**THE ROLE OF YOUTH CULTURE IN HOLISTIC FAITH FORMATION OF
YOUTH IN NAIROBI: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPROACH**

By

KEVIN MURIITHI NDEREBA

submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THEOLOGY

In the subject of

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: REV. PROF. GARTH AZIZ
SEPTEMBER 2021

DECLARATION

NAME: KEVIN MURIITHI NDEREBA_____

STUDENT NUMBER: 66031230_____

DEGREE: PHD THEOLOGY (PRACTICAL THEOLOGY)_____

Exact wording of the title of the thesis as appearing on the electronic copy submitted for examination:

THE ROLE OF YOUTH CULTURE IN HOLISTIC FAITH FORMATION OF YOUTH IN NAIROBI: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPROACH_____

I declare that the above thesis 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.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

_____   **Sep 14, 2021**_____
SIGNATURE   **DATE**

SUMMARY

Faith or spiritual formation studies the practices that nurture the spiritual lives of young people including preaching, scriptural engagement, prayer, and discipleship. On the other hand, young people are not isolated but are usually shaped by several factors. These influencers include popular youth culture, parenting, and peers. Although each of these areas are crucial, the researcher explores the specific area of youth cultures and sub-cultures and their pertinence for faith formation. Serious attention is given to culture because it is argued that parents and peers are successful influencers in so far as they can successfully penetrate this cultural milieu of the young person in Africa today. The necessity arises from "faith malformation" seen in the reality of disengaged youth in the Church and de-churched young people outside the Church, who both are navigating traditional cultures and western postmodernity. Much has been written from a Western perspective, but this theological study seeks to consider the "cultural fluency" needed in a plural and contemporary African context. The particular context of the study will be youth in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Nairobi city which will be investigated through a qualitative methodology. This is a practical theological research that explores the need of ongoing reflection of youth ministry in light of relevant theory and praxis. Additionally, it is based theoretically in the four-fold approach of Richard Osmer and grounded in the reformed-evangelical tradition. It is hoped that such an engagement can enrich faith formation in a holistic manner. Holistic faith formation will be considered through an interdisciplinary engagement of human development, anthropological research, and theological reflection. The study also explores the implications for theological education, youth ministry and congregational life.

KEYWORDS

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and specifically the congregations of St. Andrews, Loresho and Nyari, which have nurtured me, both in my personal life and in my calling to the ministry.

I also dedicate this thesis to all the youth workers and ministers in Kenya and Africa at large, who labor out of a genuine call to young people and oftentimes, without adequate resources. May God richly reward you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The African wisdom that it takes a whole village to raise a child is certainly very apt for this section of the thesis. I have been the product of the input of so many people, so it is only right that I acknowledge them in this thesis. It is true that whatever our successes in life, it takes the hand of God working through many people.

I am grateful for my wife Jessica Muriithi, for whom this thesis belongs to as much as it belongs to me. Her understanding when I would spend inordinate amounts of time researching as well as creating space for my many books is appreciated. It has been her confident assurance and prayers that have kept me writing when I did not have the energy. In many ways, the research in this thesis has shaped my vision of what kind of father I hope to be for our son Noah.

My parents, Eng. James Ndereba and Mrs. Angela Ndereba have been at the center of my formation as a person. I am thankful to them for their wise guidance, exemplary marriage, and input through the years of my life. Their loving care and compassion towards my siblings and I have mirrored in many ways the love of the Father towards his children. My siblings, Ann Ndereba (and her spouse Michael Mweha) and Alex Ndereba have been great friends and encouragers in my life.

It was through my marriage to Jessica that I got another set of loving family. To my other parents, Mr. Livingstone, and Mrs. Lucy Murage, together with my siblings Nick and Ruth Kariuki and Michael Murage, I am thankful for all the calls and prayers.

My supervisor Prof. Garth Aziz deserves special mention with regards to this doctoral work. I am sincerely grateful for the prompt responses to my work, critical feedback, and guidance that he has exemplified throughout my study. The counsel that he gave me upon commencing my studies, that doctoral work is more about

character formation as much as it is about academic competence, has proved true. This was certainly my experience, and he was always available to answer my questions promptly and to give me guidance when necessary.

In terms of the academic life, several individuals come to mind. The pastor who shaped me as a young person and who accompanies me to this day deserves special mention, especially because the nature of this work has to do with youth ministry. Rev. Edward Buri and by extension his wife Mary Buri, have exemplified what holistic faith formation looks like in the life of a congregation. It was through his encouragement, and others, that I resigned from my Engineering practice and pursued my pastoral calling. It was his preaching and conversations that showed me what being a reflective practitioner and being a down-to-earth intellectual looks like. Prof. Elizabeth Mburu, shaped my thinking towards a worldview approach to Christian scholarship and research during my Master's studies at the Nairobi International School of Theology (now International Leadership University). Rev. Prof. Nathan Chiroma was instrumental in my academic teaching at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC). As a great mentor and practical theologian, he has shaped my vision for scholarship and research by placing youth ministry at the center of my focus. It has been a pleasure to work with these two for the Africa Society of Evangelical Theology (ASET) as part of the executive committee. It was at PAC that I clarified my research proposal, through the process of teaching youth ministry courses as well as my practical engagement with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

It was through Prof. Chriroma's invitation to the African regional conference of the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry (IASYM) in Zambia in 2018 that allowed me to meet other friends, colleagues and academics including Prof. Shantelle Weber, Prof. Anita Cloete and Prof. Reggie Nel, all of Stellenbosch. These networks have given me a critical and scholarly home for my practical theological work.

Last but not least, I acknowledge the ecclesial context that has shaped me, supported my call, and expanded my own personal and ministerial development. My home church PCEA St. Andrews has nurtured me. PCEA Loresho Parish, comprising PCEA Loresho Community Church and Nyari congregations called me and developed me as a minister to young people. I remember the sessions of elders and various committees and individuals who I have had the privilege to serve with in the course of my ministry and I am sincerely thankful for each of them.

To friends who checked up on me, and extended family who kept me in their prayers, I am indebted to your support.

And to God, who has blessed me with his gifts, who not only gave me life but redeemed me through His Son, God who "unexpectedly" detoured me from Engineering practice into pastoral and teaching ministry and God the Spirit who animates my life, equips me to serve and who reminds me of the better things to come, to Him be all the praise.

To the glory of God, the advancement of his kingdom and its consummation, I offer this work.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AACC   All African Council of Churches

AICs   African Independent Churches

ASET   Africa Society of Evangelical Theology

ATR   African Tradition Religion

BCF   Belgic Confession of Faith

CCM   Contemporary Christian Music

G.A.   General Assembly

HC   Heidelberg Catechism

IASYM   International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry

JYT   Journal of Youth and Theology

MDT   Moralistic, Therapeutic, Deism

MOH   Ministry of Health

NSYR   National Study on Youth and Religion

NT   New Testament

OT   Old Testament

PCEA   Presbyterian Church of East Africa

PP	Practice and Procedure Manual
RC	Roman Catholic/ism
UN	United Nations
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCF	Westminster Confession of Faith
WLC	Westminster Larger Catechism
WSC	Westminster Shorter Catechism

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research considers the influence of youth cultures on faith formation of young people in Africa's cities, particularly in Nairobi city. And as with any task of research, all research is approached from within a particular perspective. The youth ministry emphasis is of critical concern for the researcher as he serves as a youth pastor in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, as well as teaching youth ministry at Pan Africa Christian university, both in Kenya. It builds up on the researcher's Master's research in Biblical and Theological studies (with Apologetics concentration), that was targeted towards youth who have left church and analyzed their worldview construction, drawing out implications for the church (Muriithi 2015). Grounded in practical theology, this research utilizes the fields of anthropology (youth cultures and sub-cultures) as well as psychology (adolescent development theory) in conceptualizing young people in Nairobi city. Secondly, the theological approach of the researcher is a broadly evangelical and reformed perspective. By broadly evangelical, the researcher refers to the kind of theology that is centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ, that engages the Word of God from a confessional standpoint, that focuses on a personal relationship with God and that emphasizes the Spirit's work in accomplishing God's mission (Wells 1993:5-6). Whereas the researcher is sympathetic to the way that the identity marker of "evangelical" has been used in the North American context to support American nationalism, racism and other systemic issues, the researcher uses it here in the traditional sense that it has been used (Larsen & Treier 2007). By using the word "reformed", the researcher approaches the task of theology from the normativity of Scripture, the importance of the historical confessions of the church, chiefly among these confessions being the five solae as well as the centrality of the church in theological reflection and in mediating God's activity (Calvin 2014; WCF 2018). This does not necessarily mean a blind acceptance of a theological framework without considering some of the blind posts that its adherents have continued to support.

For instance in the case of reformed missions of various stripes in Africa, how the missionary and theological enterprise did not always engage the real issues that matter such as cultural imperialism, African identity and socio-economic issues that hinder African societies from moving forward as Tshaka (2014:5) has eloquently argued when considering the racial issues in the reformed denominations in the South African context.

Thus, African and reformed must not necessarily be at odds with each other but in "interlocution" (Tshaka 2014:1). Therefore, in terms of epistemological foundation, the researcher begins from acknowledging the Word of God as primary in theological reflection, with the purpose of fostering people's personal relationship with God and with the implication of nurturing the lives of others and by necessity, being engaged in the practical realities in one's environment and society. A reformed worldview also considers that God is at work in the natural world and that knowledge in different disciplines is beneficial in life, and that Christians are called to wise engagement of alternative visions of life and thought (Coletto 2009:294-295; Plantinga 2002:126-127). Consequentially, this means that any piece of scholarship is contextual in nature, because on a presuppositional level, it approaches the task from within certain epistemological, theological, and metaphysical frameworks and is focused on contextual realities, even while it engages with global antecedents of particular knowledge domains. One of the critical implications of this is the task of nurturing the next generations, by considering their lived realities, for a better world.

The "youth bulge" has been used as an adjective in describing the African continent. With the growing numbers of young people, theological reflection on youth issues is pertinent. The academic exploration of youth studies has been approached from economic, social science, psychological and philosophical perspectives, and though this has born significant fruit, this study orients the topic within the discipline of practical theology. Practical theological reflection takes into consideration the lived experiences of faith communities, in this case, young people in the Church. The choice of practical theology is based on its interdisciplinary

nature, which enriches theological reflection by engaging the insights of other disciplines. This study will survey some of these interdisciplinary insights. However, much of this "theological turn" to youth ministry has been engaged from a largely Western perspective, with the context of Europe and North America, largely defining youth ministry scholarship (Root & Dean 2011). This research is contextually located in Africa, and in particular, the cosmopolitan city of Nairobi, as a lens for envisioning youth ministry in other parts of Africa.

One of the subject areas in the practical theological reflection of youth ministry is faith or spiritual formation, which in this research will be considered synonymously. What differentiates other types of youth work and Christian youth work or youth ministry, is the faith formation aspect. Yet since young people in Africa navigate complex socio-political situations, economic challenges, multi-cultural frameworks as well as plural religious identities, faith formation of young people must be engaged in a reflexive manner – both traversing the theoretical underpinnings of youth ministry as well as the practical skills and knowledge bases for effective work with young people. Youth malformation in this research is described as the complexities surrounding the spiritual identification of young people, the difficulty in Churches engaging and retaining young people as well as the missiological challenges from secular worldviews and organizations that confront the Church. As such, this study generally engages current empirical studies in youth faith formation, theories on adolescent growth and development as well as emerging adulthood. In particular, this study explores how youth cultures and sub-cultures in a postmodern and postcolonial African context influence faith formation of young people, as envisioned in the preceding statements.

1.2 Background to the problem

Youth malformation is a critical issue that affects youth ministry. In my practical ministry experience, I have encountered several issues that confront the faith formation of young people. First, surveys of the spiritual and religious identification

of young people around the globe is taking on more plural identification. On the surface, many may be quick to assess this as a lack of effective teaching in the Church or a waning in the doctrinal definitions of ecclesial bodies. On a deeper level, these fragmented identities may be markers of the socio-cultural factors at play in the hybridity of a digital culture. Secondly, many churches are unable to effectively engage adolescents. This could be due to the biological, intellectual, emotional, and psychological transitions that largely define this unique stage of life. Thus, insights from developmental psychology may assist parents, pastors, and ministry leaders with the understanding to enable them to walk with young people. Third, for African youth who live in a postmodern and postcolonial context, "multi-cultural fluency" is needed for youth workers to be able to effectively minister in this unique cultural milieu, given the heritage of our history as Africans. These are some of the issues that are seen as contributing to youth malformation, and the disengagement that has been observed by several scholars (Smith & Snell 2009; Kinnaman & Hawkins 2011; Smith & Christoffersen 2014 and, McFarland & Jimenez 2017).

