CHURCH AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY OF PENTECOSTAL MISSIONAL ORIENTATION IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

By

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DECLARATION

Student Number: 48530786

I, David Ovbiebo, declare that CHURCH AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY OF PENTECOSTAL MISSIONAL ORIENTATION IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE                  DATE

28/04/2021
ABSTRACT

Based on the massive explosion of Pentecostal churches in present-day Nigeria, there is almost no street in Edo State without at least one Pentecostal church in it. This shows the remarkable proliferation of Pentecostal churches in this Nigerian state. However, when turning to the situation of the youth in these churches, many are unemployed. Unemployment is a major problem faced by many people, especially by young school graduates. The youth, and especially those who graduated from tertiary institutions, wander in the streets in search of jobs to enable them to make ends meet and survive in the midst of hardship. However, all of this is futile given the dearth of employment opportunities. Hence, these youths succumb to the temptations of making a living through illegal means such as internet fraud, just to be able to survive and overcome the hardships in society and in the country at large. If nothing is done, the crime rate will only increase and Edo State will no longer be a place conducive to living a decent life.

This study sought to address the aforementioned problem area through the following research questions: What orientation do the Pentecostal missions in Edo State have with respect to the challenge of youth empowerment? How and to what extent are Pentecostal churches involved in meeting the challenge of youth empowerment in Edo State? How can Pentecostal missions successfully engage in empowering its youth for national development? The aim of this research was to develop a more informed understanding of the missional orientation of Pentecostal churches and how this orientation impacts on the churches’ contribution to youth empowerment in Edo State. The study adopted the qualitative research method to achieve these aims. This entailed interviewing church leaders and conducting focus group interviews with youths in selected churches in the Pentecostal tradition. The findings from the focus group and individual interviews conducted respectively with members of the Church of God Mission, Living Faith Church, Omega Fire Ministry, Believer’s Love World and Foundation Faith Church revealed that Pentecostal churches are struggling to come up with a relevant strategy or program with regards to youth empowerment. This is because the Pentecostal churches display little strategic orientation to tackle the issue of youth unemployment, whether through their teachings or practical actions. The study, as part of its recommendations, suggests that Pentecostal churches should not wait for government to solve the issue of youth unemployment, but rather, take a leading role in addressing this challenge.
Aspects of such a role are spelled out in more concrete terms and in greater detail towards the end of the study.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal churches, missional, missional orientation, youth, empowerment, youth empowerment, unemployment, Edo State,
DEDICATION

This academic achievement is dedicated to God Almighty, the giver of life, and to my mother, Modupe Ovbiebo, who wanted me to become a medical doctor, but God had other plans for me. Thanks for bringing me into this world and always encouraging me not to give up on my dream.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLW</td>
<td>Believers Love World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>Christian Association of Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGM</td>
<td>Church of God Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Mission Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>CYE</td>
<td>Critical Youth Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDP</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCPE</td>
<td>Free and Compulsory Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFC</td>
<td>Foundation Faith Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INEC</td>
<td>Independent National Electoral Commission</td>
</tr>
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<td>LEEDS</td>
<td>Local Economic Empowerment and Developmental Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>LFC</td>
<td>Living Faith Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NABTEB</td>
<td>National Business and Technical Examination Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAFPP</td>
<td>National Accelerated Food Production Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAPEP</td>
<td>National Poverty Eradication Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDE</td>
<td>National Directorate of Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEEDS</td>
<td>National Economic Empowerment and Developmental Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRDS</td>
<td>Natural Resources Development Scheme</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYSC</td>
<td>National Youth Service Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFM</td>
<td>Omega Fire Ministries</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFN</td>
<td>Operation Feed the Nation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>Poverty Alleviation Programme</td>
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<td>RIDS</td>
<td>Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEEDS</td>
<td>State Economic Empowerment and Developmental Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWSS</td>
<td>Social Welfare Service Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIDN</td>
<td>Technological and Intellectual Development of the Nation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Fund for Population Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFYP</td>
<td>Work For Yourself Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Youth Empowerment Scheme</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

Youth empowerment has universal and comprehensive meanings and its explanation are endless\(^1\). Youth empowerment in Edo State, Nigeria has become the topic of this research seeing that the number of unemployed youth in Edo State is increasing yearly and the chances of youth getting jobs become slimmer by the day. According to Surajo and Karim (2016:4921), more than 80 per cent of Nigeria youth are jobless. In Nigeria, past and incoming governments make promises that they never fulfil when they get into power and this is no longer news to the youth. Such routines of political aspirants making promises that they never fulfil have crippled Edo State and its prospects for development, as investors have been moving to other states in the country in search of investment opportunities (Onyechi 2018:82).

Benin City is regarded as an ancient town, which later became the capital city of Edo State, Nigeria (Isah & Okojie, 2006:65). In order words, it was among the first developed cities that formed part of the old Western Region of Nigeria. Yet, due to a lack of commitment on the part of the government and the political leaders of the present Edo State, Benin City has deteriorated in term of infrastructures and other social amenities (Enoma, & Idehen 2018:71). Benin City has a great history, but her present condition shows very little sign of development. Taking into account where the political leadership is heading to, the future of Edo State seems to be on a time bomb (Enoma & Idehen 2018:72).

Empowerment programmes are no longer yielding profitable results. As a result of lack of funding from the present government, most of the empowerment programmes put in place by past governments are no longer functioning (Ayoade & Agwu 2016:3). The few ones that are still running are not benefiting the youth more generally speaking, but rather the siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews of those in charge of these programmes. This means that young

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\(^1\) These meanings and explanation of youth empowerment are presented under the definitions of terms in this thesis.
people who do not have biological links to these people will not be assisted. Many of the youths have given up and decided to go to European countries through illegal means because they cannot afford going through the legal process. Many of them have died while embarking on risky adventures in order to escape the hardship in Edo State and the country at large (Ogbu 2019:55).

Effectively, therefore, the youth appear to be at the receiving end of the predicament of Edo State. As a result, it is not surprising that many become involved in criminal activities in order to survive (Salihu 2019:91). The present condition of Edo State is not encouraging, but rather frustrating and terrifying. In the context of this study, this leads us to ask what the churches are doing with regard to the plight of the youth, not least the Pentecostal arm of the Church, since most youths also belong to these churches.

1.2 Background to the study

There has been a massive explosion of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Based on what is visible to the naked eye, there is almost no street in Edo State without at least one Pentecostal church in it. This shows the fast rise of the Pentecostal churches, not only in Edo State, but in Nigeria at large. In the words of Ayuk (2002:189):

> The fact that Pentecostal churches have touched every facet of the Nigerian society and church life is not an overstatement. The ‘Spirit’ movement in the Nigerian church and society in general is unprecedented. It is almost impossible for anyone to say that there is a Nigerian who has not heard the Word of God; this is so, by and large, because of the Pentecostal spirit and the number of Pentecostal churches in the country.

According to Anderson, Bergunder, Droogers, and Van Der Laan (2010:15), “Pentecostalism refers to a wide variety of movements scattered throughout the world that can be described as having family resemblance.” Mashau (2013:10) supports this view when he mentions that Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon with a large population all over the world (cf. Kgatle 2018:1). The Pentecostal churches can be divided into three categories, namely classical Pentecostal churches, Charismatic renewal movements and neo-Pentecostal churches (Ele 2019:6). Independent churches can be classified under any of the categories mentioned above.

The history of Pentecostal churches or missions in Nigeria dates back to the 1970s of the twentieth century, when youths of tertiary institutions such as at the University of Ibadan,
Ambrose Alli University and so on started Pentecostal churches (Gaiya 2002:6). Examples of such youths are William F. Kumuyi, Christian Oyakhilome and E. A. Adeboye, who were vibrant and burning for God, and preached wherever they found themselves. Furthermore, the evangelistic mission is an example of a Pentecostal mission that was founded as a result of the enthusiasm and energy of one of the youths mentioned above, namely William Kumuyi, the founder of Deeper Life Christian Ministry (Gaiya 2002:6). Oyakhilome started his ministry on campus, with basically all his followers coming from among the youth.

Pertaining more specifically to this study’s focus on Edo State, the founder of Pentecostal mission in Edo State was the late Benson Idahosa. His ministry started as a prayer group from which later he established the Church of God Mission, with its headquarters in Benin, the capital of Edo State (Church of God Mission 2012). Although these ministries listed above have been well rooted, they are yet to contribute more specifically to youth empowerment within the borders of the state and the country at large. That is not to say there have been no achievements by these ministries; in the educational sector these churches have been able to establish private universities successfully. Yet, evangelism and church expansion have been the focus of Pentecostal mission; Pentecostal churches became involved in education, orphanages and other forms of relief work to enable them to evangelize and win more converts (Wonsuk 2014:28; Anderson 2020:132).

Anderson (2006:142) holds that one of the advantages of having a definite missional orientation is the provision of transformed visualisation for Pentecostal churches in their contemporary state. To this end, whatever the Pentecostal institutions do, they do it for the growth of the kingdom of God. Therefore, for Pentecostal churches to bring more converts to God, they should also involve themselves in the task of youth empowerment.

This study, as part of its exploration, is concerned with the ever-growing challenges Nigerian youth face and how those challenges should be handled. As Jayme Rolls (1999:75) puts it, we need leaders that can help with the transformation of people’s lives as well as the transformation of the state. This research consequently is a “double-edged sword”: it affirms work done by the church but at the same time it also looks at and discusses the difficulties that are associated with youth empowerment in Edo State.

Most authors in their work on youth have identified the youth as the bedrock and future of any society. Hence, “[Y]ouths are considered important and cherished in every part of the
The youth are an unmistakeable force in the socio-economic, political and religious structures of human society. According to the Nigerian National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action (NYPSPA) of 2001 and the National youth policy: Enhancing youth development and participation in the context of sustainable development of 2019, one of the objectives of the government is to “ensure that all youth are given equal opportunities and guided to reach their full potentials” (Federal Republic Nigeria 2001; Federal Republic Nigeria 2019). Another objective is to “seek and offer solutions to youth problems such as drug abuse and addiction, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, cultism, examination malpractices, etc.” The document acknowledges that there are also many other objectives that will enhance the lives of young people (Federal Republic 2001; Federal Republic Nigeria 2019).

In the words of Chiegboka and Nwadialor (2010:145), who portray the present situation of the Nigerian Christian youth as follows:

[D]espite the importance attached to the youth and the fact that there cannot be a happy society without the youths, the Nigerian Christian youths have themselves become victims of neglect, and as such have been exposed to certain untold predicaments resulting in difficulties in managing the affairs of the youth ... It is regretted that this group identified by the general public as both the life wire in the church and society are besieged by myriads of predicaments ranging from crisis in faith, problems of unemployment, choice of career, peer group influence and cult membership. Notable among the youth are poor family background, financial constraints in pursuit of education, illiteracy and uncommitted attention to learning (e.g. examination misconduct), and a getting rich quickly syndrome through armed robbery, kidnapping, openness to exploitation in schools by lecturers and becoming thugs and agents of crime by politicians. In the light of these predicaments, one wonders whether the youth can at all realize their potential as leaders in a country where they are subjected to such deplorable situations.

Even though policy-makers and experts are conscious of the significance of youth empowerment in decreasing joblessness amongst the youth in Nigerian, they have failed to give it the needed and earned attention (Salami 2011:17). It is the obligation of the government and the stakeholders, amongst which I include the Pentecostal churches, to recognise and deal with the needs and problems of the youth, as well as involving themselves in such a process.
This study examines the missional orientation of these churches in relation to the plight of young people. As such, the research deals primarily with the way in which these churches on the one hand hinder, but on the other hand, also promote the empowerment of young people in Nigerian society. Related to such a focus, another objective of this study is to learn more about the problems the youth face when they want to empower themselves and become upwardly mobile. With this in mind, furthermore, the study therefore concerns itself with developing deeper insight into the causes of those problems and the role the Pentecostal churches can play in providing lasting solutions to these problems. As an underlying motive of such exploration, the study also pays particular attention to the notion of empowerment and its conceptual promise towards addressing the problem of youth unemployment, which presently stands at 80 per cent in Nigeria (Salami 2011:19; Surajo & Karim 2016:4921). This includes examining some of the main causes and limitations that impede empowerment. The study concludes by recommending some policies that will encourage effective youth empowerment.

1.3 Problem statement

Unemployment is a major problem faced by many people (Adesina 2013:146), especially by young school graduates in Edo State. Due to the fact that the workers in Edo State are mostly civil servants, there is little or no job creation, and the federal and state allocation that comes into Edo State is barely enough to help the people in Edo State survive. The youth, and especially those who graduated from tertiary institutions, wander in the streets in search of jobs to enable them to make ends meet and survive in the midst of the hardship experienced in Edo State (Ogege 2011:253). However, all of this is futile because there is no kind of employment or job creation in Edo State. Hence, these youths succumb to the temptations of crime such as internet fraud, just to be able to survive and overcome the hardships in society and in the country at large. If nothing is done, the crime rate will increase and Edo State will no longer be a place that is conducive for living a decent life.

After his tertiary education, the researcher also encountered the problem of unemployment. This has made him reflect on what could be the solution to this problem, since those in political power will remain whom they are, enriching themselves and forgetting the masses.

Recently, there has been an increase in the formation of Pentecostal churches in Edo State. This development is at least partly the result of the high rate of unemployment and people’s attempts to survive and find greener pastures, all in the name of preaching the gospel (based
NGOs and other stakeholders are involved in the field of youth development and several papers and reports on the challenges of youth empowerment have emerged (e.g. Adesina 2013; Ogege 2011; Emeh, Nwanguma & Abaroh 2012). Yet, one question that keeps coming back to the researcher’s mind is what the Pentecostal churches are doing about the plight of the youths, given the fact that the youth amount to one-third of the Nigerian population (UNFPA 2012), but also in the light of the fact that the same youths are also members of these churches. Due to problems such as the present socio-political and economic crisis in Edo State, as well as youth engagement in crime, it can be presumed that most of the Pentecostal churches are not successfully carrying out their task of youth empowerment in Edo State. The main research question of this study is: What kind of missional orientation exists among Pentecostal churches in Edo State and how does this orientation relate to and impact on the task of youth empowerment within the conﬁnements of this state area?

The sub-questions deriving from this formulation are:

- What is the orientation of Pentecostal missions in Edo State?
- Do all the Pentecostal missions in Edo State have the same orientation with respect to the challenge of youth empowerment?
- What are the challenges faced by Pentecostal churches in Edo State when they want to engage meaningfully in the task of youth empowerment? To what extent do these churches see this task as part of their missional orientation?
- How and to what extent are Pentecostal churches involved in meeting the challenge of youth empowerment in Edo State, Nigeria?
- Moreover, how can Pentecostal missions successfully empower youth for national development?

1.4 Aims and objectives

The main thrust of this research is to develop a more informed understanding of the missional orientation of Pentecostal churches and how this orientation impacts on the Pentecostal churches’ contribution to youth empowerment in Edo State, Nigeria. Furthermore, as part of this exploration, the contribution of Pentecostal missions as agents of change in empowering youths for political and social-economic transformation is investigated and evaluated. In achieving this, an empirical research is conducted among church representatives and young people.
In order to address the main aim of this study, the following objectives are addressed:

- To investigate and study the orientation of the Pentecostal churches in Edo State to determine how it impacts on youth empowerment;
- To help bring to the attention of Pentecostal churches the orientation of youth empowerment;
- To study and outline issues around youth and the challenge of empowerment in the Nigerian context;
- To address the challenges faced by Pentecostal churches when it comes to youth empowerment;
- To investigate the impact the Pentecostal churches have on youth with regard to the challenges of empowerment and economic transformation;
- To engage with youth and church leaders of various Pentecostal churches to obtain their views on the subject matter;
- To analyse the responses of the interviewed youth and church leaders in order to determine the level in which the Pentecostal churches impact on the youth for meaningful empowerment.

This study’s point of departure is to have a positive appreciation of Pentecostalism. Yet, at the same time it does not shy away from being critical towards certain ways of thinking and doing that perpetuate narrow forms of Christian practice. While upholding the Christian faith and its institutions’ importance for achieving transformative youth empowerment for a better future, it opposes narrow-minded practices that reduce the Christian faith to merely praying for spiritual blessings and forgetting the mandate of bringing forth true disciples of Christ who can contribute towards changing the conditions of the society they live in (Kalemba 2011:12).

1.5 Demarcation and scope of the study

According to Creswell (1994:110) acknowledging the limitation of a research project or study helps to create restrictions integral to it. In line with such recognition, this research clearly limits itself to a focus on the Pentecostal churches in Edo State, though some of these Pentecostal churches may have branches in other states of the country.
It would have been more ideal to explore Pentecostal missional orientations in respect of the challenge of youth empowerment across the whole of Nigeria. This would have enabled the researcher to come up with a comprehensive set of results. However, limitations in terms of logistics, finances and time have made such an endeavour impossible. The sheer number of Pentecostal churches in Edo State has also made it imperative to restrict the research to a selection of some of the most populous Pentecostal churches in this state. Furthermore, the researcher has made this selection not out of bias, but because of his affiliation to one of the churches from this group and the large numbers of youth followers these churches have.

For sampling purposes, this study has limit itself to research among five major Pentecostal churches in Edo State, Nigeria. The first church is the Church of God’s Mission. This church has its headquarters in Edo State and its founder also hails from Edo State. The second church is the Living Faith Church, also known as Winners Chapel. This church is included because of its huge number of followers. The third church is Omega Fire Ministries. This church likewise has its headquarters in Edo State and its founder also hails from Edo state. The fourth church is Believer’s Love World, also known as Christ Embassy. Although this church does not have its headquarters in Edo State its founder hails from Edo State. The fifth and last church is the Foundation Faith Church. This church was chosen because of its huge numbers of youth membership. Research was conducted across urban areas in each of these churches.

1.6 Significance of the study

There is practically no literature on the combined topical focus this study has, namely on Pentecostal missional orientation and youth empowerment in Edo State, even though much literature exists on Pentecostalism and on empowerment more generally. As such, the undertaking of this study can be considered as a pioneering attempt to contribute to new knowledge on the aforementioned combined topical focus. Moreover, through this undertaking the study can also be appreciated for revealing how useful the theological teachings of the Pentecostal churches are when relating them to the challenges of youth empowerment.

In Nigeria, as well as in most developing countries, the youth usually constitute a neglected constituency (Surajo & Karim 2016:4919). Resources allocated to youth empowerment are limited compared to other sectors of the economy, regardless of the challenges facing the youth. This uneven allocation of resources results in high rates of violence and criminal
activities. In an important way, it therefore challenges Pentecostal churches to change their whole outlook in order to be able to combat these challenges and proffer solutions to these problems.

Pentecostal churches have already established their roots in Edo State, and it is thus essential that these churches should be examined in order to come to a conclusion whether or not they address the significant challenges faced by the youth in this society. This study will identify and describe the challenges faced by the youth in order to aid Pentecostal churches in taking the required steps to make these challenges more manageable. It is anticipated that the results of this study will benefit Edo State, Pentecostal churches and neighbouring states in Nigeria. It could also help such churches to re-examine their obligation and calling as a church. Finally, it is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to the existing body of national and international literature related to Pentecostal churches and the challenge of youth empowerment.

1.7 Definition of terms

This section provides the definitions of key words used in this study.

1.7.1 Church

Church to the lay person could simply be a place of worship for Christians – a place they go to make their petition known to God. All through history there has been different conceptions of what the church is. In this study, I shall look at a few understandings starting with the dictionary definition. Alawode (2013:9) observes that the church is a communion of redeemed individuals confessing “Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Saviour” and awaiting His second coming. Church is also known as ecclesia (ekklesia), which means a gathering or assembly of faithful people. Accordingly, church should be understood or defined as an assembly of God’s people more than a building or structure.

Journet (2004: xxviii) defines church from the theological point as a “mystical body of Christ and the communion of the saints”. He goes further to explain that it will be an error to define church without mentioning “love” because God is love (1 John 4). Thus Christ is the revelation of God’s love. Christ is the head of the body “the church” and as such the body of Christ reveals love. It is the love Christ has for the church that made him die for the church. This means that love is supposed to flow from the church because when love is involved sacrifice becomes easy. The church should as part of its mission love one another and this can
be seen from the sacrifices they make in order to see their neighbour having a better life. And therefore, the church’s love is made manifest in its participation in the mission of God (missio Dei), and by definition and for the purpose of this study, a church is defined as God’s missionary people.

Missio Dei according to Sarisky (2014:259) is simply the sending of God. This means that the church does not have its mission but rather the mission that God the Father has given to her. In John 20:21, Jesus made emphasis that the mission was not his but that God sent him and he also has sent the church. Bosch (1991: 390) and Nikolajsen (2013:259) explained this in terms of how they apply to the church, “the classical doctrine of the missio Dei as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.” The main benefit of this move is that by referring to its root as God, it defines the church and offers an overall structure for thinking about all the work that the church has to do (Sarisky 2014:259).

1.7.2 Youth

Colete (2015:520) supports the view that youth implies a period of transition into adulthood. According to Stech (2016:127), it is not easy to define youth by using the age range. This is because of the fact that scholars in different disciplines have used different age ranges. The African Youth Charter (UNESCO 2006:3) sees youth as those from 15-35 years. The United Nations (United Nations 2009:3) defines youth as those between the ages of 15-24 years. De Lannoy, Leibbrandt, and Frame (2015:23) define youth as those from 15-24 years. Some scholars will rather define youth as young people or young persons, says Stech (2016:127). Stech (2016:128) therefore chooses to define youth as “a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group.” The United Nations (2013) defines youth as “the period of transitions from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence.”

The age span of the youth varies, depending on the country, but for the purpose of this study, the Nigerian age group definition will be adopted. According to the Second National Policy on Youth in Nigeria, the youth of Nigeria are defined as young people between the ages of 18-35 years, both males and females, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2009:6). This definition is adopted in this study because most
youths who fall within this age group are seen to constitute more of the unemployed sector in Nigeria. It is also revealed by the Second National Policy on Youth that this age bracket (i.e. 18-35 years) includes more secondary school leavers and graduates from tertiary institutions. Another reason this age bracket was adopted relates to the statistic crime and violence in the country. Accordingly, most youths who are involved in crime also fall within the age bracket of 18-35 years. Chiegboka and Nwadiyor (2010:145) emphasized the crimes most youth of this age get involved in as a result of unemployment.

The challenges the youth in this age group face is not peculiar to Nigeria alone but we can see even in South Africa, for instance, the crimes committed are done by youth ranging from 18-35 years of age (Swartz & Scott 2014:325).

1.7.3 Youth ministry

According to Nel (2003:76), the ministry of youth is an important ministry. The ecclesiological assumption is that the youth are part of the faith community. This means that the ministry of youth seeks to transform young people into responsible Christian adults. Ellis (2015:122) defines youth ministry as “disciplining adolescents into mature Christian adulthood”. In light of this definition, it is a reality that youths are an important part of the ministry of the church. This is the reason this study has opted to focus on the youth wing of the church to explore how the church, particularly the Pentecostal church, has reduced unemployment among the youth in the church as well as the society at large.

1.7.3.1 Youth ministry: A theological definition

Youth ministry is an area in which advanced theological communication theory and practical-theological perspectives on ecclesiology are needed. This particular ministry includes specific, deliberate and distinctive communicative activities in service of God’s Kingdom (Nel 2003:75). Nel (2003:76) postulates that a Christian perspective on youth supports a biblical interpretation of the ministry for young people. The ministry of young people is an expansive and systematic community of God in all forms of ministry; that is, in a respected and focused way, with special recognition of families and parents (Nel 2003:76). Youth ministry, therefore, points to that arm of the ecclesial ministry that caters for the spiritual and physical growth of the youth in the church. According to Nel’s definition, however, this care should also be extended to the youth outside the church, seeing that it will also help towards bringing more souls to the kingdom of God.
Strong (2015:2) argues that the youth ministry of the church is today focused on skills and social factors when it should instead be centered on theologically and spiritually guided theoretical structure for successful youth ministry, that reflects on the purpose and essence of theology. I do not agree with Strong’s view that youth ministry should not focus on the social factor of the youth. Humans by nature are social beings that can interact with different aspects of life. I think what Strong is trying to say is that there should be a balance between the social and the spiritual aspect of the youth ministry. In the book of 3 John 1:2, the Bible wants us to prosper not just spiritually but physically as well. Aziz (2019:1) supports this claim when he comments that youth ministry can no longer be concerned only with the spiritual state of young people, but should instead be an outlet for youth in lived realities and experiences. It is important to note that the field of theology has made it clear that the gospel provides the foundation for youth ministry; not social or any other factors (Strong, 2015:2).

1.7.3.2 Youth ministry: A developmental definition

The goal of youth ministry is to help teenagers grow spiritually. Ellis (2015:122) argues that any youth ministry that does not have this as its goal is not youth ministry. Ellis emphasises that this is the period or time of transition that brings long-lasting effects on a young person. He continues to argue that this definition became a near-universal definition for the ministry of young people (Ellis 2015:122). The efforts of youth ministry is geared, almost entirely, towards this creation and growth towards the formation of Christians who were mature enough to carry out the tasks that corresponded to the dream of mature Christian adulthood. Youth ministry is there to nurture and bring youth up in the fear of God. It will also help youth maintain their focus especially when challenges arise and they are tempted to give up on their service to God and to humanity. Therefore, youth ministry should take the context and culture of the youth seriously so that the youth can experience a deep and meaningful relationship with God (Aziz 2019:4). Youth ministry should also recognize young people as essential agents of change in society and that young people should eventually inform the practice of youth ministry. The ministry of youth should therefore, have trained youth ministers who are involved in this ministry to represent and improve practice where and when appropriate (Aziz 2019:4).

1.7.3.3 Defining the scope of this study

From the above sections, it shows that the youth is an important or vital arm both in the church and in the society. This is why most scholars have engaged in the study of youth
(Colete 2015), youth ministry (Aziz 2019), youth and development (Ogunyemi & Adenuga 2019), or even youth and empowerment (Paynevandy 2016). A common denominator between this group of scholars is that their research aims to address the socio-economic circumstances of youth by advocating a broader spectrum of life choices that should become available to them. The youths are those who are in the period of transition to become mature and need all the care both spiritually and physically. This is because as seen from the definition above it is a period where there is a long-lasting effect of any decision they make.

### 1.7.4 Empowerment

Unemployment is mainly described as an economic issue, but it is argued by Cloete (2015:513) that this issue poses a threat to human dignity and should therefore be a theological concern. Paynevandy (2016:10) defines empowerment as “the process of giving power to employees, meaning to help them strengthen their confidence … [and] overcome their weaknesses”. He adds that empowerment “is not just giving power to the people, but also the employees learn[jing] the knowledge, skills and motivation to improve their performance” (Paynevandy 2016:10).

These definitions stress that empowerment includes the increase of knowledge, skills and motivation needed to obtain the required experience to succeed in their choice of career. In this study, the term refers to the development of youth potential in order to prepare them for nation building and contribute toward improving their standard of living.

Balswick and Balswick (2007:27) believe that empowerment can be described as an effort in another individual to establish power. Empowerment does not inherently mean that one is pleased with another person’s desires or converted to another person’s power. Empowerment is the active and deliberate mechanism to motivate others (Balswick & Balswick 2007:28). The empowered person is trained, improved, strengthened, established and rendered the acquired ability due to the encouraging assistance of the other person or persons. Empowerment therefore entails a process whereby the empowered individual recognises his/her potential and by implication through motivation and guidance reaches this potential (Balswick & Balswick 2007:28).

Dickson (1994:249) is of the opinion that you cannot define empowerment without first defining what power is. He defines power as “the ability to get things done or change things”. Power, he says, “is not the ability but the actuality of getting things done”. In his work, power
means different things depending on the context of usage. The first context is where power is used as an instrument. The second context is where power is used to attribute responsibility. The last context is where power is used to evaluate social systems. The second context, which is the power to attribute responsibility, is where I find it very interesting and meaningful to this study. Most Nigerian youths do not have the power to attribute responsibility especially to areas of their lives. By this, I mean the power to pay bills for themselves and those dependent on them. Therefore, they need to be empowered in order to take up such responsibilities.

Dickson (1994:250) in his work explained the concept of empowerment using Psalm 82 where God condemns those who take power from the poor by means of oppression and injustice. It is also important to note that God empowered Adam in Genesis to give name to the animals and also take care of the Garden of Eden. Thus, it can be said that God is the ultimate source of empowerment.

1.7.5 Pentecostal church

Pentecost is a Jewish festival that is celebrated 50 days after the Passover. The New Testament celebrates it fifty days after Easter (Akanbi 2017:29). The day the Holy Spirit descended after Jesus was raised is recalled in the book of Acts chapter 2:1-4. Pentecost is an occurrence where the Holy Spirit was descending upon the disciples of Jesus Christ after Jesus was resurrected and ascended (Akanbi 2017:29). It therefor means that Pentecostals are a group of people that places emphasis on the gift of the Holy Spirit. The origins of the Pentecostal churches can “be traced back to the twentieth century” (Robbins 2004:117). According to Johns (2010:14), Pentecostalism denotes a worldwide movement that has a common denominator of the Holy Spirit’s baptism known as the experience of re-birth or salvation. Kgatle (2018:1) claims that Pentecostalism is that strand of the Christian tradition or faith that sees itself as Pentecostal and follows the work of the Holy Spirit as defined in the book of Acts. Pentecostal church, according to Robbins (2004:117), is “the form of Christianity in which believers receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and have ecstatic experiences such as speaking in tongues, healing and prophesying.”

From the definitions stated above it becomes evident that for different authors one common denominator keeps reoccurring and that is the association of being Christian with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This shows that it is the emphasis on the Holy Spirit that makes these groups of churches to be called Pentecostal. This group of churches, which collectively believe in the
gifts of the Holy Spirit – the speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy, prayer, faith and evangelism – has spread across the world; not least in Nigeria, where the number of followers is still greatly on the increase.

1.7.6 Mission

What is mission? This a good question, although the answer is rather difficult. In fact, we should start by understanding that we will never be able to provide a fully satisfying definition of mission. According to Alawode (2013:7), “mission can be defined as the work of the church in the world as commanded by God.” He adds that mission can be seen as the affirmation and immediate commencement of restoration by way of the divine gift of deliverance, both spiritual and temporal (Alawode 2013:7). This is also in line with David Bosch’s (1991:393) concept of mission that claims that the restoration of an individual determines the choice of his or her missionary work. Bosch (1978:169) simply puts it that “(m)ission is the totality of the task which God has sent his Church to do in the world”. This shows that the mission of the church is based on what it was founded upon.

Hlásek (2017:26) describes mission as the operation of God in the light of the missio Dei. This gives us a fundamentally new viewpoint on the church’s mission which cannot be regarded as an individual human undertaking, but which is integrated into the Trinity’s missionary life (Hlásek2017:26). Missio Dei challenges the church to understand that the foundation on which the church is built is God. Most times, the church seems to forget that God is not just the foundation alone but also the mission of the church. Kemper (2014:89) understands mission as a movement from the middle to the edges and from the wealthy to the poor. This means that “in the past mission was done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor and by the privilege to the marginalized” (World Council of Churches 2013:15). Instead of such powerlessness, the poor and the marginalized should be seen as agents of mission and not as its objects. Given this reversal of position, God choose the weak, the unwise, and the helpless to further God’s mission of justice and peace, that life could flourish (Kemper 2014:89). This reversion is based on biblical foundations in 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

1.7.7 Missional orientation

According to Saayman, (2010:9) missional is a synonym of “mission” and “missionary”. According to him, missional can be seen as an adjective to describe the mission of the church.
The term mission is not used in the New Testament, as we well know today. In theological discussions until around the sixteenth century, “the term was used solely with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, that is, the Father’s sending of the Son and the Father and the Son’s sending of the Holy Spirit” (Saayman 2010:6). The word missionary as it is commonly known in theology today, that is to say, as representing the propagation of Christian faith among unbelievers, has a rather verified past. It has its genesis in tandem with the imperialist expansion of the West into the Third World (Africa and Asia in particular). It is part of the Western world (Saayman 2010:7). Saayman also adds that it is an alternative word for missionary appearing in articles and missiological discussions during the mid-1990s (2010:9). From Saayman’s views, it is clear that missional and missionary can be used interchangeably depending on the context and still mean the same thing.

Mission Dei stresses that the missional orientation of churches is gradually deviating from the calling to do mission. This is what Kemper (2014:89) was trying to say when he mentioned that churches today no longer focus on the poor or the weak but rather they focus on the rich and the strong. For the missional orientation of any church to change, it needs to revisit the purpose of the calling of the church which lies in the missio Dei; by so doing the focus will shift to the true calling of mission. The missional orientation of Pentecostal churches needs to take its root from the missio Dei and understand that mission begins and ends with God. When there is this understanding, the focus of the Pentecostal church will not only be on the privilege but also on the marginalized, not only on the rich but also on the poor and not only on the powerful but on the powerless. This means that the marginalized become the subject and not the object of mission activities. As such it implies a radical shift from the powerful to the weak (Kemper 2014:89).

Volkman (2008:26) describes missional orientation as “the degree to which a group of Christians is moving with God on his mission based upon their involvement and experience in biblical community, incarnational service, bold and humble witness, and the reproduction of disciples.” Anderson (2006:134) refers to missional orientation as a way of rediscovering “the missiological thrust that lies in the heart of Christian faith”. Missional orientation, therefore, can be seen as a way the church revisits its missional focus in order to remain focused on the main goal of missionary engagement, which is to win souls for the kingdom of God. In John 3:16 it is recalled that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. This means that love comes with giving and sacrifice. God’s love for the world saw him
releasing his only son so that the world through his son might be saved. This has proved that God’s provision for the world should be an emulation by the church to provide for the well-being not only of the members of the body of Christ but human beings in general. In this the body of Christ still remains a pertinent starting point. According to Bosch (2011:474), what is practiced at the local level of the church where it really matters is not necessarily the same as what is written in the official documents or joint statements of the church. This is what this study seeks to address, namely that the churches and particularly the Pentecostal churches should focus on what is reflected in the church documents; that is, even at the local level where the people really need transformation in their lives.

One main goal of missionary work is to correct the social injustice of both individuals, the church and the government. If this orientation is adhered to, I believe it will go a long way in addressing the topic in focus. Volkman’s (2008:26) definition stresses the reproduction of disciples who have personal experience of God. This is one core area that the Pentecostal churches need to ascertain that these new disciples have personal experience with God, by showing humility and witnessing and preaching to others.

1.8 Literature review relevant to the topical focus

One of the main religious trends in Nigerian society has been the rise of the Pentecostal movement (Adamolekun 2012:1). In the words of Omotoye (2010):

The study of Pentecostal Churches is regarded as the third phase in the history of Christianity in Nigeria. The existence of the Churches in this category is a challenge to the existence of Mainline and African Independent Churches. Some of these churches are [the following]: Redeemed Christian Church of God, Deeper Life Christian Church, Living Faith Church, New Testament Church, Rhema Church, etc. It is observed that many of them have contributed significantly to the needed religious, political and socio-economic infrastructure for Sustainable Development of Nigeria in the 21st Century.

Omotoye (2010) continues by pointing out eight areas in which Pentecostalism in Nigeria contributes to national development, namely: (a) humanitarian services, (b) educational development, (c) employment generation, (d) social and ethical development, (e) governance by example, (f) improving the economy, and (g) spiritual and moral development. However, she fails to include youth development in this identification, which illustrates the lack of attention to the challenge of youth development in the country.
It is, therefore, necessary to take heed of the youth and attend to their dilemma. As Ngwuoke (2008:20) writes:

Any failure of leaders to take the youth into account, whether in civil society or in the church, would be a grave and dangerous omission. To disregard the persistent and sometimes aggressive voice of the young anywhere in the world, and the refusal to meet their demands some way (not necessarily all the way) is to invite disaster. This is because in any society, state or church, they form the most vocal and strongest opposition to established order; they are the most active force yet the least constructive in thinking in the society. They gleam with illusion, aspirations and dreams. They cannot but be given a hearing whether in the society or the church.

To this end, empowering youth means creating an environment where young people can act on their own and take responsibility for their actions, rather than be directed by others (Diwan 2003; Ucar, Jimenez-Morales, Soler & Trilla 2017:412). This environment falls under the following categories, as highlighted by Diwan (2003:1) “an economic and social base; political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks; a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy; and access to knowledge, information, skills and a positive value system”.

According to Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, and McLoughlin (2006:33), “empowerment is a social action process that can occur at a multiple levels, e.g. family, organization, and community”. Lausch, in turn, is of the opinion that “empowerment is a word that has been used so often and so widely that its definition has become blurred” (Lausch 2011). Nevertheless, Lausch characterises empowerment as

… a person’s freedom to do and achieve desired goals of economic, political, social and educational fulfilment. This framework of empowerment focuses on the individual” (Lausch 2011:1).

The youth can be influenced positively or negatively. Commenting on the negative effects on youths in the Nigerian context, Oviawe (2010:117) and Olaniran and Mncube (2018:7) states that the Nigerian youth are confronted with chains of challenges (poverty, unemployment, conflicts and diseases) on a daily basis, challenges that are not easy to overcome. This situation demands that the youths be empowered with creative problem-solving skills. These skills are for the betterment of the society and are required for national development.
The negative effects that the state has on the youth have driven them into various forms of crime. To fully participate with adults, the youth also need to be informed about the adult perspective on problems, challenges or issues at stake; the jargon that adults use to describe their task; and strategies for approaching the task. In other words, we need to be sure the playing field is level for all parties concerned (National Resource Centre for Youth Development 2013).

Without the youth there is no future for any society, as they bridge the gap between the infants and the old; they are the continuation of any society, including Edo State. According to Psalm 11:3, “[I]f the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?” This is to prove that even in the Bible a foundation of any structure has to be solid. The youth are the foundation of any society, Edo State inclusive and Nigeria at large and sufficient attention is not given to them. That is what Psalm 11:3 is trying to point out, namely that no government or church aspiring to make a positive contribution to the economy can do so without a deliberate focus on the youth. If any government or church fails to focus on youth, it is clear that they have also contributed to the destruction of the foundation. For this foundation to be solid and preserved, attention must be given to youth empowerment. A good foundation is the bedrock of any successful society; the absence of such a foundation is therefore the problem of the state today. The youth have been neglected. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) mobilizes at least 300,000 young graduates from tertiary institutions annually across the country (Oyedele 2013), yet there is no job or any form of employment to show for the years spent in school and at university. They roam the streets in search for jobs, and if they manage to get a place where there is a vacancy, the condition for getting the job will be ten years of experience, or they will have to find a godfather in a high position who could secure them a job. Godfathers are influential politicians and businessmen who have the power to influence the decisions of managers and CEOs in both the private and public sector to favour whomever they decide on. In the case where an individual has no godfather, he or she will be denied a job.

