congregational whole, in that the whole is never complete without youth ministry at the centre. In consequence Nel (2001:6) questions how theology and the congregation can become more sensitive to and aware of the culture of young people. How can the youth become more aware of theology and the congregation as a whole? In short how can young people find a place in the church?

The problem expressed with many of today's youth programmes and ministries according to De Vries (1994:142) is they tend to judge young people's involvement/leadership in accordance with traditional church processes, without them understanding what is required;

In essence, this deprives young people of the very relationships that can most effectively lead them to a Christian maturity within the church. But, undergirded by Christian families understanding and the extended family of the church, well defined and structured youth leadership programmes, can greatly enhance a young person's growth in Christ (De Vries 1994:142).

Building on the above; Nel (2001) points out that the 'changing local church' is therefore the principle temporal agent in youth ministry. It is part of the continuity in youth ministry that has to be maintained, for the youth have time after time, responded to genuine warmth and care evidenced by adults in the faith community, - which is the nurturing they seek as they grow in faith to maturity.

Wuthnow (2007) adds to the above, in noting this current generation is not radically different than preceding generations for they are dealing with many of the same 'season of life' issues that individuals, couples, and families have always encountered.

The principle difference with today's younger generation is they have been identified as being so radically diverse by the older generations (and the church), that they are traveling through these milestones alone, or with little input and support from previous generations.

Adding to the above, Wuthnow (2007:20) concludes these observations are important for the church to note and consider, as it discerns the need for new and appropriate models for ministry, and claims that the basic premise of social science research is that religion is embedded in social environment, and is thus influenced by this environment. Thus, understanding the life situation and the opportunities available to today's young people generation may be the starting point for the church in strategizing effective ministry to the youth.

The above comments align with a research study conducted by Smith and Denton, (2009), where young people do not appear to have a sufficient number of adults, including parents, and others who are vested in their spiritual formation. One of the reasons being adults are not adequately grounded in knowledge of the faith and unable to engage young people in meaningful religious issue discussion.

Smith and Denton (2009) conclude, in essence, the faith formation of children, young people, and adults is undermined because of a failure to enter into conversations that would enable them to clarify their faith in a constructive manner what is good for the spiritual lives of young people is good for the spiritual health of church congregations in learning from Scripture that faith is nurtured when the generations tell the stories of God to each other.

Current youth ministry practice in Africa (and more so South Africa) according to Webber (2014), has relied heavily on international principles and concepts, primarily from America. As a result, Cloete (2012:72-73) points out that the technological and information era we live in has resulted in the youth of today being more informed about different religious traditions and life in general from a very early stage of life.

However, while youth may be more informed, Nel (2001) points to the criticality of identity formation and faith formation, being a necessary interrelated process in understanding who we already are in Christ. Often, those responsible for youth ministry structures sometimes neglect this connection and try to focus on the spiritual, without recognising how these two processes are significantly interrelated. (Cloete (2012:70). expands further on this aspect, by advocating youth ministry should be directed to focus on real life issues and experiences of young people, and not only on cognitive processes of knowing or behavioural changes, hence creating spaces where young people can begin to discover themselves in knowing God.

Taking cognisance of the above, Dean (2010:3, 24) concludes from his research that traditional youth ministry is in a crisis today, advocating that the principles and teaching practiced is not effective in leading the church youth to a mature status, which implies that traditional youth ministry is being practised as an independent ministry, and advocates this isolation as 'autonomous Youth Ministry'.

Research undertaken by Smith and Snell (2009:259) concurs with the above, advocating that this style of youth ministry has not been effective in developing the youth to become mature adult Christian's. Nel (2001:8) expands further by concluding the current state of Youth Ministry in South Africa is not unique, as this traditional

approach has resulted in a global loss of youth to Christ. To counter this loss going forward, both the parental home and church must work in a partnership, to attain retention and spiritual growth of the youth.

5.1 Empowering parents as spiritual leaders

In order for youth ministry leaders to be effective in their role, it is important to apportion the leadership and primary responsibility of raising children to spiritual maturity back to their parents, as God intended it to be. Accordingly, De Vries (2004:9–10) argues that the most substantial Youth Ministry with the utmost positive results is the ministry that relates to young men and women as members of families. Strommen and Hardel (2008:269) concur with this point in noting the vital role that parents play in establishing family relationships as well as how the family relates to God. Instead of taking the responsibility off the shoulders of parents to raise their children in the ways of God, Barna (2006:35) advocates it is clearly the church's responsibility to train and empower parents as spiritual leaders, in order to be the primary spiritual coaches for their children, as research findings indicate most Christian parents do not believe they are doing a good job at facilitating the spiritual development of their children.

Strommen and Hardel (2008:142) build on the above in stating that parents need to be taught how to connect with their children through the sharing of Scripture stories within the church community, and also how to pray with their children. Only when parents feel empowered as spiritual leader's, will they have the courage to take up their responsibility as spiritual leaders of their homes in the same way that they take up the responsibility as primary caretakers of their children in all other facets of life. Parents need to realise, that this is the way that God intended it from the very beginning.

As Scripture reveals in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, it is important for parents to understand that children, and especially the youth, need to embrace these years of their lives. For according to Medved and Medved (1998:15) there is a time for everything, and parents need to be aware of fighting against the risks in today's world confronting their children, and preserving the innocence of their loved ones in their formative years.

Research undertaken by Boteach (2006:35) concurs with the above, indicating that we need to shield the youth from the increasingly malign cultural influences that subtly, but constantly persuade our children to skip childhood. Boteach (2006:35) adds to this, concluding that too many of today's youth are left to parent themselves having come from broken homes, or homes where both parents are working away from home. Children's lack of awareness to the at-risks of life can only be protected by parents taking responsibility in raising their children, rather than forcing them to raise themselves.

Adding to the above Van der Ven (1998:30) concludes that young people need to be confronted with the plurality of values, beliefs and cultures they encounter daily, and should not be coerced into only one perspective to the situation. The importance of the faith community and their familial community is in being able to listen to the opinions of others, and also share their opinions with others, as they process their faith in the structures of youth ministry.

5.2 Culture and climate

De Fries (2001) advocates that churches tend to spend an inordinate amount of time defining vision and value statements, together with preparing measurable goals, as opposed to focus on the faith development of children and youth.

At best, De Vries (2001) points out that this time spent on re-defining, simply creates structures that keep the visioning documents before those responsible for building the ministry. Sadly, a vision in itself is not enough. Too often even the most compelling vision is thwarted because in spite of all the right structures being in place, little or no attention has been given to the climate and prevailing culture.

The size of a congregation's youth according to De Vries (2001:24) is the predictor of its overall climate. In addition, the youth have a tendency to be drawn to where the numbers are. In contrast, anti-numbers churches remain status quo as they fail to recognize that the youth are drawn to locations where there is at least a critical mass of peers, where they do not feel uncomfortable all alone.

Although youth ministry may be highly valued by most churches, De Vries (2008:31) advocates while it may have limited across the board success, churches often fail to see the need to invest appropriately in youth ministry culture. In consequence, the difference between an effective and an ineffective youth ministry, is often directly tied to the level of collective investment a church makes. Adding to the above Dean, Clark and Rahn (2001) conclude in some instances Youth Ministries have been built on culture as foundation rather than on theology, where they conclude: Has the church-built Youth Ministry on a theologically sound basis or on a basis of cultural relevance? Although understanding that culture is an important part of connecting to young people in Youth Ministry, it should not be the foundation or heart of the ministry.

5.3 Youth subculture

According to De Vries (2008) it is impossible to think about 'growing up' in today's world without considering the role of 'youth culture' which every young person is confronted

by and must deal with. There is not one monolithic youth culture that defines all young people. Popular youth culture embraces a diversity of sub - cultures where groups distinguish themselves by dress, style, music, body modification practices, race, ethnicity, and language.

In recognizing this paradigm cultural shift, Savage, Mayo and Cray (2006:88) comment that it is of particular note that generation X have become the new parents of generation Y and Z youth, who associate with the peer groups as the social vehicle by which young adolescents have made the transition from their natural parents (through loss of communication) to the peer group, which in turn becomes the new parent from which values are imbibed.

To become part of the 'group' Savage, Mayo and Cray (2006:93) conclude a young person (especially 16 – 19 years) accepts he/she will have to conform, in order to gain a sense of belonging within this peer group. What is important to understand, is these young people will discuss their issues/problems with their peers and ask for their insight and understanding, regarding what action (if any) they should take to resolve the matter.

5.4 Modernism and postmodernism

Modernism, according to Vieth (1995:124) led a world viewed as a community of men and women bound together in a common search for answers. In contrast, postmodernism is leading to a world of individuals floating in a sea of uncertainty, in consequence there are no answers, only questions.

Post-moderns believe that reality or truth is always subjective, as Strauss and Howe (1991:48) point out, one's reality or truth grows out of one's perspective and life experiences. Therefore, the modern idea of a metanarrative or a grand story that explains everything about the world is greeted with incredulity by many young people.

Savage, Mayo and Cray's (2006:97) research in this field conclude that Generation Y and Z young people are spiritual, but being spiritual does not make one a Christian. But because of their acceptance of all points of view, they are uncertain which God they believe in or want to believe in. This has been validated through the empirical research conducted in South Africa (dealt with in Chapter Six) where young people have looked to the church for guidance in their world, and were found wanting.

In consequence of the above, the church per se needs to get into the minds, emotions and spirit of children at varying ages and stages of their lives, to understand who they are and how God relates to them, either as preschool, or high school/post adolescents.

According to Savage, Mayo and Cray (2006) Generation Y and Z have been moulded since infancy by postmodern thinking and advocate that for many of this generation, the truth about postmodernism is plain and clear. In consequence, they are typically modern in their thinking. However, the problem with this thinking is that postmodernism rejects absolutes, and distrusts anything masquerading as false, or even promeneading a real truth. Adding to the above, Zacharias (2000:214) contends that truth is relative, hidden, and unknowable. This is the way postmodern thinking works for these generations, and everything, even their understanding of the culture of postmodernism itself, is filtered through this lens.

However, in contention with the above views Grenz (1996:89) points out that while modernism, may be regarded as on the way out, is far from gone, as the culture of modernism is written throughout the pages of history. While according to Roxburgh (1993:8) there is increasing recognition that many communities in the modern world are in a period of fundamental change in terms of values, spiritual consciousness and worldview. Building on the above an important factor in the breakdown of community is the pluralization of society. Here (Roxburgh 1993:23) indicates how one advocates that community requires a shared vision of the meaning and direction of life, but modernity has produced a pluralized society of divergent visions. The common language of meaning breaks down in the fragmenting decision of choice.

In consequence, society has moved into a period characterized by a loss of shared experience (Roxburgh 1993), where there are a collection of competing subcultures and interest groups, each vying for rights and place, without a common soul to hold it all together. This is not a value judgment about modern society, only a description of where modernity has brought one.

The question that begs to be asked is how the Gospel will be heard in this confusing search for direction. One hears much debate about how to reach baby boomers and baby busters, about the megachurches and supermarket-type Christianity (Roxburgh 1993). Through social media much comment has been offered to churches with a concomitant myriad of new techniques, in an attempt to produce growth and retention of young people.

Despite the above, churches are still missing the bulk of our young people who according to Inglehart and Wentzel (2005) sense that something is profoundly wrong

with our culture and search for a spirituality to make sense of it all. This is especially the case with the Millennium group of young people, who no longer want programmes catering to their every need, but a spirituality that will address the serious issues they see facing the world around them.