This study therefore seeks to determine the correlation of these markers with faith formation. Within a global perspective, practitioners and scholars did not always consider these problems from a theological perspective. As a result of this skewed perspective, western theologians have called for a return to theologically driven youth ministry (Root & Dean 2011). Practical theologians in the continent have appropriated theological reflection for the African youth ministry context. Aziz (2017, 2019) has explored issues of youth identity, youth development and professionalization of youth pastoral work. Chiroma (2015) has explored the role of mentoring in youth ministry. Cloete (2012a, 2015, 2020) has explored African youth work and faith formation in light of the contemporary digital culture. Weber (2015) has called for decolonization of youth ministry models in order to reach out to young people more effectively. Much of this research is in the South African context and there is need for a more geographical representation in Sub-Saharan Africa. More particularly, this research considers the nuances of African youth cultures and sub-

cultures. This is important if the Christian faith and tradition is to deeply influence the African young people. This research seeks to retrieve the significance of theological identity and importance for young people in Africa today much like Bediako (1999), and others such as John Mbiti (1970), J. N. K. Mugambi, Bolaji Idowu, Benezet Bujo, did for post-independent Africa within the continent's context of the 1960's to 1990's.[1]

Cultural consideration of African youths, whether sub-cultural influence or ethnic influence, would stimulate deeper theological reflection and engagement. Such a foundation is necessary for exploring faith formation in a holistic perspective. First, holistic faith formation must have a personal or moral vision. By this the researcher means that it must inwardly transform the young person in the area of sanctification. Some approaches to faith formation may either singlehandedly focus on the affective aspects or the cognitive aspects. The researcher pursues an interdisciplinary exploration of the intersection of spiritual, cognition and psychological aspects as they find themselves in the fields of theology, social sciences, and human development. Second, holistic faith formation must have an ecclesial vision. Here the researcher proposes that the best approach to build the faith of local church youth is an inclusive-congregation model, which has inter-generational mentorship at the core of its ethos, as explicated by Malan Nel in Senter (2001) and expanded with a missional perspective in Malan Nel (2018). After all, adolescents, and emerging adults in a stage of transition need people to walk alongside them in the areas of spiritual direction, spiritual companioning, and mentorship (Chiroma 2015; Reed, Osmer & Smucker 2015:9). This would engage ecclesiology as well as youth ministry approaches as proposed by Senter et al

---

[1] The African theological enterprise has taken several routes in the continent. Scholars have traced themes of decolonization, liberation, and reconstruction within the theologies of key figures such as Allan Boesak, Bolaji Idowu, Benezet Bujo, John Mbiti, Kwame Bediako and J.N.K. Mugambi. There is also an increasing emphasis on womanist and feminist approaches to theology, as examples of contextualized theology in Africa, in the work of theologians such as Musa Dube and Mercy Amba Oduyoye.

(2001), and particularly Malan Nel's (2000) inclusive congregational approach. Lastly, holistic faith formation must be of public significance (Willard 2015). In this last sphere, I would be seeking to explore how holistic faith formation engages its postmodern and postcolonial context. This would give young people "cultural fluency" to then engage with the public issues of the day such as interreligious dialogue, identity formation, pluralism and community development in Africa, realities crucial in Christian mission among young people.

1.3 Research problem

Faith malformation of African youth may be seen in the passivity of youth in the Church and their disengagement from the Church. Part of the reason is that there is shallow engagement with youth culture in youth ministry. This research study will examine how understanding youth culture in youth ministry can contribute to holistic faith formation of young people, here defined as 13–35-year-old according to Kenya's constitution.

1.4 Research aims and objectives

a) To investigate how understanding youth culture influences faith formation in youths.

b) To examine African youth's understanding of faith formation and their influencers.

c) To explore the significance of an interdisciplinary approach to holistic youth faith formation.

1.5 Key research questions

The primary question is how does understanding the sub-culture(s) of African youth influence the faith formation of youths? The specific questions are:

a)   What is the relationship between youth culture and faith formation?

b)   How is the African youth culture unique in the formation of young people?

c)   In what ways can an interdisciplinary approach enrich a holistic concept and practice of youth faith formation?

It is hoped that the conversation will offer contextualized insights for youth workers (ministers, pastors, and mentors), parents, institutions, and other denominations in the Christian community on how they can aid the faith formation of young people. This research will be relevant for practitioners and scholars working with young people specifically within the African context. This research also adds to the global discourse on youth ministry, by contributing a youth perspective to the budding field of African and global or world Christianity.

1.6 Preliminary literature review

1.6.1 Existing literature

From a global perspective, five studies have been influential in the observation of faith formation of young people. Weber (2015) cites the first study as Smith and Denton, conducted between 2001 and 2005, focusing on adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age. The second study she cites is by Powell, Griffin and Crawford who longitudinally surveyed 500 youth pastors from 2004 to 2010. Third is a quantitative study by Pieterse, Van der Ven, and Dreyer, from Dutch and South

African universities, through two surveys (1995-1996 and 2000-2002) in the same selected schools in the Pretoria and Johannesburg area. The fourth study is by Shantelle Weber, herself, who conducted a research study in 2008 and 2012 in order to understand youth faith formation among 14–17-year-olds in 8 local congregations in South Africa. The fifth is a 3-year study of more than 3,000 congregations across 5 denominations, including 7,000 parents, youth and leaders that explored the practice of confirmation as faith formation and has been published by Osmer and Douglass (2018). These studies combine a creative mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, a diversity of project scopes and sampling methods as well as broad geographical contexts. Collating her observations of the first four, Weber (2015:4) notes the overlapping issues of youth identity and sub-cultures and how they are shapers of young people. These empirical studies will be deeply engaged in chapter two of this thesis. Of importance to this study will be how youth-subcultures, particularly in the East African context of Nairobi, affect the faith formation of young people. Globally, a shallow conceptualization of faith by youth leaders being based on outward behavioral trajectories supports the thesis proposed by Smith & Denton of 'Moral Therapeutic Deism' (MTD) which fails to richly engage youth subcultures with the redemptive work of God. Dean (2010:3-4) further notes that faith formation of young people must be interpreted within a wider socio-cultural framework including the place of parenting and families as well as the historical contexts of young people.

Whereas most of the global studies in youth faith formation are Western, the above studies paint a positive picture with fifty percent of the cited studies located within South Africa. It is necessary to conduct more reflection in the Sub-Saharan context that is more regionally representative. This is not to mean that there is nothing to learn from the western context, but "decolonizing" youth ministry calls for a looking with African eyes "by using localized youth ministry models relevant to the context they are ministering into" (Weber 2017:2). The point is that there is need for a deeper engagement of the faith formation of young people in the African continent. Malan Nel (2015:2) reminds us that discipleship is at the center of ensuring the

flourishing of all peoples, fitting in with Jesus' focus on an abundant life (John 10:10), which necessarily involves young people and children. Jesus' ministry also moves from the personal (heart, emotions and will) to the public, by his oftentimes challenging calls to leaders in the religious, economic, and political spheres.

For instance, in Mark 7:1-13 Jesus' conceptualization of discipleship as a response to his calling was of public ramifications. In this text, he blurs the lines of societal stratification, overturns religious conceptions of well-being, and sidelines some religious cultural traditions (Wilkins 2004:55). Although Wilkins provides a coherent account of a Christocentric approach to discipleship, he begs the question of how such a model of discipleship may be applied in particular contexts, say in Wall Street or in the peri-urban area of Kangemi. Considering this narrow scope of discipleship, the biblical scholar Vaitusi Nofoaiga (2017:5-6) seeks to engage discipleship to the concerns of everyday Samoan life, by considering the place of the Mediterranean and Galilean world in Matthew's gospel. Jesus' model of discipleship begins with the calling and response of everyday people to the participation in the Kingdom of God. One of the core texts that are central in the call to discipleship is Matthew 4:12–25. Whereas readings of this text as exemplified in Warren Carter (1996) and Jack Kingsbury (1978) focus on the master-follower model in which an individual disciple leaves the family behind, Nofoaiga (2017:55) considers Jesus' calling to particular individuals within the context and social fabric of Galilee as the basis for the Christian mission to all the world. Nofoaiga's (2017:53-83) exegesis of this particular text, notes the Old Testament quotation of Isaiah 8:23-9:1 to affirm the time and place where Jesus ministry begins, which culminates in the ever-widening scope of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God to the entire world (Mt 28:18-20).

The point to be made is that whereas discipleship is always extended to a particular person within a particular context, it has ramifications for their personal transformation and public engagement. Thus, faith formation engages both the private and public spheres of African young people. This study will be conducted in

East Africa in Nairobi city, particularly focusing on youth in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). Some overlaps are expected among other cosmopolitan African cities, but this study will also cast light on the uniqueness of the Nairobian context, with particular inference to youth culture as will be discussed in the following sections. Since youth cultures and sub-cultures may have some areas of divergence, this will be discussed in the forthcoming sections.

1.6.2 Practical theology

The preceding paragraphs necessitate a framework that considers both the practices of faith formation of young people as well as the theoretical literature on faith formation. Situated in the purview of practical theology, this study desires to explore the theological foundations that are pertinent to the task of youth ministry. The classical disciplines of theology such as systematic theology, which explores the coherence of Christian doctrines, historical theology, which traces the development of particular doctrines in history and biblical studies, which utilizes the exegesis of theological themes from Scriptures are foundational. Practical theology explores their utility for enriching ministry practice. It does this by pursuing theological reflection of practices or actions among faith communities. In order to understand practical theology, Anderson (2001:15) notes the relevance of the epistemological underpinnings of pre-modernity, modernity, and postmodernity - because the pre-modern view was based on the medieval "sacramental" concepts of signs, symbols, institutions, and tradition, "reality remained partially hidden". The modern view, according to Anderson, goes beyond the enlightenment to the renaissance and is founded upon critical thought, human autonomy, and the world's self-existence. Thus, the relationship between theory and praxis in the modern period was that theory dominated practice as the following diagram portrays:
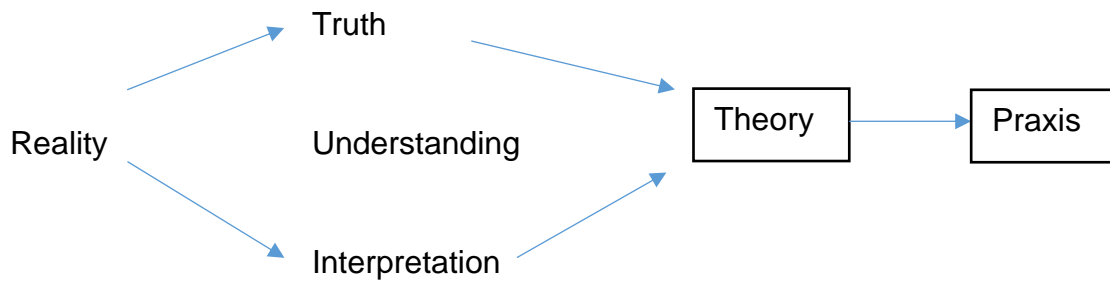
Figure 1: Relationship of theory and praxis (Anderson 2001:16)

In western post-enlightenment history, scientific empiricism would then be followed by existentialism (for instance in the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard), rejecting the major premises of modernity and leading on to postmodernity. A postmodern mood is best summarized as follows:

> While the modern mindset was optimistic, always looking for progress as knowledge increased – for knowledge was good – a postmodernist mood of irony and playfulness has arisen, expressing a deep-seated pessimism. The modern mindset values objective certainty based on rational rather than religious or mystical means of attaining truth. Against rational certainty a pluralist relativism has emerged – a relativism that questions even the existence of an objective reality to be known. The modern mindset looked for a totality and unity in all knowledge, believing that all rational minds operating independently would come to similar conclusions about what is universally true and good. In contrast, postmodernism values diversity with truth relative to each community's perspective and situation (Anderson 2001:19).

Diversity, tolerance, and secularism have been seen as the results of postmodernism which in turn "foster freedom of human reason" (Anderson 2001:20). The helpful insights that can be learned are that communities have a pertinent role in our perceptions of reality. This makes the case for the significance of narratives that shed light on the role of the family and society in shaping young

people. However, postmodernism provides several dangers, chief amongst them, relativism, and objective pluralism. In conclusion, a balanced hermeneutical approach must be cautious of the attendant extremes of cultural imperialism in perceptions of reality and on the other hand, a subjective view of reality that is not informed by God's self-revelation. Such a hermeneutic takes theory and praxis, into serious consideration, based on the action of God and our response to it. In summary, as opposed to a linear relationship, postmodernity seeks a dynamic relationship between how theories relate to practices. The interplay of theory and practice is captured by Anderson (2001:21) in his view that "all practice includes theory, and theory can only be discerned through practice". Anderson (2001:22) expands the definition of practical theology as:

> A dynamic process of reflective, critical inquiry into the praxis of the church in the world and God's purposes for humanity, carried out in the light of Christian scripture and tradition, and in critical dialogue with other sources of knowledge.

Very helpfully, Anderson (2001:22) reminds us that "all ministry is God's ministry". This construal is premised on the fact that ministry is the root of theology. And this ministry is Trinitarian with its centre on the Father's reconciliation beginning with and climaxing in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, what Anderson refers to as "Christopraxis" (Ward 2017:30). When we deviate from this model of ministry, Anderson (2001:63) cautiously warns that we end up engaging in "spurious activities" that lack redemptive value in the world. Ward (2017:3), another practical theologian, likewise observes that theology must be tied to the ministry and mission of the church. Although others have demarcated theology as a reflection on practices, Ward (2017:4) argues that theological reflection must wed doctrine and experience. This results in a theology that is not static but is dynamic in seeking transformation as the church faces the contemporary challenges of technology, sexuality, globalization, genetics, and mass migration (Ward 2017:22-24). That is why Reader (2008:17) reconstructs the boundaries of theological

reflection on practical issues to go beyond the local church towards the global world. This means that practical theology must be concerned with ever-widening boundaries while being grounded on where the divine and human interact (Root 2014a:8).