One can start to imagine the number of youths unemployed in the country if about 300,000 graduates enter the job market annually across the country. These numbers are posted to different parts of the country. From 2009 - 2017 the number of graduates has risen up to 2,700,000, yet no more than 10 per cent of this number can secure good jobs each year (Oyedele 2013). According to Woyach (1993:5), Pentecostal churches that want to see its
youths fully empowered and fit for leadership positions must centre its teachings on eight areas. He identified these areas in terms of the following eight tasks for preparing youth for leadership and empowerment: (1) shaping visions and goals (envisioning), (2) helping groups make decisions (consensus-seeking), (3) resolving conflicts (negotiation), (4) motivating members (creating reward), (5) getting recognition for the group (creating an image), (6) earning respect for the group (gaining legitimacy), (7) attracting support and defending the group (advocacy), and (8) cooperating with other groups (coalition building).

Hence, it could well be argued that each of the aforementioned areas form part of the foundation of effective leadership. According to Chiegboka and Nwadialor (2010:151),

> [l]eadership is therefore the ability to show the way, to influence people, to command respect and followership and more so to effectively harness the human and material resources for the achievement of the cooperate goals of a given community or organization.

The youth constitute more than half of the total workforce in the working population in Nigeria and therefore should be positively influenced. In this regard, I concur with Eke and Eberiye (2011:84-85) who state the following:

> In basic economics, one is taught that the working age population is those between the ages of 15 and 65. Consequently, youth are thus at the core of the working population in any society. In Nigeria, they constitute 50% of the total population and 70% of the working class. In terms of youth and national development, we can thus appreciate how youth have become the engine that drives progress. When a society is developing and the economy is buoyant, young people are among the greatest beneficiaries. As a corollary, the resources dedicated to youth education, training and advancement will wane significantly if the economy is in recession.

One of the major problems facing Edo State and Nigeria today is the result of the negligence of the youth by the government from time immemorial. According to the National Youth Policy of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2001:24), “enhancing the capacity of youths for gainful employment” is an area given priority by this policy. However, the policy exists only on paper, as millions of youths remain jobless and vast numbers of them are determined to do whatever it takes to obtain wealth, even if it means getting involved in criminal activities.

Consequently, the Pentecostal churches could contribute to a reduction in crime rate in Edo State, and in fact in the entire country, if they would engage themselves more deliberately in
activities that can make these youths learn more about God, and also make them to realize the dangers of becoming involved in criminal activities (see Chiegboka & Nwadialor 2010:158). Another way of curtailing these criminal activities will be to empower youths in the area of gainful employment. Salami (2011:19) and Surajo and Karim (2016:4921) argues that about 80 per cent of Nigeria’s youth are unemployed and 10 per cent underemployed. Unemployment is a major problem encountered by youth in Edo State. Unemployment has been increasing owing to most graduates’ lack of relevant marketable skills.

Effective and operational youth empowerment programmes that foster good youth development values are the key to advancing the role of young people in national development (Edelman, Gill, Comerford, Larson & Hare 2004:1; Olaniran & Mncube 2018:9). Given the ultimate capacity of government funding to address the developmental needs of youths, the role of the Pentecostal churches must be critically examined.

Youth empowerment should include all youths, irrespective of their background or their culture. There should be equity and fairness when empowering the youth. In this regard, Stanton Salazar (2011:1091) opined that empowerment should be understood as both an ideological and sociological paradigm. It demands “equity, equality, and fairness in the distribution of societal resources”. The processes of empowerment go far beyond the provision of institutional support, as important as this may be in problem solving and in the achievement of developmental and academic goals. The processes of empowerment also entail a series of empowerment experiences that lead to transformation across key dimensions.

The situation of the Nigerian youth is quite different from what Stanton-Salazar (2011:1091) proposed. In Nigeria, I am contending, it is “man knows man” and “godfathers” – the people in power or in top position that you know. This shows that in Edo State and Nigeria at large there is no fairness in employment. This is so much more the reason why the Pentecostal churches should get involved in the empowerment of youth who do not have people in top positions.

Jennings et al. (2006:34) commented as follows on social injustice and inequities found during the process of youth empowerment:

> Conceptualizing youth empowerment as a bipolar continuum does not reflect other key dimensions of this complex social action process, such as the philosophy and values underlying
youth programs and initiatives, the dynamics of youth-adult relationships within these initiatives, and individual and collective processes of critical reflection and reflective action to address social injustice and inequities.

This social injustice and inequities found during the execution of empowerment programmes are the reason most youths in Edo State are unemployed today. Stanton-Salazar (2011:1093) suggests that institutional agents – by institution I also understand the church as an institution, of which the Pentecostal churches are part – as empowerment agents should enable low-status individuals to see a closer correspondence between their goals and a sense of how to achieve them. It also helps to develop an awareness of what resources are necessary and how to acquire them in order to gain greater mastery over their own lives and destinies.

1.9 Research design

Fouche, Delport and De Vos (2011:143) define a research design as “a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test a specific hypothesis under a given condition.” According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:72), a research design is “a plan that was followed during the study in order to answer the research question.” The researcher needs to decide on the research strategy that should be adopted, and must follow two steps in terms of the research design. Firstly, the researcher must determine exactly what he or she wants to investigate and, secondly, he or she must determine the best way to achieve this (Babbie & Mouton 2002:72). According to Mouton (2001:55), “a research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research”. While research design is the idea of how you want to conduct the research, the methodology is the execution of those ideas. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31) view the research design as the procedures used for conducting a research study, including the when, where and how.

The research design also has implications for the internal and external validity of the application of the research findings. Wiersma and Jurs (2005:83) view a research design as a plan or strategy for conducting research. It also deals with matters such as the selection of the participants for the research and the preparation for data collection. According to the work of Brink, Van Rensburg and Van der Walt (2006:9), a research design is a set of logical steps taken by the researcher to elicit a response to the research questions and to control variance.
This study will adopt the three forms of research design, namely descriptive research design, survey design, and participatory design. The descriptive design was used to describe the situation of youth in Pentecostal churches in Edo state. The survey design was used to collect information from the participant in the form of interview questions. While the participatory design was aimed at getting information from the participants in the form of focus group interview. In this case, questions were asked on which the participants deliberated while the researcher took keynotes of suggestions that were made by the participants.

1.10 Research methodology

According to Polit and Hungler (1999:656), research methodology includes the steps, procedures and strategies for gathering and analysing the data in a study. In the view of Mouton (2001:56), the research method gives attention to the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. This study involves the subjects of research (research participants) as an integral part of the design. In order to gain full understanding and insight into the situation of research participants, a qualitative research method was adopted. According to Wiersma and Jurs (2005:13–14), the two main methods of research are quantitative and qualitative research. The choice of method of research depends on the type of information the researcher intends to collect. According to Polit and Beck (2006), Kumar (2005), and Wiersma and Jurs (2005), it is left to the researcher to choose which method will suit the study in question best, or, better still, to use both methods in order to enrich the study and to obtain valid results. This study adopted a mixed-method, namely literature review and empirical study. The literature review focused on secondary material like books, articles and policy documents. While the empirical study focused on interviews and focus group discussion to get information from the youth in Edo State. In this study, the researcher also adopted the use of the qualitative method. The qualitative method was chosen because the researcher wanted to obtain insights into the perceptions and views of Pentecostal churches and their members with regard to the challenge of youth empowerment, specifically in Edo State. The participants – youths and church leaders – were directly involved in the study and were able to provide valid information, which the researcher used for the final suggestions and recommendations on meeting the challenge of youth empowerment in Edo State. In order to achieve the above and to meet the objectives, qualitative, participatory and observation methods were seen as the best approach.
The researcher believes that a participatory research method constitutes the best way to understand the challenge of youth empowerment in Edo State. Untested statements and presuppositions could create impressions that may in the end not be true. Participatory research is a process and an educative experience for those engaged in it. The people in the situation become more aware and more knowledgeable through their engagement; they become aware of their situation and of possible ways to change that situation (Pant 2007:100). Pant (2007:100), in this regard, lists three types of change that collective action resulting from participatory research can bring about. These are:

- Development of a critical consciousness both among the researcher and participants;
- Improvement of the lives of those involved in the research process; and
- Transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships.

The researcher carried out his investigation in some of the most populated and youth-dominated Pentecostal churches in the state (see further below). The researcher also made use of the participant observation strategy by attending some of the services in these churches to see what teachings the youth are given and to ask oral questions regarding the problem of empowerment in Edo State and the country as a whole. According to Nagy and Biber (2006:119), the participatory method has the advantage of creating a dialogue between the researcher and the respondents. This became the case in the present study, as it allowed the research participants to express their views freely about the challenges of the youth.

Burns and Grove (2007:61) affirm that the qualitative research method involves a systematic, subjective approach which is used to describe life involvements and circumstances in order to give them meaning. Parahoo (2006:59), on the other hand, maintains that qualitative research focuses on the experiences of people, as well as stressing the dynamism and uniqueness of individuals. Thus, the qualitative method that this study adopted was truly aimed at eliciting the participant’s account of meaning, perception and experience. Qualitative research, in this sense, therefore became more than merely a set of data-gathering methods.

Wiersma and Jurs (2005:13) and Polit and Beck (2006:508) affirm that qualitative research is an investigation into phenomena, usually in a detailed and holistic fashion, by collecting large amounts of materials and using a flexible design. In this study, the presence of the researcher in the field was an advantage because he was able to witness the respondent’s reactions, and therefore his presence rendered the findings more valid. Indeed, besides witnessing the
respondents’ experiences, the researcher conducted one-on-one discussions with the participants on carefully selected topics. Based on the participants’ experiences and opinions, and with the necessary critical evaluation by the researcher of the matter, the participants’ contributions would provide rich, contextual and detailed data related to the subject matter being studied. Accordingly, having been in the field, the researcher was able to understand some of the behaviour and from the follow-ups he conducted, he could obtain more detailed information.

This study is a multidisciplinary study that used a missiological and developmental study approach to enable the researcher to determine the role the Pentecostal churches play in empowering the youth. In this study, these two approaches were combined to offer perspective that can lead to new strategies and practices to meet the challenge of unemployment among youth in Pentecostal churches. This study adopted a missiological approach because the researcher believes that mission work in Nigeria has shifted from the main focus and needs to be addressed. The researcher adopted the developmental approach alongside because he believes that youth development is part of mission work, hence they should work hand in hand to actualize the development of Edo State.

1.11 Ethical considerations

In the empirical study involving human life, the issue of ethics is very important. The researchers sought permission from the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa to pursue essential ethical principles. This is to ensure that the thesis conforms to the traditional model for conducting research. Whenever a researcher performs a research study, it is a professional responsibility of the researcher to abide by ethical principles throughout the research process; permission to perform the study, informed consent, confidentiality, and all required protocols are to be obtained. More detail will be found in Chapter Four of this study. This study adhered to the ethical requirement and standard required by the University of South Africa.

1.12 Chapter outline

This study consists of seven chapters.
Chapter One: *Introduction to the study*

This chapter introduces the study by focusing on the background of the study, the problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, the definition of key terms, and the research design and methods that were used to execute the research. The chapter makes clear how the empowerment of youth constitutes a foremost social challenge in Edo State, Nigeria. Based on this identification, it furthermore makes clear that the study’s aim is to develop deeper insight regarding the contribution of Pentecostal churches to youth empowerment and employment in Edo State.

Chapter Two: *Youth and the challenge of empowerment in the Nigerian context*

This chapter examines the situation in which the youth in Nigeria, and in Edo State in particular, find themselves. Literature on youth empowerment and the challenges facing young people are more specifically explored in order to gain deeper understanding of the youth’s situation in Edo State.

Chapter Three: *The Pentecostal Church, missional orientation and youth in Nigeria*

This chapter revisits the concept of church and explores the literature on the origin and brief history of church in Edo State, as well as the opportunities and the challenges that came along with it. A brief history of the five Pentecostal churches used in this study was looked upon. The chapter also takes a closer look at the missional orientation of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, the concept of missional, missional ecclesiology and the missional ecclesiology of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria.

Chapter Four: *Research design and methodology*

This chapter deals with the research design and the research methodology that was adopted for the present study. The tools used for data collection are discussed, as well as the ethical considerations that ensured the validity of the research.
Chapter Five: *Engaging with the findings of the research: the focus group interviews*

This chapter discusses and interprets the results of the focus group interviews conducted with the youth from the following Pentecostal churches: Church of God Mission, Living Faith Church, Omega Fire Ministry, Believer’s Love World and Foundation Faith Church.

Chapter Six: *Engaging with the findings of the research: the response of church leaders*

This chapter discusses and interprets the results of the interviews conducted among some leaders of the following Pentecostal churches: Church of God Mission, Living Faith Church, Omega Fire Ministry, Believer’s Love World and Foundation Faith Church.

Chapter Seven: *Conclusion and recommendations*

This is the synthesizing chapter where the findings of the thesis are discussed and summarised, and where final recommendations regarding the topical focus are made.
Chapter Two  
*Youth and the challenge of empowerment in Nigeria*

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to gain deeper understanding of the situation of the youth in Nigeria, particularly in Edo State, and the challenge of youth empowerment in Nigeria. This chapter is an overview of the challenges faced by Nigerian youths and the challenges affecting the implementation of youth empowerment programmes.

Edo State is one of the 36 states that make up Nigeria. It has three senatorial districts, namely Edo North, Edo South and Edo Central, and 18 local government areas. According to the National Bureau of Statistic (2010:18) the population of Edo State in 2006 were 3,233,366 and the projected number in 2009 would have been 3,465,005. In the *Strategic plan for young adults and adolescents in Edo State of Nigeria* (USAID, Policy project and women’s health and action research 2009:1) the Edo State population was estimated to be 2.86 million people in 2002 and the youth amounted to 32.9% of the total population.

Youth inclusion is imperative in any government structures, as no nation can prosper without its youths contributing to the socio-economic aspects of the Nigerian society. For this to happen, serious attention needs to be given to issues concerning the youth. These issues will be examined critically in order to reveal the situation of Nigerian youths and how their position in society has affected them psychologically, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, economically and politically. Furthermore, it will be shown how the Nigerian youths’ position in society have also hindered growth and peace in communities in which they (the youths) reside since many youths engage in violent criminal activities.

2.2 Youth in the context of Nigeria

The youth are often seen as a stage between childhood and adulthood. Childhood refers to the period of being a child while adulthood refers to the period during which complete physical and intellectual maturity has been achieved in the human lifespan. Between these stages is what is called youth. From the definitions in 1.7.2, youth can be seen as a transition period into adulthood. Many authors have defined youth in terms of different age brackets. The Nigerian national youth policy definition will be what this study will adopt when it
comes to the age brackets. This is because Nigeria is the geographical focus of the study and it is necessary and appropriate to use terms or definitions familiar with the Nigeria context. According to the National Youth Policy of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2001:3) “youth are the greatest assets any nation can have” and are seen to be from the ages of 18-35. For the purpose of this study, I will be using this definition and age bracket since it is formally adopted by the Nigerian constitution. The youths of this age are mainly already out of secondary school and now in tertiary institutions, or out of tertiary institutions. Some of these youths attended neither secondary school nor tertiary institutions; some of them went to learn a trade and some are roaming the streets or are in prison for crimes they committed or know nothing about. Be that as it may, the youth constitutes a large portion of the Nigerian population. According to Salami (2011:17), the youth makes up more than half of Nigeria’s total population. And on their part Ononogbu, Chiroma, Nche and Ononogbu (2020:1) have observed that 57 per cent of Nigeria population is made up of the youth. The National Youth Policy of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2001:1) also sees the youth as “the most active, volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population socio-economically, emotionally and in other respect[s]”.

Speaking of vulnerability, the youth in Nigeria have been exposed to all sorts of social and economic vices, which have eaten deep into their psyche. The youth are faced with many alarming situations, among which are, but not limited to, the following: political violence, corruption, nepotism, tribalism, indiscipline, examination malpractice, prostitution, armed robbery, drug abuse, abduction and kidnappings, murder and extortion, Boko Haram insurgency, and bombings of places of worship and of innocent Nigerians. All these are the result of a high rate of unemployment in the country. Youth that should be gainfully employed roam the streets in search of greener pastures, which they hope will enable them to meet the challenges of society. As a result of futile efforts to secure gainful employment, they have resorted to other means of getting money in order to survive.

Looking at the political crisis in the country\(^2\) – a crisis that often surfaces before, during and after elections – one political party usually fights another and the youth are used as tool by political parties in their fight against their opponents. Politicians make promises, which they

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\(^2\) Political crisis in Nigeria is like every other form of crisis that affects the masses. But in this case lives are usually lost, all in the bid for power by political parties, when political party activists fight their opponents. Sometimes a political party can cause chaos in a particular region just to sabotage their opponents.
do not fulfil. Some politicians buy guns and ammunition and give these to the youth to use in order to secure victory for themselves in the election. These weapons are the only thing the youth tend to gain at the end of the election period, and these they in turn use to commit crimes when the election is over.

The situation in which the youth in Nigeria and in Edo State find themselves is largely due to unemployment. If these youths are gainfully employed, where will they find the time to be involved in criminal activities? “Over 80% of Nigeria’s youth are jobless and 10% underemployed”, says Salami (2011:19). This is still the present situation in Edo State if not worse. One would have thought that the issue would have been addressed by now but it is not the case (see 5.4.4 and 6.2.2). Unemployment is a significant problem affecting state youth. Due to most graduates’ lack of relevant marketable skills, unemployment has continued to increase.

Commenting on the challenges the youth face, Adedokun and Foluke (2014:156) mention that the lack of self-identity, low self-esteem and a sense of hopelessness are also part of these challenges. A young person who has to face the above-mentioned situation may have feelings of hopelessness, and anyone who feels desperate will do anything because he/she has nothing to lose. Most of the youth are afraid of getting married because they do not have a job. This does not only lead to an increase in the number of single parents causing hardship for both the child and the parent, but it also leads to an increase in HIV/AIDS among the youth (Adedokun & Foluke 2014:154).

One of the major problems Edo State and the country encounter today is the result of the youth being neglected from time immemorial. This can be seen from the various policy documentation on youth by the federal government of Nigeria. And it is as a result of the neglect of the youth on the part of government that has given rise to these documents, in order to see how to address the issues of unemployment among the youth. For instance, there was an updated youth policy document issued in 2009 which merely repeated the same issues that had not been implemented. For ten years now this document on youth policy has been stagnant and implementations on the old documents are yet to become a reality. This is a serious problem where guidelines on how to elevate the youth out of unemployment are not been followed. Recently, the federal government of Nigeria has released a new national youth policy, enhancing youth development and participation in the context of sustainable
development (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2019). In this document it was said that it is a review (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2019:5), which means it was upgraded on paper but the implementation had still not been carried out. In this 2019 policy document the focus or targeted population are youth between the ages of 15-29. Reading through this policy document it became clearer that the government is doing what they know how to do best which is making promises that they do not keep.

The National Youth Policy of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2001:24 & 2019:9) gives priority to enhancing the capacity of youths to be gainfully employed. However, this policy is only on paper, whilst millions of youths remain jobless. Many of these youths are determined to do whatever it takes to obtain wealth and then get involved in criminal activities.

As part of the challenges, Gaskia (2014) mention that the quality of education in various public schools, where the majority of the people who cannot afford private schools send their children to, is deteriorating. This deterioration can be seen from primary school level right through to tertiary level. He went further to mention that there was a shortage of competent staff. Infrastructures facilities and equipment needed to aid student learning either are bad or are not available in the various schools.

A good foundation is the bedrock of any successful society, which is the problem of the state today, as the youth have been neglected. A minimum of 300,000 young graduates from tertiary schools are mobilized each year by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC); yet no jobs or work exists for the years spent in school or in universities (Oyedele 2013). Young people walk through the streets in search of work and, when they find a job available, they have ten years of experience in order to get the job. The alternative is to have a godfather in a high position to secure a job. In the case where none is available, they will be denied the job.

The number of young people who are unemployed and leave tertiary institutions each year can be estimated at around a minimum of 300,000 youngsters. Based on statistics provided by Oyedele (2013), between 2009 and 2017 the number would have risen to 27,000,000, but not more than 10 per cent can secure good jobs every year. The young should be affected positively because they represent over half of the total population in the country. As such I agree with Eke and Eberiye in this way that the working age population is said to be between 15 and 65 years of age (see 1.7.2 and 1.8). As a result, in any community young people are at
the center of the workforce. For Nigeria, 50% of the workforce and 70% of the working class make up this group. Thus, we can understand why young people have become the engine of change, from the perspective of youth and national development. In fact, if the economy is in recession, the funding for youth education, training and growth will wane significantly (2011:84-85). Without the youth, there is no future for any society, as they bridge the gap between the infants and the old; they are the continuation of any society, which is also true of Edo State. According to Psalm 11:3, “If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?” For this foundation to be solid and long-lasting, attention must be given to youth empowerment.

2.3 Revisiting the definition of youth

From the definitions of youth in chapter 1.7.2, we saw that youth was defined by various scholars from a different discipline. One basic difference in all these definitions provided by these scholars was the age range. That is, people who can be classified as youth have to be under a certain age bracket. Despite this difference in age, it is agreed that the youth is an important organ in the society. They constitute a greater part of the working population (Eke & Eberiye 2011:84-85) while it is also believed that most crimes are committed by youth (Chiegboka & Nwadialor 2010:145). It is impenitent to state that the youth can be a positive workforce or at the center of crime in society. The next section will define youth in theological and developmental perspective for this thesis.

2.3.1 Redefining the youth: Theological perspective

From a theological perspective, being young is not a purely age-related category, but rather, being young is seen from the unique way in which humans communicate to God (Stech 2016:129). From a theological perspective, being young forms an integral part of any human being (Stech 2016:129). This means that even though one becomes old, the experience from the youthful stage still contributes to the person or adult he or she has become. What Stech (2016:129) was trying to say in my view, is that choices made at a youthful age has a lifetime’s consequences and these consequences do not go away even if the youth has experienced salvation in Christ.

According to Stech (2016:130), from a theological perspective, being young is a synonym for being on the road to the Kingdom of God, seeking even in this life to fulfill its ideals, and having a fresh mind with an open heart to relate with God (Stech 2016:130). Thus, it is
important to see the young person as a full human being, not only as being human. Ellis (2015:122) states courageously, in terms of training and growth, that churches, theologians as well as many working in the field of youth ministry only see youth from the point of view of what they are to become instead of who and what they are. Youth are not just objects of God’s grace, but rather the goal of the journey with God through which God reveals himself to young people (Aziz 2019:3).

The theological approach in the youth ministry is nonetheless aimed at competent and committed workers, who are not restricted or confined to an elitist and specialized community, with the capacity to understand theological knowledge, represent it and interpret it to inform the practice of the local church and society (Aziz 2019:3). Youth ministry as a religious discipline is the discernment of the operation of God with and among young people. (Aziz 2019:3).

2.3.2 Redefining the youth: Developmental perspective

According to Nigeria’s National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action (NYPSPA) of 2001, every country has its own definition of youth given the circumstances and the objective conditions and the realities that exist in the country. In Nigeria, the youth are those between the ages of 18-35, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. “This category represents the most active, the most volatile, and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population socio-economically, emotionally, and in other respects” (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2001). All youth policy documents in Nigeria hold this definition as it is the accepted definition in terms of age by the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The United Nations (2013) defines youth as a transition period from childhood to adulthood given the age range to be between 15- 24 years. The African Youth Charter (UNESCO 2006:3) defines youth as those from 15-35 years.

There is no universally accepted definition of youth when it comes to the age group. But according to Nigeria National youth policy and strategic plan of action (NYPSPA) of 2001 each county can define youth based on their circumstances and the given socio-political and economic situation in the country. Due to the fact that this study was conducted in Nigeria, the age group provided by the Federal Republic of Nigeria will be adopted in this study.

Myers (2011:3) coined the phrase “transformative growth” to describe what development and for that matter youth development should entail in theological terms. This, according to
Myers (2011:3), involves a positive shift in the material, social, psychological, and spiritual aspects of human (youthful) life. According to Knoetze (2015:2), “youth ministry must be transformational” and the church must strive for Christian discernment of recognizing and understanding what God is currently doing in the lives of those been ministered to. The term “transformational” is therefore used to emphasize the fact that human development is not automatic; it requires effort (Myers 2011:3). Myers (2011:3) believes that the Christian faith is active and as such should be seen as doing something and not as involving mere words alone. For him this means engaging with the world and that one’s actions should also speak the message of hope, peace, and restoration.

2.4 Youth ministry: A theological and developmental perspective

Based on the definition presented in 1.7.3.1 we discovered that the youth wing is an important part of the church. Though there were some definitions in Chapter 1, this section will give details about youth ministry from a theological and developmental perspective. Youth Ministry has been defined by some as “discipling adolescents into mature Christian adulthood” (Ellis 2015:122). Aziz (2019:1) believes that for every denomination and local church not only to thrive but also to flourish, there should be a deliberate emphasis on the youth ministry. The church should be alert to the role of its children (the stage before they get to youth that is childhood), which essentially relies on the local church’s spiritual point of departure for the youth. The ministry of youth will also take the history and culture of young people seriously so that young people can experience a deep and meaningful relationship with God (Aziz 2019:1). Youth ministry is a part of the church that is not given sufficient attention. Youth ministry should focus more on how to raise young people into mature Christians that will not only be useful to the church but to the society at large. According to Knoetze (2015:3), youth ministry should from an African perspective assist young people to not only gain awareness about the world through technology but also to gain wisdom to live life to the fullest despite its many challenges. Knoetze (2015:3) emphasizes that this should shape through young people discovering their identity in the Trinitarian God.

Even though we need to recognize religion as a fundamental social, political, and growing force in many African countries, the church considers and talks about poverty holistically, taking into account individuals, institutions, and contexts (Knoetze 2019:209). The Christian church recognizes that the poor will still be there (John 12: 8). This does not, however, imply that poverty should be tolerated and that nothing should be done to alleviate it (Knoetze
2019:209). The church’s calling is to a holistic ministry of serving people's spiritual and physical needs and assisting them in discovering life in abundance in all circumstances (Knoetze 2019:209). Theology case can help mold the social life of the youth and help them put their skills into good use that will also benefit the youth ministry. Aziz (2019:1) is of the opinion that “youth ministry can no longer only be interested in the spiritual condition of the youth; instead, youth ministry should be an agency in the lived realities and experiences of the youth”. On this note, I want to say that youth ministry, even though it is in need of physical and social qualities, cannot do away with the spiritual aspect. If the spiritual aspect is not there then it is not theology and should not be studied under theology. The human person is by nature a spiritual being as much as a social being; these two elements cannot be separated but need to be guided properly so that the one does not overshadow the other. The current ministry of youth should therefore consider a greater holistic approach and engagement with young people and their role in their social participation as active agents (Aziz 2019:3).

2.5 Defining empowerment

Theories of empowerment are more concerned with application and practice. According to Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda (2006:94) empowerment theories plainly concentrate on the structural obstacles that hinder people from accessing resources essential for health and welfare. These concepts are not simply concerned with developing empowerment within people, but are also concerned with the outcome that gives better access to resources and influence for marginalised individuals and groups. Theories of empowerment include both the process and the outcome. It is the outcome of the process that determines whether the process was successful or not, if the process achieved all it was set out to achieve; the outcome should be able to reproduce the process. In the case of Edo State, the process was adopted but the outcome has not been given sufficient attention.

In light of Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda’s (2006:94) definition, I am of the view that Edo State and Nigeria at large should focus on how to eliminate the obstacles and the hindrances surrounding youth empowerment. Viewing the task of empowerment in this way will ensure that obstacles and hindrances are dealt with in order to ensure that those who need to be empowered are empowered. This process will ensure that the outcome of the empowerment process becomes productive and prevent the mismanagement of funds. There are many empowerment programmes that have been set up in the country (see 2.9.2) with the singular
purpose of eradicating poverty and unemployment in the country. Unfortunately, these programmes have not produced the desired outcome because the process did not deal with the obstacles of mismanagement of funds. This has made these programmes futile and unproductive.

Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda (2006:94) also suggest that empowerment theories involve connecting a sense of self-efficacy with serious awareness and actual achievement. “Empowerment is central to the process of development which sees the goal of development as the cultural and political acceptance of universal human rights” (White 2004:7). Many young people believe they have what it takes to get a job done but because they have not been given the opportunity in the form of empowerment, they cannot put their self-efficacy to use. This is what White (2004:7) was trying to say which I also agree with that it is the human right of these youth to be given the opportunity to reach their full potential not only in the economic sector but the political and other sectors.

Rappaport’s (2013:6) definition conceptualizes empowerment as a process. He argues that empowerment at a multiple of levels is based on theories of social change and social influence. These theories examine the importance of multiple sources of empowerment in the society in order to understand the dynamics and interactional process (2013:7). Rappaport’s (2013:10) theories see empowerment as an outcome, not just the process (see Paynevandy 2016:10 and Dickson 1994:249). A similar point to that of Robbins, Chatterjee and Cada (2006:94) on the theory of Rappaport (2013:10) is that empowerment should also focus on the outcome not just the process alone. It is this outcome that gives young people the opportunity to reach their God-given potential. Although, I do not totally agree with his view of seeing empowerment from the social aspects alone. Empowerment theories should cut across all sectors not just social sector alone.

Furthermore, empowerment should focus on the environment, not just the personal aspects alone. Tremblay and Gutberlet (2012:284) are of the opinion that empowerment should not be a static or one-time experience, but it should rather be a continuous process, which will build not only the individual, but society as well. In Page and Czuba’s (1999:3) view, empowerment theory is best understood from three basic points: multi-dimensional, social and a process. It is multi-dimensional because it is used in various disciplines and it also happens in several spheres such as in the individual sphere, group and community spheres.
2.5.1 **Theories of empowerment in development studies**

The focal point is the concept of empowerment in development. According to the theory supported by Srinivas and Leslie (2001:348), empowerment is not possible, unless the power inequalities among individuals and groups are addressed. The theory of empowerment identifies fundamental limits in community development and helps to articulate a more suitable and useful role for development (Srinivas & Leslie 2001:348-349).

This theory also concerns itself with gender empowerment. It suggests that females should be given equal rights to their male counterparts when it comes to empowerment. Equal rights to empowerment should not only be in the economic sphere, but also in education, and in the social and political spheres. Empowerment in development studies tries to balance the distribution equally among genders. According to Scheyvens and Leslie (2000:119), there is an assumption that sensitivity around empowerment issues is often intensified when empowerment involves both male and female. There is a tendency that males are considered more favourably for empowerment, even in cases were the female is more qualified (Scheyvens & Leslie 2000:119). Developmental studies try to strike a balance between male and female participants in order to see females getting equal opportunities. Duflo (2005:3) argues that if women made better decisions for long-term growth, gender empowerment would favour women in development.

Empowerment should also be seen from various fields of discipline since development studies is a multidisciplinary field of study. Akintayo and Adiat (2013:17) suggest that, for effective empowerment in development to take place, various fields of study should be involved, in the same way various stake-holders are involved in an enterprise.

2.5.2 **Theories of empowerment related to youth**

Empowerment can occur in diverse ways in different social settings. To this end, Jennings *et al.* (2006: 33) posit that empowerment refers to activities that involve social processes that occur at multiple levels of societal life, e.g. family, organization, and community. However, Lausch characterizes empowerment as a person’s freedom to do and achieve desired goals of economic, political, social and educational fulfilment. This framework of empowerment focuses on the individual (Lausch 2011:1).

Empowering the youth will therefore mean creating an enabling environment where they can take responsibility for their deeds, rather than imitating others. These enabling environments
can be grouped under four broad categories, as highlighted by Diwan (2003:1) “an economic and social base; political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks; a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy; and access to knowledge, information and skills, and a positive value system”.

In the view of Jennings et al. (2006:40), youth empowerment theories should be able to build the community and the society:

Critical social theories are interdisciplinary in origin and focus on emancipatory processes that give rise to community actions and the promotion of social justice. To further critical social theory and practice around youth empowerment, we propose that critical youth empowerment (CYE) encompasses those processes and contexts through which youth engage in actions that create change in organizational, institutional, and societal policies, structures, values, norms, and images. CYE builds on, integrates, and expands existing conceptual models of youth development and youth empowerment. The aim of CYE is to support and foster youth contributions to positive community development and socio-political change, resulting in youth who are critical citizens, actively participating in the day-to-day building of stronger, more equitable communities.

The important element in fostering the role of young people in national development is active youth empowerment initiatives based on strong youth development principles (Edelman et al. 2004). The position of the Pentecostal churches requires careful consideration given the ultimate capacity of government funds to meet youth development requirements.

The empowerment of young people should include all young people, regardless of the history or community of young people. Equity and equality should be accomplished while inspiring young people. Stanton-Salazar (2011:1091) was of the opinion in this context that autonomy must be interpreted both politically and sociologically. This emphasises justice in the transfer of resources between society’s members. The empowerment strategy is critical in uncovering issues and achieving developmental and academic goals, and it goes beyond providing funding to organizations. (Stanton-Salazar 2011:1091). The Nigerian youth situation is quite unlike that sketched by Stanton-Salazar (2011:1091). In Nigeria, the author of this dissertation contends, it is “man know man” and “godfathers” – the people in power or in top position that you know – who open up avenues to a youngster. It indicates that work in the state is not equal. This is a major problem for empowerment programmes; work is not produced on the basis of merit and only the affluent are likely to be employed.
Jennings et al. (2006:34) also comment on social injustice and inequities found during the process of youth empowerment:

Conceptualizing youth empowerment as a bipolar continuum does not reflect other key dimensions of this complex social action process, such as the philosophy and values underlying youth programmes and initiatives, the dynamics of youth-adult relationships within these initiatives, and individual and collective processes of critical reflection and reflective action to address social injustice and inequities.

The injustice and inequities among government and non-governmental organizations’ empowerment bodies is one reason why most qualified youth still roam the street jobless. Despite the country’s oil wealth, and rich natural and human resources, there is still a great percentage of poverty and unemployment in the country.

The framework of empowerment that focuses on the individual as suggested by Lausch (2011:1) will be discussed in this three areas namely; educational empowerment, political empowerment and economic empowerment

2.5.2.1 Educational empowerment

Since independence in 1960, there has been the right to education, whether it is formal or informal education. The fulfilment of this right requires that the youth be given the opportunity and necessary amenities to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to be gainfully employed (Ofoha 2011:76). The first president of Nigeria, having seen the need for education, made an investment in education by creating the Technological and Intellectual Development of the Nation (TIDN) programme (Unachukwu 2009:219). This programme aimed at making sure the Nigerian youth became educated.

Today, large numbers of Nigerian youths (Oyedele 2013) have become educated. However, as a result of the huge number still seeking education in Nigeria today, the facilities are no longer enough. In some institutions, the facilities are very poor, thereby sending young people with half-baked skills into the society. This in turn makes it difficult to find a job, since most of the young people do not have the required skills necessary to secure a job (Ofoha 2011:76). Entrepreneurship is a way of making people self-employed and reducing unemployment. However, in Nigeria entrepreneurship involves many challenges as mentioned by Unachukwu (2009:221). These challenges include lack of finances, getting funding for costly, practical equipment, inadequate infrastructure such as electricity, good
roads and access to information, a lack of an entrepreneurial attitude, as well as many other challenges, which make it difficult for so many youths to become empowered.

Vocational and technical education are no longer yielding the best results due to the lack of facilities and student interest. Ofoha’s (2011:76) studies show that the Nigerian secondary schools cannot teach their students the necessary skills for self-employment because of lack of funding and necessary equipment. Government and stakeholders need to invest in entrepreneurship and vocational and technical education in order to be able to deal with the current rate of unemployment in the country.

2.5.2.2 Political empowerment

One of the areas in which the youth lacks power is in the political sector. People in power, even in the church, are usually above the age of 35 and we keep hearing them saying, “The youth are the leaders of tomorrow.” When will the tomorrow come? Will it be when the youth are old or in their early 70s? The previous generation of leaders from the 1960s spanning the period of independence were more youthful, or were just leaving the youth age category. Leaders like Gen. Yakubu Gowon was only 33 years old when he became the president of the country, Gen. Murtala Muhammed was 37, and Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo was 39 when he first became the president of the country; others were 57 and below, and in other offices they were usually below 30 years of age (Reports on Naija 2012).

Today, youth of this age are still struggling to find their feet: some are still in school, some are still trying to get admission into school, and some who are out of school have no job by which they can fend for themselves. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC 2006), the ages to contest for any position in Nigeria ranges from 25 years upwards, depending on the office, but the highest office which is that of the presidency, to contest for that you have to be 40 years and upwards. This shows that the youth should be at the core of each of the political offices in the country. However, in reality the opposite is true, as at this age the thugs are older people who take advantage of the current situation in which the youth find themselves. Past leaders from the military regime who ruled when they were still in their youthful age are still contesting for power in this democratic dispensation, thereby making it difficult for the youth to find their place in any given seat in political offices.
2.5.2.3 Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment indicates that disempowered persons take accountability for their personal achievements on a continuing basis and become bosses of their individual expansion (Akintayo & Adiat 2013:18). The youth are targeted by political parties as a result of unemployment among the youth. Political aspirants use the youths as thugs to secure victory for them. These aspirants promise young people empowerment should the aspirants get into office, but when they are in office, the youth are neglected. One of the ways to curb this problem of unemployment is through entrepreneurship. Okwueze and Ononogbu (2013:6) see entrepreneurship as a concept that entails the following: the identification of people’s socioeconomic necessities, the raising of resources and marketing the idea of considering equally the requirements of society and the employment prerequisite of the entrepreneur and his group. According to Oviawe (2010:114), entrepreneurship reduces the poverty rate and increases self-employment among youth. It therefore also reduces violence and crime. For these youths to be self-employed and succeed, they need proper training and relevant skills. Oviawe mentions that entrepreneurship is a means of creating jobs for the youth. It also helps them to develop and manage their innovations (Oviawe 2010:115). Commenting on entrepreneurship as a way to reduce unemployment among youth, Salami (2011:17) is of the opinion that, despite how important it is for the youth to be employed, the government is yet to give attention to entrepreneurship.

There have been several reform programmes that were set up to reduce unemployment and poverty: the National Economic Empowerment and Developmental Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment and Developmental Strategy (SEEDS), Local Economic Empowerment and Developmental Strategy (LEEDS), and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). According to Akpobasah (2004:2), “The goals of the NEEDS are wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value-orientation”. Unfortunately, these programmes, and so many other programmes formed by non-governmental organizations, have failed due to the high rate of corruption among the members.

If the industrialization of the country’s economy had been given serious attention, it would have created economic empowerment for the citizen. Commenting on the use of industrialisation to boost a country’s economic strength, Iwuagwu (2009:154) mentions that England, which became the first developed country, focused on industrialization. Other countries that were at the same level as Nigeria during her independence in 1960 - countries
such as Mauritius, South Africa, Botswana, Senegal and others - put much emphasis on industrialization. In terms of economic development, these countries are far better off than Nigeria, despite the fact that Nigeria is richer in natural and human resources.

2.6 Youth and the challenge of empowerment: mapping out the Nigerian problem

Empowerment is a word on the lips of every average Nigerian. It is seen as the tool for alleviating poverty and addressing the economic crisis in the country. Empowerment from the Nigerian perspectives before independence but also after independence was seen to favour men, and not women. In the past women were relegated to the background and were made to take their place as wives and mothers in the home with their duties ending in the kitchen (Tawo, Deng, & Deng 2009). However, with recent trends this has begun to change, even though some communities still believe women should not be empowered.