5.5 Pluralism and young adolescents

Grenz points out (1996:81) that adolescents have been fed from the hands of pluralism and diversity from their first exposure to the world. Schools in South Africa have been filled with children from a variety of races, cultures and religions. Consequently, it was not uncommon to find oneself with peers who have values and worldviews that vary significantly from their own. In consequence, it is commonplace today for Generation Y to have friends who are openly Buddhist, Atheist, or New Age. Although they may not practice the same lifestyles as their classmates, they tend to view these lifestyles as acceptable and valid, and thus to be tolerated and respected.

Online experience gained through the internet, further extends young adolescents' exposure to a diverse world, vastly different and beyond the understanding of former generations. Zacharias (2000:131) indicates that by visiting chat rooms, and other forms of media/communication they interact with people of radically different beliefs and lifestyles, allowing Generation Y and now Z children, to grow up in an environment which offers them a great variety of options, all presented as equally valid, which in turn defines reality for them.

However, as concluded by Codrington and Grant-Marshall (2004) one really needs to understand the cultural influences and forces that have been brought to bear on each of the preceding generations since the end of World War Two. This is especially the

case during the early formative years from birth, when children's value systems are being shaped. In consequence, one can begin to understand what has made people of different generations develop such different worldviews on life in the past and today.

5.6 Exodus of young people from the church

Research studies regarding church attendance patterns emerged in social sciences as far back as the 1960s. These patterns, according to Dreyer (2004:921–922) indicated that significant involvement with a church 'Sunday School' was common during childhood. However, during adolescence, there is less involvement where young adults leave the church altogether for differing reasons. Dreyer continues (2004:963) that only a small number of young adults return to the church is of great concern, as they are the ongoing life-blood of the church and without their active participation, the church cannot grow, which is imperative if religious communities as we know today, are to continue into the future.

The exodus of young people and the state of the church is not simply a local concern, in South Africa, but internationally also according to Codrington (2000). The above is borne out by extensive research according to Brierly (2016), the generations for whom church-going was part of their life and culture is slowly dying off, but the church is also missing an ability to replace this loss with 'new cohorts'. While quantifiable statistical data is limited on the exodus of young people for churches in South Africa, an in-depth survey conducted by Brierley 'Does the Church have a future,' reflects revealing statistics for all 16 000 UK churches, which presents a very disturbing picture.

- 39% of churches have no-one attending under 11 years of age
- 48% of churches have no-one attending between the ages of 11 and 14
- 71% of churches have no-one attending between the ages of 15 and 25.

Brierly (2016) also points out there has been a worldwide decline in the number of young adults that attend church services as this significant loss works its way through the system over the foreseeable future, the likelihood appears that it will lead to a paradigm shift.

For many young people interviewed face to face through this research, the easy solution to their problem is to equate the church with the attitude of their parents/adults. When they do this, they often conclude that the church is outdated, irrelevant and does nothing to help or retain them.

The above relates to information obtained from a youth survey of 167 respondents, undertaken by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. Details of the report are included as Appendix C.

The survey asked respondents for their comments on:

- What can be done to retain the youth and grow their numbers?
- In your organisation/ministry, what are your challenges in retaining young people in your organisation?
- In which ways have you been successful in retaining young people in your organisation?
- How can your Diocesan Youth Structure improve in efficacy?
- What youth programmes have been implemented in your Diocese?
- How can PYC help your Diocesan Youth Ministry?

Replies in the report tend to align with many of the conclusions as described by Codrington and Grant-Marshall (2004) they attend less and less, then eventually leave. When they do this, they not only abandon the institutionalized church, but very often

also abandon their Christian faith, judging it to be equally irrelevant in their lives. To overcome the above and demonstrate effective youth ministry, Nel points out (2001:66) that this requires a similar in-depth analysis to be undertaken, as the church does of itself, when planning for its future.

Taking cognisance of the above, Jamieson (2002:141), points out that 'all too often those in church leadership find it more convenient to let existing members gradually slip away, while they focus their attention on those coming in the front door.' In consequence they are quick to blame an adolescent for his/her leaving the Church, instead of determining what part the Church played in allowing this to happen. Jamieson (2002:143) also advocates that many young adult leavers felt that 'by their silence the church leadership reinforced their decision to leave.'

Building on the above, Black (2006:100) advocates Youth ministry programmes must continue to evaluate their missional programmatic commitments and strategies, by asking 'who are our targets? How do we best reach out to them? Where do we want these young people to end up when they leave the youth programme, as very few churches see youth ministry as *their missional mandate*.

Evans (2015) is explicit in why generation Y and now Z continue to leave the church, as millennials want to be known for what they are and not for what they are against. They do not want to choose between science and religion or between their intellectual integrity and faith. Instead. They want to bring their whole selves through the church doors without leaving their hearts and minds behind, without wearing a mask.

To counteract the above, the church should heed Scripture:

... the Body of Christ should interact with the youth in the right teaching, encouraging all young men to live wisely in all they do, where you yourself must be an example to them by doing good deeds of every kind (Titus 2:6).

5.7 Conclusions

In reviewing the role of youth ministry, De Vries (2004:21) raises concerns that youth ministry has been structured as an independent ministry in mainline churches, leading to young people being isolated from participating with the larger community of the church and especially with their parents. This view is supported by Dunn and Senter (1997) who advocate that this independence of youth ministry by the church has led to the perception of youth being part of a set programme in the body of the church, and not being part of it.

With the alarming rate of young people leaving the church after High School, youth ministry will testify to the fact that no perfect youth ministry model exists. Weber (2015) supports this view in concluding that youth ministry models employed in Africa need to be revisited, while considering the vision, mission and needs in which they are to be used

In view of the above, Nel (2001:7) advocates that when young people have a passion for God, any approach to youth ministry will result in the church functioning in a Biblical manner. Unfortunately, there are times when the passion of young people grows cold because they have not experienced the church in a manner that will sustain them, either in the present or in the years after they leave youth ministry. In consequence, Malan (2001) suggests that this is the reason that young people seek to meet their spiritual needs and worship elsewhere. The church thus loses young people and drives

them into other organisations that care and treat them as important. In addition, the church rears a generation – even generations – of adults with whom the youths do not wish to identify or associate with. All of this can be fatal to the identity formation of the youths and their faith development.

Research undertaken by Smith and Snell (2009:259) concurs with the above, advocating that this style of youth ministry has not been effective in developing the youth to become mature adult Christians. Nel (2001:8) expands further by concluding ‘the current state of Youth Ministry in South Africa is not unique. To counter this loss going forward, both the home and church must work in a partnership to attain retention and spiritual growth of the youth.

So what changes does the church have to make if youth ministry is to be fully integrated into the life of the faith community, as the most evident deficiency in the nurture of children and youths is the climbing drop-out rate, that compounds as youths move from high school to university or in the workplace (Senter 2001:158).

Senter goes on to say that the church must alter its social structures in order to link the journeys of Christians of all ages where every refinement in ministry vision must draw upon the insights of youths. If the church of tomorrow is to become the church of today, the vision for what we are all about must be forged and maintained together.

The connection between identity formation and faith formation, as well as the community seeking character of Christian faith formation, is vital for youth ministry today (Cloete 2012b:70).

Malan Nel (2008:147) confirms that identity formation and faith formation are interrelated processes necessary for becoming who we already are in Christ. Youth

ministry sometimes neglects this connection and tries to focus on the spiritual without recognizing how these two processes are interrelated. Youth ministry could help to focus on real life issues and experiences of young people and not only on cognitive processes of knowing or behavioral changes, by creating spaces where these youth can discover themselves in the face of God (Cloete 2012b:70).

The next chapter evaluates qualitative research data, and face to face discussions obtained while undertaking a B.Th. in practical church history. In this instance the researcher made use of a structured questionnaire with applicable ethical clearance, coupled with face-to-face interviews with young people and parents, which are very appropriate with the research focus outlined in this chapter. The results emanating from the data will be applied to the South African context.

CHAPTER SIX

Empirical research

This research study has highlighted what is obviously a problem with very grave and far-reaching consequences for those concerned and that there is much the Church needs to address. This chapter focuses on a research survey conducted during 2015 with young people in South Africa to ascertain some of the underlying reasons as to why young adults are leaving the Church. The survey method for this study was a single structured questionnaire, plus face-to-face discussion.

Due to the nature of the research, the target objective was to obtain a valid cross sample of young people from various denominational, cultural, racial and social backgrounds

De Vries (2008:24) concludes that churches tend to spend an inordinate amount of time hammering out vision statements and value statements and preparing measurable goals for youth ministry without taking stock of the total picture. They fail to examine the culture within the church and what factors outside the church adversely or positively impact on it. However, too often a vision in itself is simply not enough. Little or no attention is given to the climate and prevailing culture to allow a step by step planned strategy and growth to take place.

6.1 Introduction

Many of the surveyed respondents attended Sunday school, youth group ministry and church while they were still in school. The purpose of this section of the research is an

attempt to investigate the reasons why young people extricate themselves from the Church, not only as a global phenomenon but particularly within South Africa.

According to Czaja and Blair (2005:3), 'surveys are based on the desire to collect information (usually by questionnaire) from a sample of respondents.' The survey method for this study was conducted by means of a single structured questionnaire.

The groups selected were: Young people (16 – 30) within and outside of the Church

6.2 Questionnaire compilation

The word choice and order in which the questions were placed, was determined from preliminary research/discussions with young people, to ensure that fresh insight would be brought to bear on 'the exodus of young people from the Church'.

This ensured that appropriate questions were asked and gave opportunity to compare results to previous research as outlined in Chapters Two to Five of this thesis.

A totally separate questionnaire (Appendix C) was drafted and conducted by the Provincial Youth Co-ordinator for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) as a first order analysis, to determine reasons why the youth were leaving the church.

6.3 Covering letter

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005:176) 'a covering letter should precede all questions associated with a questionnaire.' The covering letter outlined the questionnaire purpose, together with the importance of questionnaire

completion, making it clear that each respondent's participation would play a key role in the study and that they would remain anonymous on all accounts.

6.4 Types of questions

According to Bradburn, Sudman and Wansink (2004:325), 'a good question is one that yields a truthful, accurate answer.' Use was made of a number of closed ended questions to ensure that respondent's responses could be assessed and measured. However, due to the nature of the study, it was decided that using closed ended questions solely was too limited, thus use was also made of a number of open-ended questions. The research survey was been divided into five sections where;

- Section A: Comprises demographic information.
- Section B: Consists of general questions on Family life and growing up.
- Section C: Focuses on specific questions re Home life, Religion and Christianity
- Section D: Examines 'Youth Ministry and its application'
- Section E: Encompasses respondent's perceptions/experience re the Church.

6.5 Sample size

Due to the nature of the study, the target objective was to try and draw reference from a cross section of respondents, from various denominational, cultural, racial and social backgrounds. A total of 120 questionnaire documents were issued between Gauteng, Free State and Western Cape and 86 replies were returned.

6.6 Analysis and interpretation

According to De Vos (2002:223) 'data analysis entails breaking data down into its constituent parts to obtain answers to specific questions and to test research hypotheses.' While the research study data was analysed methodically, the statistics alone did not provide final answers. Interpretation of the data was very necessary in making suppositions applicable to the research, and drawing conclusions about these.