Although youth ministry is usually located in practical theology, it was not always the case – in fact, Malan Nel (2018:4) places this incorporation of youth ministry in practical theology in the late 1990s and in the early 2000s. The reason given is that since children and youth have for a long time been viewed as part of the family, within the congregational context, youth ministry was situated in the discipline of Christian education (Nel 2003:68). Parallel to this, the development of practical theology has been critical in the relationship between youth ministry and theological reflection. Malan Nel (2003:69-70) makes the historical case that theology, in the medieval and reformation eras, was not only seen as theoretical but also as practical, by citing this interpretation in the works of the Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and the Reformed theologian Martin Luther (1483-1546). Although practical theology during this time was viewed within the scope of pastoral theology, that is the "offices" of the pastor, the turning point is seen through Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768-1834) widening of the scope from the pastoral office to the congregation (Nel 2003:73). Müller (2013:2) seems to extend Schleiermacher's scope as beyond the congregation to the individual person when he observes that modern practical theology is focused on the values and outlook of a person.

Viewed in this manner, practical theology accommodated the social sciences, for instance in the explication of JA Van der Ven (1998), Gerben Heitink (1999) and Don Browning (1995), in order to understand human behavior and has gone full circle to engage an inter-disciplinary approach, based on a post-foundational epistemology – whereby the contemporary context is viewed by Müller (2011) as that of transition and offers a post-foundational epistemology as the best way to do theology. In addition, Klaasen (2014:6) for instance envisages this over-reliance on

the social sciences when he critiques Browning's approach as one that reduces practice to theory and offers a more nuanced approach that engages "practical reasoning" throughout the inter-play of theory and practice. However, despite these methodological approaches, practical theologians agree on the role of theology in its engagement with the ordinary issues of life. Wepener, Dreyer & Meylahn (2017:136) collectively note this outward looking scope of practical theology when they propose that theology must move from individuals to systems and societies in order to harmonize reconciliation between God, creation, and humanity.

Thus, practical theology is involved with everyday life. The everyday life of people is raw material for the theologian. In this sense, everyone is a theologian. Ward (2017:61) borrows from the work of Helen Cameron, Deborah Bharti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney, and Clare Watkins who have developed a tool called the "four theological voices" that can help the practical theologian in analysing everyday phenomena, in our case youth culture among young people. The four theological voices are operant theology, espoused theology, normative theology, and formal theology. Operant theology is the theology that is oftentimes implicit in the lives of people, similar to the computer software that runs in the background of a device. Espoused theology is when this implicit or hidden theology is vocalised. Normative theology refers to what is part of the accepted tradition. And formal theology, refers to the careful and systematized understanding usually given by professional clergy or academics. These four ways are helpful as we think about faith formation, and how young people have implicit understandings, which they may vocalize considering the accepted norms and which are material for the formal systematization for the practical theologian. This is what Ward (2017:62) views as lived theology. Construed this way, the practical theologian has a lot of data to work with in view of the ordinary lives of the youth as well as the actions of God in the larger society.

These "communicative actions" of God in the society are the ripe ingredients for practical theology, a sphere that includes youth ministry based on its unique

nature. Nel (2003:77) expands the practices of theological youth ministry to encompass instruction, preaching, pastoral care, liturgy, fellowship, and administration. Therefore, youth ministry is best situated in the practical theological discipline. Malan Nel (2018) has re-affirmed and updated this inclusion of youth ministry in practical theology based on the current context of youth in South Africa, and in our case Kenya, in the 21st century. In engaging in the study of youth ministry within practical theology, specific categories of study may include preaching, mentorship, spiritual formation, and discipleship in view of present socio-economic and cultural realities for the purposes of ministry to youth (Nel 2018:17-18). In this sense, youth ministry is practical theology.

The implications of the preceding exploration of practical theology are of importance to faith formation of youth. Practically, although youth ministry was known to pursue an entertainment focus, youth ministry literature proposed the need to deeply reflect on the practices of young people from a theological perspective (Dean 2004, 2010; Nel 2015; Root 2017; Strong 2015). This "theological turn" will mean that youth ministry moves from fads to theological reflection in light of cultural location and honouring Christian orthodoxy. This turn would consequentially influence how youth practitioners walk with young people, in the sense that practitioners honour the complexity of youth faith formation by becoming God's mouthpiece, hands and feet in their lives. This would imprint in the youth worker a heart for reaching into the youth's cultural world, understanding its *lingua franca,* and embedding within this discourse the life-birthing, reconciling, sustaining, and completing nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Root 2007; Yaconelli 2006).

1.7 Definitions of key terms

1.7.1 Youth

Within the Kenyan context, definitions of young people are based on the Kenya Youth Development Policy (KYDP) (2018), the Kenya Constitution (2010), the African Union Youth Charter (2006) and the United Nations Secretariat. The National Youth Policy (2018) observes that the UN considers "youth" under the age bracket of 15-24 years, the African youth charter 15-35 years and the Kenyan constitution as 15-34 years. Since this study has the wider African context in mind, it will adopt the African union youth charter's definition of 15-35 years. Further, although youth studies have noted the concept of emerging adulthood as extending the upper limit of adolescence, this study will define adolescence as 13-19 years and young adulthood as 20-35 years. Lastly, this thesis acknowledges the varied definitions of young people in Africa and will therefore use African youth(s) in the plural sense as opposed to in the singular sense, unless the context of usage necessitates it.

1.7.2 Spirituality and religion

As a precursor to the conversation, it is crucial to delineate the terms faith formation and spiritual formation. Defining spirituality is central to understanding the term spiritual formation. Willard (1998:79) seems to view spirituality as not only what we do but who we are – as our nature and destiny. He looks at spirituality as that which is non-physical, that is, above the perceptive world. He also views spirituality in relationship to power. By looking at spirituality as a form of energy, he alludes to the fact that spirituality does work and what works has power. Thus, spirituality can be looked at as a force. Lastly, Willard (1998:80) looks at the intellectual aspect of spirituality based on the fact that when the spiritual power, person and self is directed towards a certain subject matter, this falls within the purview of cognition or mind. Thus, Willard (1998:82) envisions spirituality as a matter that touches the

whole person, and a dimension that stretches beyond time into eternity. Young people continue to debate the place of "spirituality" and "religion", and Balswick, King & Reimer (2005:266) distinguish the two as follows: whereas religion has to do with institutional beliefs, spirituality is more personal and experiential. Spirituality in this sense is defined as "human capacity or quality of a person's character" in which a person has an acute awareness of something greater than themselves (Balswick, King & Reimer 2005:266).

Combining the concepts of "youth" and "spirituality" has yielded much fruit in contemporary empirical social research (Singleton, Mason & Webber 2004). These scholars observe the historical development of the definition of spirituality from the Greco-Roman culture to the enlightenment to appreciate its elasticity. They define the term as "a conscious way of life based on a transcendent referent" (Singleton, Mason & Webber: 2004). They list several dimensions arising from their qualitative research with young people – spirituality namely involves relationship to religion, expression of spirituality, coherence, eclectism, salience, influence, anthropology, authority, medium and development. Other scholars note that youth spirituality is linked to the developmental (biological, cognitive, affective) aspects of emerging adulthood – because with increased cognitive capacity, youth are able to reflect on the abstract understandings of God, self, and others (Barry, Nelson, Davarya & Urry 2010:312). Other broader factors are influences of socialization – due to the high mobility of young people as a result of employment opportunities and changing social networks – which in turn influence their spirituality. These "socialization factors" that affect youth spirituality include parents, peers, media, and culture (Barry et al 2010:314-317).

1.7.3 Spiritual or faith formation

Roberts (1982:12) proposes a symbiotic relationship between spirituality and emotions, when he claims that spiritual maturity is defined through the lens of emotions such as gratitude, hope, peace, and compassion, among others.

Additionally, he is exclusive in claiming that, beyond a cognitive approach to "belief", Christians must also "attend to the things of God" – this is what Roberts (1982:24) proposes as a basis for spiritual formation. Mulholland (2016) defines spiritual formation as "a process of being formed in the image of Christ". Opposing our preference to control techniques and knowledge, Mulholland (2016:33) goes on to explain the implication of formation as a yielding to be a subject of God's process of shaping.

This idea of process is captured by Wilhoit (2008:23) when he defines spiritual formation as nurturing our relationship with God, in the company of others for conformity to Christlikeness through the Spirit's working. Within systematic theology in the reformed tradition, this is akin to the place of sanctification in the Christian life – where besides the position of the believer in Christ, sanctification is seen as a life-long process (Berkhof 2012:534; Calvin 2014:258, 378). Some classical practices that enable this formation include prayer, study, fellowship, service, and solitude which, in the reformed tradition, are called the means of grace (WLC 153, WSC 85). Yet, as J.K.A. Smith has observed, these formative practices have been unsuccessful in touching the "desires" of young people in a "consumer-driven" context of the young person (Dean 2010:5). These voices affirm the role of the affective aspects of the human person as central for spiritual formation.

In exploring the place of spiritual formation in youth ministry, Chiroma (2015:78-81) integrates the definitions of other scholars to offer the view that youth ministry does not exist to solve the problem of youth but to journey with youth as they answer the deep questions about God, faith, identity, purpose, and mission in life. He expands the understanding of faith formation to include the process of mentoring young people through narrative sharing, accompaniment, listening and guiding, for the formation of Christ in the young people. Therefore, spiritual formation includes both divine action or will and human responsibility, intergenerational, trans-cultural and trinitarian perspectives for the shaping of young people.

1.7.4 Faith developmental theory

Faith formation has also been approached from a psychological developmental perspective. Fowler for instance sees faith as a vital and inward process of making meaning of the world (Parrett & Kang 2009:224). In fact, referencing the reformed theologians Paul Tillich and Richard Niebuhr, Fowler (1981:5) stretches the scope of faith to a "universal human concern". He goes on to differentiate faith from mere belief to creedal formulations when he notes that faith points to the search of relationship to transcendence (Fowler 1981:14). Parrett & Kang (2009:226) understand faith as a meaning-making process, which lies within and outside the confines of organized religion. Thus, faith formation is usually defined in the light of the different stages of learning that borrow largely from Piaget's theory of cognitive development.

Fowler (1981:272), on the basis of this understanding of Piaget and others such as Erikson and Kohlberg, developed the faith development theory. Fowler expanded on the understanding of the cognitive and affective divide by synthesizing "knowing, valuing and committing" as intertwining aspects of faith. Although Fowler's theory was well received in the 1990s, post-modern sensibilities caused an emergence of other understandings of faith formation (Balswick, King & Reimer 2005:272). While Fowler based spiritual development on human development, the practical theologian James Loder drew a distinction between the two and suggested that human development is dependent upon spiritual development and extends the scope of this holistic development to cognitive, moral, and psychosocial spheres (Balswick, King & Reimer 2005:274). Balswick, King & Reimer (2005:275) here seem to correlate the concept of faith and spirituality. Others, including Cloete (2012b) also view spirituality and faith as synonymous. Setran & Kiesling (2013:53) begin their book on emerging spiritual formation by defining the changing landscape of faith among the next generation in North America to explain spiritual formation as "a process of reorienting the heart's affections, counting the cost of discipleship and abiding with Christ in all of life".

In summary, most of the writers have defined spirituality as a holistic concept, one that eschews the predominant dualistic perspective of popular Christianity. In defining faith not merely as a cognitive, but also an affective issue, the scholars cited above expand the meaning of faith. According to Fowler (2004:417) some scholars have taken issue with this definition of faith as assumed even in secular contexts. However, this does not affect the place of formation. Formation implies the idea of shaping and processing. Whereas faith formation has generally been thought of in light of human development theory, spiritual formation in Christian literature has more to do with the Christian process of sanctification. Yet we have seen scholars extending the definition of spirituality beyond Christian bounds. In such cases, and for the purposes of this thesis, the author will use the two terms interchangeably. In other words, spiritual formation and faith formation are synonymous.

Defined this way, and with the understanding that spiritual formation of young people is crucial to the church, it is possible to proceed forward in different ways. This thesis will choose to engage the concept of youth culture, in general and some sub-cultures in particular. Whether particular ministry emphasis in youth work is teaching, or evangelizing or discipling, cultural understanding is necessary in nurturing the faith of young people – as youth workers oftentimes cross cultural boundaries to engage young people according to Walt Mueller (Clark 2016:118). Since the traditional, modern, and postmodern contexts are intertwined in the 21st century African context, how these cultures affect the young person and how the young person affects them is central to our discussion.

1.7.6 Culture

Kraft (2016:14) defines culture as a people's way of life involving their customary ways of living and the implicit worldview assumptions. Therefore, faith

formation of African youth cannot ignore youth culture but must consistently engage it. Youth culture may be understood within the broader framework of culture, although it certainly has its nuances. Kraft (2016:18) goes on to show how surface-level culture interacts with deep-level culture in his classifications of the subsystems of economics, politics, religion, social structure, and material culture. While surface-level culture considers particular behaviors, deep-level culture considers values and worldviews that inform those outer behaviors. Yet even the five spheres of culture-making mentioned by Kraft are interpreted differently by each person in space and time. Each person has their own subjective interpretation of these culture-shapers (Root 2007:154). This consideration of the cultural location of the young person must be an assumption if we are to engage the young person successfully. Young people are oftentimes seen as "suspect youth" as a result of political ideologies, economic constraints as well as social marginalization in a hierarchical African culture (Knoetze 2018; Giroux 2009; Nel 2015b). This understanding of surface-level and deep-level cultures, oftentimes truncated from the contextual location of the young person, are the same that influence how churches develop their implicit or explicit philosophies of youth ministry. In other words, the formation of people is significantly tied to their outer world and in order to engage them, it is necessary to consider these influencers.