2.6.1 Perspectives and debates from the literature

Akintayo and Adiat (2013:18) believe that people can only be empowered if they want to be empowered; empowerment strategies should create a condition conducive to the empowerment of people. In other words, people need to believe in the visions and virtues of empowerment, and also to believe in self-efficacy. Iwuagwu (2009:153) is of the opinion that for meaningful empowerment to take place, the government and stakeholders need to give attention to industrialization. He emphasizes that if more companies are formed to manufacture raw products, it will create various forms of employment and thereby empower the youth and reduce poverty. But Ofoha (2011:79) is of the view that it is vocational and technical education which will equip the youth for industrial development. Even though the government gives priority to industrial development, the youth are not able to find a better job in this sector since they do not have the skills needed to work in the manufacturing companies.

By giving attention to vocational and technical development, these youths will not only be able to learn, but they will also be able to set up their own small-scale companies and be able to work in a larger firm. Adedokun and Foluke (2014:155) argue that the quality of education in the country is poor due to poor teaching facilities, the lack of functional equipment to aid the students’ learning, and also the lack of qualified personnel to teach. The poor quality of education is a major problem that stands in the way of empowerment. They argue that it is not enough to provide technical and vocational education; the facilities should be on the
same standard as the standard found in other countries and qualified personnel should be employed to give the learners the best opportunity.

Emeh, Nwanguma and Abaroh (2012:1126) contend that unemployment is the reason for the high crime rate in the country. The crimes are not committed by illiterate people, but by educated people who could not find a job. They therefore become involved in criminal activities; many become professional criminals thereby putting the nation at risk, not only at the national level but also internationally. Whereas Emeh, Nwanguma and Abaroh (2012:1128) see a correlation between the level of unemployment in a country and limits in a country’s national resources, this is not the case with Nigeria; even though Nigeria is rich in both natural and human resources, unemployment is high in Nigeria. The high levels of unemployment can therefore be seen as the result of mismanagement by past and present leaders. These leaders enrich themselves and forget about the masses, leaving them in abject poverty. Entrepreneurship is one sure way of reducing the number of unemployed youth in the society, as stated by Unachukwu (2009:214). If the youth were given the opportunity and the funding, they would be able to create jobs for themselves and become profitable to society, instead of roaming the streets in search of jobs. He added that this would in turn boost the country’s economy and decrease the crime rate in the nation, thereby allowing foreign investors to come in and increase the country’s income through tourism.

Duru and Ogbonnaya (2012:152-153) conclude that policies concerning empowerment are written down in each administration, but the implementation of these policies to bring about significant changes is the problem of the policy makers. If these policies were implemented, the country would not be struggling with empowerment, and the poverty and crime rate in the country would not be what it is today.

This study concerns itself with youth and the development of youth it will be important to get more insights from the field of development studies since it cut across other disciplines and focuses more on development in general which also includes youth development.

2.6.2 Development studies

Development studies is a multidisciplinary field and working in a multidisciplinary way is an imperative for bringing about transformation. Development studies examines practices, policies and theories associated with the inequalities between developed and developing societies and the roles played by institutions in this regard (Currie-Alder 2016:8). As
development studies is a multidisciplinary field of study, it requires all other disciplines, including theology, to join forces in order to work towards a well-developed society. It is significant to note that the government and stakeholders should involve themselves with all the various perspectives – be it political, economic, social, health, education etc. – to drive the development of society; all the various perspectives are important in creating meaningful and sustainable development in the country. Akintayo and Adiat (2013:17) comment on the economic aspect:

Between the 1950’s and early 1960’s, economic theory of development was based on having the right quality and mixture of savings, investment and foreign aids in order to proceed along an economic growth path that historically had been followed by the most developed economics. Development was seen as synonymous with economic growth. But in the 1970’s two competing economic schools of thought with the content of dependence theories replaced the linear stages of growth model.

Akintayo and Adiat (2013:17), in further explaining these two competing schools of thought, state that the first school of thought emphasizes the internal phase of systemic change that a “typical” developing country has to undergo if a rapid economic growth process is to be efficient and sustained. The second school of thought in turn underlines the institutional and political external and internal limitations of economic growth. It stresses how relevant and new strategies must be introduced to eliminate poverty so that job opportunities are diversified and income gaps are reduced.

In the case of the Nigerian situation, these two schools of thought are both relevant. Although there have been a lot of structural changes implemented by various governments and new policies formulated to eradicate poverty, the implementation process has remained faulty. This is because most of the officials who need to administer the funds and manage the projects use the funds set aside for implementation for their own personal needs, or divert it to other priorities more important to them.

Currie-Alder (2016:11) affirms that development studies are good grounding for those who want to make significant contributions to their society. It offers them the opportunity to become creative thinkers and problem solvers, and to learn other necessary skills for societal development. These skills are relevant on the federal and state level, at local government level, and even in the private sector.
2.6.3 Youth and development

The terms youth and development must be defined separately in order to gain a deeper understanding of this section. Youth, as seen from the definition from the beginning of the chapter and also from the policy documents below, are people from the ages 18 to 35. Development, on the other hand, means different things to different people. Some see it as growth while others see it as enlargement, increase, advancement or even improvement. According to Emeh, Nwanguma and Abaroh (2012:1130), development is a state of continuous improvement or progressive change in the community, society or state. Edelman et al. (2004:3) opine that “youth development typically characterized it as a process or approach in which young people become competent or develop competencies necessary to be successful and meet challenge”. This suggest that youth development is a process in which the youth become more capable, or where they develop proficiencies needed for dealing successfully with challenges.

Generally, there is the understanding that the youth have a vital role to play when it comes to developmental growth in the society. In Nigeria, for example, the national youth development policy (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2001) and its supplementary execution policy remain tangible evidences of the transformed importance of the youth and improvement procedure (Akintayo & Adiat 2013:18, 19). Emeh, Nwanguma and Abaroh’s (2012:1130) studies show that the youth constitute the biggest portion of the Nigerian population. The youth are associated with energy and innovation and youth are consequently perceived as a dynamic source for human power in development. Since the youth are the largest group in society, the federal government has set up different youth development programmes in order to ensure that the youth get the required skills to help them become integrated into society and ensure they fit into all sectors. Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003:94) believe that the youth should be perceived as assets that need to be developed, rather than complications that need to be solved. They add that the youth development programmes should endeavour to increase the exposure of the youth to developmental opportunities with a positive outcome (Roth & Brooks-Gunn 2003:94).

Olaleye (2010:106) concludes that there are many socio-economic factors that are a hindrance to youth in development programmes, such as dishonesty in the development programmes, violence, a low standard of learning, setbacks in policy implementation, lack of organizations assessment, limited infrastructural facilities and limited working capital. If
these factors are considered and dealt with, the involvement of youth in development will increase and there will be economic growth in the country.

2.6.4 Perspectives and debates from empowerment policy

The National Youth Policies of Nigeria of 2001, 2009 and 2009-2014 see people from the ages of 18 to 35 as the youth (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2009:6). However, the decree in Section 2 Sub-section 2a of the National Youth Service Corps scheme states that nobody over the age of 30 is allowed to participate in this scheme (National Youth Service Corps, 1993). The United Nations (United Nations 2009:3) define youth as those between the ages of 15-24 years. The African Youth Charter (UNESCO 2006:3) sees youth as those from 15-35 years. How you define youth is therefore an issue. However, one common feature in all these policy documents, irrespective of the age differences, is that they promote equality in distribution. That is, regardless of the gender, background, cultural or religious beliefs, they encourage equal opportunity for all in terms of education and employment. All these policy documents recognise that the unemployment rate among the youth is high and therefore call on government, stakeholders, and NGOs to give attention to youth empowerment. For there to be positive development, Park (2004:26) suggests that the psychological well-being of the youth must be given attention. If the youth find it difficult to have a positive mental outlook because of depression and the economic environment, it will make the development process difficult, if not almost impossible. Hence, to ensure effective youth development, the youth need to be given a positive grounding from which to develop, since the development has to start from within. Policy makers need to ensure all these aspects are in place in order to ensure that youth development programmes achieve their stated goals.

The youth development programme and the youth policy are among the policies in Nigeria that have been set up to reduce the level of unemployment in the country. These can be found in some of the policy documents discussed below.

2.6.5 Development policy

There are different policies regarding development in different areas, including housing, information technology, youth, energy, and so on. All these policies aim to reduce poverty and the unemployment rate in the country. For instance, energy remains a principal factor in both the public and private sector, which ensures that economic and industrial development takes place. The energy policy of Nigeria was first drafted in 1993 and was later reviewed in
1996 (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2003: iv). This policy on energy became important to those involved in discussions on unemployment because it was observed, even by the energy policy document, that most businesses, entrepreneurs and companies – manufacturing and technology companies – need energy to grow in business. Due to the poor energy production in the country, most companies and entrepreneurs have gone out of business, thereby increasing the unemployment rate in the country. One of the policies in this document was written so that it would help create a design for sustainable development. This would be a source and application of energy capitals within the budget, and for the use of such incomes in global employment and collaboration (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2003:1). In this plan one of the aims is to ensure a suitable, dependable and sustainable source of energy at suitable “costs and in an environmentally friendly manner, to the various sectors of the economy, for national development” (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2003:9). However, the cost of electricity is high and the supply to the people is low due to problems with implementation.

In the housing policy document set up by the Nigerian government to reduce poverty by providing houses for people, one of the objectives as mentioned by Waziri and Roosli (2013:65) is to “improve and encourage methods that will organize long period sustainability and low-cost capital on behalf of the housing sector”. However, with what is available on the ground, these houses are only affordable to the rich, and the few left for the poor are substandard houses built by inferior materials, which is against the policy.

2.6.6 Policy on youth

The mission statement of the 2001 National Policy on Youth mentions how the youth are supposed to have a sense of hope, be disciplined and represent the future of Nigeria. However, it fails to mention empowering the youth, which is one key thing that the youth needs in order to be law-abiding citizens. Thus, the mission statement of the 2001 National Policy on Youth (Federal republic of Nigeria 2001:12) says the following:

The mission of the policy is to build a youth with a sense of hope, self-confidence, imagination, creativity and pride in the nation's heritage; youth who represent hope in the future of Nigeria; youth who are disciplined, well-focused, law-abiding and good citizens; youth full of the spirit of entrepreneurship, self-reliance, mutual cooperation, understanding and respect; youth who are not corrupt and self-serving; youth with equality of opportunity, free from gender and other forms of discrimination, exploitation and abuse; youth who imbibe a culture of democracy and
good governance; youth who take pride in our diverse cultural heritage and geographic conditions; and youth committed to the ideal of national unity and development as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In the same policy, one of the problems the youth face is unemployment and underemployment (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2001:5) but the policy fails to give attention to it in the mission statement. In 2009 the Second National Youth Policy was drafted and its 4th and 5th objectives were to ensure all programmes are youth based, youth driven and youth centred, and that programmes help to reduce unemployment by promoting self-employment enterprises (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2009:10). This gave rise to many empowerment programmes, but due to the failure or inability of these programmes to meet their goals the unemployment rate is increasing instead of decreasing, the reason why the programmes were originally set up.

In the draft action plan and implementation strategy for the National Youth Policy (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2009:6-8), the reduction of the unemployment rate became a clearer focus of the youth policy. It gave priority to unemployment and laid down strategies and implementation measures. The plan included all parts of the government, the private sector and NGOs, and made it their responsibility to see that the plan achieves its aim, even though we are still yet to see this implementation due to the transit of power in government sector. The new government in power has not address this as well, other than the promises made during campaign that is yet to be fulfilled.

### 2.7 Developmental perspective on youth and empowerment

Okebukola (2013:18) thinks that youth empowerment simply means that all constructive attempts are actively made to improve young people’s lives, that is, efforts to strengthen their ability to make the best out of them, bearing in mind that they are leaders of tomorrow. According to Christens and Peterson (2012:623), “empowerment has often been defined as a mechanism by which people, groups, and communities gain control over their affairs.” This is the main aim of empowerment to see people are gaining control over their affairs. As seen from previous definitions of empowerment in this study, there will be no meaningful development in any society that does not take serious account of youth empowerment.

In the work of Christens and Peterson (2012), they argued that empowerment has a role to play on the psyche of not only individual persons but also the community. I agree with
Christens and Peterson because unemployment has a way of affecting the psyche of an individual, putting all these individuals together in a particular community one can begin to imagine the effect these individuals will have on that community. Empowerment has been associated with the positive development of individuals and the community (Christens & Peterson 2012:625).

The emphasis on youth empowerment should cut across both genders (male and female) because both genders experience the same hardship and psychological trauma due to unemployment. According to Gerard (2019:1024), in the past two decades empowering women has gained substantial visibility. This is proof that until recently women were relegated to the background as far as empowerment is concerned. In his work Gerard (2019) argues that female youth should be given as much concern when it comes to empowerment in view inclusive, positive development in the society.

Boley, Ayscue, Maruyama and Woosnam (2017:113) argue that while gender equality and empowerment are key elements of sustainable tourism development, there are always discrepancies when it comes to the empowerment of male and female youth. They stress that this is not only an issue when it comes to tourism development but an issue of development in general (2017:113). This study focuses on youth empowerment, but it is important to point to the fact that youth empowerment, in this case, should prioritise both genders.

2.8 Theological perspective on youth and empowerment

In this study, it is agreed that empowerment should cut across all disciplines, which includes theology. Okebukola (2013) argues that Christianity has an important role to play when it comes to youth empowerment. Looking at the book of Genesis 2:20, where humans were empowered to give names to all the animals, it became clear that God also wants His children to be empowered. Empowerment from the theological point of view could be seen as a means of alleviating people out of poverty, both spiritually, mentally, physically, and economically.

As pointed out earlier in 1.7.3, you cannot define empowerment without first defining what power means. Dickson defines power as the ability to do something or to change things (1994:249). Empowerment would, therefore, mean giving people the power to do things or change things around them (Dickson, 1994:249). Who are then powerless that power needs to be given to? Van den Berg-Meelis (2014:9) sees this category of people as those who are poor, uneducated marginalized, segregated, and relegated to the background. These are
people who are also found in the church and who need to be given the power to change their situation. In this study majority of young school graduates falls under the poverty phase. Even though they have been educated they are still poor because they have experienced no form of empowerment to uplift them from poverty. This is the more the reason why they are in the church because they want prayers for miracle jobs.

One of the reasons for empowering youth is the role they play in church. In many Pentecostal churches, youths are seen to be active by playing vital roles in the various departments of the church (Van den Berg-Meelis, 2014:10). Theological views on empowerment encourage equity and fair play between genders and ethnic backgrounds when it comes to empowerment. This means that whether male or female, both are rendered equal opportunity in the face of empowerment opportunity.

In light of Anderson's (2006:134) definition of missional orientation as discussed in Section 1.7.6, it is important to state here that empowerment is a key focus as part of mission work in any society or community. And the targets here are usually the poor and underprivileged. Looking at Acts 3 from verse 1, to support this claim, Peter healed the crippled man who always begged for alms. Giving the crippled man some coins would have been enough but what the man needed was an act of empowerment to stop begging and work for himself. After his healing, that was the last time he sat at the gate begging for alms. In the same sense, empowerment would mean giving someone what they need not what they want. The same applies to the church today, where some youth needs a form of empowerment to improve their lives. Pentecostal churches should as part of their mission focus more on the empowerment of the youth in the church. This is where the orientation of Pentecostal churches needs to be readdressed, seeing that it has been part of mission work to empower those that need to be empowered but this aspect has been silent in the and attention given to other areas like soul winning and performing of miracles.

Van den Berg-Meelis (2014:10-11) argues that most empowerment policies are biased to the female, that is, female youth who also needs empowerment. Which is more reason the Pentecostal churches should focus on seeing that there are no gender biases when empowering the youth as both genders are equal before God and have the same rights.

Okebukola (2013:18) believes that the kind of training parents give to their children impacts them and that this reality therefore calls on the churches to encourage parents to train their
children and bring them up in the fear of the Lord as seen in Proverbs 22:6. Pentecostal churches have a huge role to play when it comes to the kind of lives the youth lives. If the home they are coming from has not given them a good parental training they will become a problem to the society and that is where the Pentecostal churches should as part of their teachings emphasized to parent the importance of bringing up their children in the fear of the Lord to make empowerment process easy.

2.9 Youth and empowerment: towards a solution

Over the years, youth empowerment has become a vital issue of concern for researchers of various disciplines. This is because the need for youth to be empowered cannot be over emphasised, seeing that most crimes are committed by youth who are unemployed (Uyang Festus & Bassey 2016:79-80). Empowerment is a tool for elevating people out of poverty. This in-turn reduces crimes and other forms of violence in the society. Many scholars (e.g. Surajo & Karim 2016; Salihu, 2019; Salami 2011; Onyechi 2018; Olaleye 2010) have emphasised in their work the need for youth empowerment as a way of reducing the crime in the society. Edelman et al. (2004:1) emphasised the need for an effective and operational empowerment programmes as the key to solving unemployment among youth.

The government has a lot of organizations but all cannot cater for the large number of youth and unemployed people in the society. Even the private-owned companies have a limited number of people they can employ. This is the more reason empowerment programmes need to be put in place to commissioned youth into the entrepreneurial world. Stanton-Salazar (2011:1093) suggested that to have an empowerment programme that can cater for the large number of unemployed youth in the society all hands need to be on deck, as the issue of discourse is not something that can be left to the government alone. Salami (2011:17) is of the opinion that empowerment is significant to reducing joblessness among the youth although attention is not been given to it by various arms of government.

In 2016 the number of unemployed youth in Nigeria amounted to 80 per cent (Surajo & Karim 2016:4921), which was predicted to increase given the economic condition of the country. With this percentage and the predicted rise, it is necessary to engage in youth empowerment if this number is to drop. According to Ogunyemi and Adenuga (2017:3), one of the ways to a sure reduction of unemployment is through vocational training. In this case, a lot of youth get to learn a particular skill that can help them become self-employed. This in turn can reduce the number of unemployed youth in society.
Another area of empowerment that should be looked at is the area of educational empowerment. Educational empowerment can help reduce the number of unemployment in the society. Many youths who are street kids and touts in society are school drop-out. This is because a lot of them could not afford it financially as a result of their poor background. According to Ogunyemi and Adenuga (2017:5), as part of means to empower youth churches grant scholarship to some youth who cannot afford to pay their fees as long as these youth are committed members in the church.

2.10 Critical reflection on different initiatives towards youth empowerment

This section focuses on initiatives by churches, government, and non-governmental organizations. This section will help bring to light the initiatives that the churches, government, and non-governmental organizations have taken to empower youth and reduce unemployment among youth. It is important to explore these initiatives in order to know which of these areas has actually worked better in reducing the number of unemployed youth in the county.

2.10.1 Initiatives by churches

Most empowerment programmes organised by churches are more of spiritual-based empowerment that has to do with the spiritual life of the youth. According to Ogunyemi and Adenuga (2017:5), most of the empowerment programmes has spiritual benefits. As has been claimed in this thesis so far, the messages the Pentecostal churches preach feeds the youth spiritually while their economic life suffers. Empowerment programmes have mainly been set up by the government. But few have been set up by Pentecostal churches to empower youth who are unemployed.

One of those empowerment programmes that have been set up by Christian churches to empower youth is multimedia training. According to Ogunyemi and Adenuga (2017:5), such multimedia training includes the use of the camera, video coverage, recording, and mass production of video and audio tapes for sales. Youth who have received some training in these areas could either work in the churches' technical and media departments or use there acquired skills to obtain employment outside the church to enable them to survive.

Another empowerment programme that the churches have used to empower some youth is that of event planning. This is an area of training they (the churches) have given to interested youth in the skills acquisition centre sponsored by the churches. Many youths who completed
this training get paid by planning events for people who need it (Ogunyemi & Adenuga 2017:5). In the skills acquisition centre, there are a lot of areas any youth may choose to focus on. These areas include tailoring, hair dressing, barbing, perfume, liquid soap production, fish farming, piggery, poultry, book publishing, human resources, and financial management.

Many churches are beginning to establish skills acquisition centres even though this is solely for the members of the church but with the training, most of the youth get from the centre they can become self-employed. According to Gideon (2014:10) and Fatokun, (2009:50), these acquisition centres offer varieties of training. This is not to say that one centre offers all the training, but only the ones they have the capacity to offer.

Churches that have both primary and secondary schools have employed capable youth into teaching positions but these positions are also limited and cannot accommodate a large number of unemployed youth in the society. Ogunyemi and Adenuga (2017:1) believe that equipping youth to develop entrepreneurial skills is the best way to cater for a large number of unemployed youth.

2.10.2 Initiatives by government and NGOs

Many empowerment programmes have been set up to reduce poverty and unemployment since Nigeria got her independence. The failure of one gave need for another to be set up. Some of these programmes had partial success but did not last due to lack of funding on from the government. The first empowerment programme that was set up after independence was the Technological and Intellectual Development of the Nation (TIDN). This programme aimed at empowering the people through education. “Show the light and the people will find the way,” was at the time an often-quoted mantra by Nigeria’s first president, the late Nnamdi Azikwe (Anumudu, Umar & Madu 2013:2). The then president gave serious attention to education as well as to agriculture. At this stage, the government was interested in an education system which could deliver graduates from university for employment (Unachukwu 2009:219). Two programmes were initiated in 1986 and 1987, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the Work for Yourself Programme (WFYP) respectively. But the NDE was more directed to youth empowerment than the WFYP (Unachukwu 2009:220). According to Unachukwu (2009:220), this programme had huge successes but the youth did not always have the required skills. In an attempt to solve this problem, the NDE introduced another programme called the Entrepreneurial Development
Programme (EDP). From 1960-1985 various governments designed the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) in order to reduce the poverty and unemployment rate in the country. In 1977 two programmes were introduced, namely Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE), and in 1980 it was the Green Revolution (Anumudu, Umar & Madu 2013:6). All these were attempts to reduce the poverty rate in the country, which still grew despite the introduction of these programmes. The Green Revolution and OFN focused on agriculture in order to increase the production of food, while FCPE’s objective was to reduce illiteracy at grassroots level (Anumudu, Umar & Madu 2013:6). Though some of these programmes made a big impact, they were short lived as a result of the transition from one government to the other and new government policies. In 1986 the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced as a result of the economic reform at that time (Emeh, Nwanguma & Abaroh 2012:1125). In that same year the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was set up in order to resolve problems due to unemployment trends in the country. It aimed at promoting skills acquisition and self-employment to reduce the joblessness and poverty in the country (Anumudu, Umar & Madu 2013:8). In 2000 the poverty alleviation programme (PAP) was established, which lasted from 2000-2007. This programme was started, instead of focusing on already existing programmes and making them better (Duru & Ogbonnaya 2012:150). In the end the PAP programme failed to meet the expectations of the people and a new programme was established called the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). This programme had four schemes in order to make it very effective. These were the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), the Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS), the Social Welfare Service Scheme (SWSS) and the Natural Resources Development Scheme (NRDS). The goal of these programmes was to address the unemployment and poverty rates in the country. A huge fund was established from which money was allocated to the schemes to see that their goals were carried out. However, with the current state of the country, it is clear that they failed to achieve their aim and the funding given to them cannot be accounted for (Duru & Ogbonnaya 2012:150).

Goals of empowerment programmes: All the programmes mentioned above had some common goals, namely to make life better for the citizens in the country, to reduce unemployment and to reduce the poverty rate in the country. Though some of these programmes had other goals and objectives that were accomplished partially, they were not effective, given the need and situation why they were set up in the first place.
Effect and achievements of empowerment programmes: Most of these programmes achieved little or nothing, given the reason for their existence; programmes still did not meet their targets. One of the programmes that succeeded was the FCPE (Free and Compulsory Primary Education). This programme helped many people to become literate; most people were too poor to afford education and they regarded the FCPE as an opportunity to become educated.

2.11 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter attended to the challenges that the youth of Nigeria face. The chapter also looked at the various policy documents on youth and the empowerment programmes that were set up to reduce unemployment and poverty in the country. Some terms like youth and youth ministry were redefined both in theological and developmental perspectives to enable the researcher to come up with a working definition that was adopted in this study. This chapter also looked at the theological perspective of empowerment. From the various policy documents that were considered in this chapter, it was seen that despite the important of youth empowerment, there has not been any permanent solution to this issue of unemployment among the youth. Empowerment initiatives to reduce unemployment among youth both from the government, NGOs, and churches were also explored. For society to move forward, there needs to be a focus on the youth since they bridge the gap between the young and the old; to have continuity, the voice of the youth needs to be heard and their problems addressed.
Chapter Three

The Pentecostal Church, missional orientation and youth in Nigeria

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the history of the Christian church in Edo State, Nigeria. In this respect, the discussion will give special consideration to the genesis of Christianity in Nigeria and the subsequent rise of Pentecostalism. The chapter will make use of different secondary sources, especially to show how they offer different and even contrasting perspectives on the history of the Christian church in Nigeria. The missional orientation of Pentecostal churches will be looked upon, what it used to be and what it is now in the present. This will show us if there has been a shift in orientation. The impact of the Pentecostal churches on youth and the society will be explored through a literature study.

3.2 Revisiting the concept of church

It is important to know what the concept “church” means in the Nigerian context and this thesis. From the definitions in 1.7.1, the church is a place of worship for Christians. In other words, if Christians do not worship there no matter how big or fancy the building looks it cannot be called a church. This means that it is the Christians in the building that makes the building a church. According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary online (2017), the church is a place of worship for Christians, while Christians are those who believe and live like Christ. In Nigeria, you can be seen as a Christian because you go to church and you do not practice any other form of religion.

One cannot separate the adjective “Christian” from “church” as these two words are intertwined and can be used interchangeably. This is because those who worship in the church are referred to as Christians while the church is just a mere building. According to Hooker (2008:1), “in a missional ecclesiology, the church is not a building or an institution but a community of witness, called into being and equipped by God, and sent into the world to testify to and participate in Christ’s work.” Hooker (2008:1) believes that the church does not have a mission of her own but it is rather God’s mission God has that creates the church. The church is here to serve God’s purpose of mission. Myers (2016:40) supports this view
when he says that the church is the people of God following after the life of Christ and doing the work of God.

According to McKnight (2007:34), a “church is a community that practices the way and life of Jesus within a postmodern culture”. He adds that one cannot know how many of these churches we have that is because they are many. This is what he means that when we talk about the church we are referring to Christians, albeit that we cannot really tell how many Christians we have here on earth (McKnight 2007:35). In the same way, the youth form or constitute part of the segment of any church. We have the men, the women, and the youth as the segments of the church. In some cases, the children are considered part of the youth while in some churches the children can form their own segment. In the church as well as in society the youth bridges the gap between the teenagers up to young adults, which covers the ages 18 to 35. Although there are different denominations, the people of those denominations are regarded as one in the body of Christ. Although this chapter will focus more on the Pentecostal churches and the profile of the youth in these churches, it will also take a deeper look into the general history of the church in Nigeria before it started to break up into different denominations.

3.3 Origin and brief history of the church in Edo State Nigeria

The history of Christianity in Nigeria dates back to the 15th century, when Portuguese missionaries first came to Nigeria through Benin and Warri, in the southern region of the present Nigeria. One cannot write about the history of Christianity in Nigeria without referring to Benin City, the capital of Edo State. This is because the first point of entry of Christianity into Nigeria was at Benin City. However, this growth point did not last as a result of the challenges the missionaries faced, as well as their interest in trade and other forms of business, which later involved slave trade (Abu & Adewale 2013:122). The missionaries also visited Warri in the Delta State to continue the missionary work there. Ajayi (1969:3), Erivwo (1989:19) and Abu and Adewale (2013:122) date this visit to be during the 1570s. Erivwo (1989:22) gives actual years, 1556-1574. The then Olu of Warri (king of Warri) allowed his son, the crown prince, to be baptized, and his name was changed to Sebastian (Ajayi 1969:3; Erivwo 1989:19). While all these developments were going on in Warri the

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3 The work of Erivwo on Christianity in Bendel State Nigeria: Yesterday, today and tomorrow was considered useful in this thesis as it was only her work that gave precise date of the history of Christianity in Edo State. Her work provided the history in details as other work was more of summary.
missionaries were still in contact with Benin; some missionaries were still in Benin to ensure they succeed with their goal, as seen from the work of Erivwo (1989:19).

After the failed attempt to introduce Christianity into Nigeria during this period, another attempt was made in the mid-nineteenth century. Before this time Christianity was silenced in Nigeria as a result of the slave trade scourge, not just in Nigeria but in African society at large. This was because slave trade had become a very lucrative business that those who were supposed to be preaching the gospel had ventured into this business. Preaching the gospel was no longer a priority for the missionaries as the newfound business was making them rich. Although, there were other businesses apart from slave trade like trade by barter where they exchange mirrors for the African artifacts. The second attempt was made after the abolition of the slave trade that lasted for more than 300 years (Ayendele 1966:3). But this time Christianity was introduced not through the Catholic missionaries, but rather the Protestant missionaries (Omenukwa 2014:214). European missionaries and some freed slaves made an effort to establish Christianity in Nigeria (Obinna 2013:32) and as part of the expedition, several missionaries established their missions in Nigeria as seen in the works of Omenukwa (2014:214), and Galadima and Turaki (2001:92). More specifically, the missions and the years of their establishment were as follows: Wesleyan Methodist in 1842, Scottish Presbyterian in 1842, Church Missionary Society in 1844, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission in 1850, Roman Catholic Mission in 1961, Sudan Interior Mission in 1893, Sudan United Mission in 1904, United Missionary Society in 1905, Seventh Day Adventist in 1914, Qua Iboe Mission in 1932, and the Assemblies of God in 1939 (Galadima & Turaki 2001:92).

Due to the failure of the first attempt to introduce Christianity to Nigeria, “the leaders of the missionary movements of the nineteenth century were very concerned about the failure of the sixteenth century missions and were also determined to make a cultural impact on the coastal regions of Nigeria” (Obinna 2013:33). At this time, it recorded more success since most of the freed slaves were also part of the mission to Nigeria in the nineteenth century.

Most authors in their work about the history of Christianity in Nigeria state that Christianity did not take firmly root in Nigeria at the time of their first entry and that the missionaries of the time therefore actually failed to establish Christianity in Nigeria. Yet, these authors do not present detailed work on how the missionaries tried to ensure the success of their mission before their apparent failure. The challenges they had to face at that time made them better prepared during their next attempt. In this thesis, I will not go along with the argument that
they failed, but rather that they were left with the challenge to equip themselves better for the future.

In Erivwo’s work (1989:17-32), “Christianity in Bendel State Nigeria: Yesterday, today and tomorrow”, she points to many instances in which the missionaries made concerted efforts to establish Christianity and ensure success before they left. This shows that they were very motivated to work for the success of their mission, but due to sickness, disease and other challenges which they had to face, they could not sustain the growth of Christianity during their first occupations. In the account of Erivwo (1989:19), she states that it was during the reign of Oba Ewuare that the missionaries first visited the region in 1472. During the first missionaries’ expedition, Oba Ewuare was the reigning monarch in Benin. He was a very powerful king.

The next time another set of missionaries would visit was only in 1485 (Erivwo 1989:19). The distance from Europe to Africa and the mode of transport in Nigeria made it not so easy to travel, hence the time lapse between the first and second set of missionaries. The missionaries came back to Benin because it was then the most powerful kingdom in the southern part of the present-day Nigeria. Gaining access to Benin would mean gaining access to the southern part of Nigeria since in the north Islam was spreading to the extent that it would be difficult to make inroads there. In addition, the missionaries knew Benin was the most powerful kingdom in the south. If they could gain access to Benin and the people in Benin accept Christianity, they could use this particular kingdom to conquer other regions and in so doing spread the gospel (Enriwo 1989:19).

Most authors pointed out that an Oba (king) was baptised in 1491 by Affonso, one of the missionaries who visited the area in 1485. The name of the Oba (king), however, was not mentioned. Given Erivwo’s (1989:19) chronology of the Benin kingdoms, this particular Oba (king) would have been Oba (king) Ozolua. As seen from my previous statements, the goal of the missionaries was to do trade as well as to convert the Oba and its subjects. When Oba Esigie took over in 1504 after the death of Oba Ozolua in 1503, he requested that the missionaries come down to Benin. This was a result of his interest to learn more about this new religion, and ultimately to become a convert. But at the time when the missionaries
arrived in 1515, he was involved in fighting the Idah war⁴ (Erivwo 1989:20; Abu & Adewale 2013:122) and this made it difficult for him to directly attend to the missionaries. He requested that they should stay and help him with the war, after which he would have time to listen to them, since it would take much time to understand the mystery of the new religion (Christianity). On his return from the war, he ordered one of his sons and a chief to be baptized and taught how to read. This shows his willingness to allow his subjects to accept the new religion even though he was not yet convinced about the missionaries’ message about Christianity (Erivwo 1989:20). Ultimately, the missionaries wanted an Oba to be baptized as this would show his conversion to Christian faith and make it easy for his subjects to accept this new faith (Abu & Adewale 2013:122).

Nevertheless, attempts to plant Christianity in Benin persisted until the 17th century. In 1651 a group of Capuchin fathers⁵ was sent to Benin but could not stay because of the ill-treatment they got from the local people (Erivwo 1989:20). Among those Capuchin fathers was Father Joseph Xison who despite his persistence could not get an audience with the Oba. The Oba refused to give an audience to the missionaries as a result of an oracle that predicted an Oba would die in the hands of the Europeans. The Oba felt that prophecy would come to pass if he gave audience to the missionaries, and therefore he refused. But this prophecy only came to fulfillment after two centuries in 1897, when an Oba was deported to the old Calabar by British troops; he later died in exile in 1914 (Erivwo 1989:20).

The missionaries were later called back as a result of the frequent death and sickness they faced. The task of looking after the church they had planted was handed over to a native father called Ohensa, though they came occasionally to see how the church was doing (Erivwo 1989:20). This gave the opportunity for the Spanish missionaries to enter Benin, who, according to the work of Erivwo (1989), made great impact in terms of evangelizing and spreading the gospel. But when the Portuguese missionaries returned, they disputed these

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⁴ The Idah war was a war between the people of Benin and the people of Idah, in what is now known to be part of Kogi state in present-day Nigeria. This war resulted from the violation of the rites and traditions of the people of Idah (Boston 1962: 380-38). This was the war Erivwo was referring to in her work as the time the Oba could not find time for the missionaries that requested an audience with him.

⁵ The Capuchins are brothers of the Roman Catholic Church who are devoted to prayer and contemplation, preaching the gospel and giving physical care to the needy. They were prepared by a committee of cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church responsible for foreign missions, founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV (Erivwo 1989:20).
territorial advances and asked the Spanish missionaries to leave. This research work will not go into the details of these disputes, except for pointing to the fact that for people who claimed that their common goal was to establish the Christian gospel, having disputes over territory shows that they also had other motives besides the planting of Christianity.

The missionaries were accompanied by traders. The traders’ intentions were to make profit for themselves by exploring the opportunities available. This meant that they later even became involved in the slave trade. There were missionaries who, instead of doing mission work, were also engaged in various forms of businesses. This did not go down well with the local people and as a result the missionaries failed to establish a strong foothold before they were forced to leave. For two centuries there was little or no history of Christianity till in the 18th century when Christianity came into Nigeria through another set of people.

When slavery was abolished in 1807, the freed slaves were sent to Freetown in Sierra Leone but it got to a point where Freetown could no longer take them because of the large numbers of the freed slaves. There was therefore a need to find another settlement and this time it was the Niger area, which is present-day Nigeria. The Yoruba freed slaves were large in numbers and were sent to this new settlement. Among this group was Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther who was the first black person to become a bishop and to work in Nigeria. He insisted that he would not stay in the place provided for them to stay because of his family. He later moved to the western part of Nigeria where he continued to preach and teach the Bible. He translated the English Bible into Yoruba language. This was how Christianity started gaining ground in Nigeria, spreading to various regions (Abu & Adewale 2013:122).

3.4 Opportunities

There were some opportunities that arose with the attempt to plant Christianity in Nigeria and in Africa at large. One opportunity was that it gave Nigeria and Africa the access to formal education. This was an avenue for Nigerians to learn how to read and write which they could not do before the arrival of the missionaries. Although, the motive of the missionaries teaching Africans how to read and write was to make their work of spreading the gospel easier and reduce their communication problems (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:13).

Another opportunity was that it opened means for international trade. Though, this trade dealing later metamorphosed into slave trade which became toxic for Africans as a whole. Another opportunity was that it brought an end to some barbaric tradition practice in Nigeria.
One example is the killing of twins which was believed to be a taboo and human sacrifice which was also practice to appease the gods (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:10-12). All these ended as a result of the coming in of Christianity into Nigeria and Africa at large.

3.5 Challenges

There were some challenges the missionaries encountered during the attempt to plant Christianity in Nigeria. These challenges involved language, cultural, educational and economic barriers.

3.5.1 Language barriers

The missionaries had to deal with the language issue since the people they tried to preach to had a different language to theirs. This made communication difficult as it commanded someone who could interpret their message. A language is a basic tool in communication and communication is the main tool in missionary work, especially when information has to be passed on to the intended converts. For missionary work, one has to be able to speak or understand the language in order not to be excluded from a deeper understanding of the local culture (Oh & Meiring 2009:3). This was a barrier to the early Christian missionaries in Nigeria because it took them time to be able to understand and learn the culture. While the missionaries were trying to learn the language and the culture of the locals they were also trying to teach the locals their language.

3.5.2 Cultural barriers

Nigeria, like every other African country, had its own culture which was peculiar to the people and practicing this culture was a normal thing to any Nigeria as at that time. But to these missionaries it was seen as a sin before God and therefore needed to be stopped. The Africa beliefs, customs and traditions were altered by the coming of Christianity into Nigeria. This was not an easy task to deal with as most of the missionaries faced opposition from rulers, leaders and the local people who were bent on upholding their tradition. This section will highlight some of these cultural issues that the missionaries had to deal with.

- Polygamy: polygamy was a normal trend in the Nigeria system of marriage. Men could marry more than one wife without seeing anything wrong with it. This was one of the cultural challenges the missionaries had to deal with. The meeting of the missionaries and the unequivocal rejection of the African practice of creating a polygamous family
without giving thought to its ideals was seen by the Africans as a clash of misunderstanding fundamental values, but it was a challenge to the missionaries (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:8). The indigenous ancestors in Nigeria saw polygamy as a weapon for their farming activities. Missionaries warned polygamous Africans that they would be thrown out of the church. Some had shorn polygamy while those who refused had been disciplined (Okeke 2006:139). It took a lot of time before many Africans started practicing monogamy (one man one wife). Even with the recent trend of Christianity today, there are still men in Nigeria who still marry more than one wife.

- **Human sacrifice:** The act of sacrifice was an ancient religious ritual in Nigeria before the European missionaries came to Africa with their Christian instruction. The missionaries condemned and sought to abolish human sacrifice entirely. For any reason or purpose, it was referred to as a criminal act. Although there were many disputes between African rulers and missionaries, the intervention of the European missionaries on this issue was viewed by the people as an act intended to cleanse society from brutality, and it died naturally (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:10).