6.7 Analysis of research replies and results

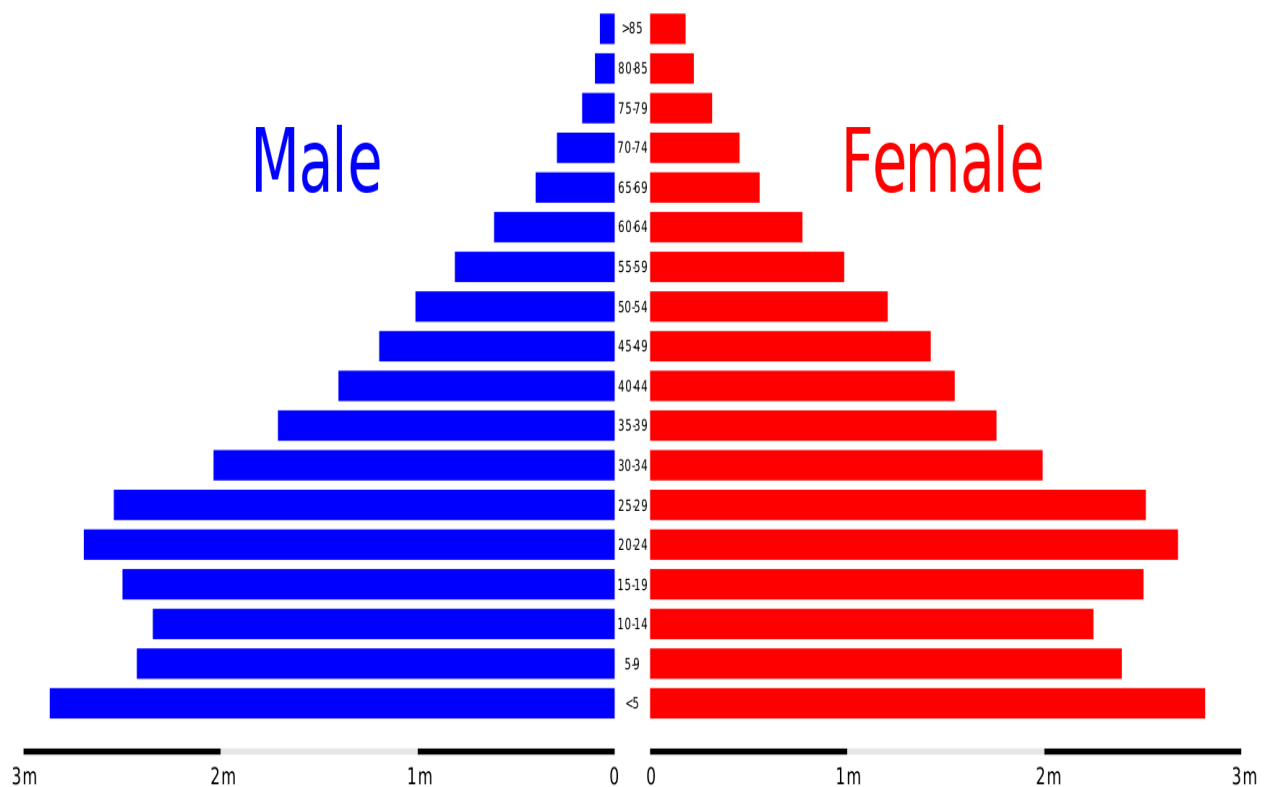
Appendix A contains summarized analysis from the 86 respondents, of which 37% were male and 49% female, whose ages ranged from 16 – 30 years. The following sections of the report - A, B, C, D and E, contain pertinent key points and comments extracted from the summarized analysis.

6.7.1 Section A: Demographic information

According to South Africa Stats 2019 mid-year census, South Africa is a nation of 58.78 million people of diverse origins, cultures, languages and beliefs. The total population (reflected at Figure 1) is represented by

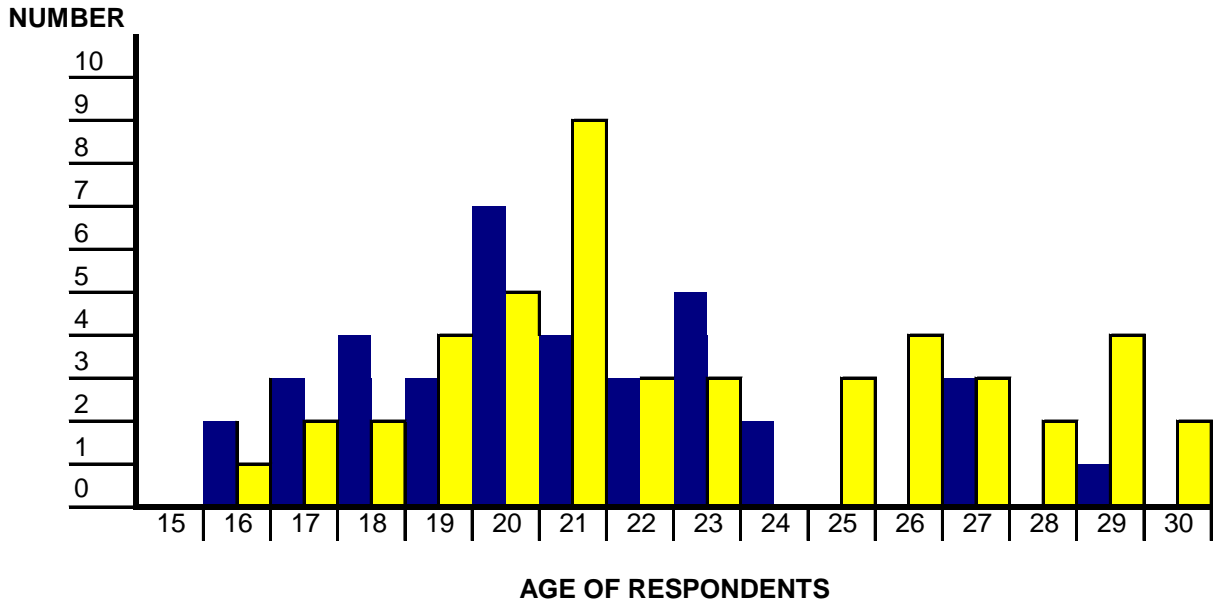
- 47.44 million Black 80.7%
- 4.65 million White 7.9%
- 5.18 million Coloured 8.8%
- 1.51 million Asian/Indian 2.6%

More than 54% of the population are aged younger than 30, while those aged between 16 -34 constitute 35% with approximately 9% aged 60 and older (SA Government Statistics). Within South Africa, young people born after the 1994 elections are often called the ‘born free generation’ or alternatively ‘Generation Y’ and now Z. These young people, to whom my research is primarily directed, have grown up in a country and culture so different to that which their parents knew. Many of them, especially the black generation, are perhaps the first to have benefited from gaining access to the global media; internet and social media etc. which has seen a gradual merging of culturally integrated values and viewpoints emerging from this generation of today’s South African youth. (www.tommorrow/today)



**Figure 10 Population estimates in millions by age and sex, 2019
South Africa Demographic Pyramid 2019. Statistic SA mid-year release P0302**

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS: BY AGE & GENDER



LEGEND
 Male Total **37**
 Female Total **49**
Combined Totals **86**

3) Marital Status percentage:

Single	81	Married	4	Divorced	1
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Percentage undertaking: -Tertiary Education, High School or Employed

- a. Tertiary Full time **50**

- b. Tertiary Part Time **8**

- c. High School **12**

- d. Employed **30**

6.7.2 Section B: Family life growing up - pre-adolescent years

In section two of the document, problems experienced by children coming home to an 'empty' house were highlighted, where they were left to their own devices in spending their time until one, or both parents arrived home.

67% of the respondents indicated that both parents were out of the home working while they were growing through their child/teenage years.

Respondents were also asked: – *'During the years you spent at home with your parents, did you have meaningful in-depth discussions'*, to which replies indicated;

With the mother – 71% said No

With the father – 86% said No

In addition, 81% indicated that during any form of discussions they were not able to openly talk about issues or concerns that worried them, while 78% indicated whatever discussions they had, did not assist in helping them to cope post- adolescence.

A sample of replies is indicated below;

- It did not help me because my parents never made me feel comfortable to speak openly about certain important issues. Although I tried, always to be open, they did not try and see things from my perspective.
- When I grew up it was hard to open up to both my parents because I always felt whatever they said - all the time they were right

- I could discuss most things with my mum except deep issues with her, my father was very distant until after school, but I had a great school and friends as my support system.
- In a way it did prepare me. However, most of the time I coped with post adolescence through my own practical experience and friends help.
- My relationship with my parents wasn't very good; I mostly just kept everything to myself. Didn't really confide in my parents a lot as I felt alone
- My parents did not care
- My parent-child relationship was not very strong

Respondents were also asked: *'Each generation of parents has retained their own 'core values' in relation to the church. How do you feel you align with the views shared by your parents'?*

A sample of replies is expressed below;

- I am from a different generation; we maintain some of our parent's values but develop most of our own
- Parents can't always relate to the issues of teenagers today or understand our needs spiritually all the time.
- My parents believe in ways to participate in certain activities, even the smallest ones, as it can make a huge difference. They are very adherent to the Christian faith but are strongly against other religions.
- They believed in God but had no faith to act or live according to that belief. I live my own belief - to act in faith

6.7.3 Section C: Home life, religion and Christianity

Asked in which religion denomination where you raised – **95%** of respondents indicated Christian. However, **52%** stated they no longer attend church at all, while **29%** varied their church attendance between a number of times a year, to only once per month.

On the question of parents attending church, **42%** stated their mother attended every week, in contrast to fathers - where **77%** either never or seldom attended.

When respondents had attended church, **73%** stated that parents or guardians; *never sat and discussed their faith with them.*

On the matter of parents belonging to the same denomination, only **51%** said this was the case

Section two of this research report highlighted: - *‘As families have prospered and engaged in their respective pursuits, many have no longer found it necessary to work and eat together. Thus, the natural bridge from childhood to adulthood has been severely weakened if not removed altogether.*

Respondent’s replies indicated **59%** had shared family meals from only once a month, to never.

In regard to Church Sunday school, **83%** indicated they had attended in their childhood years. However, when asked '*What do you believe you gained from attending Sunday school*' a selection of replies indicated;

- I have gained more knowledge of the Bible of the most important stories.
- I was very young, so it was a fun way of learning about my religion/ Christianity and many other things concerning the church
- It made me enjoy going to church I gained knowledge about the church
- That all of us are part of God's plan because all of us play a certain role in fulfilling God's work
- It taught me about God and it made me realize things I never thought of, God as my redeemer, it made me realize I could always go to Him in my time of need, but I should also praise him when I don't need him. Sunday school taught me about him
- It laid the foundation of being a Christian
- Lessons about the Bible and about God. Basic things we should know, - like if you sin, you'll be punished, Jesus is the Son of God and that he died for us etc.
- That believing God, and believing in religion is your own choice and no one can judge you on how you see yourself in the church

6.7.4 Section D: Youth ministry

On the question – 'Did your church offer a youth group/teenage group', **63%** indicated yes. However, only **32%** made the effort to attend nearly every week.

Replies to the following questions, are indicated below

		%		%
Were you taught about other religions at youth meetings?	YES	41	NO	59
Were you ever taught how to defend your faith against Non-Christians?	YES	43	NO	57
Were you ever involved in any form of church leadership whilst part of a youth group?	YES	34	NO	66
Were you ever involved in any church ministries during your teenage years?	YES	30	NO	70
Did you participate in any Christian events or societies while at school?	YES	50	NO	50
In your opinion, did the time spent at your youth group ever prepare you for life after leaving high school?	YES	33	NO	67

When asked – ‘Do you consider the church excludes youth from its various ministries’
76% answered yes.

This was followed up by – ‘Do you feel the youth are not involved in decision making / or opinions are not valued in your church’.