1.7.7 Youth cultures and sub-cultures

Although we have looked at culture more broadly, in this section we shall briefly examine the concept of youth culture. Youth culture is a sub-culture of a particular cultural group. Traditionally, youth cultural studies are based on contemporary cultural thought that is founded on Marxist theory (Brake 2003:3). Marxism interprets culture as a response to history in light of a capitalistic society. Such an understanding is based on sociological and anthropological definitions of youth as "shifters" (Lukalo 2006:23). Lukalo (2006:23) advances the idea that youth cultures are localized and uses the contrast of how public university students engage in riots and how private university students engage in dialogue to prove his point. However,

the global unrest in the political space that led to several student revolutions through the 2010-2012 Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria and the #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa in 2018 expand Lukalo's thinking into the global arena. In the Arab Spring and South African cases, the point can be made that youth culture was expressed in the public sphere and has political undertones. Construed this way, Hodkinson and Deicke (2007:15) propose that youth culture may be seen as a response to the transition of adolescence, in view of Stanley Hall's (1904) conceptualization, which has been mediated before through ethnicity, class and gender, and more recently through fluidity, media and consumerism. Although Hodkinson and Deicke (2007) view youth culture in the Western context, its importance for the African context, and in particular, the East African context has been discussed extensively by the cultural anthropologist Mwenda Ntarangwi (2009; 2016).

Ntarangwi (2009) uses hip-hop music as a cultural analytic framework of exploring how globalization has affected youth in East Africa. In his view, although globalization has offered connections across communities, cultures, and nations, it has also served to marginalize those who are not in culturally or economically hegemonic positions (Ntarangwi 2009:2). Ntarangwi (2009:3) offers the example of the IMF's (International Monetary Fund) 1970s-1980s neo-liberal economic agenda and its negative socio-economic impact for African states, which was stratified through the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). In such instances, youth culture is viewed as an expression of the agency of young people to respond to this marginalization, and in Ntarangwi's (2009:3) case, through hip-hop music. In our case, we could stretch the scope broader into other music genres such as Afro pop for instance in the music and lyrics of international Kenyan artists such as Eric

Wainaina and Sauti Sol. Ntarangwi (2016) particularizes his argument through an ethnographic study of Juliani's works.[2]

In this sense, we may have youth cultures and subcultures of Kenya or the youth cultures and subcultures of Germany, with their overlaps and nuances. Dean Borgman (2013) is helpful in practically theologizing about youth culture. Youth culture is not static but dynamically changes and this gives credence to the study of youth cultures. Borgman (2013:172) covers this reciprocity when he says, "there is a continuous tension of values and meaning between power structures, the media and youthful recipients, who become producers of their own signs and meaning". Hence, youth music, language or fashion may be interpreted as a youthful way of responding to the dominant culture by forming their own culture. Youth cultures and subcultures remain crucial to the understanding of young people.

This points our gaze to the existence of sub-cultures. If music is seen as an element of youth culture, then hip-hop may be seen as a sub-culture. Sub-cultures according to Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner may be seen as "alternative cultures and practices to the dominant culture" (Muggleton & Weinzierl 2003:299). These two scholars specifically look at the internet as a type of media subculture which young people may engage for democratic reasons. To the earlier examples of Arab Spring and #FeesMustFall, we could add #BlackLivesMatter which was the most popular hashtag in North America in 2018. These media sub-cultures are expressive tools used by young people to bring social and political justice issues to the frontline. In today's digital space, it is necessary to investigate how cultural expressions of young people and popular media epistemologies and assumptions challenge the formation of young people (Mueller 2006:27; Smith 2009). These "everyday liturgies" contribute significantly to the formation and malformation of faith

---

[2] *Juliani* is the artistic name for the Kenyan hip-hop artist Julius Owino

of young people. Noting how media for example offers emerging generations "maps of reality" in their transitory journey into adulthood, Mueller (2006:27) cites Dean Borgman's findings of how media plays multifaceted roles in the lives of youth such as offering an accepting community as well as filling institutional and relational voids. But the notion of subcultures has also been critiqued by a host of scholars in the edited work by Muggleton and Weinzierl (2003). The subcultural theory began in the 1970s from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at University of Birmingham and was founded on a Gramscian-semiotic model (Muggleton & Weinzierl 2003:4). Those who critique sub-cultural theory base their arguments on seeking to find new frameworks in light of postmodernity for instance formulated in the works of Pierre Bourdieu (1994), Judith Butler (1990, 1993) and Michael Maffesol (1996), who pursue different methodologies. However, Hodkinson and Deicke (2007:16) note that post-subculturalism does not negate the necessity of outlining and understanding youth culture.

Researching youth culture is a crucial undertaking, which although engaged from anthropological and sociological approaches, merits theological reflection especially for the purposes of holistic faith formation. Mueller (2007) has written on youth culture, and this study will seek to pursue a similar focus but seek to explore its importance for holistic faith formation in Africa. Forming the faith of the emerging generations must engage the surface-level and deep-level cultures and sub-cultures inherent in the lives of African youth today. Whereas guardians of young people are more concerned on outward behavior, this cultural understanding enables us to consider the deeper foundations from which these behaviors come from. So, for instance, the trend of youth being disengaged from the Church may be as a result of worldview clashes with their older church community, showing that they may not be disinterested with spiritual things but are looking for a different paradigm with which to engage their faith within their postmodern cultural location.

1.7.8 A multi-disciplinary approach

The assumptions of the preceding paragraphs are rooted in an understanding of adolescence as a transitory period into adulthood. With various scholars and psychologists noting the extension of adolescence into the thirties, the consideration of psychological perspectives of emerging generations is important (Clark 2016). Here, questions of trust, identity and vocation remain central in the unfolding stages of faith in Fowler's (1981) understanding. Since the adolescent is shaped within educational institutions and the family setting, faith formation should explore their significance. Micucci (2009:59) for instance considers the interpersonal context of the adolescent in the family setting as an important factor that influences adolescent development. This is a core assumption in developmental psychology of young people that is shared across the field. Thus, their development, within the family setting must be considered in how it either enhances or inhibits the faith formation of young people. In Africa, familial breakdown is common across the classes of societies. In the slum areas, single parents are prone to the neglect of children or engaging in sex work on the basis of earning a living for the children. Within the middle- and upper-classes, career and professional development that is common in a self-entitled culture stresses marital bonds and parental relationships with their children. Teens for instance may have all the goods and gadgets to play with but are thirsty for meaningful relationships with their parents. In order to have a healthy youth ministry, it is crucial to engage the question of intimacy. If spirituality is seen as oneness with God and integration of one's personality in service to others, according to Jones, Wainwright & Yarnold (1986:565), then examining the psycho-social aspects of the young person is helpful in answering the research questions.

The point of this brief literature review is to make the case for the research concept. A multi-disciplinary lens that engages theology, culture and psychology is crucial for this research focus. Whereas faith formation in general, and youth faith formation in particular, is oftentimes engaged from a singular lens of theological

orientation, worldview assumptions or affective approaches, a holistic approach to faith formation will be assumed throughout. Further, although young people in a global perspective may show similarity in specific patterns, the cultural location of the African youth will be considered in order to examine the uniqueness of their context. The East African city of Nairobi will be used as the regional context whereas the Presbyterian Church of East Africa will be used as the ecclesial context, in order to help us trace the history of youth work in the African context. The longer and exhaustive literature review will serve to engage these issues at a deeper level, drawing out their symbiotic nature for examining the research study.

1.8 Theoretical framework and methodology

Several practical theological frameworks exist and can be listed as Osmer's, Browning's and LIM (Woodbridge 2014:90). Any of these frameworks can be engaged depending on one's research focus. Although Woodbridge's (2014:93) EDNA (Explorative, Descriptive, Normative and Action) model seeks to synthesize these approaches, Woodbridge himself notes that he is not offering anything new. In many ways his "Descriptive" element seems synonymous with Osmer's "descriptive-empirical task", his "Normative" synonymous with Osmer's "Normative task" and his "Action" element which seeks to answer, "how should we respond" synonymous with Osmer's "Strategic task". Woodbridge (2014:114-116) applies this understanding to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and cleansing of the Temple (Mt 21:12-33) to show how his method is more biblically grounded. Construed this way, there is not much difference with Osmer's model, although Smith (2010) proposes that the latter can be more biblically grounded.

This research is embedded in Richard Osmer's (2008) framework. The reason is that it combines a thoughtful and simple method together with its wide coverage in the discipline, thus commending itself to the particular research questions of this study. Additionally, Osmer's framework has been written for congregational leaders, that is, those who are engaged in practical ministry primarily and who desire

competent theological reflection grounded in actual field work. Such a methodology must consider what hermeneutical approach to take. Osmer's (2008:22) mentioning of interpretation being grounded in the past makes use of Gadamer's hermeneutical method (Smith 2010:102). Gadamer, the German Christian philosopher makes use of the humanities in offering his distinctive hermeneutical method, which is the bedrock of Osmer's, and generally, practical theology's approach – as compared say to the more classical disciplines of systematic theology, exegesis, and biblical theology. In his *Truth and Method,* which distills much of his learning from Martin Heidegger, Gadamer (2004) establishes the foundational understanding that interpretation is based on induction, that is, that it is based on an experiential epistemology. One sees how this understanding arose from the 20th century's scientific understanding, and how it has largely influenced the field of practical theology. This is why a qualitative methodology that seeks to gather information from the ground up has made use of empirical methods in practical theology. However, several scholars seem to take issue with such an approach as it fails to engage the nuances of particular phenomena, such as youth culture (Keuss 2014:25). Root (2016:54, 64) reflecting backwards on his longstanding research in practical theology observes:

> Practical theology seeks to attend to lived and concrete experience, but the very methods of empirical study, which practical theologians turn toward to help us with our task of describing lived experience, may, ironically, in the end (without a reworking from the start), overlook or reduce people's experience of divine action, seeing transcendence as de facto impossible... The practical theologian must see his or her move into the empirical as an act of ministry, which opens up the possibility of transcendence.

Thus, Root (2016) cautions us from losing our theological lens in empirical studies. This is the main reason that the researcher thinks that Osmer's approach serves the research questions best. By considering what is going on among the young people, especially within the African and Nairobian context, the researcher will

make use of the history of youth work in the PCEA, which is the ecclesial context. The second step will then offer an interpretation that considers the interdisciplinary connection between youth cultures and sub-cultures, psychology (adolescent development) and theology (faith formation). The third task would be to consider the normative approaches through a biblical-theological lens of Scripture and literature within the disciplines involved. And the last phase of "action" will be offered based on the theological consideration of what is happening among the demographic within the research context. The chapter outlines have been organized on the basis of this approach.

1.9 Theological rationale of the study

The theological rationale of this study will be broadly evangelical and particularly reformed and confessionally Presbyterian. This arises from the researcher's theological orientation as well as his ecclesial and research context.[3] However, the research will engage with scholars across the theological divides in order to offer a dialogical approach to the research study. In effect, a reformed-evangelical orientation, according to the researcher, assumes a biblical approach that is in conversation with the Scriptures, a high view of God and an appreciation of Christian tradition as a guide that can help the contemporary church and academy in retrieving wisdom from the past and its application for the present and future. From a reformed view of common grace, the researcher firmly believes that all truth comes from God and will be keen to engage with diverse scholars and approaches.

---

[3] For more context of the researcher's theological approach, see the first two paragraphs in the introduction.

1.10 Research design

1.10.1 Qualitative approach

Primarily, this research study is based on an interdisciplinary approach as it engages theological reflection with youth culture. Secondarily, this study examines youth psychological development. This means that as it explores the relationship of youth groups to social issues, it is qualitative in nature (Creswell 2014:4). Qualitative research involves a variety of approaches that enable the researcher to collate the meanings acquired from his or her research (Swinton & Mowat 2016:28). John McLeod (Swinton & Mowat 2016:29) has given a helpful definition of qualitative research when he says:

> Qualitative research is a process of careful, rigorous enquiry into aspects of the social world. It produces formal statements or conceptual frameworks that provide new ways of understanding the world, and therefore comprises knowledge that is practically useful for those who work with issues around learning and adjustment to the pressures and demands of the social world.

Thus, as distilled by Swinton & Mowat (2016), qualitative research best suits this study which seeks to research faith formation in light of youth culture and draw out practical implications. Epistemologically, this study assumes a *constructivist approach* as the researcher holds that meaning, especially of youth culture, is based on the shared interactions of young people and their communities (Swinton & Mowat 2016:34). Yet, even in qualitative research, one may take several methodological approaches. Figure two below is a summary of the research concept of this study.

YOUTH CULTURE → **HOLISTIC FAITH FORMATION** → PERSONAL

PSYCHOLOGY → → ECCLESIAL

THEOLOGY → → PUBLIC

empirical & qualitative implications

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

**RESEARCH CONTEXT
PREBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF EAST AFRICA
(Youth in Nairobi)**
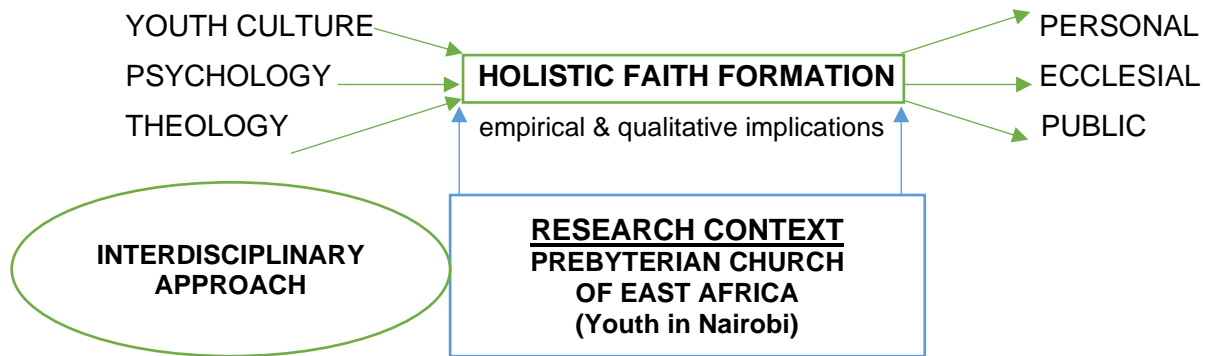
Figure 2: Research concept

1.10.2 Data collection and analysis

In terms of data collection, this research will make use of semi-structured interviews. Edwards & Holland (2013:3) define the qualitative-interview methods as having the following distinctives: (1) dialogical nature, (2) thematic approach and (3) contextual underpinning. This offers a data collection method that views the young people not only merely as objects but subjects, capable of offering meaning and clarifying assumptions. Secondly, it allows us to deeply understand the youth cultural nuances that are the subject of much stereotyping. Thirdly, this data collection method honors the place where the young person is. This is the singular emphasis of Keuss (2014) in helping us to understand the *Blur* of youth culture as the contextual situation of the young person, and how this can help the youth practitioner or scholar to deeply engage. Questions, both closed- and open-ended will be utilized in codifying the themes and also for explorative purposes.