- **Killing of twins:** As the European missionary thought of fighting slavery and slave trafficking as the only obstacle to be addressed and abolished, the traditional religious rituals of killing twins have become important as they have been seen as an anathema and an aberration whose ultimate goal should be the destruction of their lives. As an obstacle and threat that stirred up the Church (missionaries) in the face, just as Obiukwu and Ogechukwu (2020:12) points out “that the Church has struggled against various ills, such as the killing of twins and human sacrifices.”

Many Africans resisted the ludicrous intent of Christian missionaries in battling and striving to totally eliminate the tradition of the killing of twins. Towards the end of a powerful resistance, killing of twins was managed and stopped slowly through the intervention of a Scottish woman named Mary Slessor who lived in Calabar, Nigeria, for her religious fight against the African customs. Although there were some dimension of unity played out by the communities and individual that ensured permanent stop to the killing of twins (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:12).
3.5.3 Educational barriers

The adoption of western education was one of the methods pursued by Christian missionaries as an instrument of conversion in Africa. When the missionaries arrived in Nigeria, they preached the Gospel and also taught their converts how to read and write in English (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:13) because this was the only tool available to them. In evangelism, education was of paramount importance and each mission station has its school. The CMS opened a school in Freetown in 1845 in Sierra Leone, where children from the colony and other parts of the coast received secondary schools. The same goes for Nigeria, in which the missionaries focused on schools (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:13).

There has been much confusion about the various educational purposes of churches and people. The church leaders were primarily concerned with training staff for community missions, while members of the church needed the church schools to provide their children with the best tools for a good living (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:13). Obiukwu and Ogechukwu (2020:14) add that the Africans wanted to gain Western education and therefore allowed their young children to go to missionary schools.

Obiukwu and Ogechukwu (2020:14) further comment that the early Christian missionary was guilty of neglecting the African educational system, which was based on “self-reliance, self-sustainace, and self-endevour”. The imposition of western learning and culture led to the extinction of that of the Africans education. Because the Europeans missionaries believed that Africans skills orientated education is a non-civilized form of education. In this sense, the dispute in western education in the field of culture in Africa could be further traced to an effort by missionaries to eradicate the laudable tradition of good African conduct, which was perceived by missionaries as mortification in the young acts of kneeling or bowing before the elderly (Obiukwu & Ogechukwu 2020:13). Obiukwu and Ogechukwu (2020:14) remarks that it is clear from the records and from the actions of the converts that the kind of Christianity which was introduced into the country tended to make the Christians profoundly un-African and uprooted from their culture. The Christian church and the school became, in essence, the most important

In Sierra Leone, the first conflict emerged, however, with the formation of the African Church and the complete removal of European missionaries in 1861 as a result of the African climate and the transition of missionary activities to the Africans. After the creation in 1850 by the African diocese of Sierra Leone of the Sierra Leonean native church, Babalola
(1988:46) observes that Sierra Leone developed an education system that focused on the production of professionals. Thus Sierra Leone produced the first African doctors, lawyers, newspaper editors, and journalists. Sierra Leone Creole served as Supreme Court judges, colonial treasurers, Attorney Generals, Post Masters, Chief Medical Officer, chief judges, court registrars and legislators in several western African nations in British colonies.

3.5.4 Economic barriers

Economic challenges were part and parcel of the challenges the early Christian missionaries faced. Such challenges also caused many health issues as a result of the fact that there was no financial support to go for good treatment. The slave trade affected the spread of Christianity since the missionaries were accompanied with traders who were thought to be missionaries or were aiming at spreading the gospel. Ogunbado (2012:55) argued that slave trade became so lucrative that the locals were not too interested in the gospel the missionaries had to offer. At this time people were willing to sell their neighbours, siblings, and even children in exchange for goods the traders had to offer them. It is important to note that despite the numerous challenges the missionaries faced during the attempt to establish Christianity in Nigeria and Africa at large the rise of the slave trade was the final nail in the coffin to why they could not succeed in their attempt until after the abolishment of the slave trade.

3.6 The Pentecostal church in Nigeria

This section focuses on brief history of the independent churches in Nigeria and the history and origin of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. It will also look at brief history and origin of the Pentecostal churches used as case study in this thesis.

3.6.1 The independent churches

The independent churches can also be referred to as African Independent Churches (AIC). These churches were founded in Africa by Africans. These independent churches are different from the one the European and the American missionaries planted in Africa (Falaye 2010:230). According to Falaye (2010:30) this new movement started around 1888 when a new native Baptist church was founded in Lagos. This Native Baptist church broke away from the mission church planted by American missionaries (Nmah 2010:483, Adamolekun 2012:5).
The evolution of the independent churches in Nigeria was as a result of the protest movement against the marginalisation of the indigenous black people within the foreign mission as at that time (Adamolekun 2012:5). After the protest, there were a lot of other new movements like the Cherubim and Seraphim in 1925, the Church of the Lord (also known as Aladura) in 1930 and Christ Apostolic Church in 1931. These were among the popular churches that were founded then but today the list goes on and on as independent churches continue to grow in Nigeria (Nmah 2010:483). The Christian faith that was practiced during this period was suited for Nigerians to diversify their cultural and geographical outlook which later metamorphosed to modern-day Pentecostalism (Adamolekun 2012:6).

3.6.2 Brief history and origin of the Pentecostal churches

The origin of the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria dates back to the second decade of the 20th century. The history of Pentecostalism in Nigeria can be seen from the rise of an indigenous prophetic healing movement in the Church Mission Society (CMS), which sprung up in 1915 under the leadership of Garrick Sokari Braide. The second group was the Precious Stone that arose in the southwest of Nigeria a few years later under the leadership of Joseph Bayo Shadare (Fatokun 2009:35). There were also other movements like the Cherubim and Seraphim and the Church of the Lord (Aladura)⁶.

All these indigenous churches of the early second decade of the 20th century were characterised by the prophetic-healing form of Pentecostalism. They were popularly called spiritual churches because they claimed to have power given to them by the Holy Spirit to meet human needs (Fatokun 2009:36). In the western part of Nigeria, they were given a nickname Ijo Aladura, which means the praying churches. This was so because of their enthusiastic way of praying, which differed from those of the mainline churches. They placed emphasis on vision, dreams, prophecies, holiness and water baptism by immersion (Fatokun 2009:36).

However, the emergence of the Precious Stone Society laid the foundation for an explosive Pentecostal revival, which spread not only throughout Nigeria but also to neighbouring countries. The prayer cells the Precious Stone Society organized soon attracted the members of the Anglican Church. With this new wave of Spirit-filled and Spirit-led churches through

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⁶ Aladura literally means “one who prays” (Odeyemi 2014:6). This church was nicknamed Aladura because of the way they pray
faith healing and other gifts, these churches became an irresistible centre of attraction (Fatokun 2009:36). The Precious Stone Society was affiliated to the Faith Tabernacle Congregation in 1923 with the help of David Odubanjo, the missionary correspondent of the indigenous movement (Fatokun 2009:36; Mohr 2013:200).

The international presiding pastor of Faith Tabernacle, Pastor A. Clark, made some pastors by proxy, among whom were J.B. Shadare from Ijebu-Ode, D.O. Odubanjo from Lagos and J.A. Babatope from Ilesha, to cater for Faith Tabernacle branches scattered all over Nigeria. Despite the doctrine and teaching of the Faith Tabernacle Church, the Nigerian members discovered it was still lacking the Pentecostal fire that the first decade had (Fatokun, 2009:36; Mohr, 2013:200). Since 1923, the local church in Nigeria has been praying for God to visit them with great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They wanted to experience the kind of miracles that happened during biblical times, especially as recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Faith Tabernacle soon got this prayer answered when two indigenous pastors, J.A. Babalola and D.O. Orekoya, joined the church. There was an outbreak of the power of the Holy Spirit in the church and a nationwide spread of this new revival (Adamolekun 2012:6).

J.A. Babalola had performed several miracles before he was told by God to join the Faith Tabernacle Church in 1929. Fatokun (2009:36) in his work states that it took this church seven years of prayer and revival work before their prayers were answered when Babalola joined the church. In 1930, this church began to experience a new wave of revival of the Spirit of God; this was the beginning of revival in Nigerian Pentecostalism. Babalola became more popular when he was invited for an interactive session with leaders of the Faith Tabernacle Church that involved a two-day meeting with a 24-point agenda (Adamolekun 2012:6). While Babalola was waiting to be addressed by the leaders on the second day, his attention was caught by a procession of mourners who were going to bury a 10-year-old boy and the only child of the parents. He was moved by God to pray for the dead child and after his prayers the child came back to life. The parents of the child and others who witnessed the resuscitation of the child went about spreading the news; this attracted many people to see first-hand who this prophet was who could bring the dead back to life (Fatokun 2009:36).

As a result of the crowd trooping in, the meeting of the leadership of the Faith Tabernacle Church was interrupted and there and then a great revival commenced that turned out to be the single largest Pentecostal revival that has ever emerged in Nigeria. The revival spread
rapidly and it was estimated that over a million people attended from both Nigeria and beyond. “The revival recorded a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit which had never had no [sic] equal since the emergence of Pentecostalism in the country” (Fatokun 2009:42). Several miracles were recorded in this revival of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, such as the dumb who spoke, the blind whose eyes opened, the deaf who could hear, and lepers being cleansed, whilst Muslims and idol worshipers were converted and many other miracles happened (Fatokun 2009:42). The revival of Babalola continued until his death on 26 July 1959. Before his death in 1959, he visited Benin to hold a crusade, but he was arrested by the then colonial government and was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

Despite Babalola’s imprisonment, this revival continued and spread to every part of Nigeria, and even to other parts of the world. In the 1970s, another wave of Pentecostalism broke out, this time in the tertiary sector led by young graduates (Adamolekun 2012:8). In Edo State this new wave occurred through the activities of a person who became known as the father of Pentecostalism in the country, the late Archbishop Benson Andrew Idahosa (Olofinjana 2012).

Benson Andrew Idahosa was born in 1938 in Benin, the capital of Edo State, as a sickly and unhealthy child. As a result, his father instructed his mother to throw him away because of his health condition. The mother did as the father requested but took him back after a while. This to an extent caused a degree of parting between his parents. He lacked finances, but he strived to be educated and in the end he succeeded in getting his secondary school certificate. The poverty of his family was to such an extent that he could not afford a shoe until he was 18 years old (Olofinjana 2012).

Idahosa got converted to Christianity in 1952, in an Assemblies of God church in Benin (Olofinjana 2012). After his conversion he read the whole book of John’s gospel and began to witness to his friends. This was the beginning of his preaching of the gospel (Olofinjana 2012). He later sought for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the end he was filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues after his pastor prayed with him. He began to preach in different villages and organized several open-air meetings or crusades. He worked with a shoe company to earn money for his daily survival, whilst during the evenings he led revivalist meetings and crusades (Olofinjana 2012).
One of the crusades was the scene of several miracles like people being healed of epilepsy and several other sicknesses (Olofinjana 2012). The news of these miracles began to spread to other villages and led to more evangelistic activities. In order to reach more people Idahosa bought a motorbike to help him travel and conduct crusades in other villages. He was excommunicated from the church for buying a motorbike because it was considered an act of worldliness; only bicycles were allowed. But when the pastor’s wife got pregnant it was the motorbike that was used to rush her to the hospital for the delivery. It was after this event that he was called back to the church (Olofinjana 2012).

Idahosa lost his father during the civil war in 1967. One evening a year later, a voice woke Idahosa up from his sleep and his room was filled with the presence of God. The Lord spoke to him about his future mission: “I have called you that you might take the gospel around the world in my name, preach the gospel, and I will confirm my word with signs following” (Olofinjana 2014:40). After this experience, he began to engage with more outreaches and crusades. He asked permission from the village chiefs to preach to their subjects. People responded and many people were saved through his preaching. These newly converted were directed to the Pentecostal churches like the Assemblies of God Church, which he attended. Idahosa soon became a leader in the church but not for long, as his desire was to follow his vision of having his own ministry. He started a Bible study group in a small store, but the group was soon compelled to move out, because of the growing size of the members. They later bought a piece of land to build a better church auditorium. The members contributed their money, time and labour to see this church grow (Olofinjana 2014:41).

Idahosa later met S.G. Elton, one of the Apostolic Church missionaries who mentored him and introduced him to Gordon and Freda Lindsey, the two people who commissioned him into ministry in 1971 (Olofinjana 2012). He was granted a scholarship by Gordon Lindsey’s Bible College to study at Christ for the Nations Institute in Texas in the United States. Lindsey also supported him financially in building his own church (Olofinjana 2012).

Idahosa began to organise crusades in stadiums. The first was the Ogbe stadium in Benin, which attracted 10,000 people (Olofinjana 2012). He was the first African pastor to advertise on the radio about a church programme. This in turn brought hundreds of thousands of people to his ministry. Idahosa started to articulate a prosperity message as a result of his personal experience of poverty because of the civil war and the global recession that deflated the
Nigerian economy, making him a pioneer in Nigeria and other African countries (Olofinjana 2012).

As a result of the situation of poverty in which Idahosa grew up and the contrast with the kind of life he lived now, he started preaching more and more prosperity messages, telling any congregation he preached to about his story and how they too can experience a prosperous life. He was the first Nigerian preacher to wear an attire (*abgda*) mainly used by royal people or used for royal ceremonies. He was also the first Nigerian preacher to drive a Mercedes Benz. This raised eyebrows in the church and in the Pentecostal families because it was seen as money that was wasted on a worldly and flamboyant lifestyle. According to Achunike (2007:83), “Archbishop Benson Idahosa, blazed the trail of prosperity preaching”. In other words, Idahosa was the first minister in Nigeria to preach on the radio and run a Christian programme on television. His programme was considered wasteful and a show-off by Christians and non-Christians. Idahosa was the first pastor to start a ministry in Nigeria that spread to other countries. Idahosa travelled to about 145 countries to preach, mostly without being invited, but just to preach the gospel. Idahosa preached until his death, and with his death he had preached to more whites than any other black preacher and to more blacks than any white preacher (Habib 2014:77). Before Idahosa, people often associated poverty and poor people with the church. However, as a result of Idahosa’s ministry, people now linked the church among the wealthiest institutions. He was also the first Nigerian to suggest the idea of a private university, which led to the establishment of the Benson Idahosa University, one of the first generation private universities in Nigeria (Olofinjana 2012).

However, it would be wrong to conclude that Idahosa was a selfish person who only used his money for his own benefits. He helped many people financially, sent children of the poor to school by giving them scholarships, gave food to people who were hungry and could not afford good food, gave cars as gifts to people, and spoke on behalf of the voiceless to the Nigerian government on several occasions (Olofinjana 2012). One of his sayings was “It is better to live for posterity than for prosperity” (Olofinjana 2012). This was why he built primary schools, secondary schools, a university and a hospital. In 1981, he was the first Pentecostal bishop to be ordained by David Du Plessis in Nigeria. Idahosa was also the first to pioneer a television ministry, “Redemption Hour” which made him to become the first TV

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7 David Du Plessis was known as Mr. Pentecost. He was also a famous Pentecostal preacher of prosperity and was among the founders of the Charismatic movement (Walker, 2015).
evangelist in Africa (Olofinjana 2012). The Bible college he opened has trained a lot of the present-day Nigerian ministers. Among those trained are Bishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams of Christ Action Faith Ministries, Bishop Charles Agyin-Asare of Word Miracle Church International, Bishop James Saah of Action Chapel International, Bishop Christiana Doe Tetteh of Solid Rock Chapel International, and many others (Olofinjana 2012). Today, most of Nigerian Pentecostal ministers can trace their roots directly or indirectly back to Idahosa. Ministers such as Bishop David Oyedepo of Winners Chapel, Bishop Francis Wale Oke of Sword of the Spirit Ministries, Bishop Mike Okonkwo (former president of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, or PFN), Ayo Oritsejafor, Rev Felix Omobude (the current president of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, or PFN), and many more (Olofinjana 2012; Adamolekun 2012:8). Until his death in 1998, Idahosa went around the world preaching the gospel, visiting and preaching in 145 countries, including Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, Mexico, USA, Ghana, Cameroun, South Africa, Australia and Kenya (Olofinjana 2012).

There are several Pentecostal churches in Edo State and they all have different history and background. Below is brief history of the selected Pentecostal churches used as case study in this study.

3.6.3 Church 1: Church of God’s Mission

Church of God Mission International, as it is known today, grew as a prayer group first named Calvary Fellowship at a shop on Igbizua Street, off Mission Road, from a very humble start in 1962. It was officially opened by Rev. Edgar Perkins in 1965 (Church of God Mission International 2012). Rev. Perkins approached the Assemblies of God on October 26, 1968, to release Benson Idahosa, a then Sunday School Superintendent, to supervise the ministry of prayer. The Fellowship moved to No. 26, Forestry Road, Benin City with Pastor Benson Idahosa been in charge. The fellowship's membership went up numerically (Church of God Mission International 2012). Pastor Benson Idahosa decided to build a church, and this was the beginning of his construction ministry. On 18 September 1974, he moved the members to Iyaro Church. In compliance with the State, the church had been licensed with permanent succession Acts and Certificate 1245. The membership had grown enormously when Church of God Mission Iyaro was completed. Gordon Lindsay and Elton declared the church to be opened (Church of God Mission International 2012).
The primary ministry of the Church of God was evangelism-living up to the motto of God's evangelism: “Evangelism our Supreme task”. Through these practices, souls were added daily to the church and everywhere Idahosa went with the gospel churches were planted and solid buildings were erected (Church of God Mission International 2012). Idahosa laid the foundation for another church called the “Miracle Centre” at the airport road in Benin City Saturday, 1st December 1973, and was dedicated by Mrs. Freda Lindsay on Sunday 9th November 1975, in accordance with his beliefs of building of Ministry that keeps the times and accommodates the influx of people converted (Church of God Mission International 2012). The Ministry's continuous growth led to the construction of the Faith Miracle Centre's auditorium, a vision fulfilled by many as marvel. In 1983, Idahosa claimed he heard God told him, in far Australia, to build him an edifice which would bring his name glory and honour (Church of God Mission International 2012). The auditorium, which is believed to have been the seat of over twenty thousand people, was Africa's first stadium church. This building was dedicated on 2nd November 1986. The planting of branches was also part of the growth of churches in Benin. Church of God Mission International now exists throughout Nigeria and throughout the world (Church of God Mission International 2012).

The Church of God's mission has developed infrastructures to strengthen its capacity to fulfil its mandate to prepare an army to save humanity for God. This was achieved by founding a viable Bible School "All Nations for Christ Bible Institute" to meet pastoral education needs and contribute to creating a prosperous community. Church of God's mission has schools for all people ranging from pre-nursery (Word of Faith Group of Schools) to university (Benson Idahosa University) and also functional medical facilities (Faith Mediplex Group Hospitals). The ministry is committed in its quest to bring forth the entire mind, soul, and body of persons (Church of God Mission International, 2012). This can be seen from the mission statement of the church which is “Evangelizing the lost for their total transformation spirit, soul and body, developing them into leaders”. Without the focused, dynamic and spirit filled leadership of Archbishop B.A. Idahosa, all those achievements could not have taken place. The ministry is still being maintained by his wife Archbishop M.E. Benson-Idahosa and strengthened by our efforts (Church of God Mission International 2012).

3.6.4 Church 2: The Living Faith Church, also known as Winners Chapel

Living Faith Church Worldwide is a mega church and a Christian denomination founded in 1981 by Bishop David Oyedepo. The church is also known as the Winners Chapel. The
church itself began to operate on 11 December 1983, after being commissioned on 17 September 1983 by Pastor Enoch Adeboye. Since then, the group has become a global network of churches with congregations in 49 countries (Falaye, 2017:2; Relate 2016:1).

According to Falaye (2017:2), the history of the Living Faith International Church began with an 18-hour vision in May 1981, in which Oyedepo claimed to have received a mandate from God to free the earth through the preaching of the faith from every sort of satanic oppression. Living Faith Church was initially called Liberation Faith Hour ministries at the beginning of his ministry. In 1988 Oyedepo was ordained bishop exactly five years after his ordination as a pastor (Falaye 2017:2; Relate 2016:1).

Falaye (2017:2) and Relate (2016:1) added that, the Living Faith Church (also known as the Winners Chapel) started in Kaduna. Another order of God was given to Oyedepo in July 1989 to reach the people of Lagos. Therefore, attempts began to set up a new branch in Lagos. Lagos was the federal capital of Nigeria at that time. God instructed Oyedepo to send David Abioye to his branch in Maiduguri (which is Borno State capital), who was then responsible for taking over their Kaduna branch. A new Living Faith International branch was therefore established in Lagos by 1989. According to Falaye (2017:2) and Relate (2016:1), Oyedepo claimed that God had given him another mandate in 1998, to build a new Commission headquarters to host the rising membership population. This has led him to acquire a large acre in Sango-Otta, Ogun State, where witches were the dominant part of the founder's claims. The purchase of the property is measured at 2.1km2 (530 acres) that is now commonly known as Canaan Property (Falaye 2017:2, Relate 2016). Currently, the property accommodates 50,000 congregations in a single service. On this ground, which has been described as the biggest church auditorium in the world, lies the new church auditorium. During the presidency of President Olusegun Obasanjo the new headquarters was formally opened on 8 September 1999 (Falaye 2017:2, Relate 2016:1). Falaye (2017:2) explains that the majority of the church's striking features are intimately linked to the indigenous Churches of Aica but, according to Bishop David Abioye the vice-president of this church, the Living Faith International Church believes in the design of the mega auditorium for worshipers.

The church also has interest in education like that of church of God mission. It has both primary (Kingdom Heritage school), secondary (Faith Academy) and tertiary education (Covenant university and Landmark University) system all around Nigeria. It is also the first church to own two functional private universities in Nigeria (Falaye 2017:4). In addition to
these schools, the church also has an operating Bible school called Word of Faith Bible Institute (WOFBI).

3.6.5 Church 3: The Omega Fire Ministry

Omega Fire Ministries International is a charismatic and Pentecostal movement founded by Johnson Suleman in a small town named Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria, West Africa. The vision for the church was given to him on June 20, 1994, and ten years later (2004), the Church was founded. Presently, Omega Fire Ministry is one of the fastest growing Churches in Nigeria and has branches in about twenty-six countries of the world (Relate 2016:1).

Omega Fire Ministries International, under Johnson Suleiman's leadership, believes in the Tradition of God's fire project, which refines, purifies, and kills similarly. The church has a worldwide presence as Facebook spreads updates as well as a 24-hour Christian television channel called Celebration TV and its 24-hour Christian radio station equivalent, "Fire Radio Voice" (Relate 2016:1).

Omega Fire Ministries International believes in the fire operation of the Holy Spirit of God which refines, purifies, and at the same time destroys. The mission of Omega Fire Ministries International is one that believes in the judgment of God on the wicked. The ministry believes that the oppressions and demonic manipulations are a reality, they know equally that the authority of God’s power is more real, that it is all-powerful and all-pervading (Relate 2016:1).

Omega Fire Ministries International holds the belief that all authority belongs to Christ and that the devil and his followers have no right by scripture to control and manipulate God's children's destinies. We always claim it is the right of Christians to live a life completed. Accordingly, the ministry claims it is saddled with the divine order to restore those believers' religious rights (Relate 2016:1).

3.6.6 Church 4: Believer’s Love World, also known as Christ Embassy

The Church of the Christ Embassy was born of an office that Pastor Chris Oyakhilome began in the late 80s, where he studied architecture at the then Bendel State University (now the Ambrose Alli University) (Falaye 2015:232; Relate 2016:1).
Throughout secondary and tertiary schools, Pastor Chris began to preach with his community, having great miracle meetings. Believers Love World is a global movement that aims to take the spiritual presence of God into the world's nations and to show the essence and purpose of the Holy Spirit. The mission is motivated by a desire to see men and women around the world, to come to the awareness of spiritual truth, made available in Christ Jesus. This is done with every means available. Over the years various branches of the Church were born to preach Jesus Christ's message effectively (Falaye 2015:232; Relate 2016:1).

The Ministry has a lively TV Ministry, an Internet Ministry, a Healing Kindergarten, a Rhapsody of Reality and an Inner City Mission, where children without hope for the future are fed, sheltered, clothed, taught and given a chance to live out their dreams. In the ministry, there are also several cruises held in the largest arenas in several countries, in which millions of people were brought to God's kingdom and important works were demonstrated (Falaye 2015:232; Relate 2016:1). The overall mission led to the creation of an ever-expanding network of hundreds of churches and congregations in all continents worldwide, impacting millions with an extraordinary and prompt discovery of the new creation in Christ Jesus. This ministry will stop nothing to guarantee that the Lord Jesus Christ's message is spread as the Lord expects throughout the nations of the world. The ministry has rapidly spread over the coastal areas of Nigeria and South Africa and now holds large meetings in the USA and healing schools in Canada and the United Kingdom (Falaye 2015:232; Relate 2016:1).

The Ministry of Pastor Chris has many supporters, especially among youth. It has been notable that the Bliss South Africa Night is being held at the Johannesburg FNB Stadium and at the Canadian, United States and United Kingdom Higher Life Conference. It runs a global network of prayer services on social networking sites to send messages daily to Christians worldwide. Pastor Chris' ministry has several branches, including the Healing Academy, Rhapsody of Realities (a daily devotional with global reach), and N.G.O. called Inner city Missions, as well as three Christian television channels: Love World TV, Love World SAT and Love World Plus. Her TV programmes, which the ministration organizes internationally, show her faith healings, miracles and fantastic meetings, with gatherings that are over 2.5 million people in only one programme (Falaye 2015:232; Relate 2016:1).

3.6.7 Church 5: Foundation Faith Church

Archbishop Sam Amaga was appointed to the Ministry of full time in July 1982 at a time when he was entering the limelight in the management of a major pharmaceutical firm in
Nigeria, West Africa. He came to the office one morning like any other, working for a pharmaceutical firm in Jos. He was standing outside his office and knew that it was time to go. He had not yet discussed with his wife but she knew he had an appeal on his life and was afraid to do anything about it. His resignation was tendered and he left the firm even though he struggled with it (Foundation Faith Church 2015).

The Archbishop, in response to the call God upon his life, moved his family to Makurdi where he was managing his small business and began part-time missionary work in Makurdi. Archbishop Sam Amaga and his wife, Dr. Love Sam-Amaga, were heavily active in church service seminars for children at the weekend, but in 1984, on the 31st of December, he was appointed to the missionary service, but it was more of outreach work. He moved into Ozoro, the then Bendel province, by August 1985. He later moved to Igbanke to continue the mission in the following week. By the 7th of March 1986, the Lord revealed to him the mission and mandate of the ministry (Foundation Faith Church 2015).

On June the 29th, 1988, the Archbishop and his family moved from Ozoro to Port-Harcourt and in 10 years, God came to Port-Harcourt in His splendour. Through this task, the Lord also saves, restores, and makes others stronger. It is confirmation of the Apostolic Call to the Archbishop. In 1998, the work was attractive for international missions. There was an eminent move to Lagos. And this major work, in which Christ had gathered thousands of followers to run, was handed down by the archbishop in December while he was going to Lagos to give birth to another dream (Foundation Faith Church 2015).

Between 1998 and 2000, God raised the people supernaturally and gave this ministry a large land in the Lagos Lekki axis. The head office as well as satellite churches are gradually spreading. The Salem International Christian Center has been established and is expanding as the Foundation Faith Church's global church planting. Since the move, nations have opened their eyes to this vision (Foundation Faith Church 2015).

In obedience to the call of church planting, he had received from the Lord, Archbishop Sam Amaga and his family moved to London in 2000, to pioneer the work in Europe. His wife Dr. Love Sam-Amaga was left to head the church in Europe while the Archbishop shuttled between Lagos and London for monthly programs until the ministry was fully established. They both later returned to Lagos and left Bishop Dave Onimisi and his team to head the church in Europe (Foundation Faith Church 2015).
On the 2nd of December 2007, another mandate came that he should take the ministry to the North and Middle-belt of Nigeria. They went to Abuja to concentrate heavily on the north and middle belt regions. On the 11th of February 2008, Salem International Christian Center was opened in Abuja. The church is on a mission to plant 150,000 Churches and make over 300 million disciples worldwide for God (Foundation Faith Church 2015).

The church is also interested in education and has education centres where global leaders are raised. The school ministry includes Salem University, Salem Pastoral, and Mission College (SPAMIC), Covenant Faith Bible Institute (CFBI) (Foundation Faith Church 2015).

3.7 Missional orientation of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria

The general missional orientation of the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria is geared towards soul winning (salvation of the soul), while some are focused on issues and concerns related to prosperity (Togarasei 2011), deliverance (Adogame 2012), teaching the Word, material and marital breakthrough (Adogame 2012), healing, and miracles of different kinds (Chiluwa 2012). Some churches work in more than one of these areas mentioned, but with particular gifts or a so-called calling in one of the areas (Folarin 2006).

The Church of God Mission for example has as its mission statement: “Evangelizing the lost for their total transformation, spirit, soul and body, developing them into leaders” (Church of God Mission International 2012). Based on Volkman’s (2008:26) and Anderson’s (2006:134) definitions in 1.7.6, the missional orientation of Pentecostal churches is supposed to be rediscovering the missiological thrust that lies in the heart of the Christian faith. This means that Pentecostal churches are to take a pause and see if they are moving in the right direction in terms of the reproduction of disciples who have personal experience with God. And also, raise disciples under the atmosphere where they are giving opportunities to pay their bills.

The Pentecostal churches drawn upon in this study show that the commitment is to soul winning, but what this study seeks to find out is if the disciples raised are giving the opportunity to pay their own bills with a focus on youth empowerment. Youth empowerment is a process of giving power to the youth, to help them strengthen their confidence and overcome their weaknesses (Paynevandy 2016:10). This study will seek to answer the above question later in this study, to know the kind of attention youth empowerment receives from the Pentecostal churches.
For Christianity to remain vibrant in this present day and with the current situation in Nigeria, they will need to rediscover the missiological thrust (Anderson 2006:134). Even though Pentecostal churches have similar related areas of calling like soul winning, their orientations are not the same. Whilst some focus more on prosperity or deliverance, others focus on the power of the Holy Spirit or salvation. Most Pentecostal churches in Edo State, as well as their branches all over Nigeria, have different approaches towards youth empowerment. This has affected the way in which the issue of youth empowerment is dealt with in the church. I will focus on the approach of the Pentecostal churches selected for this thesis.

3.7.1 The concept missional: A brief historical overview

The word missional is the adjective form of the noun word “mission”. Missional can be used interchangeably with the term missionary according to Mashau (2014:5). Missional is better utilised as it is more modern, emboldens, and includes all the positive aspects of missionary work and provides new grounds for exposure to missionary work (Mashau 2014:5). To carry out missional work includes a change from the usual way of the mission, which essentially means praying for members, offering and tithe, gathering on every other day of worship, including Sunday, and visiting those who are sick or unable to make it to church, to what Mashau (2014:5) will call “church-based to kingdom-based leadership strategy.” This is in support of 3 John 1:2 which stresses our physical well-being as well as our spiritual well-being. This is all-round happiness including that of our soul and other realms of physical and socio-economics well-being.

According to Saayman (2010:5), “writers using the term missional clearly state that they understand mission mainly as Missio Dei, which is a well-established term”. Missional is used to describe mission especially in academic writing like this one. The word missional as an alternative to the old missionary is quite relevant and fresh; it started to appear and published in missiological articles in the mid-1990s (Saayman 2010:9). One of the issues about which we have always heard a lot of is what it means to be missional. This is a fairly recent term that has appeared over the last few decades in the discourse (Stetzer 2015:1). Although the term “missional” has arisen relatively recently as a concept, it is founded on theological concepts that date further back and they are founded on the scriptures themselves (Stetzer 2015:1). This is part of a conversation on God's mission formation, which acts as a reminder that God's people need to live on the mission (Stetzer 2015:1). According to Stetzer (2015:1), the first person to use the term “missional” was Francis DuBose in his book which
was described by modern definitions. Today, missional has become part of the conversation among theologians.

### 3.7.2 Missional ecclesiology

In the past decade, missional ecclesiology has been subject to extensive research (Stetzer 2015:1). According to Niemandt (2012:1), missional ecclesiology emerged as one of the significant topics in mission studies in the early 20th century and more specifically became a focal point in mission studies after the 2010 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh. This became a significant day in the history of missional ecclesiology.

Nicolajsen (2013:256), while focusing on the work of Lesslie Newbigin, observed that Newbigin was a founding father on the topic of missional ecclesiology who made a shift in missional ecclesiology which was based on Christocentric orientation to Christocentric focus with Trinitarian a breadth. Nicolajsen (2013:256) quoting Newbigin said:

> A true doctrine of missions must make a large place for the work of the Holy Spirit, but it is equally true that a true doctrine of missions will have much to say of God the Father. The opinion may be ventured that recent ecumenical thinking about the mission and unity of the church has been defective at both of these points.

This is because at this time Newbigin saw the way Christ’s mission was on earth, even though he was here to save sinners from their sins he was also concerned about their welfare seeing that they needed to still meet up with both physical and social needs in other to be able to survive on planet earth.

According to Hooker (2008:4), missional ecclesiology encourages one to see “church” differently not from the “Church” as we see it, but from the viewpoint of the work of the Triune God in the world. Dreyer (2013:4) added that “missional ecclesiology emphasises the continuing conversion of the church and congregational praxis”. Mission ecclesiology stresses that the Church’s mission is rooted in God and makes clear that the Church’s duty is to testify and engage in the work of Jesus Christ in the world (Hooker 2008:7).

### 3.7.3 The missional ecclesiology of the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria

Missional ecclesiology for Pentecostal churches in Nigeria can be seen as a new way of doing mission by the Pentecostal churches. The reason is that most Pentecostal churches are used to the traditional pattern of doing mission. But according to Anderson (2006:135), missional
orientation is supposed to catalyse revival and not just winning souls to the kingdom of God but also a positive impact on their social-economic and political life of their followers.

This study serves as a call to Pentecostal churches in Nigeria to revisit their missional orientation in the way they have been doing mission. A missional ecclesiology is supposed to be about assisting the community to grow and helping the community fix their lives but in Nigeria, Pentecostal churches are more concerned about what they can gain from the community. This is where the missional orientation is meant to take a shift from as Anderson (2006:135) suggested. Missional ecclesiology according to Niemandt (2010:397) is supposed to guide the Pentecostal churches towards develop a new identity and mission. He states that “it is a response to a sense of ecclesiological and congregation urgency that is felt all over the world” (Niemandt 2010:397).

Most Pentecostal churches can be traced back to their experience with the power of the Holy Spirit. However, this position has not been focused on the all-round meaning of missional orientation that should also impact on the physical and wellbeing of the followers. Adedibu (2015:52) argues that “to maximize the missionary potential of Pentecostal churches their leadership urgently needs to re-evaluate their missional agenda.”

Missional work according to Mashau (2014:6) requires a critical and innovative understanding of the church leaders to enable them to fulfil the kingdom's work. This is what this thesis is all about trying to go from the peripheral way of doing mission as Mashau (2014:5) puts it, to a more people development rather than program development orientation.

3.8 The Pentecostal churches and youth in Nigeria

Pentecostal churches and youth are factors of change that can be found in the Nigerian system. But it also holds true that all the youth in Nigeria do not attend Pentecostal churches. This gives birth to ask if the relationship between the Pentecostal churches and youth in the church should be the same as with the youth outside the church.

3.8.1 The Pentecostal church and youth in the church

The Pentecostal church comprises of both young and old. In some churches, they are broken down into children, youth, men, and women. The youth here comprises of both male and female. This is to prove that it is a not gender-based word and it accommodates both genders when it comes to equity and fair play.
The youth inside the church are those who are already members of the church. Some of these youths belong to one or more service groups in the church. This makes them very active in the church as they have to be in church on all service days because of their role in the church. The youth inside the church are those who form the youth ministry.

The youth inside the church is first to receive any form of empowerment the church is rendering and they are most at times the primary focus of the church if there is any form of empowerment scheme. But the question here is; are the Pentecostal churches doing enough to empower the youth? This question arises from the fact that there are a lot of youths in the church who are unemployed or underemployed and are struggling to make ends meet daily. However, the Pentecostal churches need to focus on the youth inside the church first before extending the hand of goodwill to those outside the church.

The focus of this thesis is to bring to the attention of the Pentecostal churches that the youth in the church are lacking the necessary support they are supposed to be getting from the church, since they also bridge the gap in the church as well.

3.8.2 The Pentecostal church and youth outside the church

This category of youth are those who do not belong to any church or have not identified with the Pentecostal church they are currently attending or they belong to other denomination outside the Pentecostal body. While it is true that the youth outside the church has also been in the same boat as those youth in the church, only this time they do not depend on the church as they do not belong to any church denomination. This makes them very vulnerable as they as exposed to various social vices and no spiritual teaching to checkmate their deeds and actions.

The aforementioned reality does not mean this section of the youth are less important compared to those already in the church and that they should not be catered for as well. Jesus Christ addressing his disciples made it clear that he did not come to save those who are saved but to save those who are not saved. This means that in as much as the church needs to focus on the youth inside the church they should also extend the hand of ministry to those outside the church. Strong (2015:1-2) supports this view when he emphasizes that youth ministry should be theologically and spiritually driven. A youth ministry that is theologically and spiritually driven extends its hand of fellowship to all youth irrespective of whether they belong to the church or not.
Youth ministry today focuses more on the youth inside the church. Though, the attempt of youth ministry to reach out to the youth outside the church is not to empower them but rather to get them converted to the church which is a good start. Getting them converted to the church is not just what youth ministry should be all about but also caring about their welfare. Aziz (2019:1) believes that the spiritual lives of the youth matters but it should not be all that matters, their physical wellbeing should also be taken into consideration by the youth ministry.

3.9 Impact of Pentecostal churches on the youth in Nigeria

Pentecostal churches are found in almost all communities in Nigeria. This is because of the fast growth rate of the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Most Pentecostal churches now have branches in small and in large numbers of worshippers, which some term as “churches at your doorstep”, making it easier for each community member to find one closer to them. The church has awakened the spiritual consciousness of the people in the community so that they are holy in the face of evil and sin in the world today (Gabriel 2015:71).

One of the major effects Pentecostal churches have had on society is the prayers it offers on behalf of the members of the society. Praying for the people in society, preaching and encouraging them, and leading them to Christ have been a major focus of the church. The church sees to it that the souls of the members of the community are won for Christ (Achunike 2004:95-96).

3.9.1 Educational impact

The Pentecostal churches have also had other impacts on society. Some Pentecostal churches have been involved in some areas and others in other areas, depending on the mission and the vision of each Pentecostal church. Some Pentecostal churches have built schools that are close to the church premises, thereby allowing its members access to education (Ihenacho 2017). Some churches that have not been able to build schools have been able to pay the fees of some of the members’ children in the form of scholarships. Recipients of these scholarships are qualified and brilliant students of the church, though this is not done by all Pentecostal churches (Ihenacho 2017).

The impact on education the Pentecostal churches have on both youth and the community at large is huge but these educational institutions are not very affordable to the common man.
This is to say that only the rich can afford these educational institutions (primary, secondary and tertiary institutions) because of the fees. According to Wahab (2018:1), private schools in Nigeria are very expensive and only the rich can afford it. Few youths have been offered scholarships to study in these schools and it has helped them become successful in their various career.