- I think youth would be given certain responsibilities if youth took charge by themselves, but they are unable to do so because of lack in confidence and laziness. There are some people who need natural leaders to guide them.
- I think youth should be more involved in decisions concerning the church as it would prepare them for bigger responsibilities when they are older and more involved in the church

- The youth are generally looked upon as irresponsible and careless. It is always the elders who are left with the responsibility of the church's decisions.
- Older people are stereotyped in their views and whatever they say goes - period.
- The youth are not actually involved in any church proceedings except for celebrating special events. There is a set process which is followed for mass.
- Kids under 6 don't know better, they follow their parents. Above 8 they start making choices and deciding – on what they want. From then on, they should be able to participate, if they feel they have a say, they will feel that they are a part of the church, if not just leave
- Youth discussions should be more interactive as it's important to consider young people's ideas and challenges to help them grow in God's work

6.7.5 Section E: Perceptions of the church

Respondents were asked to indicate the following

Please mark the box to indicate your point of view with an X.

4 = Never

3 = Most of the time / regularly

2 = Sometimes

1 = Seldom

Then indicate if applicable: YES / NO

STATEMENT						
Many young adults stop attending church because they find church activities boring, or do not relate with the congregation.	1	2	3	4	YES	NO
	11	30	69		85	15
	%					

A selection of replies as to why respondents feel this way.

- Our church does not cater for young people.
- Each week the church has the same routine and the same people preaching, that it becomes very boring
- There are too many old people; more effort should be made to lure younger people. Church activities always seem aimed to cater for the elderly.
- I do not relate or feel as if I am part of what happens in church. There are very few times when I walk out at the end of a service that I felt I could not relate to the sermon being preached, or what was said touched me in any way.

- It's become more about selling the idea than spreading the word and believing in God and the power of congregation. Going to church won't save you. The life you live as you mature will.
- It's evident, when you look at the composition in church congregations; it is normally middle or old age adults who attend, the service does not have any appeal to the youth.
- Young adults don't always understand the relevance of the message being preached, thus our interest soon fades
- Church becomes a peer pressure thing, and a friend thing, 'if they don't go then I don't go.

The following question replies – in accordance with the requested rating above

Many young adolescents leave the Church because they do not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.	1	2	3	4	YES	NO
	10	27	63		80	20
%						

Selection of respondents replies to 'why individuals leave the Church post high school'

- For so many young people, sitting in church for +- 1 hour and 30 minutes is a waste of time, they quickly find so many excuses to why they think they can't go, but they make time for all the wrong things. The youth feel that freedom begins after high school and the days of being forced to go to church are now over.

- I personally feel that between studies and my personal life I do not have time or seldom have time to rest. And I always just see a Sunday as a day to rest, just as an excuse not to go to church.
- They do not value their Christian faith or any other. They are not being given any form of love and feeling of belonging by their fellow Christian members
- The church is too abstract, we are children of the 21st century we want things that are practical that we can experience
- Lack of understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ and how he can be a part of my day to day life
- It could be that we do not understand what religion and faith is all about and what the difference between the two are
- After high school individuals start making other decisions and find they don't want to attend church. Parents just don't communicate with their kids throughout their lives.
- Parents force kids from a young age to go to church, even if they themselves don't go; therefore, when they are older, they don't want to attend church.
- People go to church to talk about other people. They don't go for the blessing of the Lord. And most of them do not know why they go to church. They just go to show off to other people.
- I did not have an understanding of what being a Christian meant and found it boring and irrelevant to be associated with 'new birth'
- No, once high school ended, I lost interest in a way, I believe that you don't have to go to church to believe in God

All respondents were asked: 'If you could turn the clock back and had the opportunity -what do you wish 'your Church' could have prepared you better for as you are today, on your journey of life'.

Respondents were then asked to read each statement in the tabulated list, indicating how much they would be interested if this kind of help, or program were offered to them today by 'a church', and indicating the following response against each question:

N : None. - I am not all interested in this kind of program or activity.

S : Some. - I am interested and would try to participate or be involved.

VM : Very Much.- I am really interested, and would go out of my way to participate

		%	%	%
		N	S	VM
Develop a better understanding of my parents and learn how to communicate better with them.	A	18	37	45
Learn the skills for making and keeping friendships.	B	16	38	46
Talk with other people my age about things that are really important.	C	14	35	51
Learn how to deal with alcohol and other drugs.	D	12	52	36
Recreation and social activities where I can meet other people.	E	10	53	37
Help to develop responsible values on sexuality.	F	12	58	30
Learn to understand the Bible better and its meaning for me today.	G	10	29	61
Experience a closer friendship with God.	H	8	17	75
Be of service to other people in my community and the world who need help.	I			

		6		40		54
Learn about what is right and wrong and how to make my own moral decisions as a Christian.	J	17		35		48
Learn how to pray in a personal way.	K	10		34		56
Learn how to deal with the pressure people place on me.	L	10		50		40
Learn how to deal with the problems I face as a young person.	M	8		52		40
Learn to understand the Sacraments better and their meaning for me today.	N	19		33		48
Learn what it means to belong to the Church today.	O	15		39		46
Develop a more personal relationship with Jesus.	P	10		32		58
Learn how to stand up for what I believe.	Q	8		27		65
Develop more understanding for other people.	R	6		44		50
Learn how I can make a difference in my world.	S	4		34		62
Get advice or help when I need it.	T	8		48		44
Opportunity to design and lead Church and prayer services.	U	35		42		23

In highlighting the key responses, it is important to note the percentage of respondents who expressed: ' **VM - I am really interested and would go out of my way to participate** '

These are indicated in summary form below, in relation to the empirical survey results:

75% would welcome a experiencing a closer relationship with God

61% wanted to learn to understand the Bible better and its meaning for today.

65% wished to learn how to stand up for what they believe.

62% sought to learn how I can make a difference in my world.

58% wanted to develop a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ

56% desired to learn how to pray in a personal way.

54% wanted to be of service to other people in my community and the world who need help.

These replies show very clearly where young people in this survey are crying out for the church to reach them in some connective form, to be drawn into God's world and becoming part of our Lord Jesus Christ ministry.

This is to the contrary of what has been outlined in several parts of the research report, where many people perceive of young people today as not being interested and it is a 'glowing indicator to the church', that they need to act in developing a strategy plan and draw young people into the ministry and body of the church. This is very significant for the future of our churches.

6.8 Selection of feedback comments - from face to face discussions

6.8.1 Parent's comments

My son is just over six years old and now I know what generation he's in. I've known that my wife and I are generation X and my 17-year-old stepson is Y So I'm familiar with X, but I don't really know much about my stepson's generation.

The only hope I see for this and future generations, are parents instilling Biblical truth in the children. As parents it is our God given responsibility. We must teach right from wrong, not situational ethics or morals. I refuse to go the route that says 'well, that's just the way it is.' As parents we must turn to God to watch over our children and guard their hearts and minds. There is no alternative.

While culture is important, I think parents need to take responsibility; as part of reaching the next generation, while the church should also be focused on reaching the parents. They need to be equipped and loved the same way their children do. They are in need of the gospel just as much. They need to be the youth workers biggest advocate and the youth worker needs to come alongside the parent, not just trying to undo what the parent has done.

How can youth ministry be more holistic? I think a lot of parents are scared and just don't know how to parent and grow a child in such a blatantly sexual, corrupt world. Many of the people today who are parents weren't given good parental role models and so they themselves just don't know how to be a good parent. I think this is a big issue for the church to help parents in reaching their young children in today's world.

6.8.2 Young people's comments

Aged 19: 'I don't believe in God and I think, to a certain extent, religion is a waste of time. I don't like being told how to live by a set of religious rules. I just want to be happy.'

Aged 16: 'I don't understand God, for some people religion is important. Happiness is more important for me, because I just want to enjoy the life I live now.'

Aged 24: 'I believe in God because I am Catholic, but I am not a very strict Catholic. I don't think that religion is a waste of time, but my own happiness is more important to me than what my religion has shown me.'

Aged 27: 'My parents never believed in God and I don't live according to any religious rules. Religion is a waste of time. I just don't believe.'

Replies from the empirical research indicate a very clear picture where generation Y and Z young people are reaching out to be drawn into the word of God and becoming part of our Lord Jesus ministry.

Where respondents reply indicated:

75% would welcome a experiencing a closer relationship with God

61% wanted to learn to understand the Bible better and its meaning for today.

58% wanted to develop a more personal relationship with Jesus

56% desired to learn how to pray in a personal way.

54% wanted to be of service to other people in my community and the world who need help.

This is to the contrary of what many people perceive of young people today and it is a glowing light to the church that they need to reach out and draw young people into the ministry and body of the church. This is very significant for the church to act upon.

During the course of face-to-face discussions, religion for today's young people often appeared to be one of a 'mix and match' (depending on their age and lifestyle) for they belong to an age of diversity and plurality and therefore one of 'make up your own'.

Resulting from the empirical research, numerous respondents indicated that;

- Traditional church styles tend to be too structured, whereas they preferred a culture of freedom of participation.
- Many churches were seen to stress learning, as opposed to life experiencing.
- Young people perceive elders in church as tending to react, as opposed to relate.

- 'Adults' tend to focus on the individual, whereas young people are socially driven.
- The 'older generation' need to accept that they can't compete with their knowledge and use of advanced technology etc.
- They don't want to be bored by rehearsed preach, or a too structured homily
- They don't care how much of life's learning 'we know', - until they know 'how much we genuinely care' - about them!

6.9 Conclusion

Overall it is evident that young people struggle to articulate their faith. The church has developed the tradition of using Christian language around youth without always explaining it to them. This could be true for any visitor to the Christian context. Traditionally, doctrinally-loaded terms (like salvation, redemption, righteousness, etc.) become part of daily language of those within this context. Youth have in turn felt that because they cannot grasp or sometimes even understand this language, the Christian faith is not something they can own (Powell 2011:37-38).

Youth ministry should form an integral part of the community of faith (the church) and should be holistically planned. The problem of youth not being integrated into the church is the whole church's problem. In fact, the problem could equally be identified as the church not being integrated into the world in which young people live. The solution for this transitional age is to return to the Biblical mandate of multi-generational interaction. The central focus of this dissertation is therefore to answer one profound question: What is the generation gap and how must the church practically and theologically respond to the challenge this gap presents?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions and practical recommendations

During the course of face to face discussions, religion for today's young people often appeared to be one of a 'mix and match' (depending on their age and lifestyle) for they belong to an age of diversity and plurality and therefore one of 'make up your own'.

Resulting from the empirical research, numerous respondents indicated the following:

- Traditional church styles tend to be too structured, whereas they preferred a culture of freedom of participation.
- Many churches were seen to stress learning, as opposed to life experiencing.
- Young people perceive elders in church as tending to react, as opposed to relate.
- 'Adults' tend to focus on the individual, whereas young people are socially driven.
- The 'older generation' need to accept that they can't compete with their knowledge and use of advanced technology etc.
- They don't want to be bored by rehearsed preaching, or a too structured homily
- They don't care how much of life's learning 'we know', until they know 'how much we genuinely care about them'

In addition to the above, survey results in Chapter Six reflect that today's young people are seekers, especially among their peers. They seek to find a connection that is missing in family life and church.

They separate institutional religious attachment from spirituality and prefer the informal and expressive, to repetitive ritual and institutional constrained forms. Only a few indicated a desire to be at Sunday worship, as many stated they never felt they belonged. However, a significant majority of the survey respondents expressed the desire of growing into a deeper relationship with Christ and understanding of the gospel messages.