The data collection method will also make use of *minutes, reports, and documents in the PCEA headquarters*. This will help in exploring the policies on

youth work within the ecclesiastical framework. The next task will be to design the semi-structure interview instrument, which has been attached as an APPENDIX A. This interview guide will be prepared in a thematic manner that utilizes the variables of study as has been presented in the previous sections. Once the data has been collected, it will be analyzed through Google Forms analytics for the general section (such as gender, age, Presbytery and Congregation). The rest of the data will be analyzed through "coding". By noting the responses for particular questions, the researcher will be able to identify reoccurring ideas or statements and develop relevant codes for them. The researcher will also match them with what he has discovered in the literature survey. Through this, the researcher will be able to explain "underlying essences, patterns, processes and structures" (Silverman 2011:188).

1.10.3 Population and sampling

The population and sampling methods of this research are defined in this section. Population refers to the general subject of the study, in this case, young people. The population of this study can be defined as follows: all young people in Presbyterian Churches Nairobi city and all youth pastors / workers in Presbyterian Churches in Nairobi city. Since the target population understood in this sense is large, then sampling is necessary. Sampling may be defined as "selecting some part of the population to observe so that one may estimate something about the whole population" (Thompson 2012:1). In terms of sampling methods, this research utilizes a non-probabilistic sampling method due to the nature of study being based on specific contexts (Marlow 2011:140).

More specifically, the researcher will utilize "criterion method" and "key-informants". The criterion method focuses on specific criteria, in our case, focusing on Presbyterian Churches in Nairobi city. In the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), the churches (congregations) are usually subsumed under particular Parishes which in turn are partitioned within specific Presbyteries (regions). In

Nairobi region, there are nine Presbyteries, although some have been placed in Nairobi region even though geographically, they are further away, based on missional reasons. The last two include Pwani and Tanzania presbyteries. The remaining seven are Kajiado, Milimani North, Milimani South, Nairobi Central, Nairobi East, Nairobi North and Ngong' Hills Presbyteries. Since qualitative interviews are not so much staked on the numbers of the interviews but on the range of meanings of the interviews (Edwards & Holland 2013:64), the scope will seek a geographical balance in the city. One congregation will be chosen within five of these Presbyteries, totaling to five congregations, for a representative sample and further focus the "age" criteria on teen, campus student and young professional. These three sub-categories should result in a total of 15 youth in the PCEA context in Nairobi. These should be representative of the youth definition in Kenya and consent and assent forms have been shared in APPENDIX D & E. Key informants will include youth pastors in these five congregations, who are considered experts in the area of youth work.

1.10.4 Ethical considerations

The researcher has conducted his research based on one of the aims of UNISA's (2016) ethical policy 1.6.2:

> The rights and interests of human participants, institutions communities, animals and the environment are protected. This is particularly important where the information that has been gathered has the potential to invade the privacy and dignity of participants and third parties, and where participants and third parties are vulnerable owing to their youth, disability, gender, age, poverty, disease, ignorance, or powerlessness.

Part of this will include proper citation of all sources of information based on academic standards, in our case the Harvard referencing guide, with due diligence to avoid academic plagiarism. This will also be ensured and enhanced through the

use of Turn-It-In software. The researcher will also seek clearance letters from the relevant institutions, including PCEA offices, congregations and UNISA committees and departments. A permission request letter to the PCEA is attached in APPENDIX B. Additionally, the researcher will attach consent forms for the purposes of responsibility and confidentiality through the entire research process. This has been attached in APPENDIX C.

This envisages the wide scope of ethics in the research process. Mugenda (2008:293) considers it as the application of ethical standards throughout the research stages – planning, data collection and analysis. In my research planning, I have identified all stakeholders in the research and planned on how to engage them ethically. During my data collection, I plan to maintain the confidentiality of each respondent and in the place of recording the interviews, the same shall be made known to them. This in accordance with UNISA (2016) research policy 1.2.4:

> Researchers should respect and protect the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of participants and where relevant, institutions. Researchers should ensure that the personal information of participants used for research purposes is adequately protected to prevent possible loss, damage and/or unauthorized access as required by Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, No. 4 of 2013. They should never expose such participants and institutions to procedures or risks not directly attached to the research project or its methodology. Research and the pursuit of knowledge should not, in themselves, be regarded as the supreme goal at the expense of the rights of participants and institutions.

In the case of engaging research assistants, I plan to develop a research guide that will set the proper expectations between all participants in the research in view of UNISA (2016) ethical policy 2.8:

Researchers should not infringe the autonomy of participants by resorting to coercion, undue influence, or the promise of unrealistic benefits. Coercion may include taking undue advantage of individuals or abusing their participation in the research. Inducement may include a promise of material or financial gain, services, or opportunities. No financial or other inducement should be offered to participants, whether children or adults, parents, or guardians of children. Reimbursement of expenses (e.g., transport costs, meals) or compensation for the time or effort expended or any opportunity that may be lost is allowed, on condition that all participants are offered similar reimbursement and that such reimbursement is only aimed at recompensing the participants.

This chapter has mainly offered an introductory framework for the research thesis. By laying the groundwork on the research problem, questions, aims, methodology, design, concept and theological rationale, the researcher has explored the tentative relationships between the variables of study as well as the approach that will be taken. The following chapter explores the theoretical base for the research study by exploring the research themes at a deeper level. Chapter one explored the first question that Richard Osmer's methodology asks which is descriptive-empirical in nature, that is, what is going on? Chapter two builds on this by asking the second question, which is interpretive in nature, that is, why is this going on? By exploring the theoretical, historical, and biblical contexts of the study, the researcher will be able to solidify the framework of this study and have meaningful foundation for the empirical phase of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one explored the research background, concepts, design, methodology and theological rationale, among other foundational issues with regards to the qualitative and practical theological nature of this study. While chapter one was descriptive in nature, this chapter is interpretive. This chapter will interact with the various literature surrounding the major research question which explores the place of youth cultures in the faith formation of young people in Nairobi city. Most of the texts in the canon of youth ministry are still heavily written by Western authors. In fact, the discipline has conceptually been developed from that background. In light of this reality, this literature engages substantially with these authors. The additional reason for this is that youth ministry is still a global enterprise for the people of God and must therefore make the best of different sources while critically engaging them. This is the researcher's approach to giving an African voice to the study. However, the author also engages African scholars in youth ministry including Aziz, Chiroma, Cloete, Weber, Malan Nel, Reggie Nel, as is evident from the copious citations.

This study consequentially explores concepts in adolescent development, youth culture, youth ministry models and a biblical theology of youth faith formation, which are the theoretical, historical, and biblical contexts that expand the research themes. This chapter is divided into three major sections, namely, historical context, theoretical context, and biblical-theological context of youth faith formation, as these provide a big picture perspective on the areas of study. The historical context seeks to explore the ecclesiological context of the study, in addition to tracing the development of youth work in Protestantism and more specifically, in Kenyan Presbyterianism from the 1960s to 2019. The theoretical context will seek to explore the interrelated themes of youth faith formation, adolescent development, and elements of youth culture, as these are most relevant towards the research study.

Lastly, the biblical-theological themes will explore the normative concept of "youth faith formation" in Scripture. By reading and interpreting the literature from these three vantage points, the researcher will then be able to engage in the data collection in order to test the various ideas that arise from the literature.

2.2 Historical Context of Youth Ministry

The study of youth faith formation is embedded in a particular historical context. Given the nature of this study that explores faith formation of youth in Nairobi city, it is therefore necessary to consider the history of youth ministry. The history of youth ministry in the literature goes back to the 1800s, with much more literature focusing on the 1900s period (Ward 1996; Root 2017). This first section will explore the ecclesiological context of the study, that is the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) as well as the history of protestant youth work in Kenya.

2.2.1 History of the PCEA

2.2.1.1 A Brief Summary of PCEA

The ecclesiological context of the study is the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). Since this chapter is descriptive and focuses on youth ministry, it does not fully engage the colonial history of the church. While mission scholars have critically engaged the imperial heritage of the colonial and missionary enterprise, there are still positive contributions by missionaries to African societies (Kwiyani 2014; Robert 2009; West 2016). While the missionary enterprise has rightly been critiqued for its cultural imperialism, Africans, and other peoples of majority descent, have assimilated, appropriated, and transmitted the faith in creative ways (Sanneh & Carpenter 2005; Walls 2015). The PCEA is a church that hails from the Protestant Reformation of the 1500-1600s (PCEA 1998). As such, it is reformed in its theology and practice. The core elements of its theology can be summarized as a high view of Scripture as inspired, inerrant, and reliable; the Sovereignty of God in creation, providence, and redemption; the fallenness of humanity in Adam and its restoration in Christ; the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to apply Christ's redemption to Christian believers; the return of Christ and the glorification of Christian believers, among others. As a reformed church, its theology is expressed in the five Solae of the reformation. These are expressed in the

"fundamental principles" of the church in articles one to thirteen of the Practice and Procedure manual (PP) (PCEA 2018:3-7). The church also has well defined positions on church-state relationships (articles 1.27, 1.28) and inter-denominational and ecumenical engagements with bodies such as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches (articles 1.38, 1.42).

In terms of church practice, each congregation is led by a session of elders – a distinction is made between ruling elders and teaching elders. The main task of the ruling elders is administrative, and a supplementary task is spiritual shepherding. The teaching elders are those who are ordained to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament (Berkhof 2012:586). Parish ministers (teaching elders) oversee the ministry of a parish, which may comprise of one or more local congregations. Several parishes in a similar area form a Presbytery, with its members and officials comprised among the elders (pairing between a ruling and teaching elder) from each Parish (Berkhof 2012:588). The Presbyteries collectively meet every three years for the General Assembly, which is the highest body (usually referred to as a court, because that is where decisions are made) in Presbyterian polity. In summary, the polity has the three-tiered courts, namely the parish level, presbytery level and General Assembly, as in articles 1.25, 1.26 (PCEA 2018:4). The leadership is thereby representative, with the concerns of the Church handled at the Parish, Presbytery and General Assembly levels. Although the parish minister leads and casts vision for individual congregations, he is accountable to his Session as well as Presbytery – as it is the latter that oversees the placement and administration of ministers (PCEA 1998).

The PCEA is also a confessional and creedal church, meaning it values the orthodox Christian beliefs as espoused in the historic creeds such as the Athanasian, Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds. These are found in the fundamental principles of the church (PCEA 2018:4) and added as appendices in chapter twenty-three of the PP (PCEA 2018:376). Furthermore, it formulates its doctrine and

practice based on the summative statements found in the historic confessions such as the Westminster Confession of Faith assembled by the 1646 Westminster Assembly and its derivative Larger and Shorter Catechisms that have been used in the catechetical formation in the congregations through the years. Additionally, the Church's guiding manual is called the PCEA Practice and Procedure with the first edition drawn out in 1969, and revisions following in 1998 and most recently in 2019.

2.2.1.2 PCEA's Reformation roots

Mutahi (2010:12) notes that the PCEA is rooted in the reformation that was spearheaded by Martin Luther (1483-1546) in 1517, theologically developed by John Calvin (1509-1564) and applied in ecclesiological practice by John Knox (1513-1572). Of course, the precursor to the reformation can be dated much earlier to luminary figures or proto reformers such as John Wycliffe (1330-1384), who was responsible for translating the Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate, and John Huss (1369-1415), who was martyred at the "stake". McGoldrick (2012) traces Presbyterian history to the early church, by noting the system of eldership espoused in the New Testament letters and epistles. Texts such as Acts 15 and 1 Peter 5:1-2 are used as biblical support for Presbyterian government. Quoting the Church father Jerome (340-420), McGoldrick (2012) observes that by the second century, church government was geared towards an episcopal polity as a result of factions in the early church. Thus, by the time of the Protestant Reformation, the popes commanded authority and various doctrinal practices had come into play.

After nailing the *Ninety-five theses* to the All-Saints Church, in Wittenberg, Germany in 1517, Luther extended his reformation emphasis through his *Address to the Christian nobility* in 1520. According to McGoldrick (2012), Luther's emphases in this address was a denial of the sacerdotal nature of the clergy by affirming the equality of clergy and laity, also known as the priesthood of all believers. The other reformers would pursue this theological reformation in different parts of Europe. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) concurrently carried on the reformation

work in Zurich, although with slight differences from Luther, especially in the area of Church-State relationship. The application of reformed theology to church polity is attributed to Martin Bucer (1491-1551), John Calvin's friend and teacher. A Dominican Friar, Bucer was converted during Luther's exposition in 1518 at Heidelberg.