It is important to point out that before private schools (this include primary, secondary and tertiary institutions) sprang up in Nigeria that the educational system was on the verge of collapsing, to the point that the citizens no longer trust the educational system in Nigeria (Matthew 2013:2). Many parents, who can afford it, send their children abroad to get a better education. Those who could not afford to send their children abroad had no choice but to manage the failing educational system in the country. According to Matthew (2013:3), some of the reasons for the failing educational system were as a result of inadequate funds, inadequate and decayed infrastructures, inadequate and low qualities of teachers, indiscipline of students, and many others. This was the gap the private-owned schools especially that of Pentecostal churches had to fill. This is not to say that the educational sector in Nigeria is of international standard but that there is an alternative for those who cannot send their children abroad.

The Pentecostal churches have brought hope back to the educational sector that was almost collapsing. Many schools owned by Pentecostal churches and private individuals are trying to improve the educational system of their schools using the international standard as a yardstick to measure up the quality of educational services that are rendered in these schools.

3.9.2 Social impact

The media is another area through which the Pentecostal churches have had an impact on the society. The use of media to preach and teach the Word of God by many bishops and pastors of the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria has become one of the fastest ways to spread the gospel around the world. The church programmes of various churches are now regular shown on television and radio. The Pentecostals have encouraged the use of mass media for religious programmes, and this is fast becoming the norm for the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria (Achunike 2004).

Liturgy, according to Achunike (2004), deals with the way people worship God. Pentecostals take worship seriously and allow it to penetrate and influence their lives. Indeed, for
Pentecostals worship is a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week experience of God. The Pentecostal attention to worship and the vibrancy of Pentecostal celebration have led to a change of attitude towards liturgical celebration in the Nigerian mainline churches. This has impacted the lives not only of those in Edo State, but for all those in Nigeria who believe in worshipping God. It has also drawn men and women closer to God than before and it is still drawing people to God today. The faithful are responding to the call for active participation in the liturgical functions of the church due to the stimulus from the Pentecostal churches. The guiding principles for preparing any liturgical function are based on the experience of the people, and not simply in conformity to a foreign style of worship. Generally, Nigerian Christians welcome the Pentecostal style of worship, since this seems to respond to African religious sentiments (Achunike 2004).

Pentecostalism has the potential and created the infrastructure (universities, schools, and hospitals) to instil ideals and beliefs that will lead a generation to transcend their social challenges and live life to its fullest (Akanbi & Beyers 2017:7).

### 3.9.3 Political impact

After the civil war in 1970, Christians began to go into politics as a result of the foundations the Muslim leaders were trying to lay down which will not favor the Christians. This led a lot of Christian southerners\(^8\) deciding to participate and make their voices heard in the political sector of Nigeria. According to Onapajo (2012:50), more significant in the history of Christianity in Nigeria was the growth and development of the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches of the “born-again” doctrine of the 1970s. Their presence further increased the political influence of Christianity in the political domain. When it comes to politics in Nigeria, Pentecostal churches have teamed up with other Christian bodies to strengthen their chances of getting good political positions. Here, the Christian body which is the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) can be upheld instead of the Pentecostal churches. This is the only area where all the Christian bodies in Nigeria share a common ground.

Mismanagement and poor governance led to socio-political and economic backwardness in Nigeria, which has paved the way for many Nigerian youths to embrace the Pentecostal movement as the new saviour (Akanbi & Beyers 2017:7). The prosperity messages the

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\(^8\) The southern part of Nigeria was mainly dominated by the Christians while the northern part of Nigeria was dominated by Muslims.
Christian churches began to preach converted a lot of rich people to the church. This gave CAN better opportunities during elections. In view of this, CAN became the Christians’ key instrument for conducting their political demands and also controlling their Muslim counterparts’ supposed growing political influence in Nigeria (Onapajo 2012:50). Today, the church has become a political ground for campaigns during local, state, and national elections.

The major political impact of CAN on youth in Nigeria today is that they encourage youth who has the intention of going into politics to do so. This is against the previous mentality that has brainwashed the church in the past that politics is not good for Christians (Afolabi 2015:45). In light of Proverbs 29:2 that when the righteous are in authority the people rejoiced. This made the Christian churches change their mentality to get involved in politics. In Nigeria’s political setting, it is difficult to find youth (18-35years) in top political positions. This is due to the fact that before now youth were not encouraged to go into politics and the few youths that have always wanted to go into politics do not have the financial backing. There is also no question that the churches in this group (CAN) have made an enormous contribution to the country’s social, political, and socio-economic growth (Akanbi & Beyers 2017:7).

3.9.4 Economic impact

One of the impacts the Pentecostal church has had on the youth is through the offering of soft loans (loans without interest). Some of the Pentecostal churches have also claimed to give soft loans (without interest) to young people, especially to young graduates who have a desire to run businesses of various kinds (Gideon 2014:6). Though not all Pentecostal churches are involved in offering loans, this mode of assistance has benefited many youths through enabling them to start up small businesses for themselves. Some have used such loans to enrol for professional courses or gain more knowledge in their areas of interest. Others used this loan to register for a part-time university degree (Gideon 2014:6). According to Gideon (2014:7), this has helped to elevate many youths from poverty and to bring them to the point of devoting their lives to Christ – which is one of the conditions for being a beneficiary of this scheme.

Craft centres of the Pentecostal churches, also known as skills acquisition centres, are another area of impact the Pentecostal churches have had on the youth. According to Gideon (2014:10) some Pentecostal churches have centres where interested young people can
develop skills like sewing, knitting, shoemaking, catering, hand craft, (beads making and cosmetics making) and hairdressing. Some Pentecostal churches have also added computer training classes to this repertoire so that young people can also become computer literate. Most Pentecostal churches offer these activities, not only to help the youth spiritually, but to also help them become economically independent (Gideon 2014:10; Fatokun 2009:50).

Creating opportunities for employment could be considered another empowering influence of the Pentecostal churches on the youth, even though only a handful of young people have really benefited from this. The church has also helped most youth to become very dedicated and committed to the things of God, since commitment to God is a major criterion used to see who will benefit from an opportunity. Gideon (2014:11) and Fatokun (2009:51), also speaking on this, said most of the staff who are employed by the churches are also members of those churches. The academic requirements of the positions offered vary significantly, from bachelor’s degrees to primary school certificate holders. And these jobs are for secretaries, cleaners, drivers and security officers. In the case of those churches owning schools, teachers are also employed in the various subjects offered at school. This has reduced the number of unemployed youth, even though the number is still very high.

One good thing about the employment the churches give to young people is that they do not require long years of experience, and the youth do not need to have a godfather to be able to get the job. This is unlike other establishments outside the church. The church is willing to give young people a trial start and to teach them how to do the job (Gideon 2014:18). Most of the diligent youth working for the church move on to other and better jobs as a result of having contact with some prominent people in the church.

It can be concluded that the recent trend in Pentecostalism in Nigeria to become involved in building activities, has brought about structural development to underdeveloped areas in Nigeria. When churches erect church buildings, outsiders are attracted to buy land and build houses in the areas. Most of the time, though, it takes a particular church group a long time to erect a structure, because of the costs involved. Sometimes church members erect temporary structures to enable them to commence their worship but when they finally do erect the structure, it brings about rapid growth and development to the area. By building schools, the churches add more structural developments to the area. For any society to experience development, certain things need to be in place. One of those things is the presence of
schools, and the Pentecostal churches have found a way of bringing into any community they enter more schools (Adeboye 2014:2838).

Finally, it would be fair to say that the Pentecostal churches have contributed to the empowerment of women in the sense that most women in the church fulfil a certain position, which makes them very committed. Unlike when women had to keep quiet in church and allow men to do all the activities in the church, women now take leading roles in the leadership of the church. This shows to the outside world that the woman’s place in the society is not only in the kitchen, and their usefulness is not only in the church, but in the broader society as well (Achunike 2004). The youth are not left out of the Pentecostal churches’ empowerment activities. Manual labour is required to build churches. This is where capable youth, both male and female, can be employed and be paid on a daily basis, depending on the day there is work available for them to do. Contracts for the interior part of the building are mostly given to women. This is, however, short-term employment, as most youth and women become jobless again with the completion of the building project. Nevertheless, some of the short-term workers can save some of their earnings and use it to do something meaningful, like starting a business or registering for short programmes (Adeboye 2014:2839).

3.10 Conclusion

Through a literature study, this chapter has explored the history of the Pentecostal churches in Nigerian society as well as their role in the lives of their members. The chapter highlighted some of the barriers and challenges encountered by the missionaries. Through the effort of the missionaries some of those challenges has become a thing of the past as it no longer exist in the Nigeria culture anymore. This chapter also looked at the mission orientation of Pentecostal churches, the missional ecclesiology of Pentecostal churches and the impact of Pentecostal churches not only on the youth but also on the society. From this study, it became clear that modern-day Pentecostalism in Nigeria can trace its roots back to Edo State, where Christianity began in the country. Christianity’s first introduction to Edo State was short-lived but eventually sprang up again under some of the most prominent preachers the country has ever known, like the late Archbishop B.A Idahosa, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome and Apostle Johnson Suleiman. Many other Pentecostal leaders are also from Edo State.
Chapter Four

Research design and methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the orientation of Pentecostal churches and their impact on youth and the society in Edo State, Nigeria. This chapter will consider the research methodology used in this study to execute the empirical component of the study. There are different varieties of research methodology and research design. For the purpose of this chapter, only the research design methodology used in this study will be discussed. This was considered appropriate by the researcher in order not to discuss issues or aspects that are not of direct relevance for the study. This confined discussion is also presented in order to enable easy comprehension for external readers and those who would want to use this study in future. In addition to the research methodology and the research design, the ethical considerations that were taken into account to do the empirical research are also discussed in this chapter. This chapter focuses on the methodology that was used to analyse the data collected during the focus group and individual interviews.

4.2 Research design

Research design has been defined by many scholars, since any research has a design pattern to be followed. However, these scholars have given their own definitions depending on the area or field they belong to. According to Fouche, Delport and De Vos (2011:142), research design is defined as the structure, plan and strategies that can be used to resolve any research problem when collecting information and knowledge. McMillian and Schumacher (2001:31), on the other hand, see research design as the measures used for conducting a research study that deals with the when, where, and how a particular research question can be answered. Wiersma and Jurs (2005:83) have argued that research design is a strategy plan for conducting research and deals with matters such as the selection of the participants and the preparation for the data collection. Mouton (2001:55) argues that a research design is a blueprint of the way the research needs to be conducted. Babbie and Mouton (2002:72) concur with this view by maintaining that a research design is the drawing up of a plan that needs to be followed when conducting research to answer the research questions. Simply put, the research design sets the limits of a research study within which the researcher will be
working and the theoretical framework that will be applied. The research design also has implications for the internal and external validity of the application of the findings. According to Brink et al. (2006:9), a research design is a logical step taken by the researcher to respond to the research question and to control variance. A research design includes a plan, a structure and a strategy that will ascertain if the validity of the research findings is maximised (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001:165). In addition, the research design provides an outline of the process the researcher will follow: from articulating the research questions and their effective implications to the final analysis of the data (Polit & Beck 2006:203). This empirical research will follow the research design laid down in this study in order to deliver findings regarding Pentecostal churches and youth empowerment. The following three types of design are of particular relevance in this regard: descriptive design, survey design and participatory design.

4.2.1 Descriptive design

Brink et al. (2006:102) describe descriptive research design as behaviours, characteristics, attitudes, events, beliefs, and processes of a research. The information of the research is analysed and classified to gain new knowledge of the issue at hand. Mouton (2001:21) describes a descriptive research design as the relationship between the variables that need to be examined. Put simply, a descriptive research design intends to describe accurately the study within its context and the data collected. The emphasis is on an in-depth description of the individual group or situation. The researcher applied a descriptive research design to this field of study: the study describes the situation of the youth in Pentecostal churches in Edo State, and was based on data that were collected. The data were then analysed and classified to provide new information on the field of study. In this study, the researcher describes the kind of situation in which the youth find themselves, a situation which is the result of a high rate of unemployment in the country. The researcher also describes how these conditions have affected the lives of the youth.

4.2.2 Survey design

In this study, the survey design was used to gather information from a sample of the population in order to examine the opinions of that population. Brink et al. (2006:111) and Rasool (2000:130) add that the survey method is effective if the intention is to obtain information using a structured interview and focus group interview, and thus collect data about the present, and indicate what people are thinking and planning to do. The survey
design was appropriate in this study as the researcher went to the field to gather data from a sample of the population with the purpose of examining their opinions. This was done through individual interviews and focus group interviews.

4.2.3 Participatory design

The participatory design is essential to clarify the nature of this study and to clarify the implication it has on this study. According to Lawson (1999:285) participatory design is a form of collective self-reflection undertaken by participants in order to improve the way they see and judge things in a social or educational sector, as well as to see how the participatory design can affect the situation on which the study focuses. Participatory design is an attempt to shift the balance of power in favour of those who are among the oppressed and who become involved in a research project like this study (Kumalo 2001:26). This design allows all participants, including the researcher, to contribute to this study and to suggest which measures can be taken to reduce the level of unemployment among youth in Edo State.

4.3 Research methodology

Research methodology, according to Polit and Beck (2004:656), refers to steps, procedures and strategies necessary for gathering and analysing data in a research investigation. Wiersma and Jurs (2005:13–14) explain that there are two main methods of research, namely quantitative research and qualitative research. The choice of method of research depends on the type of information to be collected. For undertaking an empirical research for this study, the qualitative research method was adopted. This entailed interviewing church leaders and conducting focus group interviews with youth in selected churches in the Pentecostal tradition. The researcher used the qualitative method, because he wanted to obtain insights into the perceptions of the youth and the church leaders on the high rate of unemployment among the youth in Edo State. In addition, he wanted to obtain insights into possible ways by which the unemployed youth could become empowered. The participants were directly involved in the research and were able to provide valid information, which the researcher used for the final suggestions and recommendations in light of the focus of this research on Pentecostal churches and youth empowerment in Edo State.

4.3.1 Qualitative method

According to Burns and Grove (2007:61), the qualitative research method includes an organized approach, which is used to define life experiences and situations in order to give
them meaning. Qualitative research focuses on the experiences of people as well as stressing the dynamism and uniqueness of individuals (Parahoo 2006:59). Hence, the qualitative method used in this study aimed at making the participants share their experiences and perceptions with regard to the topical focus of the research. The qualitative method deals directly with the participants. The participants were directly involved in the discussion of the study during the interviews, and their insights and perceptions were taken seriously. These insights form a large part of the research in the sense that the insights and perceptions of the participants will be analysed and they will enable the researcher to draw up a conclusion and recommendations for this study. As stated by Polit and Beck (2006:508), qualitative research is an inquiry into occurrences. The inquiry usually follows a thorough and complete approach, which involves the gathering of plentiful resources by means of a flexible design.

This qualitative method has both advantages and disadvantages. In this study, the researcher’s presence in the field was an advantage; he was able to witness the participants’ reactions, which made the findings more valid. Besides observing the participants’ reactions, the researcher conducted a one-on-one discussion with some of the participants, and got their opinions based on their experiences of the relevant issues. Having been in the field, the researcher was able to understand the behaviour of the participants. Because of the follow-up interviews he conducted, the researcher could obtain more detailed information related to the questions of this study. Wiersma and Jurs (2005) conclude that qualitative research is a specific approach to investigation based on a specific set of assumptions about knowledge and the nature of authenticity itself. It is for this reason that the researcher selected this approach because the research questions often start with what or how, hence these ventures into the topic to describe what is going on. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:8), in turn, refer to qualitative research as an emphasis on the qualities of resources. Qualitative research is about the happenings that are not experimentally examined, or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency.

4.4 Population and sampling

In this section, the population, samples and sampling procedure used in the research are discussed.
4.4.1 Population

Burns and Grove (2005:203) refer to population as the total group of persons or group of persons that meet the designated sets of criteria established by the researcher. The target population of this study was selected youth and church leaders of selected Pentecostal churches in Edo State. Population, according to Strydom and De Vos (1998:190), is the individual unit from the total set from which the study was chosen.

In this study, the population included twenty (20) youths each from the various churches used in this study and two (2) leaders each from the same churches. Five (5) youths from Edo State were also interviewed randomly. The number was reached from the two separate focus group that was conducted in each of the churches. From the second focus group it was observed that saturation was reached as the youths where giving the same responses using different words or sentences but meaning the same things as the previous focus group. This was not hard to reach as the youths were aware of what unemployment means and how it has been affecting them. The five youths selected randomly were to ascertain the information given by the youths from all the churches used in this study. This was to eliminate one of the disadvantages of using a focus group interview, which is participants refraining from giving certain information because of how other participants may look or treat them after the interview.

4.4.2 Sampling

Burns and Grove (2005:304) refer to sample as a small portion of the intended population that the researcher focuses on in the empirical research undertaken. They also maintain that sampling involves selecting the events, behaviour, and the group of people or materials with which to conduct a study (Burns & Grove 2005:305). Sampling is a process of assembling few representations from a population to test the research instruments to determine whether the intended questions were well understood (Johnson & Christensen 2004:156). In this study, sampling became important for the researcher to test the instruments that were used for the actual population of the research. It was necessary to carry out a preliminary research with a small population to determine errors or difficult words that might have been used by the researcher in formulating questions intended for the actual population. Kemper, Stringfield and Teddlie (2003:279) are of the viewpoint that purposive sampling is a process in which the terms are selected from the members of a population through non-random methods, which includes convenience sampling. This kind of sampling, according to Kemper
et al. (2003:280), is usually associated with the qualitative method, where interviews are the key instruments for collecting data.

4.5 Data collection

This section deals with the instruments used in collecting the data. Data collection, according to Polit and Beck (2006:498), is the systematic gathering of relevant information in order to provide answers to the research questions. The various data collection methods used in this study includes observation and interviews (individual interviews and focus groups).

4.5.1 Focus group interviews

Focus group study, according to Kruger and Casey (2014:2), is a study that is carefully planned. It is a designed series of discussions to obtain insight in a particular area of interest in a generous, nonthreatening atmosphere. The focus group interview method is to provide a social-oriented interaction, like a real-life situation, in which participants influence one another, build on one another’s responses to inspire shared and synergistically produced views, feelings and facts (Freeman 2013:132). George (2013:257) supports this view when he adds that focus group interviews truly save time and costs compared to individual interviews. At the same time, it also creates an opportunity for participants to discuss collectively normative postulation that is naturally implicit, hence providing understandings to complex inspiration and behaviour. Focus groups, according to Freeman (2013:132), is best defined as an interview conducted within a small group of people who share the same background or experience about a specific topic. In this research, participants were selected based on their interest and experience regarding the topical focus of the research, and their willingness to share their experiences or information about the topic.

The researcher used this method of collecting data because at the time the research was conducted it was difficult to meet each of the youth individually for a session. Concerning the actual conducting of the focus group interviews, the participants were free to speak their mind, voice their views and debate on how they feel things should be done within the church, and the Pentecostal churches in particular. Another advantage of this method is that it gave the researcher the opportunity to collect data from more than one participant at the same time since it was a discussion where they agreed upon the things they believed in.
One major disadvantage of this research method is that some of the participants refrained from naming certain things that affected them because they would not want other participants to know they are speaking from experience. Another disadvantage of this research method was that most participants refrained from speaking on some issues as it would be seen as portraying a bad image of the church. This disadvantage also applies to the individual interviews since most of the participants were leaders in their church.

4.5.2 Individual interviews

Individual interviews are important because it assists in the investigation of the meaning behind the behaviour by verifying information collected from group interviews. A qualitative technique is the most effective in getting meaningful information when the participants participate in the interviews (Polit & Beck 2006:500). Interview sessions with the church leaders and some youth in Edo State provided opportunity to obtain more first-hand information about the current situation of youth and empowerment in Edo State. Brink et al. (2006:151) suggest that interviews should be formalized in such a way that all the participants are asked the same questions in the same order and in the same manner. This means that the questions must be presented in the same way to all the participants. The individual interview questions were the same as the questions that were used in the focus group interviews. However, while interviewing some youth in Edo State, questions about their denomination were left out as these youths did not want to be identified with any church. These interview sessions took 30-45 minutes each, as at some point during the sessions some of the interviewees had to take calls and attend to some pressing issues. See the Annexures for the interview questions.

4.5.3 Observation

Observation constituted another technique used in the research. This entailed that the researcher was particular attentive to the kind of teachings (messages preached) that took place especially during Sunday services and the nature of the church programmes (religious programmes organized by the church) held in the church. In addition, the researcher also wanted to observe the reactions of the youths during these services and how this offered insight into their lives and commitment to God. He observed the way they reacted when different pastors preached; their reactions were based on the charisma of the pastors. Participating in these services also provided the researcher with a valuable opportunity to develop a good relationship with the youth, since it is easier to be friends with people who
see things the same way as you do. The ability to perceive and record the behaviour of the participants without trying to change the participants’ behaviour, regardless of the method employed during data collection in the study, is what McMillan and Schumacher (2001:207) refer to as observation. The researcher relied on this tool for collecting information, as it was important to see and hear things, and to record his observations, rather than relying on the participants’ responses to questions alone. This is what Merriam and Tisdell (2015:139) agree to when stating that, in a participant’s observation study, the researcher enters the group that he is studying and becomes part of them and accepts their situation as his own. This technique enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the actual lives of the youth, which are the focus of this study.

4.6 Pilot study

According to Neuman (2000:251) the function of a pilot study is to conduct a pre-test of the questions among a few subjects in order to determine the feasibility of the study. This, according to Neuman (2000:251), is the second step in conducting a survey. Although the pre-test may not be given to representatives, but to those who match the sample precisely, Babbie and Mouton (2002:245) advise that it should make use of subjects who would find the study relevant.

In this research, the pilot study was performed among youths in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, who find themselves very much in a similar situation …. Though there is oil in this state (Bayelsa State), this does not change the role the church is supposed to play in the lives of the youth. Like in any other state, there is still a high rate of unemployment among the youth in this state. So, this proved to be a suitable subject in the pilot study.

The purpose of the pilot study was to determine whether the questions were comprehensible or not to the interviewees. To this end, the interviewees were also asked to scrutinise the questions and the wording. The pilot study helped to clarify ambiguous questions and to ensure the reliability of the study.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Research ethics is of paramount importance when undertaking any empirical research. It involves protecting the rights of the participants and the environment in which the research is conducted (Burns & Grove 2005:181). The system of moral principles by which individuals
can judge their action good or bad is what ethics is concerned about (Denscombe 2002:174). Pilot and Beck (2006:499) agree with this in stating that ethics is a system of moral values that can be applied to research to indicate the degree to which research processes adhere to professional, legal, and social obligations towards the participants of a particular study. Research ethics include the application of ethical principles to technical research. Pera and Van Tonder (2005:4) see research ethics as the code of behaviour that is considered correct. This fundamental truth must be recognized and adhered to by all researchers. These standards are to guide the moral selections of the researcher in terms of his behaviour towards others, particularly in relation to the participants in his research.

The aim of ethical conduct in any research is to ensure that research activities during the study do not inflict harm on the participants. Ethical considerations are fundamental to the design of any research that involves human beings; it is to protect the rights and dignity of the research participants. On these bases, the research can be conducted with fairness (Burns & Grove 2005:182). During the empirical research for this study, the following ethical issues were considered: informed consent, permission to conduct the study, confidentiality, anonymity and beneficence.

4.7.1 Informed consent

According to Polit and Beck (2006:328) and Neuman (2000:255) it is a fundamental principle of any social research to never force anyone to participate in a study. That means participation must be voluntary, without intimidation or victimisation. Based on this principle, the purpose of this study, the data collection method and the voluntary nature of participating in the research were made clear to all the participants. This was done both verbally and in writing and made participants aware of the fact that they could choose not to partake in the study; they could leave whenever they felt like it or could decide not to answer a question with which they were not comfortable. The youth who participated in the focus group interviews were given an informed consent form; some of them refused to sign while others signed. The church leaders who participated also signed the form to show their participation was voluntary.

4.7.2 Permission to conduct the study

Permission was obtained from the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) Edo State chapter. This body controls all Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. The researcher received a
letter from this body with permission to conduct the study among the Pentecostal churches that had been identified in this study. In addition, the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Missiology at the University of South Africa issued a letter to the researcher giving him permission to conduct this study.

4.7.3 Confidentiality

Burns and Grove (2007:201) refer to confidentiality as the ability of the researcher to manage personal information shared by the participants during the research. To this they add that such information must not be shared with others without the consent of the participants. This research adhered to this precept of confidentiality, as information gathered from the participants during the research was kept private for the sole purpose of the study. Furthermore, the anonymity of participants was secured, as their identity could not be linked to the information that they provided. The participants had the right of anonymity and they were assured that the information provided during the data collection process would be used solely for the purpose of the research, and unless they gave their permission, no information given by them would be linked to them.

4.7.4 Anonymity

This aspect was possible during the research because the names of the participants and the churches used in this study were not mentioned in the interview questions. This was done to protect the participants and make it impossible to link the information provided to any of the participants involved in the study. Burns and Grove (2007:202) support the view that anonymity is guaranteed when the researcher cannot link information with a certain participant.

4.7.5 Beneficence

This principle stresses the right of the participants to be protected from any discomfort that may be caused by the researcher. Polit and Beck (2006:87) agree that research related to humans should be intended to produce benefit and not to cause harm to participants, either physically, emotionally or psychologically. Furthermore, the researcher has a duty to make sure that any possible benefits that may flow from the research are channelled to the unemployed church youth but also to those in larger society. The participants’ right to full disclosure was taken into account, as if it were a non-experimental study.
4.7.6 Validity and reliability of the research instruments

It is very important that any instrument used in research should be valid and reliable. The tools or instruments used for the data collection are valid and reliable only when the intended purpose of the tools or instruments is achieved (Salkind 2003:115). For Russell (2000:47) validity deals with correctness and accuracy of the instrument used for data collection and the findings in the research. This furthermore implies that the tools are feasible, and that they are used to produce relevant findings for this research. Reliability refers to the degree of consistency of the research instrument to measure a precise quality (Polit & Beck 2004:205).

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the design and the methodology used in collecting data in this study. This chapter also discussed the population, the sampling method, and the instruments used in the data collection process. In addition, the chapter discussed the measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the study and the ethical issues related to the data collection. The next chapters (Chapter 5 & 6) will present the data collected from this study using these methodologies. The focus group interviews will be presented first, in Chapter 5 and thereafter the individual interviews will follow in Chapter 6.
Chapter Five

Engaging with the findings of the research: the focus group interviews

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology used in this study. This chapter will now more specifically offer a presentation and discussion of the findings from the focus group interviews represented by the various churches selected for this study. From the previous chapters one can see that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is very high and will only increase if the problem is not addressed in a concerted way. Furthermore, our discussion in previous chapters emphasised the fact that the youth is the group at the heart of this unemployment dilemma.

The aim of this chapter is to present and reflect on the empirical work undertaken for this thesis. The rationale of this undertaking was to develop a closer understanding of how the Pentecostal churches could contribute to the reduction of the unemployment problem in Edo State, and as such to the empowerment of the youth for gainful employment. In order to achieve this aim, this chapter intends to concentrate on the responses from the focus group interviews related to questions raised in this research, which will aid the recommendation of possible solutions to the youth and the church in general.

In analysing the data, the researcher started with the process of thoroughly working through and arranging the interview transcripts. As such, this chapter involves a detailed discussion of the insights gained from those who participated in the empirical exploration. In this process, a deliberate attempt is made to link the findings of the research to existing literature on the topic under discussion. For the purpose of clarity, see Chapter 1, Section 1.6.

5.2 Interpretation and discussion of the findings from the observations

This section focuses on the interpretation of the findings from the observations made during the fieldwork.

5.2.1 Observations

The researcher was able to observe the possible empowerment of young people in church youth programmes. For this purpose, the researcher attended activities organised for youths
on different occasions, as well as Sunday and weekly services in the churches. In addition, the researcher also went around in the communities during working hours to see if youths in these communities were at work.

The researcher’s observations became one of the two major sources of data in this study, and enabled the researcher to develop closer insight into the level of unemployment among youths in the community. These observations took place during the following periods: November 2015 to February 2016, July to September 2016, January to February 2017 and July to September 2017.

Applying the method of observation has given the researcher a better understanding of the youths he aspired to interview, as well as the context in which the role of the churches with regard to the topical focus could be measured. Most of the youths in the areas where the research was conducted happened to be literate, meaning that they could read and write, and as such easily provide information to the researcher. By meeting them in their various churches, the researcher gained first-hand opportunities to establish good relationships with these youths. This made conducting the interviews easy, as they were free to respond to the questions and air their views.

During the observation phase, field notes were taken. The field notes included observations about teachings that the churches offer, which could be relevant to the empowerment of young people – also in so far as their aspirations of becoming gainfully employed were concerned. In the community, the researcher went around to observe what unemployed youths were doing to survive. While the researcher observed that some worked as building labourers in order to sustain themselves, others devoted their time to swindling people online.

5.2.2 Findings of the observations

The following were notable aspects during the general interaction between the research participants and the researcher.

The interaction among the participants and the church leaders was minimal. The activities that the churches offered for young people usually had nothing to do with their empowerment. In this respect, the researcher was able to attend activities specifically organised for youths in these churches at different occasions. It became noticeable that these activities were usually geared towards organising music concerts or towards Valentine’s Day
celebrations (popularly called lovers’ day). These activities, especially the Valentine’s Day celebration, were done to ensure that the youth did not engage in any immoral activities in the name of spreading and showing love to one another, especially to the opposite sex (based on researcher’s observation).

Concerning the dress mode, first of all it could be said that the approach to dress in the Pentecostal churches under discussion varies; whilst some see a certain dress mode as wrong, others see nothing wrong with it (based on the researcher’s observation). The Church of God Mission expects a certain kind of dress mode from women; they are quite prescriptive. On the other hand, the Living Faith Church allows any kind of dress mode for members, but for those members who officiate in a service it is mandatory to dress decently. This attitude of the church to the dress mode of its members has also influenced the youth in these churches, an observation that should be considered as very important for this study. Young people will go where they are free to dress the way they like, rather than go to a place where they are told what to wear and what not to wear.

Another area which has become an important part of Pentecostal churches’ orientation, is the emphasis placed on education. Most of the churches have been involved in establishing schools. This has resulted in a competitive environment between government owned schools and schools owned by private individuals. Pentecostal churches included in this study have their own tertiary institutions in the country, apart from Omega Fire Ministry, which is yet to erect its own institution. However, there is a noticeable difference in the number of primary and secondary schools owned by the different churches. For instance, Living Faith Church has primary and secondary schools in each of their branches in Edo State (based on the researcher’s observation during field work) while the Church of God Mission have secondary schools only in certain locations. The others, at the time of this research, did not own any secondary school yet. This has influenced the respective population sizes of the churches, since most members want their children to be educated in God-fearing environments where they would be safe and be given a good moral training. Be that as it may, the emphasis on education has also contributed to a percentage of young people obtaining some form of employment, like teaching, cleaning, and so on.

The duration of services in the Pentecostal churches under discussion is another important factor of which to be aware. The duration of services has also influenced the number of people in the church. Whilst some believed in spending limited hours in the church during the
days of services, others believed in spending more hours. Living Faith Church spends one hour forty-five minutes in church and holds three services on a Sunday, while the other churches spend four to five hours to hold one service (based on the researcher’s observation). The question is whether the time one spends in church has to be longer for effective service to God. The churches also have different days of weekly service; some have one major weekly service while others have up to two or three services in the week, except when there is a major programme in the church. The duration of services has also influenced the choice of the youth when deciding which church they would like to attend. Many of the youth would want to go to a church where they spend not too much time in services so that they can carry on with other activities the rest of their day. In as much as this does not influence the employment opportunity of the youth, it does influence the population size of the church.

The lack of teachings that could contribute to youth empowerment appeared to be a problem in all the churches focused upon in this study. The church leaders had not put in place any activities that could assist in the empowerment of the youth. In contrast, it appeared that activities of this nature were mostly organised by NGOs, which in most cases were not free, as participants had to pay a certain amount depending on the organisers. As for the churches, there were no empowerment programmes organised by the churches to support the youth for gainful employment. The next section will discuss the demographical data of the participants interviewed.

5.3 Demographical data

The number of the participants, both males and females who participated in the focus group interviews, is shown under this section. The section will be presented according to the following headings: age, gender, educational status, employment status, duration of church membership, parent membership status, and departmental obligation in the church. It appeared that the demographic variables such as age, gender and educational status all had an influence on how young people obtained employment. These variables also influenced the type of job youths could get.

5.3.1 Age

In this study, the general age bracket to fall under the category of “youth” was determined to be between 18 and 35 years. In this respect, it was easy for the researcher to identify this age
bracket because it correlated rather well with the age group falling under the category of “youth” in the respective churches.

5.3.2 Gender

The table below shows the number of males and females from the various churches who participated in this study. These churches were the Living Faith Church (LFC), Church of God Mission (CGM), Believers Love World (BLW), Foundation Faith Church (FFC) and Omega Fire Ministries (OFM).

**Table 5.1: Gender distribution of the interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Churches</th>
<th>LFC</th>
<th>CGM</th>
<th>BLW</th>
<th>FFC</th>
<th>OFM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that the majority of participants were males. This is because it was mostly the male participants who were willing to participate, whereas the females were either rushing to go home and cook for their parents or were having other commitments which this study is not allowed to reveal. At the same time, however, the few females who participated were able to do so because their parents were either not in the same church, or they were travelling and were seen as having much time in hand. Most of the youths were jobless and those who were involved in some form of small job turned out to be doing menial jobs, which were below their pay grade.

5.3.3 Educational status

It appeared that all the participants in this study had completed either a diploma or an undergraduate degree. While this achievement gave them the apparent opportunity to be employed in their various fields of study, at the time of the research for this study none of the participants had commenced with any postgraduate studies, even though some had wished to do so depending on the availability of financial resources.
5.3.4 Employment status

All the participants in this study were either unemployed or underemployed. None of them had any form of gainful employment, which was an important reason why they were available for interviews during the time of the research.

5.3.5 Duration of church membership

The participants were members of the selected churches for more than one year. The researcher decided to make the duration one year because this would allow the participants to have knowledge of the church rules and doctrine of the particular church, as well as the possibility of participating on a more prolonged basis in the activities of the particular church. However, it turned out that the shortest period participants spent as members of a church were two years.

5.3.6 Membership status of parents

While some parents of the participants turned out to be Christians only very few of the parents of the participants attended the same church with them. This was for instance very clear at the Believers Love World (BLW) church, where at the time of the interviews none of the parents of the interviewed youths attended church with them. In addition, most of them left the Catholic and Anglican churches they were attending with their parents. According to some of them, they left the Catholic and Anglican churches where they were with their parent because they wanted to experience the Pentecostal spirit, which they said they did not experience in these other churches.

5.3.7 Departmental obligation in the church

All the youths who participated in this research confirmed their involvement in one or more department of their church. Some also indicated that they belonged to more than one unit or department. These departments in the churches were the drama unit, choir unit, ushering unit, sanctuary keeping unit, technical unit, media unit, protocol unit, Bam of Gilead unit, traffic control unit and prayer band unit.

5.4 Focus group interviews

This section focuses on the responses from the participants who participated in the focus group interviews. The focus group interview method was adopted in order to enable the researcher to obtain the opinions of the youths in the selected churches. The interviews were
conducted according to the different questions and themes earmarked for research. These were directed to all the participants.

5.4.1 Orientation of Pentecostal missions in Edo State

The orientation of the churches seemed to point in the same direction. All the participants from the Church of God Mission (CGM) agreed that the missional orientation of this church was to be “soul winning” (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13). This meant that the church focused on the task of winning souls for God. This was usually done through preaching the message of repentance to both old and young. Again, participants of the Living Faith Church (LFC) similarly indicated that the orientation was towards “prosperity, giving and soul winning” (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

The participants from the Omega Fire Ministries (OFM), in turn, all agreed that the orientation of their church was towards “soul winning, deliverance from affliction, satanic manipulation, and any form of satanic oppression” (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10). Similarly, the participants from the Foundation Faith Church (FFC) also agreed that the orientation of their members was “to win and establish millions of disciples around the world; to empower families and generational leaders” (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17). Lastly, but not in the least unimportant, the participants of Believers Love World (BLW) said the orientation of their church was towards “raising men and women to come to the inheritance of God through the teaching of the Holy Spirit” (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).

Based on the above-mentioned responses it becomes clear that although the selected churches included very large youthful memberships, the empowerment of those youths did not really form an integrated part of their core orientation. Predominantly, the focus was on the spiritual needs of their members.

Yet, the researcher also wondered whether all the different branches of these churches had the same orientation, because contextual and other factors could change a particular orientation. Although the participants of the churches agreed that all the branches of their respective churches were similar in their orientation, there was one leader from CGM who believed that the orientation of the other branches might differ as a result of the various leaders and quality of leadership each person possess. He added that these leaders were all supposed to have the same orientation since a similar vision was upheld in all the branches (Interview 1, 2015/12/12).
5.4.2 Understandings of youth empowerment

Regarding the question about the meaning of empowerment some of the young people from Focus Group 1 responded by saying that empowerment involved different forms. One of the participants remarked that empowerment could involve that funds were made available for young people to start up a trade. Another participant alluded to the fact that empowerment involved more than the monetary aspect. He added that empowerment may have social, economic, political, educational and spiritual dimensions. He went on to say that when the issue of empowerment was raised people most of the time only tended to look at it from the economic aspect while forgetting that if one was serious about nation building the other aspects also needed to be considered.

Another participant mentioned that young people could be empowered through skills acquisition. She explained that through skills acquisition young people who would want to learn some form of craft would be able to do so and that not everyone was inclined towards going to school. She added that some youths wanted to learn something that could enable them to generate an income easily. One of the participants mentioned that youth empowerment entailed giving youths the tools to enable them to become self-reliant (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13).

In Focus Group 2, the participants had similar opinions to that of the aforementioned group. One of the participants similarly said that empowering young people meant that they would become self-supporting, meaning that they would not have to depend on anyone else for survival if they had the skills and know-how to generate income to meet their daily needs and expenses. Another participant said that youth empowerment was not merely about giving fish to the youth, but also teaching them how to fish for themselves. Enabling young people to generate an own income to meet life’s expenses was thus seen to be far more valuable to this person than merely giving them some money to survive (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

In Focus Group 3, some of the participants had something different to say. One of the participants saw youth empowerment as something that would lead to concerted efforts to identify talented youths and enable them to develop and use their skills. A second participant added that youth empowerment meant various things to him and that he saw it as the creation of opportunities for young people to become employed and financially independent. Again, for a third participant empowerment meant the following: “I see it as a process where youths
are encouraged to change the way they live and by all means necessary, addressing and providing solution to their problems.” He added that youth empowerment should involve creating a forum by which unemployed youths are assisted in obtaining some form of employment. Lastly, for the fourth participant in the group empowerment could be a way of giving youths who did not have a job something to do. This did not necessarily mean high-paying jobs but some kind of occupation that would at least enable them to take care of themselves and make them independent. This participant added, “Youth empowerment is a way of averting youth from engaging in crimes and criminal activities and become useful to the society” (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

In Focus Group 4, the participants held similar opinions about youth empowerment. One of the participants said that he saw youth empowerment as a way of giving young people an opportunity to achieve their desired goals and ambitions in life, as well as the opportunity to become leaders. A second participant replied that he saw “empowerment as a way of giving the youth some form of little help to help them stand on their own feet in the midst of economic crisis”. He added that in such case they would not “have to depend on people for survival or roaming the street in search for jobs or looking for the easy way out, like engaging in criminal activities”. Youth empowerment meant focusing on youths who have skills and equipping them with necessary support to enable them stand on their feet, or helping youths who do not have skills to acquire at least one skill to help them fend for themselves (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).