7.1. Role of the church in faith development.

The spiritual formation of children and youth is never about how many programmes a church may have or even about the quality of these programmes. It is about the attitudes and quality of the people the children and youth interact with and the overall spiritual and relational quality of the community of faith.

Kelly (1970:2-5) reiterates that the earliest years of a child's life are of the greatest importance in the formation of attitudes, followed by laying down foundations of belief and understanding. For children are an important of society with needs to be met and a contribution to make to the life of the Church. In consequence, the church needs to refocus with parents/caregivers in reaching into the mind's emotions and spirit of children at varying stages, to understand who they are, and how they believe God relates to them as pre-school or high school-age children.

Many young people respondents cited sermons and the service to be 'boring'. This begs to ask; is the church resistant to change the style or a portion of the worship service? In many ways, worship is a telling and re-telling of God's story to the faith community week after week. However, too many churches have been cited as

preaching the gospel messages in the same stereotype mannerism, which switches many people off', especially the young.

Research results indicate Churches need to refocus on how effective they are in being child friendly, made to feel welcome and appreciated as they enter the church, and throughout the time periods spent there. Kelly (1970), reiterates how important this aspect is, for the earliest years of a child's life is laying down of foundations of belief and understanding. Ratcliff (2004) expands further on the above that many churches do not recruit suitably qualified teachers, while there is limited co-ordination between the church and the home in terms of a child's spiritual formation. In consequence, many parents are totally unaware what their children are learning at Sunday school, together with a reaffirmation that they are primarily responsible for the faith formation of their own children.

In this regard, the church needs to review the future direction of ministry in understanding this worldview, and perhaps readjust accordingly some of the existing visions, strategies, plans and ministries toward the challenges of retaining today's generation of young people.

7.2 Marriage and family

The Church should, as a strategic priority, put in place the means to disciple couples on sound family building and parenting principles before the marriage ceremony, especially in view of the rising divorce rate and concomitant impact on the lives of children, for developing sound interpersonal marriage relationships and ultimately good parenting, takes time, patience and ongoing nurturing.

Research has indicated there is a significant void between the lives of many parents their children and the role of the church, in connecting with the issues/needs of families in today's world with regard to:

- 1) Premarital counselling
- 2) Developing couples to grow together in the faith, building strong marriages;
- 3) Teaching parents how to nurture their young children biblically;
- 4) Assisting parents in resolving child rearing problems they encounter – primarily in the teenage phase.

7.3 Church and youth ministry

One cannot perceive to stereotype youth, for what may work at one church with a certain group of young people, may not work elsewhere. Some churches have thriving youth ministries and no youth attending main services, while others may have it the other way around. Research has indicated mainline churches are failing to successfully transfer young people's faith development, from youth ministries into adult ministry, which is seen as a contributing reason to the current exodus status quo.

This significant decline in church attendance and membership is indicative of a symptom – a problem with the church itself as an organization. According to Zacharias (2000) there are a variety of reasons for this, including;

- Lack of spiritual maturity development in the youth,
- Too large a gap in style allowing for incremental growth between youth and adult ministries,
- Church lack of commitment to adapt with emerging generations of young adults,
- Lack of desire to leave established comfort zones by both young and old,
- Limited skill expertise and support of youth ministry structures by the church
- Insufficient funding in the church annual budget for development of the youth, and many other similar issues.

Research undertaken by Kinnaman (2012) supports the above, where the church is not adequately preparing the next generation to follow Christ faithfully. For those who lead churches, this decline is not only a concern, but also a call for immediate action, to develop a coherent spiritual formation programme to strengthen young adults' faith as they transition in life. The above correlates with Powell, Griffin and Crawford findings (2011), while the youth of today's world are deeply spiritual, they tend not to adhere to any one particular faith group. They desire to be able to choose from a variety of faith systems and ultimately make up their own. Perhaps the key issue is growing in understanding between youth and elders as well as relating spiritually with each other. For youth ministry to attain the above, an in-depth analysis is necessary, just as the church does for itself when strategic planning for its future.

According to Schlect (2007:3), a part of the problem with the flawed concept of youth ministry is the fact that the church is not expecting enough from parents and their children. Only when the church respects, involves and empowers parents in the process of guiding children spiritually will youth ministry be successful in the long run.

Instead of taking the responsibility off the shoulders of parents to raise their children in the ways of God, it is rather the church's responsibility to train and empower parents as spiritual leaders in order to be the primary spiritual coaches for their children.

Only when parents feel empowered as spiritual leaders will they have the courage to take up their responsibility as spiritual leaders of their homes in the same way that they take up the responsibility as primary caretakers of their children in all other facets of life. Parents need to realise that this is the way that God intended it from the very beginning.

Without this, one cannot really know in which direction the church/youth ministry should be focused, how it should take place, or who should make it happen. This is critical in relation to young peoples' views on religion and worldview. They need to be drawn into participating in these strategy sessions. Perhaps, as pointed out by De Vries (1994:18), one of the keys to lasting ministry with young post adolescents is to find ways and means to support families within the church and to work together in a common framework towards growing young people into mature Christian adulthood.

7.4. Culture within the family and church

The emergence of Postmodernism has brought about a fundamental change in today's culture in many aspects. Consequently, this shift infers the necessity of change in the

way the church engages culture going forward. Whether the church fully agrees, or not with modernism and the post-modern's way of thinking, it is critically important in the ministering to young people and children, that the church tries to understand the perspective of their worldview. More of the 'same' standpoint by the church is clearly not working in many of their lives.

A generalised fear of much of present-day youth culture becomes more concentrated as parents see their children entering the teenage years. This is not to say that the concerns over today's culture are not legitimate. Of course, there is a battle for today's young people - a battle that cannot be ignored. Of course, we should not just sit back and allow deteriorating society to have free reign over our children.

In addition, today's culture quantum-leaps children from post adolescence into adulthood, ill-prepared for the increasing demands of our complex society.

The question confronting the church is: - 'Will their vision be large enough to meet these changes'?

In consequence, today's church is dealing with a very different type of generation gap than it did in preceding decades. As a result of this multigenerational gap, young people have expressed how they have struggled initially to be identified as part of the church community, particularly in worship. Hence their exodus.

7.5. Family parents and children

Parents today must recognize that it is impossible for their children to accept the truths about life, if they don't live and practice it in their homes, for they are failing to help children see how the faith is applied, and has meaning in their everyday lives.

This is especially relevant during teenage years that form a turbulent period in a young person's life, emerging from childhood into a new world. This aspect is supported by de Vries (1994:132) where every teenager goes through intense physical, mental, psychological, and emotional changes in a relatively short amount of time. As these changes are happening within and around them, there is a deep, sometimes unconscious longing for stability and continuity. At this stage, many teenagers want to be 'free from parental control' - but do not necessarily enter into full-scale rebellion against their parents.

In view of the above, and the plethora of discussions/articles written about the 'family' and the church during the past decade, together with the importance of the family in the spiritual nurturing of their own children, churches need to realign themselves in assisting to enlighten and empower parents to model faith in the home, and use teachable moments to positively nurture their children's spirituality.

There is no doubt that the family itself is under tremendous pressure, and even attack, today, and that, as the basic block of society and of God's church, the health of the family is vital to the health of the church and community. What this research study is attempting to emphasize is that a limited application of family ministry that simply attempts to get youth into an 'adult' church setting, and possibly one or two other minor interactions between young and old (parents and children) is not sufficient to truly

bridge the great generational and philosophical divides that exist between young and old today.

The church in order to strengthen and bond the family in whatever form the 'home' comprises today, needs to grow and build up young people in the church. This shift in strengthening and empowering families does not necessarily downplay the significant role of the church, it simply changes the focus of the church's role in realigning with the multigenerational community of today.

7.6. Young people leaving the church

The radical changes of the 1990s have resulted in far-reaching implications for the youth of this country.

Based on the overall research findings, the following summary of conclusions is indicative of what is not happening, consequently young people are leaving mainline churches:

- One of the primary problems is associated with an aging clergy who are not adequately prepared with deeper insight into developing Millennium children and effective youth ministries to meet today's needs.
- The church has lost its primary focus – and that is to disciple intentionally on effective parenting.
- Parents should be discipling their children and also learn how to discipline effectively.
- The church lacks real role models for young people to aspire to their ethics.

- What adults say, is inconsistent with what they do (especially when preaching and teaching).
- Mainline churches do not provide enough insight and clarity about their worship and rituals
- The church does not provide enough opportunities for young people to participate in decision making processes as well as implementation.
- The old paternal mind-set still exists with an aging congregation, which stifles the involvement and participation of young people.
- Limited or no mentorship is offered to guide young adults to cope in today's world.

Accurate numbers of young people leaving the church were unavailable to determine the overall trend. However, several Rectors/Priests were consulted to obtain their insight from an individual parish viewpoint where the consensus of replies indicate that around 90% of young people are still involved in the first 4 - 5 months after being confirmed. A year later this drops to about 50% and after this the dedicated steadfast candidates that would remain would be about 25% of the total. This 25 % usually stays for the long haul.

One can conclude from the above, the youth are **not** the main problem. They become a problem due to adults' inability to understand how children and teenagers grow and develop in the ever-changing world that surrounds them, and how best to provide appropriate development, teaching, leadership and encouragement.

The goal of youth ministry is not simply to produce Christ-like teenagers. Rather, it is to produce fully motivated, involved, Christ-like adults who do works of service in the

church and the world. Too often, youth workers and youth pastors have focused too much on teenage ministry for the sake of keeping teenagers happy and growing them in a teenage environment. Although there is nothing wrong with these objectives, at best, they can only be short-term objectives, as the life stage called "adolescence" is soon over. The fact that most churches lose the numbers of young people quoted above during the teenage years, especially during the last two years of high school and as they go to university or working life, is an indication that they have not taken the role of producing Christ-like adults seriously enough.

7.7 Impact of past generations and their legacy

If young people are advocated as being less religious than older people, the question needs to be asked: 'Is it because older people have failed to pass faith on effectively?'

Consequently, 'What spiritual capital do young people inherit today?'

Just as churches need to integrate young people, so too must old people be integrated. The world in which we live discards the old very quickly. The church cannot do so. In fact, we are commanded in Scripture to value the wisdom of the aged, and to submit to their wisdom (1 Peter 5:5).

From a multidisciplinary perspective, Tracey (2003:46) points out that spirituality (rather than religiosity) is a core dimension of personhood. Young people often brought up outside of any religious tradition, are searching for a type of spirituality that will nurture an authentic inner self. Building on this, Heelas and Woodhead (2005:78) advocate that traditional religious forms are too restrictive to fulfil the above need. In their view, young people are inherently spiritual, and the decline of institutional religion

does not result in secularization but actually frees up space for spirituality to develop in new ways.

7.8 Practical recommendations

The respective conclusions summarize various issues contributing towards misalignment of the church in a changing world and exodus of young people. This final section offer's practical suggestions for consideration to counteract the above, where churches may need to reconsider their position and strategic realignment, in reaching out to young people more effectively to counteract this ongoing loss of young human capital.

7.8.1 Faith development - family and children

In today's ever-changing world families are stretched and stressed in challenging ways, placing new demands on family life. In consequence, parents need help to support their roles in fostering faith and developing a deeper spirituality within their homes.

The church needs to encourage and equip parents by providing them with resources, ideas, and practices that can be easily woven into a family routine, from which they can select and adapt the things that work best for them in their home. What is missing in current practice are more effective hands on ways that families can all participate together in the church mission, ministries, and programmes.