John Calvin (1509-1564) is primarily known as one of the reformers of the Church. He is remembered for the recovery of the centrality of the Scriptures as well as the separation of Church and State as a theological distinction. One of his influential works that he wrote in 1559 is called *Institutes of the Christian religion,* in addition to his influential 1543 letter to Emperor Charles V titled, *The necessity of reforming the Church.* He wrote the Institutes to the French King, Francis I, seeking to respond to the false allegations of his opponents with the effect of expositing the core of Christian teaching in order to encourage Christians of his time. This can be seen when Calvin (2014: xx) says "my sole purpose was to teach certain rudiments which might allow those who were touched with a sincere feeling for God to learn true piety." Although Calvin has been misinterpreted, his core theology seems to be very biblical. His teaching was a response to two groups of people: On one hand, the *Spiritualists* were those who laid claim to divine revelation of the Spirit and who ignored the precedence of the Scriptures. They claimed that the "letter kills" and that reading of Scripture was a mundane activity. Calvin (2014: xx) responded by noting the testimony of the Spirit in the Scriptures and his work in illuminating the Word of God for the believer as opposed to giving fresh revelations to Christians. This certainly mirrors the contemporary context today in light of the Pentecostal excess rampant in African churches. The other group of people seem to refer to the Roman Catholic (RC) priests who had laid a lot of weight on custom in the Church. Calvin (2014:xxv-xxviii) proceeded to show that Roman Catholic Church's (RCC) teaching was contrary to much of what the Church Fathers had understood about Christian life and practice.

Calvin's work observes several disagreements with the RCC. First, although the Church Fathers held to a simple understanding of the Holy Communion, Roman Catholicism (RC) suggested use of costly vessels. Second, was the issue of excommunication of those who ate meat during lent. Third, the monks were to work with their hands to earn a living contrary to the RC teaching of living in monasteries and making their vows of self-denial. Fourth, the use of imagery in the Church was contrary to the practice of the Church during the time of the Church Fathers. Fifth, was the understanding of Holy Communion. The orthodox practice of the Church held to the view of the symbolic presence of Christ in the elements compared to the RC understanding of physical presence. Sixth, was the legalistic understanding of fasting where the RC made it a "strict legal requirement". Seventh, was the issue of priestly abstinence of marriage, which was contrary to Christian teaching and seventh, was the heavy emphasis on philosophy which sometimes obscured scriptural teaching. In making his case, Calvin quotes the Church Fathers such as Augustine, Jerome, Cyprian, and Ambrose. While Calvin shows that he respected Church tradition, he saw that scriptural teaching is preeminent above custom as an antidote against errant teaching. As such he went ahead to systematically present Christian doctrine as a response to these groups and to elevate Christ and encourage the Church of Christ by expounding God's word. This was the basis of his "confession."

Other notable reformers were the French speaking William Farrel (1489-1565) in Switzerland, and his counterpart Pierre Viret (1511-1571). In France, Jean le Macon (ca. 1533–1572) and Admiral Gaspar de Coligny (1519–1572). In Netherlands Guido, de Brés (d. 1567), was a formative figure in this city that had become a city of refuge for the reformers due to its religious freedom. Scotland, which has a direct relationship with the PCEA, was home to John Knox (ca. 1514–1572), the former priest and fiery preacher who, after reading St. Augustine's writings was dissuaded from the Medieval church's teaching and became a follower of the reformer George Wishart (ca. 1513–1546). McGoldrick (2012) notes that after

his release in 1549, Knox went to England upon Protestant King Edward VI's (r. 1547–1553) welcome and remained there from 1549–1554.

Between the 1600s and 1800s, Presbyterianism took a circuitous route.[4] The second Scottish reformation (1572-1660) was an opposition to Erastianism. The core teaching was attributed to the Swiss theologian, Erastus, although he did not advance it. He taught that excommunication in the Church was unscriptural and that such discipline should be handled by the civil authorities. Thus, Erastianism advanced the idea that the state is superior to the Church. The Scottish Presbyterians responded to this teaching by advancing the counterargument that "None but Christ Reigns" or "Christ's Crown and Covenant" leading to the identification of Scottish Presbyterianism as the Covenanters. Key figures of this period were Andrew Melville, Robert Bruce, John Livingston, Alexander Henderson, and Samuel Rutherford.

A second notable event in Presbyterian history is the ten-year gathering of the divines from 1643-1653 of the Westminster Assembly that led to the publishing of the four forms of unity, that is, the Westminster Confession of Faith (exposition of doctrine), the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Presbyterian Form of Government (dealing with polity) and the Directory of Public Worship of God (dealing with liturgy). In the new world, Presbyterianism would take different routes such as French Huguenots, the Church of England, the Puritans, and the Dutch Reformed Churches. In terms of the philosophical context of the time, the publication of Rene Descartes' (1596-1650) *Discourse in Method* was a foundational text for the 18th century enlightenment that exalted the place of reason above that of religious tradition. John Locke (1632-1704) another foundational

---

[4] Presbyterian Historical Society https://www.history.pcusa.org/history-online/presbyterian-history/timeline-presbyterian-history; Church History 1600-1800, Reformed Presbyterian Church Manassas http://rpchurchmanassas.org/drupal/ChurchHistory16001800

figure of the time championed the place of sense experience in interpreting reality, what has come to be known as empiricism. Half a century later, perhaps due to an overemphasis on reason and sense experience, Jean Jacques Rosseau (1712-1778) championed a new emphasis on the human emotions, thereby beginning a movement called Romanticism. Thus, an overemphasis on reason, science and feelings would create a unique challenge for the religious landscape of the time.

Presbyterian history within the continent of Africa began through the second phase of missionary activity in Africa (1400-1800), beginning with the Portuguese slave trade which touched the coastal regions of Africa including Cape of Good Hope and Mombasa (Maseno 2016:109). Missionary societies founded in the post-reformation period were the primary vehicles of translating the protestant faith to other parts of the world. Kurewa (2011:66) records that the initial missionary activity in Africa began with the Lutheran Church in Abyssinia from 1623-1636, and missionary activity continued in Ghana in the following years. The second group critical to missionary activity in Africa was by the Methodists through the freed slaves from 1787-1791, and to Liberia in 1822. These freed slaves originated from Jamaica, England, and Nova-Scotia. American Presbyterianism entered Malawi in 1874. Duncan (2018:40) observes that the Glasgow Missionary Society (GMS) was also active in the Eastern Cape of South Africa with the Presbytery of Kaffraria of the Free Church of Scotland established in 1824. It would later unite with the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1900, with 28 congregations with about 14,402 members.

Maseno (2016:110) notes the central place that Ludwig Krapf has played in the modern missionary expansion in Africa, through the Anglican Church Missionary Society (ACMS). Together with his wife, he arrived in Zanzibar in 1844 and later moved to Mombasa. Together with his colleague Rebmann, they were involved in translating the New Testament into Nyika, Kiswahili and other languages (Maseno 2016:110). Scottish Missionaries were antecedent to Presbyterianism in the continent. In the 1880s they set foot in East Africa. Duncan (2018:37) observes that

they were instrumental in the formation of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (PCSA) in 1897.

Muita (2003:1) traces the routes of the PCEA to the Imperial British East Africa Chartered Company (IBEA) incorporated in 1888 for the purposes of trade. William MacKinnon, a member of IBEA was also a member of the Free Church of Scotland, which had broken off from the established Church of Scotland in 1843. Concerned for the spiritual welfare of the people under their jurisdiction, William MacKinnon and Alexander Bruce formed the East African Scottish Mission in 1889 and upon a formal request by the two, the Rev. James Stewart DD of Lovedale South Africa took charge of the work, traveling Northwards to Kenya in 1891 (Muita 2003:2; PCEA 1998:1). Mission stations would be established in Kibwezi on October 15th, 1891, Kikuyu in 1900, Tumutumu in 1908 by Petro Mugo, a teacher and evangelist, Chogoria in 1915, and finally Kambui mission in 1945 under the Gospel Missionary Society.

Muita (2003) has divided the PCEA historical periods instructively. Lighting the torch through the oversees mission efforts between 1891-1920, a time of PCEA taking responsibility from the oversees missionaries between 1920-1945, social reconstruction after the war and Africanizing the church between 1945-1956, church autonomy between 1956-1968, new mission emphases between 1968-1991 and the articulation of a new vision into the new millennium. Of special mention is the year 1956 when the Church of Scotland Oversees Presbytery of Kenya and the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa united through a scheme of union and inaugurated its first General Assembly on 11th February 1956 at St. Andrew's Church, Nairobi (Muita 2002:52). Rev. Robert MacPherson was the first moderator of the General Assembly, serving two terms. In addition, PCEA's contribution to the African church is the Jitegemea Philosophy that pushed for self-autonomy based on the Very Rev. Dr. John Gatu's moratorium on foreign assistance in 1971 and this has been noted by several historians including Hastings (1979:238) and Muita (2003:81). This philosophy had the undercurrents of the national motto of

Harambee. Under Rev. MacPherson's leadership, a new emphasis in youth work would begin, which has since shaped the understanding and implementation of youth work in the country.

2.2.2 History of Youth Ministry in Kenya

2.2.2.1 History of Protestant youth ministry

The literature on the history of youth ministry in Kenya is scanty. However, some information can be gathered from the work of several scholars. In evangelical Christianity, youth work goes as far back as the 19th century according to Ward (1996), who has explored the history of evangelical youth work. Similarly, the practical theologian Andrew Root (2017:17) observes the idea of "youthfulness" as a 20th century phenomenon, rooted in the last one hundred years of "technological, geopolitical and religious" transitions. Although the world wars aimed at establishing power and control, they resulted in economic anxiety through the Great Depression of the 1930's which in turn was the basis for consumerist capitalism as an economic solution. With the rise of consumerism, goods and services were marketed to unique segments, to increase sales of the same. Root (2017:29) notes that this segmentation was the backdrop of the mid-1950s outreach of the Church to engage the society, and specifically the middle-class through organizations such as Young Life and Youth for Christ.

Ward's (1996) history reaches further back. In 1844 George Williams and friends gathered for the first YMCA meeting with the purpose to equip young men to evangelize neighbors through prayer meetings and Bible studies. Almost half a decade later in 1883, the Boy's Brigade was began by William Smith in Glasgow. Baden-Powell (founder of Scouts) was less enthusiastic of the Boy's Brigade evangelistic or militaristic stance. In 1888, the Sunday School Union invited Francis Clark, who later as Minister at Maine began the first church-based youth ministry

programme known as *The International Christian Endeavour Society*. Apart from fellowship, the union engaged youth in Christian mission.

Senter (2010:xii) historically observes four phases of youth ministry in the context of North America as 1824-1875, 1881-1925, 1933-1989 and 1990s onwards. The first phase (1824-1875) focused on the social issues facing young people and was concerned in changing the outward lifestyle of young people. This phase was championed by Christian societies and organizations that have already been mentioned such as Sunday Schools, YMCA, and juvenile temperance societies. The second phase (1881-1925) took on an educational emphasis in line with the developing theory of progressive education. The third phase (1933-1989) as a corrective to the waning emphasis on God's presence, was more relational and converged on the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. The fourth phase according to Senter (2010:xiii) is concerned with navigating the pluralistic culture of contemporary societies.

2.2.2.2 History of PCEA youth ministry

Within the PCEA, youth ministry was officially instituted in the church in 1960 when it was agreed that specialized ministry to the young people within the church was in order. The Youth Fellowship was formed with a constitution drawn to guide its scope of ministry practice in the church (PCEA 1998:328). In 1961 Mr. Jerry and Mrs. Anna Bedford became the first youth workers.[5] The mission of the youth fellowship is:

---

[5] The stories of Anna and Jerry Bedford, as frontier missionaries, have been captured by the Christian Century and Boston School of Theology: https://www.christiancentury.org/article/critical-essay/frontier-interns-reenvisioned-missions-postcolonial-era; https://www.bu.edu/sth/frontier-internship-in-mission-researcher-statement-by-ada-focer-phd/ Accessed on 13th September, 2021.

> To know and believe in God through our Saviour Jesus Christ who is Lord of all humanity; to serve God through service to the youth, to the Church and to the community; to unite young Christians and strengthen one another in commitment to Jesus Christ and the church and to witness to God's love and salvation through Jesus Christ, where they are in the wider world (Muita 2003:60; PCEA 1998:329).

The constitution was revised in 1984 and 1989. In terms of the structure of youth ministry, the Central Youth Committee (CYC) was created as an oversight body, coordinated through presbyterial youth committees (PCEA 1998:328). From its inception, the youth ministry in the PCEA has seen its work in partnership with other youth organizations such as Boy's Scouts, Girl Guides, Boys' and Girls' Brigade, Youth for Christ, NCCK, Youth Desk, YMCA, Christian Students Council, Fellowship of Christina Unions in Colleges and Universities, among many others (PCEA 1998:327). The primary function of the youth ministry in the Presbyterian church has been to draw young people into a fuller life in Christ (PCEA 1998:327).

Missionary churches have traditionally focused on church polity as opposed to ministering to people. Young people thus experienced a strain in mainline churches and began to gather themselves within other contexts. In Kenya, para-church ministries desired to meet this need, leading to the formation of the Kenya Youth for Christ (KYFC) in 1975, as an example. Although the PCEA for instance began youth work in 1961, bodies such as KYFC, FOCUS (Fellowship of Christian Union Students) Kenya and Life Ministry Kenya have had a lasting impact on a huge number of students. The PCEA church has not been left behind, with youth coordinators employed at the parish, presbytery, and regional levels.