In Focus Group 5, one of the participants said that youth empowerment could be seen from two different perspectives, namely from the inside and the outside. From the inside, it involved teaching and equipping young people spiritually, in order for them to be able to serve God. From the outside, it involved equipping them financially, helping them to obtain employment and informing them with ideas on how to “tackle the challenges out there like also helping them to learn skills (skills acquisition) and if they have the certificate they can also use it to work for themselves”. Another person who responded in this group said that while she could agree with everything that was said, her emphasis would fall on the acquisition of skills, that is, so that young people could fend for themselves; as the saying goes, “If you empower the youth, you empower the nation” (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).
5.4.3 Churches and youth empowerment

The researcher tried to discern what the orientation of the selected churches / congregations were towards the issue of youth empowerment. Empowering the youth in the church was like a “no man’s business”, a participant in Focus Group 1 said. Empowering young people was not part of the focus of this congregation and the youth received very little recognition in terms of their empowerment needs. Some added that the young people only became useful when the church required their services in the church, and how the young people survive was not important to the church (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13).

In the aforementioned church, the focus did not really fall on the youth but rather on the widows in this church. While it was good to support the widows, members of the group commented that it would in fact be outrageous to give a widow half a bag of rice and expect her to survive on it for one year. However, if the widows’ children were empowered instead, it would not be necessary to give the widows rice once a year, as their children would now be able to take good care of them. It was the opinion of the group that the church therefore had to see how they could focus on the youth as well, that is, in such a way that they could become productive and simultaneously be of benefit to their families, the church and the community at large (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13).

In Focus Group 2, the participants held different opinions although at one point all agreed that their church had not done much to empower the youth. One of the participants remarked that their church made you believe that you could achieve anything in life with God on your side. However, empowering the youth was not a serious issue in their church, the reason being that the general mind-set in this church was that the teachings you received in church and your faith in God could be considered as sufficient. In this respect one of the participants said that from his point of view the church did not regard youth empowerment as part of its core business. He went on to add that for one to be able to join any unit in the church you had to be a working person. There were people who were willing to work for God in this church but were denied such opportunity because they were not working or were not gainfully employed (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

Another participant in Focus Group 2 added the following pertinent words: “Some of us here will tell you we are working but if you ask us the kind of job you will be amazed that most of us do poorly-paid jobs just to survive, even though we are educated and have various degrees. [The church] is not oriented towards youth empowerment.” Again, others went on to say that
the youth were not taken along; they were only useful when their services were needed in the church and how they survive was not important to the church. According to one participant:

For me I won’t say it is not important to the church to see youths empowered. I would say the church believes everyone is working and that attending the next prayer session or anointing service will get you a miracle job. That is to say, keep coming to church and be faithful so God can make a way for you. The few jobs they have given to some of the unemployed people in this church has been jobs like security guards, cleaners and church secretary which are just a very few persons. The teachers in the church school are the only jobs that a few young people have been able to get, and that happens only if you get someone to highly recommend you. We do not hear about job vacancies but we only know these positions exist. Though there is high rate of unemployment in the country, the church has done little or nothing to solving this problem (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

In Focus Group 3, the participants expressed similar views. Some said that their church made you believe that everything could be achieved through prayers. Empowerment was not really a focus or the orientation of this church. Another participant supported this by saying if the church prioritised empowerment as part of their orientation, there would not be so many unemployed youths in their church. The empowerment of youths inside this church was not realistic. One of the participants said, “I know the church has helped some persons outside and inside this church with monetary support to help them solve some of their problems, but that is different when it comes to empowering the youth. Youths need to be able to fend for themselves on a daily basis without looking or expecting help from other people.” At the time of the interview many young people in this church were not able to get employment, while so many other youths outside this church faced the same challenge. Maybe youth empowerment did form part of the orientation of this church, but it was not evident to the youth (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

One participant in Focus Group 3 added that the church should make youth empowerment part of its orientation. He emphasised that the church should start doing something about it because the numbers of unemployed youths inside and outside the church were increasing by the day. However, empowering the youth in this church was not of any concern. “I say this, because, if it is of a concern to them the number of unemployed youths would have been declining and the youths who have benefited from the empowerment programmes would also have been seen, or possibly these youth who benefited would have also helped others who needed to benefit as well.” Yet, another participant said that he thought the church needed to
restructure its system of operation so that the welfare of the youth could be given greater priority. In this respect some participants responded by saying that while they had a youth department in their church no one asked them how they were surviving. Instead, the only thing they were asked to do was to serve God. “This is not a bad thing, but if they can be concerned about our physical life the way they are concerned about our spiritual life, the present state of the youth would have not been like this.” These participants were adamant that greater interest in the socio-economic welfare of the youth on the part of their church would go a long way to solve the challenges of employment they faced (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

In Focus Group 4, the participants were of the opinion that the church was concerned about the youth but not in the area of empowerment. A first participant explained that this was so because one of the goals of their church was the preoccupation with raising global leaders:

   But how will you raise leaders motivationally, and yet after those strong words they have nothing to show for it? As those strong words practically do not give them any form of employment. …

   [I]n some branches of this church, young people received full or partial scholarships but in this branch we do not have such a thing.

As part of the same discussion, a second participant presented the example of a young lady in the church who dropped out of school because she could not afford the fees, which was more or less the equivalence of US $250. She was forced to drop out despite the fact that she was a very devoted member, serving in the media unit of her church. As a result, she became so despondent that she decided to leave the church. She expressed her feelings in the following way: “We see the church teaching how the Lord will bless and prosper [sic] individuals who faithfully serve Him, forgetting that these blessings do not fall from the sky. Men have to be used to bless others, which most of the church members do not want to be, for whatever reason” (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).

A third participant in the same discussion commented that it would be hypocritical to ignore the plight of young people inside the church while trying to help those outside the church. At the same time, he agreed that his church had not really managed to develop an outward focus as far as young people were concerned.

   Yes, it’s true there are a lot of youth programmes held in this church but none are heading towards the empowerment of the youth. What I think should be done is that the church should rethink its
policy regarding youth and do this unbiased. The church should devise plans to see that the youth of this church are empowered instead of leaving them alone to watch out for themselves.

To this, a fourth participant added that one could blame the government for most of the issues that befall the youth. Yet, he was at the same time of the opinion that the church was part of government and needed to be blamed and held responsible for how the lives of young people turned out as a result of the jobless situation they had to contend with (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).

In Focus Group 5, the participants held the opinion that it was not a case of the church not wanting to see young people become employed; there was some concern about unemployment. The problem, however, was that their concern did not translate into any action on the part of the church. In the words of one participant: “They have not really done anything substantially to show how concerned they are or how much they are willing to solve the problem.” She then added by saying that while her church had been able to produce some well-known gospel artists, these artists were from other branches of the church. “Most of the youth in this branch do not have jobs. You see them wear fancy clothes as though all is well, but deep down most of those clothes are either borrowed or they are still paying for it.” She further commented that one could thus not really talk about what was done or not done for young people on the outside because from the inside nothing was being done. For her, it was obvious that any talk about the empowerment of youths outside the church did not make sense as long as the church neglected the empowerment needs of its own youth (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).

5.4.4 Challenges faced by youths

Seen from the perspective of young people on their actual empowerment and employment needs, one participant from Focus Group 1 observed that most youths who were duly qualified for meaningful employment failed to secure actual employment. To this extent, he also blamed the church and its leaders for their lack of interest and support. Another participant who supported this perspective recalled his own experience. He narrated how he was supposed to get a job in a particular institution but that people in his own church did not show any support. Instead, he had to seek assistance from an outsider who later helped him to get the job. In his own words:
I was supposed to get a contract job with the University of Benin and the VC is a member of the church. I went to a well-known leader to help link me up but he acted as if I was disturbing him and when the bodyguards asked me to leave I actually lost that opportunity. After some time, I had another opportunity and spoke with a friend who linked me up with the son of the Oba of Benin. He straight away linked me up, and even when I was having issues as to who recommended me for the job, this is how I got the job.

Others who added to this example said that what they wanted from the church was not money but support and interest from the church to enable them to acquire their desired goals in life (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13).

In Focus Group 2, the participants had similar things to say about the challenges they faced. Some commented that young people were faced with the dilemma of how to go about seeking for assistance. They added that people they approached for assistance usually turned them down or promised to help but never actually kept their promises. This made them afraid of telling anyone in the church about their experiences. Some also added that in most cases what they needed from people in the church was not money but recommendations in order for them to secure a job. “When you approach the church leaders to help you talk to these top people in church, they keep promising that they will do so, but they don’t and then one ends up missing the opportunity” (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

In Focus Group 3, a participant mentioned that access to the right sources happened to be the major challenge. He went further to say that accessing the right person for employment was a challenge as most people one approached saw it as an attempt to beg them for monetary assistance. A second participant added that most youths were going through financial stress as a result of the jobless situation in which they were finding themselves. Most of them could not afford paying their own bills. To this another participant added that most youths were at the verge of giving up on their faith and ready to join one or another scheme in order to get rich. Others participants continued to mention depression, mental and physical suffering, becoming hostile as a result of their desperation and frustration, and doing all sorts of criminal activities in order to survive (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

In Focus Group 4, the participants who responded said experiences of rejection in the church could be considered as a challenge. Most youths felt rejected by the church they attended and this was because the church was not doing anything to improve their present situation. One participant specifically mentioned how this contributed to a deep sense of frustration. Young
people also became engaged in cybercrimes amidst experiences of depression and poverty (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).

For participants of Focus Group 5 the situation was very similar. They pointed out that the youth faced by many temptations due to joblessness. In the same breath, they also agreed that meeting basic needs such as having food and clothing was another pertinent challenge, which young people in their church did not openly want to admit, and which led to deep feelings of shame and humiliation. As one participant observed, “There is nothing as challenging as when one has a problem but there is [sic] no finances to sort out the problem” (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).

5.4.5 Barriers to youth employment

On the question what the participants thought the problem was why suitably qualified youths in their church /congregation could not find employment, participants from Focus Group 1 emphasised that this was not only a problem confined to the realm of the church but that it was rather a general problem in the country. However, one participant again wanted to qualify this perspective when he said that the church was nevertheless part of the problem given the high rate of unemployed youths inside the church (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13).

In Focus Group 2, one of the participants said, “[The youth of the church] are unemployed because the church does not have vacancies for employment.” Another participant added that those who could help were not willing to help for whatever reason best known to them. “[This] is where the issue of connections comes in. People will tell you that you have to know certain persons before you can get this or that job; you have to be connected to this family or that family before you can get this job.” A third participant suggested that he did not think that this was a problem which only existed in Nigeria, but that his fear was that the Nigerian scenario was worse compared to any other country. This was because the country was richly blessed with natural resources that could be utilised for the well-being of all. However, this was not the case because the country’s leaders use those resources to enrich themselves (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

In Focus Group 3, participants related the inability of the church to do anything about the situation of the youth to the fact that the church did not own companies that could employ all the jobless in the church. However, despite this fact they nevertheless believed that there were companies the church could link the youth to, as the owners or CEOs of those
companies belonged to the church. Another problem the participants in this group mentioned was the fact that most of the youth did not have godfathers that could supply them with letters of recommendation to help them become employed. “Most of the time you see on television the senior pastor giving money to some people or giving them expensive gifts but this does not in any way change the fact that the youths are not employed and the church has failed to do something about the situation.”

The participants in Focus Group 3 also mentioned another problem, similar to the one mentioned earlier, that is, leaders want to convince the youth that their lack of employment is due to a lack of job opportunities. However, amidst the high rate of unemployment in Edo State and in the country at large, some people are employed through the back door. This means that although the candidate did not measure up in the formal selection process, they still get the job due to the high recommendation of a prominent person. The reason for unemployment among the youth is thus not because of a lack of jobs, but rather due to a lack of connections and an unfair advantage of some. Most of the youth in the church did not have those connections (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

The participants of Focus Group 4 expressed similar opinions in response to the question. They agreed that getting a job in Nigeria was not easy. They identified a further problem, namely those who had the means and ability to help were not willing to do so. According to one participant:

Some of them will tell you directly that they cannot help. Some will promise and make you have hope but deep down they will not do anything to the situation. They only come to you when they have something they want you to help them with.

Focus Group 4 also pointed out the Church as agency failed or refrained from linking and recommending its unemployed youth to various government and private establishments where they could obtain employment. “If you do not know anybody or have the right connection, it will be difficult for you to get a job, even when you are very qualified.” Some criticism from this Focus Group was also directed at the unemployed youth. According to this group, young people did not want to start small but from the outset wanted big jobs with big salaries, which complicated matters. Instead of starting small and working towards their bigger dream, they would rather remain unemployed (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).
The participants of Focus Group 5 reiterated the comments of the previous groups. According to one member of the group, the current rate of unemployment is due to the situation in the country: “Most youth who are qualified are not employed because getting a job is tougher than getting the qualifications.” Focus Group 5 also mentioned that the lack of connection and the lack of representatives in office who take the problem of youth unemployment serious is a big problem. It seemed that one could only become employed through connections, because the advertised jobs were already taken. Advertisements were merely placed for formality. In addition, this participant commented that the churches were not helping matters, because they were aware of the state of affairs, but were doing nothing to address it.

Most of the people in top positions are also in the church but I am still wondering why they don’t want to help. Another problem I see is that most youth are not willing to start small; they are bent on getting a white collar (job) and these we all know do not come handy(easy). On the other hand, some youths who are willing to start small do not have the financial backing to start up (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).

From the above discussion on the barriers to youth employment, it was obvious that some of the challenges are present in all the churches used in this study. Among the challenges the youths mentioned are the following: people who can help but who are not willing to help, failure of the church to link or recommend qualified youth to companies of some of the members of the church, reluctant attitude of the church towards the situation of unemployment among the youth, the youth’s lack of connection to prominent people who could recommend them to companies for jobs, mismanagement of the country’s funds by past and present leaders, employment of unqualified people through the back door because of the connections they have, and lack of discipline by some youths to start small. All these factors have contributed to the large number of unemployed youth in Edo State. These challenges are not, however, limited to one church alone, but cut across the churches in Edo State and the youths of Edo State.

5.4.6 Probing deeper into the potential of ecclesial involvement

Given the challenges the youth mentioned and highlighted, they were also asked to give suggestions with regard to the involvement of the church to enable the youth to tackles the challenges they mentioned. This section will focus on the various group views on how the church could become more involved in addressing the problem of youth unemployment.
The participants of Focus Group 1 focussed on the Church’s role in making information on employment and training courses readily available to its congregation members. The participants suggested that the Church could contribute to youth empowerment by creating a forum or platform on which the youth could interact with business in order to promote themselves and to become aware of what skills business is seeking. According to the participants in this focus group, this forum would also give managers, directors and stakeholders in companies the opportunity to look at the CVs of the youth and consider them for employment. If the companies could not accommodate the youth with regard to employment, the wish was that they would act as a referee to the youth in order to give them a better chance of employment. Another participant also added that members of the church could make information with regard to job advertisements in the companies in which they work available to the unemployed youth in their congregations. This would make it easier for the youth to apply and give qualified youth a chance to get the job (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13).

In Focus Group 2, the participants gave some suggestions through which ways the church could empower the unemployed youth. One of the participants listed motivation as one form of empowerment. The church could motivate the youth not to lose hope. Other participants who were more critical added that in cases where the youth are encouraged to start something up for themselves, no matter how small the business, it always requires start-up capital. According to one of the participants, the church fails to understand that point. The participants of Group 2 thus mentioned that the church should think of creating more avenues for employment, for example the church should create a fund through which people who want to start small-scale businesses could be assisted and funded. This would make it possible for the youth who have skills outside their formal qualifications to fend for themselves. Those who are not skilled but who are willing to undergo training could be helped by the church to receive the training. The church must thus act, according to these participants, in a liaising capacity to facilitate training and financial support from training institutions and companies for the unemployed youth (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

The participants of Focus Group 3 suggested that the church could get involved by providing training, by preparing the youth for interviews and by providing them with a network of connections. It seems the participants of Focus Group 3 were demotivated because they go for job interviews but are unsuccessful as they do not have the right connections. They felt
the church could help in that regard. A participant of Focus Group 3 added that the church could in fact also provide the youth with career counselling. This would entail getting to know the youth better and advising them to make more suitable career choices. Another participant in the group added that the church could especially help with specialized training by establishing a skills acquisition centre. According to the participant, the church does not currently have such a centre. Furthermore, the church could also aid the trainees at their skills centre to enter the job market after they have completed their training (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

The participants of Focus Group 4 reiterated many of the suggestions of the previous groups, such as providing a skills-acquisition centre and providing training opportunities. They also felt the church could provide the youth with letters of recommendation for job interviews. One of the participants mentioned that the church has indeed its own universities and other establishments, which should become accessible to all branches and members of the church congregation. That which was alluded to in this participant’s comment, was in fact supported in another’s response, which stated that discrimination also exists inside the church. Therefore, the participant highlighted that the church is not free of societal prejudice and discrimination. It is thus mentioned that if the church wants to successfully empower the youth they should curb discrimination among their own members. If this discrimination is not stopped, any form of skills acquisition will not be effective, because some persons will be denied the opportunity of learning their desired skills. This could happen because some applicants are not from a particular tribe or state, or are not friends with people in power. The participants of Focus Group 4 also mentioned that the church could help with start-up capital for small businessmen, which they call soft loans. This will be a way through which they could help the youth to become employed. Such loans would be paid back within a period of time in order to allow others to benefit from the soft loan scheme (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).

Focus Group 5 continued to emphasise the importance of the church in providing training and access to training centres as a way to empower the youth. On a more critical and analytical level, a member of the group came forward and asked the church to take its prophetic role in society more seriously. This participant felt that the church should step forward and act as patrons to the youth. The church should speak out against unfair practises in business and government, such as nepotism and corrupt appointments that rob the youth of a fair chance to
be employed. The participant felt that the church should become more involved in the processes of government and law making to ensure fair practice and just government in order to create equal opportunities (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).

It is clear from the interviews that among the participants of the five groups there were frustrations with unfair practices and lack of opportunities. They felt that the church could provide counselling and training to prepare the youth for the job market. They felt the church could act in a liaising capacity between the youth, state and business to raise awareness of the situation of the youth and to create opportunities for them. The issue of discrimination in society and in the church was raised and the need to eradicate any form of prejudice and unfair advantage was emphasized. Lastly, the youth asked the church to take up their prophetic role and speak out against unfair government and business practices

5.4.7 The church as mentor and patron

One of the biggest barriers to employment mentioned in the interviews by the five focus groups was their lack of connections when it came to finding and getting a job. Therefore, the issue of the church acting as a patron to the youth came to the fore in the interviews.

In general, the participants of Focus Group 1 were negative about the involvement of the church in this regard. They went so far as to say that the church failed them. As mentioned before, the youth perceived that having connections was vital in the process of getting a job. Since many of them do not have connections, they at the very least require someone or some institution to vouch for them and act as referee in their applications. Participants of Group 1 felt that it is with respect to the latter that the church could particularly be of service to the youth. Seeing that many businesses and businessmen have in one way or another contact with the church, they know what quality of person a member of that church is. They therefore felt that the church could take an active role in promoting their youth to companies for employment. It was further mentioned that the church should realize the important role they play in the unemployed youth’s plight in seeking employment, and they must therefore not be tardy in writing letters of recommendation. One participant complained that most of the times, before the church gives a letter of recommendation, they make you go through such a rigorous process that by the time they give you the letter, the offer has closed and you have to start afresh (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13).

In Focus Group 2, the participants’ responses were similar to the previous group. One of the participants felt that the church is well connected with people in top positions, either in
government or in private establishments, and that they could use these connections to create opportunities for the youth in their congregations. Members of the church who are committed and active in the church should be recommended to top and well-known stakeholders in the church to help them with employment. Continuing along this line of argumentation, one of the participants commented that the church might not always be able to create jobs for the youth, but the church should stand the young people in the church in good stead when they apply for advertised jobs. The church must thus act as patron and protector of the youth, speaking out for them, vouching for their character, and thus helping them to become employed (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

The participants of Focus Group 3 asked that the churches change their mind-set about youth empowerment and take a more active role in solving the problem of youth unemployment. The churches should actively speak out against youth unemployment and this might bring about a big change in the situation. One participant felt the churches must take their role as patron more seriously. They must actively speak out, vouch and protect the youth against unfair practices, such as godfatherism, nepotism and favouritism that are present in the process of making appointments. The church should, according to Group 3 and the other groups, be willing to vouch for the youth and maybe, in doing so, help them to become employed and in this way address the problem of unemployment (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

The issue of the rights of the youth to equal opportunity to employment came to the fore in the responses of Focus Group 4. It was clear that inequality in society and in connections led to a feeling of disempowerment and anger amongst this group. They felt that the church should ensure that the youth are given back their rights. They felt that the church should also ensure that some regulatory processes are established to ensure that appointment procedures are fair. The participants of Group 4 demanded a more strong-arm approach by the church and that the church acts as a protector of the youth. One of the participants added that if the church could not put a stop to the lack of equal opportunities and unfair practises, they should then step in as patron of the youth in their church. This will create opportunities for the youth to become employed (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).

In Focus Group 5, the participants suggested that all the church needs to be for the youth, is to be their patron and protector. One of the participants added that the church is well known and any recommendations from the church should be considered. However, this will only be
fully effective when the church has been able to establish strong ties with various companies, stakeholders and government parastatals. Another participant added that in the church and branches of the church there are prominent people who can give youth letters of recommendation that will ensure their employment. The church should form a department, which is actively concerned with finding employment for the unemployed youth. This department must do screenings and background checks on the youth, and then recommend suitable candidates for employment (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).

It is clear from the interviews that the youth is eager for the church to take its role as patron seriously. They ask that the church vouch for them in letters of recommendation, speak out against unfair practices and lack of opportunities, and lastly, that the church protect them and give them back their rights to equality and to equal opportunity of employment.

5.4.8 The youth as agencies

In the previous discussion, the responses were largely focussed on barriers to employment and the involvement of the church in addressing the issue of youth empowerment. However, the youth is actually also an agency or active role player in their own empowerment. Focus Group 1 responded to the youth’s involvement in their own empowerment by focussing on education. According to the group, it is important that the youth should empower themselves and become more knowledgeable, because that is something no one can do for them. If they have knowledge, then it will be easier for them to be empowered. They also suggested that the youth not only state their formal education achieved, but add their knowledge gained from the informal sector, as well as their life-skills, when they present themselves to potential employers. In this way, they make themselves more marketable. They added that self-development is needed for any of the youths seeking employment. There are graduates everywhere who complain about the jobless situation in the country, but their focus is on what is lacking in society. As an individual you must be able to come up with something you can do for yourself; if you have the skills to develop yourself, you will have the ability to adapt to different jobs and this will make you stand a better chance when it comes to employment. Those who do not have any formal schooling must focus on acquiring skills through self-development or life experience. In this way, they will be able to establish a record of skills they have acquired and from which they can make a living (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13).
Focus Group 2’s response was that the youth must not be complacent. They must not wait for the church or anyone to help them, but should rather look for ways to solve their own problems. By doing something, no matter how small it is, they can earn some money and even make some savings from it. The group members also suggested that the youth should acquire other skills outside their formal qualifications, because this will help them fend for themselves (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).

The participants of Focus Group 3 emphasized the fact that the youth wants to go big too fast and too soon, in other words, they want big salaries from the beginning without working long and hard for it. The participants thus suggested that the youth should not be lazy; instead of looking for someone to give them a job or help them, they should work out their own salvation. They also suggested that the youth should be willing to start small. They emphasised that the major problem with most youth who are jobless is that they want to earn big and drive big cars but they are not willing to start with little steps (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

Focus Group 3 mentioned that an important reason for the youth seeking high-paying jobs rather than just being employed is that many tend to be spendthrifts and lead expensive lifestyles. The youth do not save their money and they spend more than their income, and that is the reason why they seek high-paying jobs or stay jobless. The youth should learn how to save, no matter how small the amount; over time, their savings could be used to get something better for themselves. Group 3 also emphasized the importance of self-development, which gives young people skills to solve the problem of unemployment (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

The participants in Focus Group 4 agree with the previous groups on becoming knowledgeable and focusing on self-development, but they go further by saying that the youth must become self-reliant. They added that the youth should strive hard to solve their own problems. If they get help from others it is fine, but that should not be their objective. The youth should focus on solving their problems by themselves, without the help of anybody else. They should be creative and look for what they can do that requires little or no capital. Some youths have big dreams, and any talk of them starting small is a problem for them (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).
In Focus Group 5, the participants added to what the previous groups have said. They suggested that the youth should not be selective when it comes to jobs. If the youth can be disciplined and learn to work for everything they get, instead of waiting to collect from people or sitting and increasing the number of unemployed, this will be a positive step towards reducing the number of unemployed youth in Edo State. According to the group, the attitude among the youth is a problem, because they are not submissive or willing to learn; they feel themselves more knowledgeable than the ones teaching them. The latter is a serious barrier in self-development (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).

It is clear from the abovementioned responses that it is felt that the youth can play a large role in decreasing unemployment. It is felt that they are not helpless and should solve their own problems by becoming more knowledgeable, learning hands-on skills from life experience and by being hard working. They stressed that barriers to the youth empowering themselves are their lifestyles and expectations; they want to have big salaries too soon, because they need these salaries to support their expensive lifestyles. Thus, in order for the youth to become empowered and an agency of change, the youth must acquire a sense of self-reliance and a strong work ethic.

5.4.9 The teachings of the church and youth empowerment

The participants showed a great need for the church to act as patron and vouch for them in the job market. The real issue that should be asked at this point is whether the teachings of the church contribute to the empowerment of the youth in some way or another. The responses of the five groups were unanimous that the teachings of the church do not offer any form of empowerment of the youth in seeking employment.

The groups pointed out that the teachings of the church are primarily concerned with the sacred, and not so much with the secular or earthly needs of the members of the congregations. Some of the participants from the groups thus said that all the teachings of the church are geared towards living a holy life, winning souls for God, giving offerings and paying tithes (Focus group interview 1, 2015/12/13). The teachings of the church are geared toward the prosperity of the work of God and winning souls. A member of Focus Group 2 even made a comment of disillusionment that the only teachings of the church that might offer some form of empowerment are their motivational teachings, which in actual sense do not empower the youth in any way when the message has ended (Focus group interview 2, 2015/12/20).
The responses of Focus Group 3 supported the viewpoints of the previous groups. They added that the teachings of the church are concerned with that primal battle between good and evil. The teachings of the church are mainly directed towards deliverance from satanic manipulation and oppression, healing, sowing of seeds and salvation. The church only gives instructions as a form of empowerment, such as telling the youth not to be lazy and that they should not be selective when it comes to empowerment or taking a job offer. The church also encourages the youth to be willing to start small, and by doing so, God will bless them and increase their fortune in future. The problem with these teachings is that they are only motivational in nature and this has not led to the successful empowerment of the youth in the church (Focus group interview 3, 2016/01/10).

Group 4 reiterated this basic focus of the church, which is orientated towards the Holy Spirit at work and towards miracles. They commented that although the church has a series of programmes that it presents, none of those programmes aim at qualifying the youth for employment, or creating future opportunities of employment (Focus group interview 4, 2016/01/17).

The members of Group 5 responded in a critical way toward the motivational messages of the church. According to them, the teachings of this church are only orientated towards salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit. The teachings build up your faith to expect miracles in the areas of your life where you are in desperate need of a miracle, such as getting a job. However, in reality this does not solve the issue of unemployment among the youth; instead, it makes the youth lazy to search for jobs, because they are waiting for the miracle to come while they are in church doing God’s work (Focus group interview 5, 2016/01/24).

5.5 Interpretation of the data

The previous section dealt with the transcribing of the data collected from the focus group interviews. This section focuses on the interpretation of the collected and transcribed data. This section will give insight into how the researcher interpreted the data collected by focusing on the themes that arose from the focus group interviews.

5.5.1 Orientation of Pentecostal missions in Edo State

From the presentation of the data above it is clear that the churches selected for this study did not all have the same orientation even though they were all from the Pentecostal family. Although, one common goal between them was that of soul winning. That is bringing souls to
the kingdom of God. From the responses of the participants it became clear to the researcher that this common goal of soul winning is not really bringing souls to the kingdom of God but rather increasing the population of the church. This conclusion was drawn from the fact that these churches did not really care how the youth survive or what they do to make a living. Hence, most youth who engage in criminal activities were members of these churches.

The spiritual needs of youth in these churches were well attended to but the physical needs were lacking behind. Jesus, after preaching to the multitudes and healing those that were sick with diverse form of diseases, still recognised that the people had been with him for a long time and therefore needs to eat this is seen in Matthew 14:13-21 and Matthew 15:29-39. This physical care that Jesus gave to the people is lacking in the church presently. Even though so many of these churches were park full on a Sunday morning most of them were still involved in one act or the other that is wrong in the sight of God and in the sight of the law. As seen from the book of Mathew 14 and 15 the church should as part of its orientation include the physical needs of the youth in the church and see that youth welfare is taken account of.

5.5.2 Understanding of youth empowerment

On the question of empowerment, the participants showed their various understandings of what empowerment is about. In so far as they shared their various understandings, this resembles the definition of Paynevandy (2016:10) in 1.7.3 and other various definitions by scholars in this thesis. Some of the youth explained that empowerment would entail identifying talented youths and help them develop their talents in order for them to reach their full potential. This means that youths who are gifted in any field should be encouraged and given the necessary support to enable them become useful to the church and the society at large.

Youth empowerment is giving power to the youth to become who God created them to be. This is also in line with Paynevandys’ (2016:10) views of empowerment as giving power to those who are weak to overcome their weakness. Dickson supports this as giving people power to take responsibility for themselves (1994:249).

5.5.3 Churches and youth empowerment

It was obvious from the responses of the participants in all the focus group discussions that the churches were no involved in youth empowerment. Making the youth believe in
themselves and giving them a sense of hope are good but it is not enough when it comes to empowerment. Empowerment of youths is not taken seriously by the church and therefore lacks attention from the church. What you take seriously you will give attention to but this is not the case of the youth in these churches. From the data collected from all the churches, it is obvious that the churches lacked orientation as regarding youth empowerment. The church cannot assume everyone is working or careless to know the kind of jobs the youth in particular are doing to make end meets. This shows that the churches were either neglecting the youth intentionally because they did not have strategies in place to solve the situation of the youth or they were aware of the youth’s predicament but believed it was the government’s duty to empower the youth.

5.5.4 Challenges faced by youths

The challenges faced by youths as mentioned by the participants in all the focus group interviews were not different from what the researcher pointed out earlier in 1.2 and 2.2 of this study. These all point to the fact that unemployment is the key factor to the numerous challenges faced by youth. In addition, the participants gave another reason why unemployment was on the increase. They pointed out that most youths in the church were unemployed because the leaders in the church were not willing to help them with letters of recommendation. Despite the fact that they were committed members of the church. Most times the help they got were from people who did not even go to church. This is a strong challenge faced by many youths in the church. Some have lost potential opportunity of getting a good job all because no prominent person could recommend them for the position. In situations like this most youths give in either to offer their body to get the job or bribe their way through because of desperation.

Lack of information can be seen as another key challenge the youth faced. Job advertisements in most organizations were done secretly and leaders in the churches who happened to be holding top positions in these organizations would not inform the youths in the church who are unemployed. This challenge has increased the unemployment level in the church today. These challenges amidst others mentioned earlier in this study are what the youth in the churches and the state at large are going through. Most youths have succumbed to the easy way out like getting involved in crime and prostitution just to enable them to meet up with their daily responsibilities.
5.5.5 Barriers to youth employment

There are a lot of barriers as to why many youths are unemployed. As some of the participants observed, the churches did not have vacancies that could accommodate all the unemployed youths in the church. One of the barriers to youth unemployment is as a result of the strategies the government has put in place and has not followed through on the strategies to reduce unemployment. The churches too had no plans in place to reduce the rate of unemployment among the youth. According to one of the participants, given the natural resources in the country the issue of unemployment among the youth would have been easily dealt with but corrupt and greedy leaders will not let that happen. The church should be able to do something to reduce the rate of unemployment in the church and in the country at large giving their position in the society but their inability to do something has become a barrier to youth employment.

Another major barrier that the same participant mentioned was that most youths do not have godfathers. Godfathers are regarded as people with strong influence in the society either in the political or economic sector. They have the power to decide who occupies a particular office. When employment opportunities arise, the candidates of these godfathers are being considered first before any other person. This is despite the fact that most times their candidates are not as qualified as others who do not have godfathers. These godfathers are a threat to equity and fair play during employment offers in any sector of the economy. This barrier has increased the rate of unemployment among youth since employment opportunities are not fair and only those who have strong connections can secure a job.

Yet another barrier is caused by the youth themselves. This is as a result of most youth not willing to start small. Some youths are waiting to get white collar jobs instead of building up their skills to becoming entrepreneurs. The government is not doing anything yet to redeem the situation but youths in the situation are not doing anything themselves. In 2 Kings 7:3-8 the story is told of four lepers who were hungry as a result of the famine in the land of Israel as at that time. They said to each other if we go into the city we will die there because there is also no food if we stay here we will die. “Let us go into the camp of our enemy probably they will give us food before they kill us or lets us live.” This story should serve as lesson to the youth that waiting for the government to do something is not a good idea but rather should find something to do while they are waiting.
5.5.6 Probing deeper into the potential of ecclesial involvement

Information is a key factor for anyone who wants to be successful in life. As a matter of fact, you are only as successful as the information and skill(s) you possess. Sharing necessary information with the youth in the church will go a long way to help reduce the issue of unemployment. This the youth said the church had failed in giving out useful information. Most church leaders who have this information do not want to give it out in order to reduce the competition for their own candidates.

The church had failed to organize seminars among youth where directors and stakeholders in different companies can be present, to educate youth on what the company requirements were for the youth to get jobs in these companies. Rather, most churches were organizing seminars that do not lead to the physical empowerment of these youth.

Setting up skills acquisition centres was what the churches should have been looking at. Currently none of the selected churches had a skill acquisition centre where the youth could learn skills and develop themselves in the area of their choice. The selected Pentecostal churches had several branches across the State, but none had a skill acquisition centre.

Encouraging and motivating youths has been an area where the church was doing well. This contribution has given a lot of youth hope that someday things will change for the better. One critique of this aspect is that, in as much as the encouragement is good, it also needs to be backed by some form of financial assistance to allow youths realizing their dreams.

A common trademark in churches today is discrimination, tribalism and ethnic sentiment. These are issues the church should not be faced with seeing that believers all one body in Christ. The youths are most of the times at the receiving end of these issues found in the church. Youth empowerment has been lacking because most of the leaders want to help their own relatives rather than making the available opportunities open and fair to everyone.

5.5.7 The church as mentor and patron

This is what most youths were looking up to the church for. Most youth have had several opportunities that they lost because there was no reputable personality to vouch for them. In the society, there were people who could help you but you have to pay in return. For young women you might be asked to pay with your body and for the young men you might be asked to pay in cash or get into some form of diabolic or cult group. This is where the church needs
to stand firm for these youth, offer them this same help only this time is their dedication to God and the church that is required.

In Nigeria, godfatherism is the order of the day (Omonijo, Nnedum, Oludayo & Anyaegbunam 2015:36). This phenomenon is found in both the private and public sector. This is one crucial point the youth mentioned that has slowed down the rate of empowerment among the youth in the church. That is why standing in as mentor and patron for the youth becomes so necessary in order to secure employment provided by the State. This is not the same role as godfatherism. The difference is that where mentors and patrons help to bring up youth and teach them to follow the right path, they also ensure that only qualified youth are employed. In contrast, in the case of godfatherism the youth are misused to do the dirty work of others and in the bid to compensate them they recommend them for jobs even when they do not have the qualification. The issue of godfatherism will be discussed in details in the next chapter (6.3.1).

Most companies go through your CVs to see who your referees are or who gave you recommendation for the job. In cases where there are not prominent people or people with high reputation, you might end up losing your chances of getting the job. This is what makes the role of the church becoming very vital in assisting youths needing this kind of help from them without making them go through rigorous processes to get it.

In the society, there is inequality, injustice and unfair treatment when it comes to youth empowerment. The youth are requesting the church to step in and address these issues as it has resulted to many youth being unemployed. The need for the church to step in as mentors and patron for the youth cannot be over emphasised, as this will help many in securing employment.

5.5.8 The youth as agencies

From the analysis above it is obvious that the youth suffer most from the problem of unemployment. However, this begs the question how such youths are themselves dealing with the condition of unemployment they find themselves in. Some of the participants suggested that the youth must be instrumental in effecting the change they want to see in the society. This means that if you want honesty and fair play in the society as a young person you have to be honest and impartial in your daily dealings. The youth should also start to think more pointedly about what they could do for the country in order to get other youth out
of their unemployment situation. The youth should seek ways to develop themselves in
getting marketable skills that will project them for employment. They should learn to develop
their abilities gradually and improve on what they are currently involve in and depend more
on what they can do for themselves rather than depending on others for help. There are
certain kinds of self-development that do not require any form of capital, like reading books
or becoming an apprentice to people who are very skilled in a particular field just to gain
more knowledge that will help them become more useful to themselves.

Many great persons had a humble beginning. The youth must understand that it is not a crime
to start small or with a low income. Starting small will make them not to be idle and lazy;
instead, it will encourage them to be hardworking in order to get to their desired dream. From
the little savings they can make from manual labour and low-income jobs, they can start up
the desired businesses they have in mind even if this would be on a small scale. I understand
that the income from these manual enterprises would barely feed many youth who are
independent and who have others dependants relying on them. But the idea is to save from
one's income no matter how small it is. This would be a starting point for growth.

5.5.9 The teachings of the church and youth empowerment

The teachings of the church currently do not lead to the empowerment of youth as seen from
the responses of the youth in 5.4.9. Most youths agreed that in as much as the teachings of the
church help them spiritually they still need to be fed physically like Jesus did to the 5000
people whom he fed in Matthew 14:13-21 after feeding them spiritually. The teachings of the
church in general are not geared towards the empowerment of youth but rather to the
salvation of their souls. All the focus groups agreed to this fact, namely that the teachings of
the church did not assist in obtaining gainful employment.