For example:

- Involve the whole family in worship roles, such as reading the Scripture on Sunday, leading prayers, decorating the environment for worship, singing in the choir as a family, greeting people as they arrive for worship, collecting the offering, etc.
- Redesign existing service projects for children, teens, and adults into whole-family service projects.
- Churches can highlight positive parenting moments in church bulletins and on bulletin boards. Ministers can also send personal notes to parents when applicable, and visit their homes.

However, to counterbalance the effect of the exodus of young from the church, for reasons already outlined, there are excellent programmes that have been developed and implemented globally such as Alpha. This has various categories available that could be used to great effect in the short term.

For example, the youth series was created to bring the Gospel to a younger generation, aged 11 – 18. A junior programme caters for the 4 – 10 age group and an Adult programme is available for those who have yet to encounter the 'faith'. Thus, church leaders can provide a much-needed service to various parents, by selecting volunteers to set up teams to manage and run the above programmes.

In addition to the Alpha programme outlined above, there are several other ways to involve young people in the church in faith development, where:

- The more mature young adults could have a role on the church council so that church leadership is aware of the needs and input of the younger adult members.
- Teenagers could be trained to assist council members who follow up on first-time church visitors.
- Teenagers could drop off a welcome package for a new member, and possibly help establish a relationship with a teenager who may be part of the first-time visitor's family.
- Alongside a responsible adult, teenagers can help staff a crèche nursery for young children during worship.

7.8.2. Marriage and family

This is a key issue where the church requires strategic refocusing, where the following needs to be developed and implemented to grow and sustain healthy marriages through;

- Premarital counselling
- Helping parents develop into mature Christians and model Christian living, biblical roles in their family life;
- Developing couples to grow together in the faith, building strong marriages;
- Teaching parents how to nurture their young children biblically;

- Assisting parents in resolving child rearing problems they encounter – primarily in the teenage phase.
- Building and Promoting biblical family relationships in the family.

7.8.3 Premarital counselling

Alpha has developed programmes suitable for churches that require to undertake this aspect. Preparation encompasses couples who are exploring the idea of getting married and for those who are already engaged. It's designed for those who want to give their marriage the best possible start, whether they're exploring marriage for the first time or have been married before.

7.8.4 Marriage enrichment

This Alpha programme is for couples seeking to strengthen and further their relationship, while other couples may simply need help to address more specific challenges. Either way, the course offers essential tools and practical ideas for a church to select an appropriate team who wish to help couples, or in a forum, in which they hear what other couples are going through with issues that inhibit husbands and wives from speaking about such things. Statistics have proven that parents of all types committed together in traditional marriage have greater emotional and spiritual health to impart with their children. In addition, this fulfils the mandate in Ephesians 4:12 which teaches the church to equip the saints for the work of ministry

7.8.5 Parenting

This Alpha Course is for parents, step-parents, prospective parents or carers of children aged 0-10 years. The course is designed for every type of parenting situation including, step-parenting, and single parenting.

7.8.6 Parenting teenagers

Previous published research undertaken with parenting has indicated a variety of pressures related to raising teenage children can be the most destabilizing factor for married couples. As teenagers begin to assert their independence and find their own identity, many experience behavioural changes that can seem unpredictable and unwarranted to parents, who will frequently butt heads and argue.

While this is recognised as a phase all parents have been through, many will challenge themselves in view of the ever- changing world and emerging cultures, that they have failed. Instead of assigning blame, the church needs to assist in finding ways to connect with the issue's parents are experiencing emotionally and socially. Here the church can provide guidance by forming a mature team who can guide and implement the Alpha Parenting Teenagers Course for parents including, step-parents, single parents or carers of teenagers aged between 11 - 18 years.

While readily available to implement, the above programmes are not advocated to be the ultimate panacea for addressing the various issues highlighted. However, when action logs require to be developed to counteract identified weaknesses or threats, many churches do not have the ability or acumen to start from scratch in developing

effective strategies. In the case of Alpha, the materials advocated for use are globally tried and tested which a church can immediately implement for the short/medium term benefit.

7.8.7 Church and youth ministry

In view of the various issues identified with youth ministry, a family-orientated approach is advocated where parents need to work with the church for their children's spiritual growth. This implies the church undertaking a re-evaluation of its youth ministry with a greater focus on the context and needs of young people, and where they are in their own journey of life. Here, according to Strong (2014:1) the aim would be to prepare these young people to become active adult members of their congregations.

7.8.8 Youth development

- Clergy should discern and identify future leaders from those who have completed their confirmation year, who are eligible to stand for election to Parish Council.
- Clergy must undertake to develop training for youth on the processes and procedures of the Church, how they work and how they are used in mission, ministry and administration.
- Appoint compassion and passion-youth committed leadership to develop creative worship Investment in youth- training.
- Identify and involve young people in Parish initiatives like missions, outreaches, projects, etc. and allow them to be part of the decision-making process, the

planning and organising process, as well as being involved in the execution process.

- Allow young people to organise meaningful events, such as a children or senior citizens party. Or, let adults take them with them on hospital and home visits, etc. This will present opportunities for adults to see potential future leaders in action.
- Full advantage must be taken of the young people's creativity, innovation and energy, and they must also be entrusted with responsibility and accountability.
- Young leaders need a mentor each to help and encourage them on their leadership development journey. Constant feedback on their progress will be necessary.

In addition to the above, The Alpha Youth Series (13 – 18 years old) is an additional way to create an environment of acceptability where young people/students can invite their friends to explore the Christian faith, ask questions, and share their points of view in a safe and non-threatening way.

The series offers compelling stories, and discussion topics well spread throughout each episode to engage the youth, helping them think about how these issues relate to their lives as they discuss with their friends and leaders. The church should then involve supporting parents and families in this process.

According to Mayo, and Savage (2006.108) the team members within the youth ministry will need to assess their teaching styles and the way they approach the youth in their congregation, to ensure that sermons, teaching and activities are relevant and contextualized for their generation as indicated below;

- Provide lots of structure. Having grown up in a highly structured world, Young people (especially generations Y and Z) look for this in their learning setting.
- Providing frequent feedback is essential to know when they are headed in the right direction and when they have gone off-track.
- Make learning relevant. Tie learning biblical situations/examples to real-world problems. If it is not seen as relevant, there will be resistance to learning.

However, the above is only a start, for the church leadership needs to not only consider offering a transition programme into student life or young adulthood, but they need to effectively implement one.

7.8.9 Culture within the family and church

The church should endeavour to bring groups of parents together, and help them to give each other their mutual support, through praying for each other, sharing their concerns and intercede in a continual way for their adolescent children.

However, the challenge for the church is not primarily to just set up culturally relevant forums, but simultaneously allowing young people to grow into this – ‘as themselves’.

A strategy that warrants further research is to explore potential links between parishes and community schools, to establish supportive nurturing networks in both secondary schools and tertiary learning centres. There is a need to reach out to young people in today’s school jungle of drugs and other events. Children need someone unbiased, understanding and trustworthy to whom they can unburden their inner selves.

7.8.10 Family parents and children

Conclusions from this research has indicated a significant void between the lives of many parents and their children – and the role of the church with regard to interfacing with families. Research has also indicated during various interviews with young people, that parents often fail to take time out in understand what is going on in the lives of their teenagers.

In ministering to families with teenagers and young adults, it's important that the church does not set about addressing specific needs in a piecemeal fashion, with merely patching up apparent problems as opposed to addressing the real issues. Rather the overriding goal should be one of guiding and enabling families to become integrated and healthy, so they will have the inner resources to cope with the stresses of life they inevitably face.

In order to do undertake this, De Vries (1994:79) advocates the leaders in the church must model what a Christ-centred family looks like, as many of today's parents did not grow up in a strong Christian family supportive situation, thus they have limited or no ideas about what such a family looks like, as the Bible speaks clearly about the responsibility of the parents to nurture their children. (Deuteronomy t 6:7-9 and Proverbs 22:6).

Further ideas for adoption by the church could include:

- Engaging with applicable skilled persons to give a talk/presentation on the important role parents play in their children's lives, especially in spirituality.
- Use competent church resources (parents who have walked the road already) to share their testimonies on how to handle the various milestones in children's lives such as baptism, first day at school, confirmation, etc.
- Host classes on basic family and parenting skills. Topics could include listening and communication skills, understanding teenagers and their emotional and spiritual needs etc.

Thus, it is clear that the parents of adolescents are key role players in their children's growth and Christian faith, as they play a crucial role in their development.

7.8.11 Young people leaving the church

The problem of young adults leaving the church is not something new, however, what is new is that the church is not drawing back the people it has lost. The Church needs to begin to address this issue by re-evaluating how it is approaching Millennials as a whole.

Kinnaman (2011:201-202) offers insight into the sociological aspect of the problem of young adults leaving the church, on how the church needs to realign to the future to bring millennials back, where three main steps are envisaged to foster a relationship between millennials and the church:

- the church needs to reconsider how we make disciples,
- we need to rediscover Christian calling and vocation, and
- we need to reprioritize wisdom over information as we seek to know God.

This is where the extended church family needs to come into play, where De Vries (1994:116) advocates that ‘every Christian teenager needs an extended family of Christian adults, and the church should be the primary vehicle through which teenagers are exposed to those adults who make up their extended family in Christ.’

According to Balswick (2007:169) most parents tend to acknowledge that a non-parent can often exercise more influence over a teenager than a parent, thus such a program could pair newly confirmed teenagers with an adult in the church who agrees to mentor the new confirmand. In essence, the Church needs to create an intergenerational environment where all members will become involved and actively serve God and his people, as portrayed below.

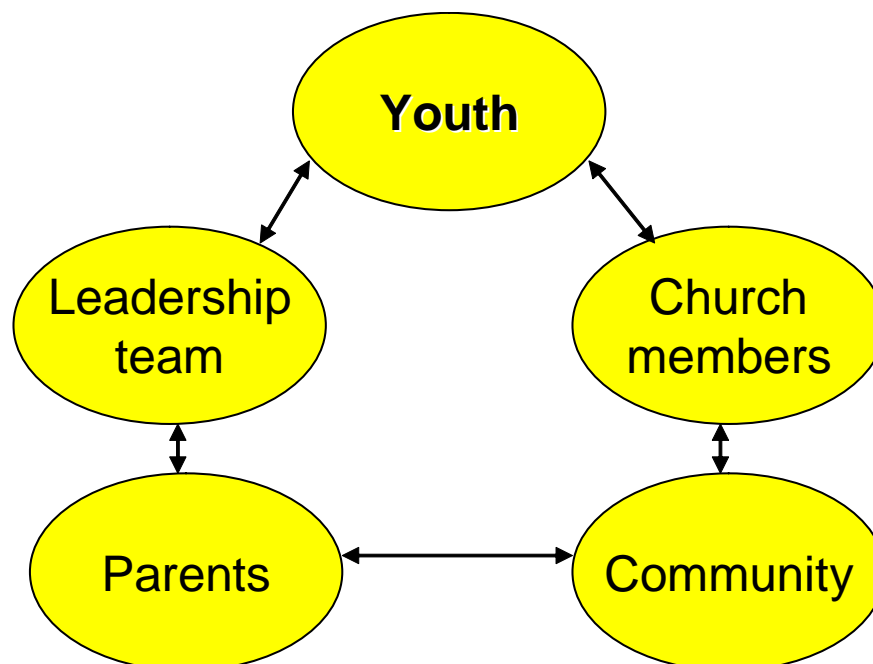


Figure 11 Intergenerational process flow

7.9 Final comments

Unless mainline churches rethink their strategies for youth ministry, young people will continue to exodus the church. In essence the challenges being faced are not simply about young people leaving church for 'better' activities, but that the church is not engaging sufficiently with non-churched young people (those who never attended a church) and those who used to attend, but have now abandoned for reasons outlined.