Initially, regional youth workers were employed in five regions (Maina 2015:53). In 2001 St. Andrews parish employed its first youth coordinator followed by Nairobi west parish in 2003 then Thika and Langata Parishes followed in 2005. Maina (2015) has noted how youth ministries in the PCEA became a catalyst for raising

up current church ministers and leaders. Youth work has since expanded and covers most of the presbyteries. As of 2019, the Youth Department of the PCEA is overseen by Rev. Anthony Miring'u. The first national convention of its time in 2019 brought together about 500 Presbyterian youth for the purposes of fellowship. The vision of the PCEA Youth Department is "a vibrant and well-coordinated Youth Movement extending to every corner of East Africa and beyond". The mission is focused on evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, youth leadership and holistic empowerment – which are critical emphases in the African context of the 21st century. The vision is a vibrant and well-coordinated Youth Movement extending to every corner of East Africa and beyond. Figure 1 below summarizes the PCEA Youth Fellowship vision and mission.

Figure 3: PCEA youth fellowship logo emphasizing the youth ministry focus on spirituality, cooperation, and development in the African context.

According to the PCEA website (2019), the Youth department's mission has been expanded to raising emerging youth leaders as well as youth empowerment (physically, economically, socially, and politically). With urbanization and globalization in the country due to rural-urban migration, such a holistic perspective to discipleship is necessary. Further, cultural engagement in the global world is crucial to equip the young people to serve the church and society in an informed manner. Much more needs to be done in order to make the youth work effective for instance policies that acknowledge the place of youth ministers, a concept which is

foreign to the PCEA practice and procedure but has been tabled in the General Administration Committee of 2019. Even though the PCEA may have been a forerunner in youth work, other churches and para-church organizations have gone on ahead to surpass the PCEA in terms of youth engagement, as they have taken advantage of the youth bulge that characterizes Africa as a young continent. These churches tend to be more evangelical and charismatic, and established as missional churches to urban youth. In Kenya, they include churches such as Mavuno, Mamlaka and the International Christian Center, among others.

Several programmatic activities are also part of the youth ministry in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). Youth commissioning process is a contextual approach of recruiting members into the youth fellowship. It is usually overseen by the parish minister who organizes for training through the office of the youth director in the national headquarters. The youth are then taken through a training process and then commissioned in a public worship service. They are usually given a youth badge and an identification card to give them a sense of belonging. While this has worked in some of the rural parishes, it is slowly picking up in urban towns. The reason may be the socio-cultural reasons behind the concept of what it means to belong. Additionally, the PCEA youth fellowship has an ecumenical focus and has been represented in the Word Council of Churches (WCC) and the All-African Council of Churches (AACC) (PCEA 2018). PCEA also runs an annual youth week whereby the youth take a central part in the congregational life of the church. This happens through youth fellowships, youth-to-youth or peer engagements, youth outreach through missions and community work, youth, and environmental engagement, among others. The week climaxes on the Sunday when the youth lead in the entire liturgical service, including worship, prayers, readings, presentations and preaching.

2.2.3 Conclusion

The forgoing history has gone to show that the ministerial strategy is based on the needs-based approach considering the society of the time. The PCEA is a well-grounded church with a rich history. It has also been observed through the research that the PCEA, as well as other mission churches, Africanized their polity and practice to suit the context of the new Africa in post-independent Kenya. An example is the Jitegemea Philosophy which has set the pace for many faith-based organizations on how to raise support for their workers in order to be self-propagating, self-sustainable and self-reliant churches.[6] By the same token, the PCEA must take up the mantle to create ministry policy, strategy, and funding towards the emerging generations. Considering the inter-cultural and technological age that we find ourselves in, the PCEA must firmly embed its focus on youth work. One of those ways that is proposed is through robust faith formation; otherwise, the pressures from the surrounding culture may sway the young people away from the Church, when they view it as not relevant. It is to some of these theories on youth ministry that we will now turn to, in order to consider their place for the 21st century. Such theories include adolescent development, youth cultural studies and youth ministry models.

---

[6] "Africa has money and personnel and until we have produced the five loaves and two fishes, our Lord continues to say, 'Give them something to eat'". This was a part of the speech by the Very Rev. Dr. John Gatu, past moderator of the PCEA church to the conference of Africa Committee of the Division of Overseas Mission (DOM) held in February 1971 in New York, USA. This was the basis of the "principles of selfhood, self-reliance and self-determination" popularly known as *Jitegemea philosophy* which was a hallmark of the PCEA and spread to other Kenyan churches in post-independent Africa (Gatu 2016:128).

2.3 Theoretical context of youth ministry

With the ecclesiological context captured through the foregoing historical survey, it is now helpful to consider the thematic areas of study. In order to critically analyze youth faith formation, it is necessary to survey the literature surrounding adolescent development. This is because the study of adolescence is critical in understanding the concept of "youth" as well as laying a foundation for the cultural study that will follow in section 2.3.2. Adolescent development will be the focus of this section.

2.3.1 Adolescent development theories

In the area of adolescent development, G. Stanley Hall's study of 1904, "*Adolescence"* has been a foundational work. Noting the uniqueness of this period of life, Hall saw adolescence as a turbulent stage, comprising of "storm and stress" such as laziness and excitement, selfishness and hospitality, creativity, and passivity (Hall 1904, xii). As an evolutionist who interpreted adolescence as a transitory stage between childhood and adulthood, Hall desired to explore its relevance for pedagogy as well as other areas such as nature, science, religious training, society, and crime. Thus, his first three divisions take up the matter of physical, cognitive, and biological growth that define adolescence.

As the transition between childhood and adulthood, the age limits stretch between 11 and 19 years, although based on contemporary research, others have extended the upper age limit to the early twenties (Clark 2016). Adolescence can also be classified into early, middle, and late – in the Kenyan context, primary school, high school, and early college (Clark 2016:25). Increasing research in the area of adolescence shows tensions in the description of adolescence, and the reason given is that much focus is given to the lens of "age and stage rather than through markers of development" (Clark 2016).

Rather than an "age and stage" approach as earlier discussed, Clark (2016) proposes that adolescence should be seen from three different "orientations" – psychological, cognitive, and behavioral orientations. *Psychological development* has been attributed to Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Eric Erikson (1902-1994). This approach explores the fact that personality develops over a period of life stages. During each stage, the person goes through a crisis and must resolve it for proper development and the acquisition of specific virtues. Erikson's eight stages (as in Table 1 below) of psychosocial development includes five stages up to age 18 and three more stages after that. Of importance to us is the age 12-18 bracket which is termed as the "identity and role confusion stage". During this stage, adolescents search for a sense of self and personal identity, through an intense exploration of personal values, beliefs, and goals, as they consider the roles they will occupy as an adult (Erikson 1968).

Table 1: Erikson's eight stages of development

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1.	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	0 - 1½
2.	Autonomy vs. Shame	Will	1½ - 3
3.	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	3 - 5
4.	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competency	5 - 12
5.	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	12 - 18
6.	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	18 - 40
7.	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care	40 - 65
8.	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	65+

The second orientation is *cognitive development* which has been attributed to Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). It focuses on the intellectual and brain developmental functions of adolescents. According to Piaget, adolescents begin to develop cognitive skills such as improving language skills, greater assessment of risk versus reward, making abstract concepts, making

hypotheses, making observations and problem solving (Hazen, Schlozman & Beresin, 2008:164; Piaget 2008). Vygotsky (2004:31-32) looks at how imagination matures from child-like fantasy based on the transitional nature of adolescence.

At the same time, the two major types of imagination are exhibited very clearly at this stage. These are plastic and emotional, or external and internal imagination. These two major types are primarily distinguished by the materials from which fantasy constructs its products and by the rules of this construction. Plastic imagination primarily utilizes the data provided by external impressions and builds using elements borrowed from external world. Imagination in the arts and poetry is an example (Zittoun & Glaveanu 2018:68). Emotional imagination, on the other hand, builds with elements taken from within the human senses. Plastic imagination can thus be called objective and the emotional imagination, subjective. The manifestations of both types of imagination and their gradual differentiation are characteristic of the adolescent period.

The third orientation is *behavioral development* which has been attributed to B. F. Skinner (1904-1990) and Bandura (1925-). This orientation looks at adolescent behavior and attributes it to social factors as well as physical changes that happen in adolescence at the onset of puberty. Because of some of these changes, peer influence remains a crucial factor for teenagers. As a result, adolescents may want to experiment with sexuality, for instance, which could lead to teen pregnancy (Krayer, Ingledew & Iphofen, 2007). Other scholars note that as adolescents develop, they can mature in their coping strategies with regards to life stressors such as distraction, peer influence, negotiating family issues as well as medical events (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011). The behavior of adolescents requires a multi-disciplinary approach that looks at the various facets of adolescent development including biological, psychological, and social (Magnusson, Stattin & Allen, 1985:268). Youth workers must be willing to help adolescents with decision-making skills for them to negotiate their transition well. These crucial skills can be

applied to the topics of sexuality, drugs and money, topics of practical concern to young people.

The orientations, as discussed above, approaches adolescents from different perspectives, which are not contrary to each other, but are complementary. Yet in some senses, there is an overlap between the different orientations. For instance, biological changes may be connected to cognitive development among adolescents. Instead of this age and stage approach to adolescent development, adolescence can be approached as a landscape and Clark (2016:226-38) suggests that knowing certain "markers" may equip youth practitioners in their work. Some of these markers that Clark (2016) has explored are crucial for our study.

Timing and duration of adolescence is one marker that affects the development of adolescents. Scholars have noted that the duration of adolescents is increasing thereby leading to the phenomenon of "emerging adulthood" (Hill 2015). Several factors that contribute to this concept of "emerging adulthood" or "extended adolescence" are the loss of an overarching life story (metanarrative) and the "systemic abandonment" of children and youth. This is especially true for many African countries given the multicultural nature of the society as well as the systemic structures that disable the development of young people. These include political instability, struggling economies, unemployment, and dysfunctional families. Thus, crossing into adulthood is taking a longer time and is more fluid as opposed to traditional development which presents specific challenges to young people (Clark, 2016:30). Another issue is gender difference and how this has affected the development of both males and females. It has been noted that females are maturing earlier than males, thereby reducing the lower limit of adolescence. Further, the "boy-child syndrome" is proving that the transition into adulthood is extending well beyond the mid-twenties, thereby increasing the upper limit of adolescence.

A physician and psychologist, Sax (2007) focuses on the problem affecting the "boy child". To support his theory of the reality of the challenges affecting the "boy child", he notes five issues that are critical for this study. The first issue has to do with the changes that are happening in school. According to MRI studies done at the National Institute of Mental Health in Maryland in 2007 (Sax 2007), brain development varies between young boys and girls through to emerging adulthood in terms of sequence and tempo. The parietal gray matter (information integration), in girls develops about 2 years faster than that of boys; whereas the temporal gray matter (spatial perception and object recognition) develops faster in boys (Sax, 2007:17). Because of these differences, some suggest that boys should begin class a year later for them to be at par with girls, especially given the modern-day emphasis of education on rote learning.[7] Furthermore, because childhood development requires children to engage with the real world, boys are disadvantaged when school is not experiential. Secondly, the modern-day phenomenon of video games gives boys the "will power", that is, the ability to be in charge of their circumstances, and this will power takes charge over other drives. Video games, especially violent ones, give some boys this sense of power and control that they crave. Video games, although some argue can be positive or negative, has the potential to negatively alter the development of boys. Thirdly, the prevalence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), at least in the West, has led to the increase in medications which affect development. Stimulant medications such as Ritalin for ADHD affect the normal brain functioning of boys. When boys don't pay attention or are easily irritable, parents who have absconded their duty of disciplining them, might take them to the doctor and have them medicated. In the long run, this worsens the situation. Fourthly, endocrine disruptors have influenced the changing patterns in entrance into adolescence. Girls are undergoing puberty much earlier than before, as soon as they turn eight years old.

---

[7] This is changing in the Kenyan public education system with the recent introduction of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) that has elicited mixed responses.

One factor of this earlier emergence of girls is synthetic chemicals, which affect brain development, in different ways among girls and boys according to 2005 studies from Cincinnati, Harvard and Oxford universities (Sax 2007:105-106). These endocrine disruptors affect testosterone levels and consequently the activity of boys, more than girls (Sax 2007:107). Thus, their level of physical drive and motivation to accomplish tasks is lower than that of girls. Fifth, the lack of male-mentors has presented a challenge in the socialization of boys. Boys lack male mentors or figures, and thus create their own. "If we fail to provide boys with pro-social role models of the transition to adulthood, they may construct their own. In some cases, gang initiation rituals, street racing, and random violence may be the result" (Sax 2017:168). All these are issues that affect the timing and duration of adolescence.

Clark (2016) interprets a second marker as the reality of multiple selves. Many of the youth may engage in worship yet on weekends attend parties. Although the committed youth worker finds it hard to reconcile the two, it seems that many of the young people are leading "double lives". This is what the idea of *multiple selves* refers and is further compounded by the reality of the multiple changes happening (physically, mentally, emotionally) as the adolescent "differentiates" or in other words develop their own concept of self. Because adults have developed in the sense of bridging these different gaps, their unconditional love can help adolescents find a healthy way of maturing: "What adolescents need are more faithfully committed adults who are willing to be fully present in their lives" (Clark 2016:32).