5.6 Synthesising discussion

In the above discussion the focus was particularly on the youth’s perspectives on questions
relating to the missional orientation of the various churches. Interviews were held with
groups consisting of active church members. These interviews thus reflect their bottom-up
viewpoint of the churches’ involvement in the issue of youth unemployment and
empowerment. Upon critical examining of the evidence, it became clear that the youth rely
on the church to come up with plans to empower them.
In the discussion, the youth firstly defined what they understood under the term youth empowerment. It was very much associated with the idea of becoming self-reliant, financially and in a personal (spiritual) sense. It is important to note that these youths, having defined empowerment in their own terms, are yet to experience what they believe to be empowerment. They also feel that the help they need to become empowered rests largely on the contributions of the church and the state. They interpret their current situation to be due to negligence on the part of both church leaders and the government. They believe that the church or government should have a stable plan of empowering youths in the country. It is thus not a surprise that most youths who participated in this study were either jobless or doing menial jobs like working at building sites as unskilled labourers.

An important realization coming from the discussions with the different groups is that the youth generally experience the church to be uninvolved in their empowerment. They made the valid observation that if the church were empowering the youth, the number of unemployed youth in the church would have been reduced. Some of the participants revealed that they received assistance from the church in the past, but the type of assistance was not aimed at empowering them; it was ‘monetary gifts’ aimed at solving their immediate problem rather than the long-term goal of empowerment. The church should have encouraged such a person to start a small-scale business in order to meet future needs, rather than giving those gifts for immediate assistance.

During the discussion, the participants mentioned how the church could help in setting up small-scale businesses such as events planning, catering, a business in make-up, being a church administrator or a driver, or setting up other businesses that could at least meet future needs. Hence, the church should aim at empowering the youth and enlighten them on how to improve themselves, rather than just focussing on spiritual salvation.

Another suggestion that was also raised by the youths was that the church should liaise with training facilities and company owners in order to refer youths to them for training. They further went on saying that the owners of these businesses and training facilities, as well as owners of companies both in and outside Edo State, were members of the church. They therefore called on the church to liaise and form good relationships with these owners in the church in order to be able to address the issue of unemployment in Edo State.
The challenges of youth empowerment, as mentioned by the participants, are that the Pentecostal churches do not have a strategy in place to tackle the problem of unemployment in the church, and therefore they do not help to diminish the growing problem of unemployment. The church is reluctant to become involved in secular problems; they focus on winning souls and “praying for miracles”. The youth clearly ask the church to be more visible and present in their daily plight. The youth, in reality, need the church to take the situation of unemployment seriously, and the church needs to be willing to give letters of recommendation and to assist the youth in their attempts to seek employment.

In addition, the youth want Pentecostal churches to become their “godfather”/patron in the secular world. It is true that when the issue of godfather is mentioned the church is quick to say that “our Father God is in heaven”, and that the youth forget that God will not come down to do what we can do for ourselves. The youth’s plea in this case is not to replace God in their lives, but rather that the church plays the role as patron, protector and mentor to the youth in the secular world, thus acting as a “godfather” to young people in a positive sense. The youth believe that this could go a long a way in helping so many young people secure or gain employment, and in turn increase the number of youth coming to church as well.

The youth also mentioned that most youths contribute to this issue of unemployment. They emphasised that most youths want to start in a big way or with a big job and when this is not possible, they do not start at all. The youth are quick to forget that they are also part of the change they wish to see, and for this change to become visible, they should be ready to start from the scratch, no matter how small. This problem is not peculiar to Nigerian youth alone; it is a global trend among most youth who love to dream big. This can also be seen as a problem caused by the church because the church only focuses on teachings such as spiritual and material breakthrough, marital bliss, deliverance or miracles. While they concentrate on these aforementioned areas, the youth lack career orientation, work ethics, and the expertise to establish themselves in the secular world. The teaching of the church on miracle jobs also encourages many youths to become lazy; instead of going out to look for jobs or doing the little they have at hand, they are inside praying and waiting for a miracle job to be given to them on a silver plate.

However, looking at the discussion above it is clear that unemployment is a burning issue for the youth and this issue cannot be overemphasised. The challenges the youth face were mentioned and possible solutions were also discussed. It is then left in the hands of the
church leaders and the political leaders of the country to see that something is done to improve the situation.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter presented, interpreted and discussed the findings of the focus group interviews. These groups represented the youth from various churches. The opinions and experiences of the different groups were largely similar, although they differed in minor ways. The interviews revealed a desire amongst the youth that churches are more part of their everyday struggle. They felt the churches do not take the youth’s situation of disempowerment seriously and they do not concern them enough with matters such as letters of reference, unfair appointment practices and a general sense of hopelessness amongst the youth. The next chapter will focus on the viewpoints of the church leaders: How do they view the issues of youth empowerment and unemployment? To what extent do the church and its leaders address the issue of unemployment? What changes in focus and application should take place in church for the church to be God’s agent that is truly present for the youth, serving the youth in this world?
Chapter Six

Engaging with the findings of the research: the response of church leaders

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, it became clear from the interviews conducted amongst the youths that they perceive the churches to be uninvolved in their empowerment in everyday life and especially in their frustrations with unemployment. There was a special need for the churches to act as patrons for them in their endeavours to find a job, to vouch for them and speak out against injustices. This chapter will deal mainly with the interviews conducted with leaders of the particular churches used in this study. Unlike the previous chapter, the leaders’ responses are not linked to a specific church, because the leaders did not want their identity to be revealed in some way or another. The focus in this chapter will be, in particular, to ascertain how the leaders of the church understand the idea of youth empowerment, and how they view the churches’ involvement in it.

6.2 The orientation of the Pentecostal missions in Edo State

The missional orientation of the Pentecostal churches in Edo State is, according to the leaders, that of soul winning (Interview, 2016/07/10), prosperity and giving (Interview, 2016/07/17), the deliverance from affliction, satanic manipulation and satanic oppression (Interview, 2016/07/24). It is to win souls and establish millions of disciples around the world, to empower families and generational leaders (Interview, 2016/07/31), and lastly to raise men and women to come to the inheritance of God through the teaching of the Holy Spirit (Interview, 2016/08/07). The leaders believed that most of the branches of the Pentecostal church maintain the same orientation. Any variation to this basic missional orientation would be due to the quality of leadership in a particular church.

6.2.1 The Pentecostal church and youth empowerment

It is important to ascertain what the church leaders see as youth empowerment and what the challenges to that empowerment are before the issue of the churches’ involvement in youth empowerment can be addressed. It is clear that the churches’ focus is on the spiritual realm of
winning souls and fighting satanic manipulation. However, what do they view empowerment to be in the physical, earthly realm?

The leaders of the first church interviewed said that youth empowerment is to give the youth the rightful tools, to enable them to cater for their well-being and that of their families. It could also mean to place the youth in positions that make them more responsible to themselves and the society at large (Interview, 2016/07/10). Another leader from this church said that empowerment has a physical and spiritual dimension, especially if you look at it from within the church. Physical empowerment in particular would mean creating avenues for the youth to get jobs (Interview, 2016/07/10). Unfortunately, although the church has a youth ministry, the focus of this ministry is not empowerment of the youth in a physical or secular sense. The youth are called upon when their services are needed in the church, but how they survive and what they do to survive the church does not really know (Interview, 2016/07/10).

The leaders of the second church who participated argued that youth empowerment means helping the underprivileged youth to obtain the necessary skills needed for employment, or skills that will help them become economically independent (Interview, 2016/07/17). Another leader said youth empowerment is putting empowerment schemes or programmes in place that will in turn help with youth development, be it education empowerment programmes or economic empowerment programmes, which will help the youth obtain access to work or employment (Interview, 2016/07/17). The church believes that the youth should be given opportunities to rise in life and to be taken care of; the church has therefore put plans in place to achieve this. Up to now those plans have only focused on the youth inside the church. The plans of the church are thus to start supporting the youth through the missional orientation of the church (Interview, 2016/07/17).

Leaders from the third church saw empowerment as giving the youth opportunities. A leader said that youth empowerment could be facilitated through the establishment of a youth forum. This forum will give talented youth the opportunity to come together and display their talents. Through such a forum, the youth could develop their skills further, and those interested in training could explore what they are good at (Interview, 2016/07/24). One of the leaders stated that although the church has sometimes paid the tuition fees of some of the youths in the church, the church is still a long way off from empowering the youth. The problem of youth unemployment in the church is substantial, and therefore the church’s focus is on the
youth inside (not outside) the church. Now, however, the focus of the church is on the liberation of lives from satanic manipulation and bringing deliverance to all those who are oppressed (Interview, 2016/07/24).

It was clear from the leaders of the fourth church that this church has no real focus on youth empowerment. They however believed that youth empowerment means to give the youth the necessary assistance in getting support to make them functioning members in society (Interview, 2016/07/31). This could also mean that the church must help the youth financially, perhaps by starting up small businesses that will in turn make them independent (Interview, 2016/07/31). A leader in this church, however, lamented that as a leader he must admit that he himself does not know how most of the youths that attend his church survive. The youths do not speak out about their situations because they generally think that nobody cares. It is thus very necessary that the church place youth empowerment at the centre of its youth ministry so that they do not lose these youths to the world (Interview, 2016/07/31).

The leaders of the fifth church see youth empowerment as making the youth self-reliant and not dependent on the government, society or on the church. This means that they will be able to take care of themselves without the help of anyone; the process of getting to that point is what is referred to as youth empowerment (Interview, 2016/08/07). It was also added that youth empowerment is about providing means and opportunities for the youth to become better people in the society (Interview, 2016/08/07). In this church, they feel they contribute to the empowerment of the youth by taking care of the spiritual life of the youth through the preaching of the Word and daily prayers. The church does evangelise amongst the youth but has not taken this kind of empowerment to reach further than the youth in the church. They also feel they must first start with empowerment inside the church before they go outside the church (Interview, 2016/08/07).

All the leaders of the five churches view youth empowerment as the process through which the youth is guided to self-reliance and to independence from help by the government, the church and society. The leaders agree to a large extent that the empowerment of the youth in the aforementioned physical or secular sense is not a clear focus in their churches. They have schemes through which they give financial assistance but that could not be seen as real empowerment. However, most of the church leaders feel that the work they do in taking care of the spiritual life of the youth, which includes liberating them from satanic manipulation, go a far way towards the empowerment of the youth.
6.2.2  The challenges to youth empowerment

The churches’ leaders pointed out that their primary orientation is the winning of souls, which in itself they see as a step towards empowerment. With regard to the overwhelming need for empowerment in the physical realm, the leaders stated their priority is with the members of their congregations. The leaders noted that there are particular challenges to youth empowerment that come to the fore in their congregations.

The leaders of the first church interviewed pointed out that frustration and lack of capital is a big challenge to youth empowerment. They stated that the youth are becoming frustrated as a result of the current unemployment rate in the country. Getting a job in Edo State is not easy. Job opportunities are limited in the country and the few jobs available are given to those who are well connected. Sometimes, even before the job is advertised, the position is already filled. The advertisement was thus only a case of formality (Interview, 2016/07/10). Those youths who want to explore other avenues of employment, such as self-employment and to start up their own businesses, suffer from a lack of capital (Interview, 2016/07/10). Daily living expenses are also a challenge because one needs money to survive and getting this money does not come easily. Most youths must look for menial jobs to try to make ends meet. Given these challenges, one of the church leaders also criticized the youth for their selective attitude when it comes to job offers. They want certain kinds of jobs with a certain kind of pay and if they do not get it, they would rather remain jobless (Interview, 2016/07/10). This kind of attitude persisted despite the fact that so many of the youths are unemployed or do not have the type of employment that establishes pride and sense of achievement causing them to feel rejected. This sense of rejection often leads to depression, which the church sees as a further challenge to youth empowerment (Interview, 2016/07/10).

The leaders of the second church agreed that rejection and depression is a major challenge to youth empowerment. Poverty is a large problem in their church. Although there are wealthy families in the church, the largest number of church members is poverty stricken, and a great number of the youth who come from this section of the church are unemployed. These youths find it difficult to feed and clothe themselves, pay rent, and pay transport to where there might be opportunities of getting a job; most of them walk long distances to church. Some
cannot afford to pay rent anymore and they do not have the means to survive on their own; thus they are in one friend’s place today and another friend’s place tomorrow (Interview, 2016/07/17). Eventually, as the leaders of the first church also stated, rejection becomes another challenge they have to face, because people do not want to associate themselves with poor persons. Getting help from people thus becomes difficult or impossible (Interview, 2016/07/17). The leaders criticized the current employment practices. They said that although many of the youths are qualified they are not appointed, because they lack someone in a top position to recommend them. The church has not done enough to see how they can help or assist the youths in this regard. Perhaps church leaders should get to know more about their youth so that they can write testimonials about their young members that are more meaningful (Interview, 2016/07/17). Godfatherism is unfortunately a big problem with appointments. The leaders lamented that the issue of merit is not a priority for people who make appointments; thus, you find people who are not qualified working and those who are qualified roaming about in the streets (Interview, 2016/07/17).

The leaders of the third church pointed out that a very unfortunate result of the frustration, rejection and desperation experienced by the youth, is that they fall victim to get-rich-quick schemes. Due to the unemployment the youth experience, they put money into different schemes to make them rich, and by doing so, the little they have saved is also wasted. They want to work, but since the jobs are not forthcoming, they invest in these schemes in the hope that it is a way for them to get money. Unfortunately, many of these schemes are not “godly” or legal, thus many of the youths become involved in criminal and sinful activities in order to get money. The youths are lured into criminal activities due to their desperation to get money, but on the other hand, it is very difficult for them to get a legal job because access to information regarding available jobs is seriously restricted. People with access to information about employment do not publicly share it, but share it rather only with family members or people who are close to them. A church leader commented that there are two key factors in getting a job in Edo State: You must know organisations that want to employ someone, since most of the advertisements are done internally. Secondly, someone must recommend you for a job, or else no matter how well you do in the interview, you might end up not getting the job because your recommendation is not from a well-known person (Interview, 2016/07/24). The sense of rejection therefore becomes stronger amongst the youth because they stand outside this circle of trust. The temptation to give in to practices
that are more sinful subsequently becomes stronger because of their unemployed state (Interview, 2016/07/24).

A leader in the fourth church interviewed said that unemployment amongst the youth pose a big challenge to youth empowerment, but also to the church. The youth are driven away from the church due to a sense of disillusionment with the church. They feel frustrated, depressed and rejected and therefore they either leave the church for other churches or are lured into criminal activities that drive them away from the church (Interview, 2016/07/31). The youth, according to another leader, feel that the church and its members are indifferent to their plight and struggle for survival. A case in point is that of a girl who had to drop out of school because she could not afford the 100 dollars for her school fees and nobody in the church seemed willing to help her. According to the leader, this girl was a committed member of the church. He said some members of the church made empty promises but did not deliver on their promises until it was too late. For the girl, this was a painful experience of rejection in the church, and she thus left the church. Her realisation of the church’s indifference was strengthened by the fact that even after she left nobody cared enough to enquire after the reason for her leaving the church. The church leader added that the sad fact is that there are people in the church who spend more than 100 dollars when they go out to have fun with their friends and colleagues; yet, they could not help her. Thus, the lack of care in the church for the youth must be addressed (Interview, 2016/07/31).

The leader of the fifth church also stated that the youth experience rejection and depression due to their state of unemployment. He thought that it has almost reached a point of hopelessness. For him, there is nothing as challenging as a broken spirit, someone who sees no way out of a situation. The country’s situation has made challenges like depression, poverty, starvation and so many others inevitable for the youth; those who have jobs still face challenges, but it is the worst for those who do not have jobs (Interview, 2016/08/07). The leader blamed the government and said that there are many incompetent people in jobs, because they had someone in a position to vouch for them. On the other hand, there are qualified people who are not employed because they lack recommendations (Interview, 2016/08/07). Some youths are orphans with nobody to turn to and when they turn to the church, they still do not get the needed support. Another leader added that the church does give gifts or some form of financial assistance to the youth, but it does not empower them to get the jobs because it is with regard to recommendations that they need the help. In that area,
the church still has a lot of work to do (Interview, 2016/08/07). Another point of concern is youths who give in to quick means of getting rich.

The church faces many challenges in addressing youth empowerment. Unemployment amongst the youth is something that may be experienced in the physical or secular realm, but the results of it are both physical and spiritual. In a physical sense, the lack of capital seriously hinders youth in rising out of their state of disempowerment. The high cost of daily living and the struggle to make ends meet drive the youth to desperation and force them to fall for get-rich-quick schemes and criminal endeavours. On the other hand, the rejection they experience inside and outside the church leads to frustration, depression and disillusionment with the church. It is thus necessary for the church to place the issue of youth empowerment at the centre of its youth ministry.

6.2.3 The response of the church congregations to the challenges to youth empowerment

The church leaders of the five churches interviewed identified numerous challenges to youth empowerment. There are challenges that fall largely in the church’s sphere, which the church should address, such as rejection, depression, frustration and hopelessness. Even though the churches identified many of the challenges correctly, sadly, they all admitted that their churches/ congregations have not done much to address these challenges to youth empowerment.

The leader of the first church said they have not addressed the issue, but that a meeting with the elders should be set up for them to address the issue (Interview, 2016/07/10). The leader of the second church said that they have not addressed these issues amongst the youth; they have helped widows with food and small amounts of money, but they have not thought of extending it to the youth (Interview, 2016/07/17). A leader of the third church said that he cannot say with certainty whether the issue of youth empowerment was addressed in the church, but they have paid the tuition fees of some of the youth. The church, according to this leader, does not address the issue directly, but indirectly through prayers (Interview, 2016/07/24). A leader from the fourth church said that his church has handed out scholarships for some of the youth to study at church universities, but most of those scholarships were given to the youth outside Edo State, mostly from their headquarters or other branches of the church. As a leader who works with the youth, it was quite apparent to him that youth empowerment and unemployment are not focus areas of the church (Interview, 2016/07/31). The leader of the fifth church confirmed the opinion of the leader of the third church. He said
the church pray for the youth and hope for divine intervention and a miracle to solve the problem of youth unemployment, but the church has done little to address it directly themselves (Interview, 2016/08/07).

However, the leaders of the different churches did have ideas and ways in which the issue of youth empowerment and unemployment could successfully be addressed. The first church pointed to an idea which many of the youth also mentioned, namely the establishment of a skills acquisition centre where the youth who are interested can learn skills of their choice in order to become self-employed (Interview, 2016/07/10). It was further mentioned that the church could recommend the youth for jobs. There are many reputable members in this church who are affiliated to companies where the youth could possibly be employed, should they have a recommendation from the church. The leaders of the first church furthermore suggested the extension of existing welfare schemes to serve more than just the sick and orphaned, but also lend support to the youth to start a small business for themselves (Interview, 2016/07/10).

The idea of giving financial support to the youth in order for them to establish their own small businesses was reiterated by the leaders of the second church. They also added that some of the youth in the church have learnt a particular trade or skills but need money to buy the equipment to start their business. The church could thus give them assistance in buying the equipment and by so doing help to reduce unemployment (Interview, 2016/07/17). The leaders of the third church critically observed that the church needed to re-evaluate how they give their monetary gifts. The youth should become the focus of the church. Instead of giving gifts to people outside the church, the church should support the youth. There are many youths in this church who are unemployed, and nothing has been done to help them. The money that is invested in gifts should therefore rather be used to help the youth to get something started (Interview, 2016/07/24). The leaders of the third church also pondered on the establishment of a skills acquisition centre and the church giving recommendations to the youth in their congregations (Interview, 2016/07/24).

A leader in the fourth church emphasized that the church should focus more on the youth, relate to them and ascertain in which areas they need assistance. People could be hesitant to assist the youth because they believe they are not serious about life, but some youths need a little push to become the person they desire to be in life. This push could be in the form of financial help or a recommendation to some companies that could employ them (Interview,
Another leader said that the church should encourage those who are leaders in companies to employ youths from the church who are qualified. The church should assist this process by setting up a skills acquisition centre for the youth to learn and acquire skills they can work with (Interview, 2016/07/31).

A leader in the fifth church mentioned the issue of godfatherism. Because of the practice of godfatherism in society, many youths cannot find employment. The leader felt that the church should step up and vouch for the character and/or abilities of youths in their congregations who are disadvantaged because of the practice of godfatherism in society (Interview, 2016/08/07). The leader added that there is need for a skills acquisition centre, because although the government has set up similar centres, there are not enough due to the large numbers of unemployed people. He furthermore said that assisting unemployed youth financially to start up small-scale businesses will also help them to become employed (Interview, 2016/08/07).

6.3 The role of the Pentecostal missions in youth empowerment for national development

From the statements of the leaders of the different churches, it is clear that they are also weighed down by the large numbers of unemployed youth in the churches. They recognise that their churches have not addressed the issue of youth empowerment yet. Many of the leaders felt that the problem of unemployment is, in fact, the government’s problem and is to a great extent caused by current practices in Nigeria at large, practices such as godfatherism, which implies that one needs to be recommended by someone in a high position in order to get a job. Churches have a role to play in terms of national development and youth empowerment, and therefore the viewpoint of the different churches on the issue of godfatherism and the attitude of the youth in terms of youth empowerment will be discussed in the next section.

6.3.1 The issue of godfatherism

Godfatherism is a guiding principle in Nigerian politics and social life; it refers to the practice by which godfathers (men with power and questionable wealth) determine who gets nominated or appointed to positions of office or employment (Abdullahi & Tunde 2013:5). Abdullahi and Tunde (2013:6) went on to define godfathers as people who finance political campaigns and elections as an investment. They therefore need to get back their money they
spent as well as to make a profit. The godfathers also decide who gets a contract from the government or an appointment into public office, because they sponsored the government during election. This has made it difficult for the government to act or make certain decisions without the influence of the godfathers. According to Abdullahi and Tunde (2013:7), in the past the issue or idea of godfatherism was mainly in the political sphere. The political godfathers of then did not abuse their powers so much. However, since democracy godfatherism has eaten deep into all spheres of Nigerian society; without having a godfather, it becomes difficult for you to be given any job position, especially in the government’s parastatal companies. According to the work of Abdullahi and Tunde (2013:16), one of the effects of godfatherism on the state is politicized employment. This entails that the so-called godfathers decide whom the government will employ in particular positions of office. This employment happens irrespective of qualification and competence.

This practice of employing people is a serious issue within the church, because many of the members of the church are poor and without connections. People who are orphaned also have nobody who can recommend them, and this leaves them vulnerable in a society dictated by godfathers. The leaders of the first church interviewed duly stated that most of the youth do not have godfathers who can help them, and the church should be looking at ways to eliminate the practice of godfatherism. One leader said the church should learn to discourage corruption and should not be part of it. He added that, if there were no godfathers, everyone would have access to jobs. The practice of godfatherism places restrictions on the process of employment (Interview, 2016/07/10).

The other leader from the first church said the church cannot provide the employment that the youth in the church is seeking. The church can, however, through prayers and a gospel message that is not geared to prosperity and prophecy, but to the growth of a better person, be an instrument of real change. The church must encourage these men (the godfathers) to give their lives to Christ and make them aware of the harm their corrupt practices are doing. The church should not invite a corrupt chairperson of a company to act as chairperson of the church, thinking he is well placed and influential, and could benefit the church and its members, for instance the youth. That would only encourage such a corrupt individual to continue in his ways. The church’s ministry should be there to guide these corrupt individuals to give their lives to Christ. If they do not change, they will in any case not use or appoint the youth inside the church, but rather the youth outside the church who are tied to
them and who are willing to participate in their corrupt ways (Interview, 2016/07/10). The church should work on how to do away with godfatherism and corruption inside the church. This will give equal opportunities to all the youth when they apply for a job, because appointments will be based on qualification and not connections (Interview, 2016/07/10).

A leader of the second church who was interviewed commented that there are many well-known people in the church and that the church should recommend active and dedicated youth in the church to them. The church would therefore act as a type of patron for the youth. Another leader, however, came forward with an extremely critical and important observation concerning the churches’ ability to act as patrons for the youth. According to him the churches are sometimes also in the grip of godfathers. It is therefore important that the church does not fall into the system of godfatherism and support it, but rather eradicate it by not applauding these godfathers for the things they do. He added that most of these godfathers are known to make generous contributions to the church, and instead of the church speaking to them about the unemployment amongst the youths, they keep quiet because they do not want the gifts to stop coming (Interview, 2016/07/17).

In the third church, the leaders who were interviewed stated that it was important for the church to act as a positive role model to the youth, in contrast to the godfathers who influence them negatively. These leaders said that the church in general should take the place of godfathers in the lives of the youth. Most of the youth in the church do not have godfathers. If the church does not take up this role as patron to the youth, why does the church exist? It is the easiest way you could bring the youth to Christ (Interview, 2016/07/24). Another leader added to this by saying that if the youths have godfathers who deal with drugs, for example, their role model will be someone who is involved in drugs. They will subsequently want to follow that role model’s example, and also deal with drugs. Thus, if the churches stand up, play the fatherly role, and be a patron to the youth, they will guide the youth to follow in the footsteps of Christ (Interview, 2016/07/24).

A leader in the fourth church who was interviewed elaborated on the importance of the church to step up and act as a patron of the youth. According to him, the church should use its connections and knowledge to help the youth find a job (Interview, 2016/07/31). Another leader went so far as to say that the church cannot entrust so-called godfathers outside the church to help the youth. He said if the church does not become an influence, the stranglehold of corruption in the country will not end. The reason is that there are people out there who
might be willing to become patrons for the youth, but at the end of the day they will twist their minds into doing the wrong things or doing all the things which the church disapproves of. This in turn would lead to the church complaining about the moral regression amongst the youth, but in reality it would be the church that failed to step forward and accept the role of mentor and patron of the youth. Thus, if we want to win and retain young converts, the church should assume the role of mentor and patron in the lives of these youth (Interview, 2016/07/31).

One of the leaders of the fifth church acknowledged that the practice of godfatherism is a real problem in society and that the church must in the long term seek ways to help eradicate this practice. However, in the meantime they should think of ways to assist the youth in their current situation (Interview, 2016/08/07). Another leader commented that the church could give letters of recommendation to the youth, but he was doubtful whether that would make a difference and assist the youth in getting the job. He, however, feels that companies that are affiliated with the church might welcome such a letter of recommendation. Thus, it is worth it to assist the youth in this manner (Interview, 2016/08/07).

### 6.3.2 The development of an entrepreneurial spirit and work ethic

It is clear that unemployment is a national phenomenon, inside and outside the church. It also became apparent that getting a job in the formal sector, whether you are well qualified or not, is very difficult. Obstacles like godfatherism stand in the way to employment. Self-employment seems to be the solution for many of the youths. Unfortunately, even if many of the youth are qualified and educated, they lack the skills to start up their own businesses or to sustain themselves in the day-to-day living. The church leaders of the different churches all had meaningful ideas on how unemployment could be addressed from within the church.

One of the leaders of the first church mentioned with regard to unemployment that the church should not encourage laziness, as the scriptures say when Apostle Paul addressed the church, ‘He who will not work, let him not also eat.’ It is important for the youth to become self-employed, that whilst they are waiting for that big job to come their way, they should be busy doing something that will give them a small income to meet their daily expenses. It is important for the church to encourage the youth in this endeavour, and therefore it is very necessary that the church knows the youth in the church, what they are doing, how they take care of themselves and how they sustain themselves (Interview, 2016/07/10).
It is important that the church make the youth aware of the fact that education in itself does not secure you a job. There are well-educated youths in church who are unemployed, but who are willing to do anything to survive. Other youths are not educated. They also see the lack of education as a limiting factor in their survival. The attitude of the youth is in the end also a critical factor (Interview, 2016/07/10). Another leader suggested that the church should encourage the youth to work hard and teach them ways on how to get something done. He added that it is necessary for the youth to have greater exposure to the world of job market/other areas. In this way they would gain more information. He said if the youths are not willing to leave the place where they are, they will never know of the opportunities elsewhere. It is necessary for the youth to set their horizons broader and gain access to more information regarding work opportunities. If there are no jobs yet, they must find something else to do. A person might just become very successful in the job they are doing while they are waiting for the big job, and that may lead to them not needing a high-paying job anymore (Interview, 2016/07/10).

A leader from the second church said that the church should create avenues in which the youth could be employed (Interview, 2016/07/17). Another leader suggested that they should create room for skills acquisition; that will go a long way in reducing the rate of unemployment. The problem is often that youths who have managed to complete a degree or certificate do not necessarily have the money to afford training at a skills acquisition centre, for it is very expensive. They would rather sit and wait until they get a job (Interview, 2016/07/17). A skills acquisition centre established by the church will give these youths the opportunity to acquire a skill that will help them with an occupation. For instance, those interested in catering, tailoring, being a hair stylist, a car mechanic or being in the automobile trade, to mention only a few, could be trained in those skills. Once such a skills acquisition centre is created and they have successfully empowered the youth with the skills, the leader thought the rate of unemployment will be reduced among church members. This will mean young people are taught how to catch fish for themselves and not giving them the fish. The fact that they are doing a trade to survive does not mean their education and certificate is of no use, because the manner in which they work will be a testimony of their education and their certificate will thus be an added advantage (Interview, 2016/07/17).

The leader from the third church suggested that the church could create more opportunities for the youth by having regular workshops for the youth. Here they can gain knowledge on
how to start a small business on their own (Interview, 2016/07/24). Another leader suggested that they could employ people who have successfully established their own businesses to come and give training. Not every young person will be a government worker or work in a big private firm, but youths trained in doing business could become very successful as well. The training that the church could provide or facilitate would help the youth to think of other ways of employment, rather than just sitting around and wasting perfectly good talent (Interview, 2016/07/24).

The leader of the fourth church suggested that the church could assist the church’s youths in starting up their own businesses, no matter how small. Even if it is to start up a pure water business or the selling of airtime, nothing is too small to get started with (Interview, 2016/07/31). Another leader added that those who want to learn a specific skill should be helped by the church in acquiring the skill. Seeing the church does not have a skills centre as yet, the church could also decide to start up its own skills acquisition centre where the youth could be trained, rather than the youth attending a centre outside the church. The youth should be given the opportunity to learn the skill they want, and the church should assist them in doing so (Interview, 2016/07/31).

The leader of the fifth church also suggested the creation of a skills acquisition centre where the youths could learn something that will enhance their life. Most of these youths have certificates but cannot do anything because they do not have the practical skills that may be needed in some organisations. It is surprising how many youths found gainful employment after they came out of one of these training centres, owned either by government or by a private establishment. Some of them can start up their own small-scale business with which they can in time provide employment to others. This leader also alluded to the problem of secrecy in the sharing of information regarding employment. It is necessary that the church encourage members of the church and others to share information with regard to employment and opportunities without bias, because we are all equal before the sight of God (Interview, 2016/08/07).

It is clear from the above interviews that the leaders of the churches all feel that the church could provide a vital service in training and skills acquisition. The leaders all admitted that many youths are not skilled and not capable of adjusting to the workplace or of sustaining themselves with what they have learnt, even though they have an education and have received a certificate as proof of their education. It is also clear that some of the youths who
are qualified feel that it is below their status to acquire a manual skill or take on a menial job to survive. The church leaders responded in particular to this by saying that one of the greatest contributions the church can make to lower the unemployment rate is by encouraging the youth not to be lazy. They feel there is a need to encourage the youth to work hard, and to promote an ethic of honesty, hard work and equality.

6.3.3 Building a community of support

In earlier discussions in this chapter, the church leaders said that although their church’s orientation is not towards physical empowerment, they do empower the youth through looking after their spiritual life and praying for them on a daily basis. They also admitted that unemployment are for many youths a debilitating experience and that the youths become frustrated and feel rejected. The leaders admitted that there are among its members not always enough concern and support for young people in the situation in which they find themselves. Young people should be placed at the centre of the focus of the church. In the following section, the leaders all focus on the necessity of building a community of support in combating unemployment.

The leader of the first church emphasized the importance of establishing a community of care in which you see the one beside you as your brother, or like a son or a daughter. This will change the way you feel about that person; it will make that person relevant to you and it will help you to develop an interest in helping that person to survive. Another solution is that the church should see all its members as family members. Then, when an opportunity to help them comes your way, you will easily remember them. He added that most of the people in the church are not willing to render assistance because they do not want the youth to know the kind of life they live, what exactly they are involve in, or because some of the youth are not trustworthy. He emphasised that most youths, after getting support from members of the church, run away to another church or probably stop going to church because they got the help they wanted. These two factors are reasons why care and trust do not exist in the church. These factors the church needs to address before there will be brotherly love among the members of the church (Interview, 2016/07/10).

Another leader in the first church said that the church should actively involve the youth by using them and their skills for the church. Many of the youth have skills in, for example snapping, video coverage, artistic work, graphic designs, and so on. The churches do have a need of these things and then they pay people outside the church to do it. If the church could
take stock of the skills they have among the youth and call them to do it, as well as pay them for the services they rendered, this will help to solve the issues of unemployment in the church. Most of the time the church is quick to blame the youth for not making their area of expertise known to the church, but meanwhile it is not the youths’ fault, because it is the church that does not attempt to build a relationship with them. According to this leader, the church has to build a relationship of understanding in which church members in the same congregation do not see each other as strangers, but as brothers and sisters (Interview, 2016/07/10).

This same leader from the first church added that there were many more steps the church could take to build a community of trust, such as creating a forum where the youths can meet with the church leaders to discuss their situation. It is important that at these meetings the focus should not be on preaching a message of repentance, but to have a discussion with the youth; let the youth open up and talk about their challenges. The church leaders could then take note of these challenges and see how best they could help the youth to tackle these challenges. According to this leader, this should be common practice in a church, but unfortunately the youth in the church are often driven to speak out against the church due to frustration and disillusionment. This in turn leads to the youth being labelled as rebels and not “born again”. According to this leader, the church should go back to the Bible and study how the apostles did things and solved this problem of trust (Interview, 2016/07/10).

The leader of the second church argued that the church must be a community of support to the youth. He added that it is necessary for the church to encourage and motivate the youths and to be the driving force behind their attempts to achieve their dreams. It is thus also vital that the church is always ready to assist the youth when and wherever they can. Most times the youth need a little assistance to sort out some immediate problems; they might get this help from the wrong people if the church does not step in. According to this leader, the church should stand between the youth and society. The church should protect the youth when they are challenged or opposed by society, for instance in seeking employment. The church should ensure that society functions on just principles in order for the youth to get what they rightfully deserve (Interview, 2016/07/17).

The leaders of the third church stated that a community of support could be established if the church looked at ways to work with the government to bring more lasting solutions to the challenge of unemployment. This shows that the leaders still want to work with the
government but they have not made a decision as to when this meeting with the government will take place. It is only when church leaders have had a meeting with the government, that they would be able to finalize what to do to help the youth in this regard. From the talk the researcher had with the leaders it became clear that one of the reasons the church had not been able to do so much is because of changes in leadership, something which takes place at any point in time. Furthermore, most directives come from the headquarters, so the leaders of the local branches are limited in their capacity to make decisions. He added that if the church could work with the government in terms of finances and in getting more non-governmental organisations involved, it would be easier for the government to address issues that would benefit the youth. If the church could work hand in hand with the government, it would go a long way in reducing the number of unemployed people in the church. Other than working with the government, the church could use its money wisely to assist the youth in their endeavours (Interview, 2016/07/24).

The leaders of the fourth church, in particular, focussed on caring relationships that should be established in the church. Their concern was the growing trend of suicides amongst the youth. A leader from this church said that the members of the church should learn how to assist one another, even if it is only in some small way, for the thought that someone cares about you can go a long way in safeguarding somebody’s life (Interview, 2016/07/31). Another leader suggested that the church should always know when to step in and then do so immediately, not when it is too late. He added that giving the youth relevant information that will enhance their way of life should be the priority of the church, not just inviting them or asking them to come to church every service day and forgetting they have issues in their lives (Interview, 2016/07/31).

The leaders of the fifth church delivered strong criticism against the church and stated that the church should stop its acquisition game such as acquiring both landed and housing properties, or buying private jets, because spending money on these things will not help to address the issue of unemployment or make the lives of the unemployed youth better. According to the leaders, the church has turned into a business centre where anybody who wants to get rich starts a venture, instead of the church being a place where people’s lives can be impacted and changed positively (Interview, 2016/08/07). Another leader added that the church should create a space where the welfare of the youth could be addressed. This would
also mean determining how the church could render help to the youths without any form of bias (Interview, 2016/08/07).

6.3.4 Developing a work ethic amongst the youth

With regard to the issue of youth empowerment, one can look at society and its practices in which the youth need to function. One can also look at the role the church plays and how much support they give to the youth, but finally one must look at the youth themselves. With regard to the youth themselves, the church leaders also had ideas of their own.

Earlier in this chapter, the leaders pointed out that the frustration youth experience due to unemployment either leads to depression amongst the youth, or youth falling for get-rich-quick schemes. When the leaders were asked what they felt the youths could do to contribute to their own empowerment, it was clear that they felt that the youth should develop a better work ethic. Leaders from the first church interviewed felt that the youths need to live up to their employer’s expectations. One leader even went so far as to say that some of the youths are unemployable, because they cannot be trusted with the jobs that were given to them. It seems as if there exists a lacklustre attitude among the youths if the job is not desirable. The leaders felt that they should have a word with the youth on doing their jobs in earnest and doing it as the Bible says, in other words, that whatever their hands find to do, they must do it with much diligence. As the saying goes, anything worth doing is worth doing well. Be known for your good works so that you can be supported easily (Interview, 2016/07/10).

Humility was identified as a characteristic the youths need to embrace and make their own. They must not be arrogant and despise the days of small beginnings; they should be ready to work hard and be ready to start something, no matter how small, because every journey starts with a step (Interview, 2016/07/17). A leader of the second church felt that the youth need to stay true to their Christian principles, live in prayer and be honest in whatever they do or wherever they find themselves. Honesty could be a catalyst that takes you to greater heights, she added (Interview, 2016/07/17).

Believing in oneself was identified by the leaders of the third church as a critical attribute that needs to develop among the youth. It was suggested that the youths look at their inner selves and discover what they can do, apart from working for the government or the private sector. They must think of developing businesses of their own. They should have the mind-set of “I can do it, I can make it and that everything is possible through hard work and determination.”
This is the foundation of any successful business (Interview, 2016/07/24). Another leader said that they should believe that what they want is achievable through hard work. Starting small in life does not mean you will end small. This is what most youth fail to realize; they should not be afraid to start small and should not be selective when it comes to job offers (Interview, 2016/07/24).

The fourth church expressed strong criticism against the youth. Laziness, idleness and tokenism were listed as some of the problems among the youth, problems that are holding them back. It was felt that the youths could make themselves useful, and not just sit around and wait for the church or others to solve their problems for them. A leader from the fourth church strongly objected against the youths’ selective attitude when it comes to employment. He describes it as laziness. Some are waiting for big jobs where a car is attached to the job offer, instead of them starting small and then rising to the top (Interview, 2016/07/31). Another leader agreed that the youth should learn to start small, do any small job, either in the church or outside the church, and become diligent in doing it. This will have a positive influence on their lives and their attitude, and with time the other youths will learn from their example. It was said that in the absence of meaningful employment, the youth should keep themselves afloat doing menial jobs. In this way they would maintain an honest living instead of allowing their present situation to push them away from God’s path (Interview, 2016/07/31).