According to Colson and Percy (1999:12), 'The church's singular failure in recent decades has been the failure to see Christianity as a life system or worldview - that governs every area of existence.

While all of the practical suggestions offered are practical ways for young people to serve within the church and feel needed, the key is to communicate that young adults and teenagers play an important role in the body of Christ – and allow them to do so.

In consequence, there is a high need for strong investment in relationships between young people, parents, congregants and the church in sowing the good seed onto fertile soil within the respective generation cultures – realizing there are 'no quick solutions to this researched problem.

This dissertation has attempted to show that young people should not be isolated from the rest of the church in custom-made activities. Although in the short-term this may be very effective, it does not fulfil the ultimate, true goal of teaching and growing the youth in God's word. The goal of parents and the church is not to produce Christ-like young people. Rather, the goal of teaching and growing children and the youth is to produce Christ-like adults, who are not only fully integrated into ministry in the church

and community, but are godly people of influence in their workplace, family and social environment. This process of integration into adult life is perhaps the key failure in many churches as we move through today's world.

Most mainline denominations are shrinking, resulting in more people leaving than joining. The critical group who are leaving are young people, many of which do so before they finish high school. The purpose of this dissertation has been to identify and address this trend, and provide some theological, sociological and practical information on how to reverse the trend. In our zeal to provide integration and continuity for our young people, we must never forget that they have a need for individuation as well. Finding this balance will take a lot of effort.

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Appendix A

Survey format with summarized replies (where applicable)

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please mark with a cross in the applicable box

- 1) Gender

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--
- 2) Your age:

--
- 3) Are you:

Single	Married	Divorced
--------	---------	----------
- 4) Are you studying in a tertiary institution:

Yes	No
-----	----
- 4a) Full time

Yes	No
-----	----
- 4b) Part time

Yes	No
-----	----

SECTION B: FAMILY LIFE GROWING UP – Results indicate overall percentage

- 5) Which of the following best describes the family you live with. Please mark with an X in the box below:

I live with my two parents	47%
I live with my mother	14%
I live with my father	
Sometimes with my mother and sometimes with my father	5%
I live with another relative	2%
I live away from home	8%
I live by myself and not attending a college / university	8%
I live in other circumstances	15%

- 6) In your pre-adolescent years (<18):
- | | | |
|---|--------|-------|
| Did one parent work and one remain at home | Yes 33 | No 67 |
| Did both parents work | Yes 67 | No 33 |
| Did your father work away from home for lengthy periods | Yes 25 | No 75 |
- 7) Did your parents have strong ties with your high school
- | | |
|--------|-------|
| Yes 33 | No 67 |
|--------|-------|
- 8) If yes, did this help with your academic results
- | | |
|--------|-------|
| Yes 27 | No 73 |
|--------|-------|
- 9) During the years spent at home:
Did you have regular meaningful (in depth) conversations / discussions with
- | | | |
|-------------|--------|-------|
| your Mother | Yes 29 | No 71 |
| your Father | Yes 14 | No 86 |

10) During these discussions, were you able to talk openly about issues that concerned you

YES 19	NO 81
--------	-------

11) Do you feel these discussions helped prepare you to cope post- adolescence

YES 22	NO 78
--------	-------

12) If no, please give your views:

13) Each generation of parents has retained their own ‘core values’ in relation to the church. How do you feel you align with the views shared by your parents?

a) Not at all 15%	b) In some areas 31%	c) Strongly aligned 54%
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14) If you answered a) or b) could you express where you disagreed:

SECTION C: HOME LIFE, RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

15) What religion, if any, were you raised in?

Christian	95%
Jewish	
Muslim	
Other	2%
None	3%

If you answered ‘no not Christian’ please move to page7 If you answered ‘yes’ please continue and place an X in the appropriate box.

16) How often do you attend church services?

Never	49%
Several times a year	17%
About once a month	11%
Every week	15%
Numerous times a week	8%

17) Growing up as a child, how often did you attend church services?

Never	10%
Seldom	8%
Several times a year	15%
About once a month	17%
Every week	38%
Numerous times a week	12%

18) How often did your mother attend church?

Never	10%
Seldom	25%
Several times a year	6%
About once a month	6%
Every week	42%
Numerous times a week	11%

19) When you attended church, did you mother/parental guardian ever sit and discuss their faith with you?

Yes	41%	No	59%
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20) How often did your father attend church?

Never	62%
Seldom	19%
Several times a year	2%
About once a month	4%
Every week	11%
Numerous times a week	2%

21) When you attended church, did your father/parental guardian(s) ever sit and discuss their faith with you?

Yes	22%	No	78%
-----	-----	----	-----

22) Did your mother and father/parental guardian belong to the same denomination?

Yes	54%	No	46%
-----	-----	----	-----

23) Through your years growing up, how often did you sit and have meals together with your family members?

Never	26%
Several times in a year	15%
About once a month	16%
Several times a month	4%
Nearly every week	17%
Every week	10%
Numerous times a week	12%

24) How often do/did you and your family take time out to discuss faith or matters pertaining to God?

Never	36%
Less than once a year	21%
Several times a year	19%
Several times a month	4%
Nearly every week	8%
Every week	4%
Numerous times a week	8%

25) Did your church offer Sunday School?

Yes	83%	No	17%
-----	------------	----	------------

If you answered 'yes' to the above question then please continue with this section, if you answered 'no' then please move onto the next section of the questionnaire.

26) How often did you attend Sunday School?

Never	10%
Several times a year	8%
About once a month	13%
Every week	69%
Numerous times a week	

28) When you first started attending Sunday school was it because: -

Your parents told you	58%
A friend attended	10%
It was a family habit	19%
None of the above	13%

29) Which of the following did you do at Sunday School?

Play games	35%
Sing praise songs	54%
Learn Bible stories	81%
None of the above	12%

30) Did you learn about any other religions at Sunday School?

What do you believe you gained from attending Sunday School?

SECTION D: YOUTH MINISTRY

31) Did your church offer a youth group/teenage group?

Yes 63	No 37
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If you answered 'yes' then please continue with this section, if you answered 'no' then please move onto the next section of the questionnaire.

32) How often did you attend youth group meetings?

Never	37%
Several times a year	7%
About once a month	20%
Nearly every week	10%
Every week	26%
Numerous times a week	

33) If yes, did you have a full-time youth leader/minister or pastor?

Yes 63	No 27
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34) If you answered no to the above question, was it a volunteer youth leader?

Yes 47	No 53
---------------	--------------

35) What did your youth gathering comprise of: (✓)

Games only	8%
Sound Biblical teachings only	6%
Worship only	7%
Games and Biblical teachings	13%
Games and Worship	10%
Biblical teachings and worship	7%
Games, Biblical teaching and worship	49%

36) Did your youth group offer a cell group/s?

Yes 32	No 68
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37) If yes, did you belong to a youth cell

Yes 10	No 90
---------------	--------------

group?

38) How did you first come to attend youth meetings?

Your parents told you	54%
A friend invited you	17%
You chose on your own to attend	20%
None of the above	9%

Question			
39)	Were you taught about other religions at youth meetings?	Yes 41%	No 59%
40)	Were you ever taught how to defend your faith against Non-Christians	Yes 43%	No 57%
41)	Were you ever involved in any form of church leadership whilst part of a youth group	Yes 36%	No 64%
42)	Were you ever involved in any church ministries during your teenage years	Yes 30%	No 70%
43)	Did you participate in any Christian events or societies while at school	Yes 50%	No 50%
44)	In your opinion, did the time spent at your youth group ever prepare you for life after leaving high school	Yes 36%	No 64%

45) If you answered 'yes' to the above question, then please indicate which area/s they helped prepare you for: (✓)

Leadership	28%
Relationships	17%
Career choice	30%
Sexuality	10%
Dealing with temptation	15%
None of the above	

If 'None of the above' please describe below:

46) Do you consider the church excludes youth from its various ministries

Yes 86%	No 14%
-------------------	------------------

If yes, please express your views as to how and when and why

47) Do you feel the youth are not involved in decision making / or opinions are not valued in your church. Please give your specific views on this:

48) Do you believe youth members of the church should have more exposure / be involved in every day church activities:

Yes	No
87%	13%

If you answered

yes, please explain your views:

49) If you or your friends are not attending some, or all of the youth activities, what has kept you / them from attending:

50) Please indicate on average how often your friends attend church. (✓)

Never	67%
Several times in a year	14%
About once a month	10%
Nearly every week	5%
Every week	4%
Numerous times a week	

SECTION E: PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH

Please mark the box to indicate your point of view with an X.
 4 = Never
 3 = Most of the time / regularly
 2 = Sometimes
 1 = Seldom
Then indicate if applicable: YES / NO

51)

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	YES	NO
Many young adults stop attending church because they find church activities boring, or do not relate with the congregation.						

52) If you answered yes to the above question, please outline your views as to why you feel this way:

53)

Many young adolescents leave the Church because they do not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.	1	2	3	4	YES	NO
--	---	---	---	---	-----	----

54) In your opinion, what are other reasons why individuals leave the Church post high school in South Africa?

55) In your opinion, are there any other reasons why you personally left the Church?

56) Do you think the Church could have prepared you better for life after high school, if so in what way?

57) What do you wish your Church had prepared you for? Please indicate in the applicable boxes below:

Please read each statement and indicate how much you would be interested if this kind of help or program were offered by your church. Here is what your responses will mean:

- N** None. I am not all interested in this kind of program or activity.
- S** Some. I am interested and would try to participate or be involved.
- VM** Very Much. I am really interested and would go out of my way to participate.

	N	S	VM
Develop a better understanding of my parents and learn how to communicate better with them.			
Learn the skills for making and keeping friendships.			
Talk with other people my age about things that are really important.			
Learn how to deal with alcohol and other drugs.			
Recreation and social activities where I can meet other people.			
Help to develop responsible values on sexuality.			
Learn to understand the Bible better and its meaning for us today.			
Experience a closer friendship with God.			
Be of service to other people in my community and the world who need help.			
Learn about what is right and wrong and how to make my own moral decisions as a Christian.			
Learn how to pray in a personal way.			
Learn how to deal with the pressure people place on me.			
Learn how to deal with the problems I face as a young person.			
Learn to understand the Sacraments better and their meaning for us today.			
Learn what it means to belong to the Church today.			
Develop a more personal relationship with Jesus.			
Learn how to stand up for what I believe.			
Develop more understanding for other people.			
Learn how I can make a difference in my world.			
Get advice or help when I need it.			
Opportunity to design and lead Church and prayer services.			

Thank you for taking the time and effort to complete this questionnaire. Your thoughtful responses have been of great assistance in completing my research

Appendix B

Ethical Clearance Certificate



THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION COLLEGE (NPC)

PO Box 74257 Turffontein 2140 20 Gantner Street Haddon Johannesburg 2190
Tel: +27 (0)11 683 3284 Fax: +27 (0)11 683 3522 admin@tee.co.za www.tee.co.za

Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that ethical clearance submitted for

Mr Howard Rose

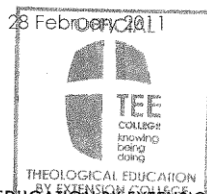
For Bachelor of Theology Studies entitled

Young people abandoning the church post adolescence

was granted as per the assessment requirements of Theological Education by Extension College. This approval was affective for the required period of study.