Living a life of appreciation and honesty should be a key goal of youth empowerment, according to the leaders of the fifth church. The youth should learn to be appreciative of any help or opportunity, no matter how small it is. The youth should not be lazy because that leads to poverty and frustration in life. The leaders of the fifth church stated that one’s attitude and approach to life is what makes the difference. Unemployment should not define who you are; even if one does not have a job, one must wake up in the morning, and go out and seek employment anew. In one way or another, a person might find something to do, no matter how small, instead of sitting around all day blaming the government for not providing jobs (Interview, 2016/08/07).

Creativity amongst the youth, according to a leader in the fifth church, will go a long way to help reduce unemployment. The youth should think of creative ways to employ themselves or find employment. The youth should not only apply for all the competitive jobs. They must be realistic and apply for a job where the chance of getting it is high. If the pay is small, one
must see it as a starting point, as something you do to gain experience and sustain yourself until you can apply for something better (Interview, 2016/08/07).

The leaders clearly view the youth as active partners in their own empowerment. They do not always have a positive view of the attitude and work ethic of the youth. One could in fact say that they view many of the youths to be lazy and far too selective when it comes to the type of job they are willing to do. The church leaders would like the youth to become less idle and work harder. They would want to see the youth be more self-reliant and creative in seeking employment and even in starting up their own businesses. The reliance of the youth on others, the government and the church must fall away when the youth want to be empowered. The youth would also finally want to experience an attitude of appreciation and humility, because those are necessary elements in becoming successful.

6.4 Interpretation of the data

The previous section dealt with the discussion of the data collected from the interview with the church leaders. This section now focuses on the interpretation of the collected data. This section will provide insight into how the researcher interpreted the data collected with specific reference to the themes that came up during the interviews with the church leaders.

The orientation of the Pentecostal missions in Edo State: According to the leaders who participated in this study, the orientation of Pentecostal churches varies but have one common goal among them, which is soul winning. They all are out to win soul for God, which is the primary assignment giving to them by their Lord and saviour Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16). From the transcript of the data gathered it is clear that these Pentecostal churches do not have youth orientation as their focus.

The Pentecostal churches and youth empowerment: The church leaders understood what youth empowerment is from their various definitions. Though their definitions of youth empowerment were in line with the definitions used in this study, the leaders pointed out that the churches did not have any orientation with respect to youth empowerment. Although, like one of the leaders observed, his church was putting plans in place to start assisting youth to become empowered. At the same time, however, those plans would first of all be focused on the youth inside the church before going into the community. Equipping the youth spiritually might be some form of empowerment but has not remedy the issues of unemployment surrounding the youth.
The challenges to youth empowerment: The data revealed that one major setback the churches had to deal with, is the issue of lack of capital to empower youths who are unemployed. This lack of capital has brought frustration to the youth as they were discouraged by the fact that neither the government nor the church had been able to help them with the current issue of unemployment. This and many other challenges the church leaders mentioned are evident from the challenges the youth mentioned in 5.4.4 and 5.4.5.

The response of the church congregations to the challenges to youth empowerment: It is sad to know that the churches have not done anything to solve the challenges the youth are facing. These challenges are ones that need urgent attention and solution but nothing has been done. From the responses of the church leaders from the five churches selected for this study, none of them had been doing anything to remedy the youth’s situation. In this respect, one can begin to imagine the number of frustrated youths in these churches who are unemployed.

The issue of godfatherism: The issue of godfatherism as mentioned earlier is a big problem facing the Nigeria system as it affects everything it touches including the empowerment of youth. This was an issue that clearly surfaced during the focus group interviews, although the issue was more critically raised by the church leaders as a major setback why most youth are unemployed. This issue gave rise to the youth seeking for mentors and patrons to assist them since they do not have godfathers who they can turn to for help. The church leaders emphasised that there are many well-known people in the church who can become mentors and patrons to the dedicated youths in the church in order to see that they are gainfully employed. This in turn would discourage youth who cling to godfathers and embrace patrons since godfathers will only use them for their selfish interest while patrons will more pointedly want to see them excel and become useful to the society.

In 6.3.2, 6.3.3 and 6.3.4 the discussion focused on how the youth could develop themselves for future employment. The leaders emphasised that the youth should think of how to own their own businesses rather than thinking of working for someone. There are skills necessary for self-employment that youth need to have even though they are graduate. These skills are most of the time not taught in schools and have to be sought elsewhere. This is where the establishment of skills acquisition centres becomes very important.

Another pertinent issue that came to the fore is the importance of work ethics. It is true that every work environment has its own requirement of what needs to be done. Youths need to
be able to learn the work ethic of the various fields they want to venture into. There are
certain characteristics that employers like and do not like; youths need to figure this out and
ensure they live up to the expectations of their employers in order to keep their jobs when
they finally get employed. Also, youths must ensure to keep a clean criminal record. This is
important because no matter how good your skills are, most organisations will not employ
anyone who has a criminal record.

Building a community of support where youths can be placed at the centre of focus in the
church will also go a long way to assist the youth. There are many young people in the
church who have skills (see 6.3.3) that can be utilised. Using the skills of these youths and
paying them for it is a way of reducing unemployment among the youth.

6.5 Synthesising discussion

In this chapter the missional orientation of various churches in terms of youth empowerment
and dealing with youth unemployment were discussed. The focus of this chapter was to
ascertain the viewpoint of the leaders with regard to these issues, especially seen from the
youth’s point of view that the churches were largely uninvolved in their struggle. The youth
in the previous chapter demanded a more active role from the church. They felt that the
churches only pray and hope for a miracle.

The interviews revealed that all the leaders agreed that the missional orientation of their
churches was that of soul winning (Interview, 2016/07/10), prosperity and giving (Interview,
2016/07/17), the deliverance from affliction, satanic manipulation and satanic oppression
(Interview, 2016/07/24). They agreed that any difference in approach would be due to a
difference in leadership. On the issue of youth empowerment, they viewed it as the youth
becoming more self-reliant, physically, economically and spiritually. They differed to what
extent youth empowerment is addressed by the church. The leaders from the first, second
and fourth churches felt that little is done in their churches for true youth empowerment and
that the issue of youth unemployment does not get the attention it deserves in the church.
However, the leaders of the third and fifth churches felt they do contribute to the
empowerment of the youth by taking care of the spiritual life of the youth through the
preaching the Word and daily prayers (Interview 2016/08/07).

With regard to the challenges to youth empowerment and employment, the challenges
identified by the youth and the church leaders are very similar. The church leaders also
commented that they observe the frustration among the youth and noted that the relationship between the youth and the church is not always of such a nature that the youth feel to share their frustration. The leaders noted that many youths experience the church to be indifferent to their struggle.

The church leaders observed that the youth experience a lack of capital that disempower them to start up their own businesses, even if they wanted to. With regard to this challenge, the leaders stated that the church could definitely reconsider how they spend their money. They felt it was within the reach of the church to give start-up money or small monetary gifts as part of their welfare projects to help some of the youths to survive or to become self-reliant. In fact, they felt it was necessary, because one of the problems the youths experience is falling prey to get-rich-quick schemes, which are in many cases not legal or godly.

The leaders noted that the frustration, the unemployment and a general sense of disempowerment among the youth make the youth feel rejected in society and in many cases lead to the onset of depression and, sadly, a growing number of suicides among the youth. This, added to the fact that the church loses many of its youths to the wrongdoers outside the church, is a serious point of concern. The leaders lamented the fact that their churches have not acted proactively and have not addressed the issue of youth empowerment in all earnest.

The church leaders had many ideas on how they could contribute. They felt that the churches could fill the void that exists in terms of skills acquisition centres where the youths could learn a trade that will make them more employable. According to the leaders, many of the youths are educated and they want high-paying jobs and a certain lifestyle, but they do not have the skills to sustain them in a more practical sense. The church could use its resources and connections to start such a skills acquisition centre. It is better than just giving monetary gifts, which keep the youths dependent and do not really empower them to be self-reliant. The church could also assist with start-up money for small businesses. The leaders also felt that the churches could encourage an entrepreneurial lifestyle among the youth by teaching them to be hardworking and frugal.

However, although the leaders acknowledge the dismal and deplorable situation of the youths, they are also critical of the work ethic of the youth. They describe the youth as being lazy, selective in their choice of employment and not wanting to work hard to create a future for themselves. They feel the youth are too dependent on the state and the church to solve
their problems for them, and are not self-reliant enough. The leaders of the churches also felt that the youth must live out their Christian principles. They must be hardworking and diligent in whatever they do, no matter how small.

Having said that, from the interviews with the leaders of the different churches it was clear that they are aware of specific structural problems that keep the youths disempowered. They specifically referred to the practice of godfatherism in society; youths who do not have somebody in a prominent position to recommend them have virtually no chance of getting a well-paying job. Secrecy with regard to available positions was also mentioned as a problem. The leaders felt that the churches could and should do something to counter these problems. The church community should work towards spreading and sharing information with regard to employment. The churches should furthermore speak out against godfatherism and hold the government accountable for issues pertaining to youth empowerment and employment. The leaders pointed out that the practice of godfatherism is a real problem to the church, because they lose many of their unemployed youths to these men of power outside the church. These youths fall victim to their corrupt ways and are being led astray from God’s path.

On what the churches could practically do to counter the practice of godfatherism, the comments of the leaders were very revealing. The leaders said that the church should through their preaching lead people to a radical change in their way of living. They should get people to walk in God’s path and act according to His instruction. If this is done, the practice of godfatherism would in reality be countered. They mentioned that these godfathers act as role models to the youth, and because their influences are negative, the youths’ lives follow a negative path. The churches should place themselves as counterpoint to the godfathers and in a positive manner act as mentors and patrons to the youth. They should step up and vouch for the good qualities of individual youths in terms of getting employment, but also step up and get the government to address the issue of godfatherism. Sadly, the leaders admitted that the churches have not so far taken that role seriously.

From the comments of the leaders, one could deduce that the churches’ lack of focus on issues such as godfatherism and youth unemployment reflect certain shortcomings within the church communities. One of the leaders actually said that the church should not also fall into the system of godfatherism and support it, but they should go against it and not accept the monetary gifts from these godfathers and applaud them in society (Interview, 2016/07/17).
The leader’s expressed concern reflects an element of corruption in the church. Because of these seeds of corruption and these ties of corruption that bind the churches, the church as a whole cannot truly and efficiently resist the influence that the practice of godfatherism has on youth empowerment and youth unemployment. Godfatherism seems to be a dividing practice that creates and gives opportunities to some while excluding others. The fact that the leaders of the different churches commented that support should be given to the youth without any bias (Interview, 2016/08/07), testifies to the fact that the church communities also experience internal divisions. Because the youth experience these hypocrisies in the church, they lose faith in the credibility of the church and turn away from the church.

The leaders of the different churches also mentioned that there is a lack of communication between the youths and the church. One leader suggested that the church establishes a forum, not to preach, but to ascertain what the challenges are that the youths face and to establish how the churches could assist them in this. Currently the churches are facing the real threat that they will lose the youth, because the youths do not trust them and experience them as indifferent. The churches cannot afford that this perception among the youth continues.

The leaders declared it was imperative that the church should focus on the creation of a community of care. Fellow congregational members should be seen as brothers and sisters, or sons and daughters. The physical and emotional wellbeing of the members of the congregation should matter. If there is real concern for each other, information about opportunities and employment will be shared in the church, according to the leaders. It is, however, the responsibility of church leaders, the youth and other church members to create such a community of care.

6.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, it could be said that the leaders of the churches all agree that the churches have a vital role to play in youth empowerment in order to meet the challenges of national development. The biggest challenge is to address the issue of godfatherism, to counter it and to replace it by the church acting as mentor and patron to the youth, guiding them to a life in Christ. The churches furthermore view themselves as important role players in addressing the lack of skills among the youth. The churches would address this shortcoming by establishing skills acquisition centres for the youth. The church could thus use their connections and information to the benefit of the youth. Lastly, the church must focus on becoming a community of support. This would mean that they must eradicate any bias in the church and
start caring for one another like family. The issue of youth unemployment must thus become relevant and a point of concern to all in the church.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This study particularly concerned itself with the problem of endemic youth unemployment in present-day Nigerian society and the empowering role of Pentecostal churches in helping to address the problem. With this focus in mind, the study more specifically confined itself to Edo State in Nigeria as its context. The findings challenge the Pentecostal churches to play its missional role more fully by promoting justice and equity in its concern with the plight of the youth in Edo State. This concluding chapter synthesises the main argument and on this basis offers some important recommendations in view of creating a path towards a better future for the youth in Edo State and Nigeria at large.

7.2 Meeting the problem statement, research aim and methodological approach

Unemployment is a major problem among young school graduates in Edo State. Whilst the large majority of employees in Edo State are civil servants, there are few other job opportunities. At the same time, the federal and state allocation of resources is not enough to help the people in Edo State to survive. As a result, young graduates from tertiary institutions who are not able to find employment succumb to different temptations in order to survive the hardship in Edo State.

In the light of the on-going proliferation of Pentecostal churches in Edo State, this study exerted itself to consider more specifically the role Pentecostal churches could play in helping to address the aforementioned crisis of youth unemployment in Edo State. As such, the aim of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the missional orientation of Pentecostal churches in Edo State and its impact on the mode of engagement of these churches with the youth, both inside and outside the church. In order to achieve this aim, the researcher adopted the qualitative, participatory and observation methods as the best approach to obtain the insights of the church youth and leaders of the selected Pentecostal churches.
Chapter 1 introduced the study and the backdrop against which the study was conducted. It also focused on the definition of terms which the study took a firm root. Chapter 2 explored the challenges of youth empowerment, theories of empowerment and various policy documents regarding empowerment in Nigeria. Theological and developmental perspectives on youth and youth empowerment were considered in this chapter, which were examined using theological insights. Chapter 3 focused on the missional orientation of Pentecostal churches, the missional ecclesiology of Pentecostal churches and the impact of Pentecostal churches not only on the youth but also on the society. The research methodology that this study adopted was elaborated upon in Chapter 4. In Chapters 5 and 6, detailed discussions were offered on the empirical findings and interpretation of the research. Chapter 5 focused more specifically on the responses and the interpretation of the church youth, while Chapter 6 on the responses and interpretation of the church leaders.

7.3 **Key findings and perspectives emerging from the study**

This study was conducted among youths and church leaders in a few populous Pentecostal churches in Edo State. The study adopted the qualitative research methodology for the collection of data. The findings of this study provide evidence for advancing a thesis that the selected Pentecostal churches were mostly not involved in the promotion of youth empowerment. As such, it provided evidence that these churches lack to a large extent any missional orientation with regard to the topical focus of youth empowerment and the related problems of unemployed and underemployed youth in and outside the church. The study in the process also gave evidence of the lack of practical commitment on the part of the churches to support the youth in their predicament.

7.3.1 **Involvement of Pentecostal churches in youth empowerment**

In Chapter 1 (1.3), an argument was presented that, given the sheer rate of unemployment among Nigerian youth, Pentecostal churches are not sufficiently involved in youth empowerment. As such, it became clear from the discussion in this study that the missional orientation of the Pentecostal churches does not include youth empowerment. Policy documents concerning youth empowerment were taken into account by the researcher. However, none emanated from any of the Pentecostal churches selected for this study because at the time of this research the researcher could not find any document on youth policy written by the churches. Furthermore, based on the empirical results presented in Chapters 5 and 6, the church is seen as a place of worship and the place where more souls are
brought to the kingdom of God. However, empirical results show that the Pentecostal churches lack programmes in the area of youth empowerment.

The question regarding the orientation of Pentecostal churches in Edo state was answered in this study. It could be detected from the discussions in the aforementioned two chapters that the orientation of the selected Pentecostal churches varied but not in so many different ways. The orientation of these Pentecostal churches did not accommodate the full meaning of missional orientation as discussed in Chapter 3. It is important to state here that Pentecostal churches who wish to be God’s people here on earth should embrace their missional orientation from the Triune God. This means that they should understand mission as the Triune God being the source and the sender and not any other source.

According to the young people who participated in the study (see Section 5.4.3), the selected churches largely lacked any orientation with regard to the challenges faced by the youth. To them, this was also the reason for the high rate of unemployment among the youth in the church. The selected churches tended to focus on the salvation of souls of human beings, as is clearly evident from the discussions in the study. Whilst the spiritual life of young people was well taken care of, the physical and the material part was left aside, which meant that the necessary provision needed to enable them to survive was lacking.

From the overall discussion, it appeared that the unemployment rate among the youth in the various churches was very high, largely as a result of the fact that the issue of unemployment was not being addressed in the policies of the churches. This aspect especially emerged from the discussions in Sections 5.4.1 and 6.2.1. However, from the discussion in Section 6.2.2 it became clear that whilst the selected churches did not take the issue of youth empowerment seriously, some leaders nevertheless suggested that they hoped the church, generally speaking, would begin to do so. Their responses hinted at the fact that the issue of youth empowerment was becoming a pressing need since unemployed youth who were members of the churches had also turned to fraudulent activities in order to survive.

### 7.3.2 Challenges of youth empowerment

In Chapter 1 the researcher presented the hypothesis that Pentecostal churches were not exerting themselves successfully in the area of youth empowerment amidst the present socio-political and economic crisis in Edo State and the concomitant engagement of young people in criminal activities. This proved to be true during the data collection of this study as evident
from the way in which young people expressed their feelings of being neglected by the church when it came to their empowerment needs.

The discussion in this study attempted to highlight the many challenges the youth in Edo State face. Both the youth and the church leaders interviewed alluded to the challenges they faced as a result of unemployment. These challenges included issues related to poverty, drug abuse and addiction, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and Aids, cultism, examination malpractices, financial constraints in pursuit of education, illiteracy and lack of commitment to learning (e.g. examination misconduct). In addition to these challenges, the youth faced the challenge of the getting-rich-quickly syndrome, which surfaced strongly through various malpractices. These malpractices ranged from armed robbery, kidnapping, and becoming thugs and agents of corrupt politicians. Yet, complicating matters even more, young people interviewed also alluded to the difficulty of obtaining employment as a result of godfatherism in the country. This they lamented by blaming the church for not standing in as their own godfathers in order for them to stand a better chance in the labour market, as well as in relation to other young people who have godfathers. In Sections 5.4.4 and 6.2.2 other challenges the youth faced were mentioned. These included experiences of frustration, disappointment, not having access to the right sources for help, rejection, mental and physical suffering and the temptation to succumb to illegal means of survival.

7.3.3 Addressing the challenges of youth empowerment

In the light of the aforementioned challenges the youth faced, the researcher was interested to discern what remedial activities could be undertaken to reduce the number of unemployed youth, and therefore asked the participants to speak freely of ways in which they thought the present predicaments could be addressed. The youth and the leaders of the selected Pentecostal churches replied that in as much as the churches have not been involved in youth empowerment, it was not too late for them to get involved. The gist of their argument was that the churches could begin by focusing more on the physical well-being of young people, rather than just on their spiritual lives.

In this study, the opinions of the church youth and the church leaders on how the Pentecostal churches could successfully empower the youth for national development were presented. Among the many concerns raised by both the youth and the church leaders was that of godfatherism, which has crippled society and has reduced many young people to the status of
being unemployed, given the unfairness of employment processes. As a result, these youths and church leaders called upon the churches to step in as mentors for the youth in the church.

The same youths and church leaders added that, apart from addressing unfairness during job appointments, the churches could address the issue of unemployment by developing a better understanding of the challenges the youth faced. By getting involved in the lives of the youth, by knowing what they do and how they survive, churches would contribute a great deal towards starting to solve the problem of unemployment and contributing to empowerment in a more meaningful way. This implied that through such involvement, the church could easily identify and help youths who do not have the means to survive. Addressing the challenges of youth empowerment was not an easy task, according to the youths and the church leaders. This therefore required a greater collaborative spirit among the Pentecostal churches, standing together in their efforts to address the plight of the youth.

The youths interviewed were furthermore of the opinion that the Pentecostal churches did not provide them with the necessary instructions they needed for physical empowerment. They maintained that the teachings of the church focused more on spiritual empowerment. The Pentecostal churches therefore need to become aware of this factor in order to contribute meaningfully towards resolving the issue of youth unemployment. This is where revisiting their missional orientation should come in handy. If their missional orientation is revisited, the Pentecostal churches will be able to focus on other aspects as well and not just the spiritual empowerment of the youth alone.

During the early ministry of Jesus Christ, he identified the importance of addressing physical needs when he healed many sick people and fed 5000 people with five loaves of bread and two fishes, as recalled in Matthew 14:13-21. Here Jesus himself taught us how to do mission by setting a good example for us to follow. He addressed their needs even when the disciples suggested that the people should be sent away to buy their own food. This is how much importance the churches need to attach to youths who are unemployed in the church.

The perspectives presented above include discussing the involvement of the church in helping youths face their challenges and how these challenges have been addressed by the church in light of the present socio-political and economic crisis in Nigeria. The present situation of the youth in Edo State and Nigeria at large is one that needs urgent attention. The youth are the
future of any society, a reality from which present-day Nigeria can also not escape, as stated earlier in this study.

In as much as this study focuses on the role the Pentecostal churches can play to reduce the current predicament the youth are facing, it is a task that cannot be confined to the Pentecostal churches. All hands need to be on deck to see that this predicament receives the necessary attention. In order to achieve meaningful growth in Nigeria, and Edo State in particular, it is essential that all forms of government – at the national, state and local government level – address the issues surrounding the youth. It is within such a framework that the churches should be considered as an important collaborative agent.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings summarized above, this chapter now concludes with the following recommendations on how the Pentecostal churches in Edo State could, as a direct outcome of their missional orientation, engage more effectively with the related challenges of youth empowerment and employment. These recommendations are therefore linked to the topical focus of this study.

7.4.1 Recommendations to Pentecostal churches in Edo State

- Pentecostal churches should revisit their missional orientation in such a way that they rediscover and accommodate the missiological thrust that lies in the heart of the Christian faith. They should be able to embrace an ecclesiology that is missional and one anchored on the missio Dei – that the church is there as an instrument serving the missionary agenda of God in transforming human lives holistically. This way, Pentecostal churches can then be seen as moving in the right direction in terms of the reproduction of disciples who have personal experience with God but also raise disciples under an atmosphere where they are given opportunities to participate fully in the socio-economic and political agenda in every given context where they serve.

- The missional orientation of Pentecostal churches should be the catalyst for revival and winning souls to the kingdom of God. However, they should learn to embrace a missional ecclesiology that seeks to go beyond soul winning. Churches should serve as hands and feet of Christ in responding to the social and physical needs of the people they serve. By so doing, they will be fulfilling the work of the Triune God.
Churches must be seen as agents of transformation in the very communities they are located and do ministry.

- Relevant information entrepreneurship (creating business from scratch) and employment opportunities should be considered as a vital key to solving the problem of unemployment among the youth in Edo State. This implies that the churches concerned should organise seminars and conferences to distribute such information to the youth. Churches can invite experienced business leaders, from within and outside the church, both from the private and public sectors, to empower the youths on business matters. Churches must, therefore, serve as centres where entrepreneurship skills are passed on to the youths as a way of empowering them to face unemployment challenges in their midst.

- Churches should also open their spaces and invite youths to gatherings where the necessary skill of writing down a business plan and strategy is passed on. The youth should be taught to take ownership in driving an agenda that seeks to liberate them from their vicious circle of poverty. Motivating the youth and helping them to reach their full potential should be considered another way of combatting unemployment among their ranks.

- Importantly, however, such motivational support should be complemented by at least some financial support for young people so that they can acquire the necessary start-up capital for entrepreneurial activities. Revenue collected by churches should be utilised as a seed to support the missional agenda of providing start-up capital for the youth inside and outside the church. Building on this concept, churches can also create a trust fund in every individual church to assist in this regard. Financial skills can be taught to aspiring youth entrepreneurs, and this should include financial management and accountability.

- Establishing skills acquisition centres by the churches will go a long way to assist youth, both inside and outside the church. The Pentecostal churches should acquire the necessary funds to establish such centres. Even if this is not done in all branches, two or three branches of the church could collaborate and set up a centre that will serve the members of the church. Branches with bigger populations can set up a centre to serve the members of that particular branch.
In view of implementing the aforementioned skills acquisition centres, the church should organise the youth in such a way that everyone will be given equal opportunities to attend or benefit from the programmes on offer. By doing so, young people’s experiences of rejection from government skills acquisition centres when applying for admissions will be eliminated.

Employing qualified people to handle the training in the skills acquisition centres will help the youth to engage in more effective learning practices. At the same time, it will also be an avenue for creating employment, as those who will be employed will be remunerated, regardless whether they are church members or non-church members.

In providing platforms for employment opportunities, the church should avoid discrimination. The church should not be a place where discrimination exists. Most youths are victims of discrimination in the secular world and in the church. If the churches can deal with the issue of discrimination, especially when trying to give assistance to the youth, this will raise their confidence and trust in the church.

Acting as patrons and mentors to the youth will help to reduce the rate of unemployed youth in the church. This will be a suitable replacement for what in the secular world is called godfathers on whom the youth depend for appointments. Standing up for young people and recommending them to others will go a far way to reduce the rate of corrupt appointments that rob the youth of their rightful opportunities.

The churches usually employ young people for their skills but do not pay them for their services. In as much as one could agree to such practice, the churches should at the same time not forget that they as a rule comply with the practice of remunerating a youthful or skilled person who is not a member of the church to render a particular service. Therefore, this study proposes that the churches should learn to encourage and support young people in the church with such skills. In this respect the best way of support remains taking care that the youths in the church with suitable skills are gainfully employed so that they will be able to fend for themselves.

Finally, and very importantly, the churches need to change their teachings from the popular sermon of “The Lord will bless you,” or “Give and sow seed” to teachings that will affect the lives of the youth. Jesus’ parable on the sower made mention of the
seed that could not grow well because of the challenges of this world and other forms of temptations. The churches should recognise that the challenges that have been identified in this study are the hardships young people endure in order to survive. If these challenges would be addressed by the church, The Lord’s word will grow in them (youth) and yield fruit, but if not, it will be choked as Jesus rightly said in Matthew 13:7 and 22.

7.4.2 Recommendations to the church youth in Edo State

- The youth in the church should focus on gaining new knowledge around youth employment, entrepreneurship and how best to run a business, besides what they already know, while waiting to be employed. By so doing, the new knowledge they acquire in the process of waiting might be the skills they need for employment. This will make them venture into new areas other than the qualifications they have.

- The church youth should not limit themselves to a particular job or career so that they do not get frustrated when that job is not forthcoming. Instead, they need to be open-minded with regard to any given opportunity.

- Dedication to service is one key factor the church youth need to incorporate into their lives. No matter how little the job pays, the youth should be dedicated to their duty. This will help them when an employment opportunity with better payment comes their way.

- Nigerian youth in general are not lazy, though, there are some youths in the church who prefer quicker means of making money, thereby engaging in quick-fix schemes that produce quick money, but which may not be legal. The church youth should become creative instead of merely waiting for employment opportunities. Instead of making people believe they are lazy, they should create opportunities for themselves that will prove such people wrong.

- The church youth should learn to cut down their expenditures. High expenditures is the reason why most youths cannot save, and it is also the reason why most youths will turn down an offer of a poorly paid job. It is good to have big dreams and have a flamboyant lifestyle but when youths do not have the means, such youths may start engaging in criminal activities in order to make money.
• Job preference has been an important reason why most youths in the church remain unemployed. As already stated, it is not a bad idea to dream big but being selective when you do not have any employment is not a good attitude for youth to have who really aspire to get out of poverty. The church youth should appreciate and accept whatever opportunities come their way as these opportunities may later lead to better ones.

• Whatever they do or in whichever situation they find themselves, the church youth should always be trustworthy. No one will employ a person who is not trustworthy. This is the reason why some leaders cannot employ young people in their firms as they do not have confidence in them.

• The church youth need to learn how to think out of the box or without a box when coming to their support for unemployed youths. A critical question that needs to be asked is: What can they do for themselves in a legal way which will enable them to survive? If the youth start thinking this way, then we will have so many young entrepreneurs that they will change the global economy.

• The church youth should understand that although the challenges they face are to a large extent caused by external factors, they cannot take out their frustrations on other people or use their frustrations as an excuse to become involved in crime. Instead, it will be far more constructive to channel their frustrations into something productive that will give them better opportunities.

• The attitude of the youth becomes crucial in order to meet their challenges. The churches have the indispensable task to encourage and motivate the youth to develop and uphold positive attitudes amidst the hardships of joblessness they experience.

7.5 Postscript: raising global leaders through youth empowerment programmes

This study finally is a call to all who desire to see a Nigeria where people can live meaningful lives, for all who want a Nigeria free of crime and see the economy growing. The youth need to be given special attention with regard to their employment and empowerment. As the say goes, an idle mind is the devil’s workshop. To avoid being the devil’s workshop the youth need to become gainfully employed or be empowered to employ themselves. The society at large needs to understand that you cannot put out fire with fire but rather with water. For the
present situation in Nigeria to change, the situation of the youth needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way, since it is they who are perhaps more than others involved in the types of crime that have reduced the great Nigerian nation to the state it presently finds itself in.

If all stakeholders – government, NGOs and churches – will come together by putting aside their political, religious, denominational and tribal differences, their personal ambitions and hatred they have for one another, and work for the common goal of reducing the level of unemployment among the youth, the country will become a safer place for both local and international investors. To put out the fire of unemployment and crime in the country, one needs all hands, irrespective of who you are or what you believe in. The reason is that you might not get burnt now, but you might get burnt later or your family member will end up getting burnt by the fire. It has spread so far that no one can go to bed with two eyes closed anymore.

Raising global leaders for future Nigerian generations should start now through empowerment programmes. Equipping our young ones with the necessary skills for the future is what the country needs, rather than equipping them with guns and weapons by which they will kill themselves, and thereby destroying their future and the future of the next generations. The recent situation in the country can be linked to the fact that most Nigerian youth are unemployed and without hope, which leads many to succumb to acts of political thuggery, kidnapping, ritual killings and much more, because they are trying to survive. They have sold their souls to the devil as they no longer feel hurting their fellow brother or sister is wrong. My question to all those whose responsibility it is to deal with the challenges surrounding the youth, how long will they sit and watch these acts continue to happen and as a result allow this evil to continue in the Nigerian society and do nothing? We all need to start effecting the change we want to see in Nigeria by empowering the youth in meaningful ways!

I wish to conclude this study by highlighting possible areas of further study into the church and youth empowerment. Due to time, logistics, and other factors, the research focused on Pentecostal churches in Edo State in as far as the challenge of unemployment among youth is concerned. For future research, other churches like the Catholics, Anglicans, and Protestant churches in Edo State could also be explored. Also, Edo State is one of the 36 States in the country, which implies that research should also be extended to these other states. Again, this study was conducted in one of the developing countries in the world. Other developing countries and underdeveloped countries could also be looked at. To reiterate, this thesis
focused on youth who were unemployed, while future research could importantly also outline
the reasons and causes for unemployment among other age grades. Furthermore, future
research could also look at how the diaconal ministry could assist in reducing unemployment
among youths in Nigeria. As such, future research could focus more on how to build the
youth ministry in Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, even though there are youth wings in these
churches.
References


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ANNEXURE A: Letter of information for participants’ consent to be a research participant

Dear Participant

My name is David Ovbiebo. I am a student of the University of South Africa, Department of Missiology pursuing my Doctoral degree in Theology. I am carrying out a study on Church and youth empowerment: A study of Pentecostal missional orientation in Edo State, Nigeria.

Your involvement would entail a research interview at a convenient place of your choice. I estimate that the interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes. Please note that you will not be paid or given any other form of compensation for taking part in the research.

Please note that your participation in this research project is voluntary which means you do not have to take part at all if you do not want to; if you decide to participate, you may refuse to answer any questions you may not want to answer (without providing reasons), or withdraw from the research at any stage. I regard your participation as confidential and I will only divulge your identity if you give me permission to do so.

If you are willing to take part in this research, I would like to make an audio and video recording of our discussions, in addition to making notes. However, you may prefer to have only a discussion with me, without being recorded. Please indicate your preference in the space provided.

I hope to publish our findings on this research project in my thesis, academic journals and books, but I will not publish information that you have indicated as confidential. I would gladly share such publications with you if you wish to read it.

Yours sincerely

David Ovbiebo.
ANNEXURE B: Statement of consent

I have read the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please indicate your choice:

I voluntarily agree to take part in the research: Yes No

The research interview may be audio recorded: Yes No

The research interview may be video recorded: Yes No

I give consent that sections of the interview may be published, provided that the information is not linked to my real name: Yes No

Signature of participant ………………………..
Date……………………………..

Signature of interviewer …………………………
Date……………………………..

THANK YOU FOR ACCEPTING TO PARTICIPATE
ANNEXURE C: Interview questions for focus groups

Introductory questions

1. How long have you been a member of this church/congregation?

2. Are your parents members of this church too? If yes, is that the reason why you are here? If no, tell us why you joined this church/congregation?

3. Do you belong to any group in this church/congregation? If yes; which group? If no, why have you not joined any group?

Questions related to specific research questions of the study

What is the orientation of Pentecostal missions in Edo State? Do all these Pentecostal missions in Edo State have the same orientation with respect to the challenge of youth empowerment?

1. What is the missional orientation of this Pentecostal church/congregation?

2. Do you think all the branches (congregations) of this church have the same orientation?

3. What do you understand under the notion of youth empowerment?

4. What is the orientation of this church/congregation with regard to youth empowerment? How and to what extent is the empowerment of youth inside and outside this church/congregation regarded as part of the missional orientation? If not, what do you think should be done?

What are the challenges faced by Pentecostal churches in Edo State when they want to engage meaningfully in the task of youth empowerment? To what extent do these churches see this task as part of their missional orientation?

5. What are the challenges faced by the youth in this church/congregation in regards to empowerment and employment?

6. What do you think is the problem why the youth in this church/congregation who are qualified are not employed?

7. How, if at all, has this church/congregation addressed the problem of unemployment amongst its youth?

8. To what extent is this congregation involved in the challenge of youth empowerment formation in Edo State?
How and to what extent are Pentecostal churches involved in meeting the challenge of youth empowerment in Edo State, Nigeria? And how can Pentecostal missions successfully empower youth for national development?

9. How can this congregation successfully empower its youth who are unemployed?

10. What do you think should be the role of the church in general in empowerment in the state (Edo State), since most youth do not have godfathers that can help them?

11. Unemployment is everywhere, even in the church. What should the church do to reduce the numbers of unemployed people who are members of the church?

12. What are the solutions you would proffer to this church/congregation in order to see this problem of unemployment solved?

13. What are the solutions you would proffer to youth in general in order to see this problem solved?

14. How and to what extent do the teachings of this church/congregation lead to the empowerment of its youth?
ANNEXURE D: Interview questions for church leaders

Introductory questions

1. How long have you been a member of this church /congregation?

2. Are your parents members of this church too? If yes, is that the reason why you are here? If no tell us why you joined this church /congregation?

3. What is your leadership position in this church/congregation?

4. How long have you been a leader in this church/congregation?

Questions related to specific research questions of the study

What is the orientation of Pentecostal missions in Edo State? Do all these Pentecostal missions in Edo State have the same orientation with respect to the challenge of youth empowerment?

1. What is the missional orientation of this Pentecostal church/congregation?

2. Do you think all the branches (congregations) of this church have the same orientation?

3. What do you understand under the notion of youth empowerment?

4. What is the orientation of this church / congregation with regard to youth empowerment? How and to what extent is the empowerment of youth inside and outside this church/congregation regarded as part of the missional orientation? If not, what do you think should be done?

What are the challenges faced by Pentecostal churches in Edo State when they want r to engage meaningfully in the task of youth empowerment? To what extent do these churches see this task as part of their missional orientation?

5. What are the challenges faced by the youth in this church/congregation in regards to empowerment and employment?

6. What do you think is the problem why the youth in this church/congregation who are qualified are not employed?

7. How, if at all, has this church/congregation addressed the problem of unemployment amongst its youth?
8. To what extent is this congregation involved in the challenge of youth empowerment formation in Edo State?

How and to what extent are Pentecostal churches involved in meeting the challenge of youth empowerment in Edo State, Nigeria? And how can Pentecostal missions successfully empower youth for national development?

9. How can this congregation successfully empower its youth who are unemployed?

10. What do you think should be the role of the church in general in empowerment in the state (Edo State), since most youth do not have godfathers that can help them?

11. Unemployment is everywhere, even in the church. What should the church do to reduce the numbers of unemployed people who are members of the church?

12. What are the solutions you would proffer to this church/congregation in order to see this problem of unemployment solved?

13. What are the solutions you would proffer to youth in general in order to see this problem solved?

14. How and to what extent do the teachings of this church/congregation lead to the empowerment of its youth?

15. As a leader in this church/congregation how do you see the youth that are unemployed in this church/congregation?
ANNEXURE E: Letter of Introduction

12 November 2015

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

As supervisor of the doctoral research project of Mr. David Ovbiebo (student number 48530786), I hereby affirm that he is a bona fide postgraduate student of the University of South Africa doing his study in the field of missiology on the topic: Church and youth empowerment: A study of Pentecostal missional orientation in Edo State, Nigeria.

I commend him to you, with the request you assist him in pursuing this important research topic. His address is 603 Capoleto Flats, 220 Steve Biko Street, Muckleneuk, Pretoria, South Africa. He can also be contacted at 074 254 6480 or davdav247@yahoo.com.

If you have any question about this research project, you are welcome to contact me at the department address below or by telephone +27 (0)12 429 4836 or 083 6078153. My email address is swarti1@unisa.ac.za.

Yours faithfully

Ignatius Swart
Professor with the Focus on Research
Research Institute for Theology and Religion
University of South Africa
Tel: 012 429 4836; 0836078153
swarti1@unisa.ac.za
ANNEXURE F: Letter of Recommendation

28th January, 2016

The State Chairman
Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
Edo State Chapter

Sir/Ma,

Letter of Recommendation

The Deacon, MR. DAVID OYBIHIO is a member of Foundation Faith Church,
Osiri Road, Ekeji – Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

He is of a good character, humble and obedient. Therefore, we solicit you give him
all necessary support.

Thanks.

Yours in the Vineyard

PASTOR OKECHUKWU E.
Resident Pastor.

In Salem, God Is At Work, Saving, Healing & Making Many Mighty
MONDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION:

MR. DAVID OVIEBO

We write to introduce to you, MR. DAVID OVIEBO, a doctoral research project Student of the University of South Africa who is doing his study in the field of missionology on the topic: Church and Youth Empowerment: A study of Pentecostal Missional Orientation in Edo State, Nigeria. (Please, see attached letter for additional information).

The said MR. DAVID OVIEBO has also been recommended by FOUNDATION FAITH CHURCH, Osiri Road, Ekeki, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State overseered by Arch Bishop Dr. Sam Amaga. (Please, also see attached letter of recommendation).

We therefore wish you accord him all necessary support in the above area of his research proposal.

Accept the assurances of our highest consideration as we wish you contact the PFN Edo State Secretariat for further information/clarification on GSM 08037733810 or 08056856808.

Yours sincerely in His Vineyard,

For: PFN EDO STATE CHAPTER

BISHOP MON IGBINOSA
STATE CHAIRMAN

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3)