Rev C Dunsmuir
Principal

Mrs G Gosthuizen
Administrator



THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION COLLEGE

Registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as a Private Higher Education Institution under the Education Act (71 of 1997) (2208/HE08/002). A registered non-profit Company (2007/030481/08)

Appendix C

Anglican Church of Southern Africa Youth Survey Conducted in 2015¹

The number of respondents in each age category was as follows.

- Under 12 0
- 13 to 18 54
- 19 to 25 69
- 26 to 35 31
- 36 and over 13

Various responses to the following survey questions are listed below:

1 What can be done to retain the youth and grow their numbers?

- Parents need to start taking responsibility for their children by encouraging them to get involved in church activities and not to leave it to the youth to decide what they want to do.
- More effective and interactive programmes in place, have more youth camps and youth community projects.
- A deeper connection between youth and the rest of the church. My impression is that at the moment they are isolated from the mainstream.

¹ The responses listed here are a first order analysis of a small sample of replies to the survey. They do not represent the official results of the survey, but are noted here as they support the bigger issues that are addressed in this thesis.



- Committed leadership with a passion for the youth.
- Creative worship.
- Investment in youth - training of leaders and Rectors in youth leadership and programmes.
- Seminars - have courses on youth development.
- Ownership of youth ministry by local church.
- Recognition and give them a chance to express their capabilities.
- Believe in them. Empower. Encourage. Involve them. Challenge. Mentor. We need to explore this avenue to make have an effective solution.
- More teaching is needed in our church (Anglican) as a whole to give better understanding of the Christian life and better understanding of our church and how the youth fit in in the bigger scheme of things in our church.
- A re-evaluation of youth ministry with a bigger focus on the context and needs of the young people where they are in their own journey of life.
- We need to get the youth active in the service and not just stand there without saying a word.
- Explanation of our Anglican traditions, liturgy and symbols used. More voice in the leadership of the church.
- Make church interesting and fun while at the same time you can bond with God.
- They can be taken for youth workshops, be allowed to make and decide on activities that would be fun and interesting to them.
- To come with youth programmes and to make sure the youth do not get bored.
- By doing things that can attract the young people.
- Help the youth to express themselves and being encouraged in the church service.



- Stop criticising them and help them grow spiritually, socially and intellectually.
- If there are a lot of youth programmes in the church.
- Show the youth the things we do, so that they may know it is fun serving God.
- More programs in education and social participation.
- To be considered in church and be given a chance in church.
- Keep the spirit of dignity and be spiritually filled with love.
- To start with the game plan that will attract the youth.
- By encouraging them to join and have better programmes.
- To involve them in the church council.
- What can be done to grow your youth numbers?
- Help the existing youth to grow spiritually by involving them in all church activities as spiritual growth only happens when you serve others and give of yourself. If the existing youth are encouraged to reach out to others, then the numbers will grow.
- Fellowshiping with youth in schools.
- Be much more welcoming and inclusive, and above all be interested in them.
- May they experience being of value in the church.
- Creative programmes.
- Development of youth leaders.
- Visitation of youth in the parish.
- Parent meetings to educate and develop a partnership in youth development.
- If they can get a Budget from the church things will be better as they struggle to run some programmes because of funds.



- Youth programmes that will teach our youth life skills and equip them for the harsh reality of the world and how to deal with disappointments and failures in their lives and when all seems that God is not there to help them.
- We can do this by being aware of the following words. Relevant, Joyful, Honest and Acceptance. If we can show the youth these words in practice, we will be able to break through the idea that the Anglican church is boring and in so doing we can grow the numbers. However, we must be aware that the "quality" of the young people is more important than the "quantity".
- Make them also feel special - they have problems as well don't just focus on others' problems but highlight the problems they are going through as well so they can relate to it. We should not exclude them and let them think only others have problems.
- Make the church attractive by starting to understand where our generation is coming from and where we want to go.
- Making youth understand the importance of a relationship with God. Practical Christianity.
- Entertainment and fun activities. The youth must be able to call church their home.
- The remaining youth should be able to go out there, do activities in public places while wearing Anglican Youth T-shirts to show where they come from.
- Praise the Lord in different styles, maybe by doing community engagement and talking about God while doing that.
- Collective and interactive programmes.
- Having a more youthful organisation that can interact with the young adults or kids, because what I found out is that, the youth take time to commit themselves fully to something. Now they don't need too much pressure or they'll run. And



when they run, they need someone who will run behind them so they can see that there's someone out there who cares.

2 In your organisation/ministry, what are your challenges in retaining young people in your organisation?

- Lack of support and encouragement from parents.
- Staff has been reduced due to lack of money - which is affecting the children very much. Staffing the youth is just as vital as for the church proper.
- Many options youth have in the city/beaches.
- Parent involvement.
- Monetary matters and their poor commitment.
- Lack of human resources (eg musicians for a youth band). Lack of teaching resources (eg cool 10 - 15 minute DVD inputs).
- Busyness - youth have no time for church.
- There are not enough youth leaders in the church and the senior members/old people still have the old thinking of the church. They don't want to see the church develop into a Spiritual service of God it should be.
- One of the biggest challenges facing the Anglican Church is that in many parishes youth ministry is only now starting to become an important focal point. Very often the youth are faced with the option of helping to get an effective ministry started or they can go to a church that already has an existing effective ministry. The latter is often the route taken.
- We do have quite a few young people active in our parish and we also have young people on our church council.
- They are not allowed to do things only when an older person feels like it.



- At our ministry, transport, lack of commitment and interest seems to be the biggest challenges.
- To be honest, youth participation is not encouraged and even if it is, it doesn't get implemented. As a result, we feel left out and that results in a boring church.
- Getting them interested and being a participant.
- We are not given a chance in the church to do what we like.
- Not being heard.
- Lack of support from parish councillors, lack of knowledge about Anglicanism and youth ministries training.
- They are losing interest and they are moving to other churches.
- Church attendance and inter-parish communication fellowship.
- Lack of confidence in youth members.
- Youth have no interest in the church.
- Youngsters find that they have better things to do weekends or Fridays.
- Youth does not participate in the church's work, no training for running programmes

3 In which ways have you been successful in retaining young people in your organisation?

- When parents have supported and encouraged their children the Youth have done well.
- Having projects that needed youth output. Such as HIV/AIDS awareness and helping elders.
- Having spiritually sound and committed youth leadership.
- Love for the young people that they can experience and feel.



- Creative worship that allows youth to participate fully.
- Youth service Involvement in choir and worship team/band.
- By having clear and interesting programmes, giving them (constituency) a freedom to voice out and make them own the programmes and the ministry.
- Early days. I arrived at my church in April - have just started a service pitched for youth. They lead it, welcome people - I preach. Watch this space.
- By having sport events, prayer meeting which have grown to teaching ministries.
- We have youth Sundays every last Sunday of the month.
- One aspect that has been helping us is by including the Grade 6 and 7 learners in youth so that by the time they reach high school, attending youth has become a part of life.
- By giving them leadership roles that way they have responsibilities
- Practical Christianity.
- Leadership development.
- Focusing on the image of Christ as a model.
- By trying to get most of them involved and by showing them they are not alone.
- I am still in the process of organizing youth in my parish to do a fundraising activity so that we can Buy t-shirts and print them. In order for us to be recognised we have to have t-shirts. After the fundraising, it will be community engagement and fun activities for youth, we want to bring them back to church.
- Diversifying roles and duties to ensure that everyone feels part of the team.
- So far what works are the friendships. Among friends it is easy to convince each other.
- Presently in our diocese the synod will enable us to retain young people back to the Church.



- Good youth programmes, good leadership and supportive priests, parents and congregation.
- By practicing activities from other Anglican dioceses.
- By coming together and having a youth synod.
- By spreading the word of God to them.

4 How can your Diocesan Youth Structure improve in efficacy?

- We need a dedicated full-time paid co-ordinator.
- Being fully recognised and supported by the church elders.
- Commitment by leadership of the church to youth ministry.
- Releasing youth and people called to serve in the role of chairperson and chaplain to lead in every way
- Support to youth leadership in attending meetings and provincial meetings
- If they can get recognition and be given freedom to do things the way they want to. We have the ability and vision we know what is best for us.
- One word jumps to mind and that is **communication**. There is a definite lack of communication between the various groups in the diocese.
- We have a youth council and our youth meet every Friday.
- By working as one team.
- By showing their commitment and interest, since the youth is the future of the church.
- They should be active and try to make sure every parish in the diocese is active when it comes to youth programmes, and they should not get tired of visiting them now and then, to see whether there is progress or not



- Improving leadership management and having uniform programmes that would consolidate identity.
- Interaction/participation from everybody.
- It doesn't depend on the young but also the leaders in our diocese.
- The diocese must work hard to fulfil their goals
- By discovering how the church can help and play role in youth organisations.
- Ensuring that there are youth ministries, retreats, conferences, etc.
- Every year there should be a youth camp, conference and the youth awarding ceremony
- Be more involved in church service.
- Only if they can approach the outstations like rural areas and have time frame.
- A clear vision and philosophy.
- To include the youth in all programs

5 What youth programmes have been implemented in your Diocese?

- None so far.
- HIV/AIDS awareness
- Not sure
- Youth Day once a year (singing and preacher).
- Spiritual retreats, spiritual workshops, youth camp, social outreach programmes, fundraising drives, stay awakes, youth balls, HIV/Aids awareness campaigns
- Young Lay Ministers' training Formation School
- Annual Youth Conference



- So far just the youth group.
- I don't know.
- Not clear to me thus far, decentralised.
- Bible studies, camping, music, etc.
- The new elected committee will come up with the programmes. We have already adopted an HIV/AIDS Programme.
- None so far.
- Nothing in place.
- Nothing yet.
- HIV/AIDS Programme.
- Spiritual dances and Mother's Day service.
- There has been only one programme initiated in three years.
- Never been implemented unless maybe when time goes on.
- There has been only one programme initiated.
- HIV/AIDS Programme.
- Nothing has happened yet.

6 How can PYC help your Diocesan Youth Ministry?

- The PYC is doing a lot already. It all depends on the delegates to apply what they receive from PYC the Diocese.
- Host leadership workshops.
- Perhaps by visiting or church and telling the congregation what is available, so we can all encourage the youth.
- By offering funds for them and being visible in our diocese



- Not sure - I'm new to the diocese
- Provide training in the diocese, not only for the Chaplain but also for the leaders who work on ground level.
- By making sure they are active in our parishes.
- By helping us be more active within the Anglican youth council, and then again help us to worship and praise God.
- In a fun and awesome way.
- Teens enjoys being active and helpful in great ways
- Providing us with the necessary resources to be able to move forward.
- Making follow ups every now and then.
- So that we can know they care and they want us to grow spiritually too.
- Provide uniform programmes. To have a similar identity could be a start.
- By bringing our youth together and building something worthy for our youth and upcoming generation.
- Mentoring the leaders that we already have and sharing different views and ways of doing things.
- Being transparent, objective and present in youth.
- PYC needs to put a lot of “vuma” and assistance with implementing the programmes.
- Taking part and being responsible.
- By inviting the DYM to their events, conferences and other activities so that we the DYM can learn about the types of youth ministries.
- By reaching their goals and listening our needs and wants.
- By visiting our parishes and encouraging young people.



- Introducing the 'Rooted to Jesus' programme through the diocese and archdeaconries.
- By offering ministry and youth training. Hoping they will help with money to sustain the organisation.
- The importance of discipleship programme for youth.
- To help our youth grow and win back the lost interest in the Church.
- Help us with the organisation and help us where we cannot.