The last marker is seen as the objectifying of young people, in other literature, referred to as youth marginalization. Objectification can be defined as the turning of a human being into an object (Clark, 2016:33). Youth are objectified when they are viewed as enemies or as unnecessary in the community's life. The irony is that although the youth make up the majority demographic in developing countries, policies and systems that support their well-being are few and, in some cases, non-existent. Even in the church, the youth ministry is oftentimes seen as an appendage

of the Church, and youth workers are employed to keep the young people busy –
many adults remain aloof of what happens in young people's lives. Objectification
attacks what it means to be a human person, and this creates unique challenges
for youth ministry. Adolescents growing up in such systems attach their self-worth
to a concept of performance, performance that is gauged by unloving adults in their
perspective (Clark, 2016:35). Youth workers, adults, parents, and the church must
uphold the personhood of teenagers and draw them into the full life of Christ.

2.3.2 Youth development and faith formation

Developmental theories are useful ways of seeing young people. As a result,
the work of some of the psychologists such as Erikson have influenced the
understanding of faith formation among adolescents and young people more
broadly. One of the theologians who incorporates human developmental thinking
into theological thinking and ministry practice is James Fowler. Fowler (2004)
reflects on this relationship between human development and faith formation after
30 years of the publication of his influential paper *Agenda toward a developmental
perspective on faith*. One clearly sees his thinking of faith formation as tied to
developmental theory when he begins "Like many dimensions of our lives, faith
seems to have a broadly recognizable pattern of development" (Fowler, 2004:405).
For Fowler, faith is not limited to one's religious outlook and is "generic" to humanity
(Dirks 2001:83).

In fact, in his aforementioned paper and throughout his work, Fowler comments
on Erikson's developmental theory. Fowler shows us that our process of maturation
from childhood to adulthood involves both blessings and bruises. Blessings in the
encounters we have had with God and bruises in the woundings that have
happened in our lives. As such, faith is an ongoing process that is affected by our
development through life's stages, borrowing largely from the cognitive
developmental theory of Piaget, the cognitive structural theory of Lawrence
Kohlberg, the psychosocial development theory of Erik Erikson and theologically

grounded on H. Richard Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and Wilfred Smith (Dirks 2001:83). These stages can be summarized as follows in Table 2:

Table 2: Researcher's representation of Fowler's stages of development (Dirks 2001:84-85)

Age	Stage	Shaped by	Central theme
0 – 3 years	*Primal or undifferentiated faith*	Experiences of love from caregiver/parent	Trust
2 – 7 years	*Intuitive-projective faith*	Imagination through stories, symbols, and gestures	Emotions
8 – 11 years	*Mythical-literal faith*	Distinguishing between fantasy and reality	Morality
12 – 22 years	*Synthetic-Conventional faith*	Cognitive ideas to form meaning in	Identity

		the context of relationships.	
Young adulthood	*Individuative-reflective faith*	Reassessing previous knowledge and owning one's faith.	Intimacy
Middle adulthood	*Conjunctive faith*	Multi-perspective view of faith to explore depth of faith symbols.	Community
Later years	*Universalizing faith*	Maturation of all stages to accept self in light of others.	Freedom / openness

Although these stages build up onto one another and are marked by specific age descriptions, there are outliers within different cultures and worldviews according to Fowler. Dirks (2001:87) makes correlations with the doctrine of sanctification noting that both have similarities in the ideas of growth, God's

sovereignty, and repentance, that is, changing of one's mind. On the other hand, while sanctification holds in balance God's active role and a person's passive (and active) role in the process, faith development theory focuses on human experiences and allows us to appreciate each person's individual growth.

The reception of the faith development theory has been varied. Because Catholics view faith and intellectual reasoning as agreeable, especially in the Aquinas tradition, their reception of faith development theory was positive. On the other hand, more conservative theological traditions were critical of the idea of moral development, which is a highlight of faith development theory (Fowler, 2004:411). Some of the aspects that faith development theory considers are:

i. Our ability to respond to and evaluate sources of authority.

ii. Our capacity to deepen and widen the perspectives of others.

iii. Our construction of a coherent and meaningful portrait of the world.

iv. Our acknowledgement of the growing capacities, in humans, for shaping and responding imaginatively to symbols, narratives, and rituals that invite participation in the sacred, and that touch the deepest dimensions of our relatedness to God.

The relationship between faith developmental theory (FDT) and practical ministry (religious education) in learning institutions and the church is therefore an important area of consideration. Since young people have not developed their own language for faith, a concept that some theologians call "individuation", images, symbols, and practices become important "bridges" for young people as they develop their faith. "True symbols have depths and breadth of meaning that spill over our interpretative categories and abilities. They grow in depth and richness as

our abilities to interpret them develop" (Fowler, 2004:412). Such thinking may help the youth minister to develop age-appropriate curriculum in their teaching while not being a slave to thinking in terms of stages.

Because of faith development theory's reliance on psychological development, theologians and practitioners have taken issue with the theory. Some of these theologians and practitioners propose that adolescence should be engaged from a theological point of view (Keeley 2010, Going 2009). We know that faith is a gift from God (Eph 2:8-10) and yet we cannot totally disprove the place of nurturing our faith (2 Pet 1:3-15). Keeley offers certain pointers to guide us in thinking through adolescent faith formation:

     i.   Youth ministers and guardians should articulate their faith to their children and adolescents in a manner that they can grow in their understanding.

     ii.   Telling and retelling the Scriptural narrative can help to provide a framework for young people to enter into God's story of redemption.

    iii.   Church leadership should welcome young people into faith practices such as worship, prayer, scripture reading and outreach.

    iv.   Families and homes being the primary learning environments for faith means that parents must be equipped to nurture the faith of their young people.

Thus, it is helpful to explore the concept of "formation" in this section of the research. Astley (2018:22) helpfully notes that formation implies the shaping of a learner into practices that help the learner to assimilate the objective truths and

traditions of the Christian faith. We can summarize the core theme of adolescent faith formation as "identity" and young adulthood formation as "intimacy". Based on this understanding, it is important that adults are available to accompany young people as they seek to responsibly integrate the concepts of identity and intimacy (Taylor 2001:94). This implies that an intergenerational approach to ministry enhances these formational practices of faith according to Parrett & Kang (2009:309).

Adolescents and emerging adults must be seen as people whom God can use for his purposes. The common narrative especially of emerging adulthood faith is that the faith patterns of the "millennial" generation is not at par with their older generations. However, Hill (2015:3) challenges this assumption based on two fronts. First, Hill (2015:7) acknowledges that although generational comparison is helpful, it is more effective to use a longitudinal focus in order to trace themes in a richer way. Second, Hill (2015:10) notes that individual stories of faith malformation distort the larger picture that can be drawn from sociological surveys. At the heart of these issues is how scholars have interpreted the data of emerging adulthood and faith. Even with the attendant sociological and psychological perspectives on adolescence, practical theologians must look at these from a theological lens.

2.3.2 Youth cultures and sub-cultures

A critical understanding of youth faith formation must therefore consider adolescent development. Yet, although adolescent development and emerging adulthood are universal phenomena, the place of particular cultural contexts is helpful in exploring how these two themes interface with youth culture. Therefore, a study of youth culture is a crucial component in giving a contextual base for exploring the nexus of adolescent development and faith formation. This section will offer an introduction to youth cultural studies, then consider the influences of western postmodernism and African traditional values and conclude by looking at the place of the internet or the digital age in youth culture and faith formation.

2.3.2.1 An Introduction to youth cultural studies

Youth cultural studies can be approached from various perspectives including historical, sociological, and psychological. Historical perspectives trace the development of the studies on youth culture. Sociological perspectives trace the various societal forces that affect youth culture including politics, family systems, religion, and economics. Psychological perspectives interrogate the influence of adolescent development on particular youth cultures and subcultures. An example is the issue of individuation which influences the spirituality of adolescents and emerging adults (Barry, Nelson, Davarya & Urry 2010). Nel (2018:139-141) observes that this process of "identity formation" is further complicated by youth culture, and borrowing from the work of Amy Jacober, he expounds on the psychological underpinnings form the work of Carl Jung, James Loder and Eric Erickson and the resulting concept of the "plural self" in Dean's words.

Most of the youth cultural studies have been conducted in the West and mainly extrapolate the influence of the World Wars, the Cold War, industrial capitalism, and the Americanization of global culture on the concept of youth culture, tracing its development in the 19th Century up to its heyday in the 20th Century (Heilbronner 2008:577). Heilbronner (2008:586) considers stadiums, bars, cafes, and motorcycles as "new temples of youth culture" and hairstyles, music, and fashion as the ways in which youth express their style. This is especially helpful for our consideration of faith formation because although Christian practitioners have considered the local church as the primary temple, there is need to consider how faith formation is enhanced, challenged, and dilapidated by these public spaces of formation, rituals, and religious expressions. Lastly, youth culture in the 21st century has moved from being nation-specific and become more transnational, global, digital, more consumeristic oriented and in essence, hybrid (Faix 2016:66; Heilbronner 2008:590). This "global village" certainly affects the cultural milieu of the African youth. With a considerable demographic of young Africans now educated in the West, issues of hegemony, globalization and technology intertwine

with traditional values. Some of these values include the idea of community during African celebrations, respect of elders and those in hierarchical power positions and a fetish for power dynamics as in the old traditional religions. For all intents and purposes, Africa is indeed the epicenter of a literal global village.

Youth subcultures can be described as the critique of parent or youth cultures and an assimilation of new musical expressions, hairstyles, language idioms and even religious identifications. Griffin (2014:31) observes how the dominant neo-liberal economy affects the mental health of youth. This is expressed through their need to maintain an individual self-conscious image that undergoes "continual recreation and maintenance" in order to create a particular and dominant narrative of youth identity. This takes various routes in the religious identification landscape. For instance, from the study of 2,049 young people aged between 18 and 34 among Canadian youth called *Hemorrhaging faith,* Cronshaw, Lewis & Wilson (2016:18) prod further the commonly accepted terms "exiles" and "nomads" to conclude that the words "disengagement" and "disidentification" better represent the faith identification of young people in their sample. In their own words:

> Sociologically speaking, "disengagement" and "dissociation" refer to a change being made in one's affiliations, bonds, and attachments within organizational and social contexts. As such, a young person ceasing attendance at church, withdrawing from youth group, and no longer participating in ebb and flow of church community life can be understood to be disengaging (sociologically speaking). The question of whether this young person is at the same time, or in the same way actively rejecting their Christian faith (or even that church community) is quite different. Such a process is more closely approximated by the sociological notion of de/disidentification.

The foregoing information helps us to understand the concept of youth subcultures. Youth disengagement or disassociation implies the rejection of the majority youth

culture within the church, based on a preference of other youth subcultures or social norms. This may explain the migration of youth from one church denomination to another, that is, the concept of 'church nomads'. This migration does not necessarily reflect the rejection of one's faith, but merely a change in "affiliations, bonds and attachments" according to Wilson (2016:18) as cited above. This is a helpful naming of the process of youth faith formation, which is often influenced by the youth subcultures that they resonate with in the process of identity formation or finding (Aziz 2019:2).

2.3.2.2 East African music as sub-culture

Thus, we can see that youth cultures, from sociological, psychological, and historical perspectives affects the religious and spiritual identity of young people. However, we must also consider how particular aspects of youth culture are pertinent in our regional context of faith formation. Mwenda Ntarangwi (2009, 2016), a cultural anthropologist has done impressive work in analyzing popular culture and its intersection with youth studies. Ntarangwi's (2009:17) studies on how East African hip-hop music has influenced the agency and identity of young people in their socio-political context is helpful in showing us how expressive culture plays a role in the formation of young people. Borrowing from the cultural theorists Clifford Gertz and Victor Turner, Ntarangwi (2009:18) offers the following definitions of culture:

i.   A combination of symbols and process that people attach meaning to.

ii.   The shared ethos and worldview of a group or community.

iii. Day to day practices that result from the web of power relations, struggles and changes.

In a particularly helpful chapter "Hip hop and African identity in contemporary globalization", Ntarangwi (2009:20-43) observes that globalization has increased the flow of ideas and allowed young people to borrow from western ideas and to localize and indigenize them as a response to their socio-cultural and political realities, within the East African context. In this observation, Ntarangwi's research context is with musicians in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya and thus, he envisions hip-hop, or in our case music more broadly defined, as helpful in the following ways:

   i.   Music as a tool for transnational identity formation

   ii. Music as a tool for socio-political commentary, agency, and engagement

   iii. Musical sub-cultures like hip hop as a response to western hegemony and control

   iv. Music as a vehicle for transmitting African traditional values.

   v.   Musical indigenization in the form of East African hip-hop as the acculturation of western worldviews and values (Ntarangwi 2009:20-28)

This is a helpful analysis of the place of hip-hop culture, in particular, and music more generally. Since young people are not static and are influenced by the web of political, religious, societal, spiritual, and intellectual factors, culture as the transmission of these multi-faceted ideas and values forms who they are. This culture forms what young people believe, what they do and how they live (Mueller 2006:112.) Thus, in order to explore the place of culture and faith formation, we need to go beyond mere stereotypes of cultural forms of expression and distinguish between the shallow surface and the deep surface aspects of culture (Mueller

2006:116). These distinctions are helpful in describing culture according to Mueller (2006:117) as:

    i.   A gift to humanity from God for utilizing the world's resources for the common good.

    ii.   A universal reality with particular differences from place to place.

    iii.   A shared resource that offers identity and security.

    iv.   A learned reality that forms us and that we affect.

    v.   An integrated whole that links different aspects of life (Mueller 2006:113-115).

Though youth ministry has been accused of pursuing the two extremes of an un-contextualized theological task or on the other hand a pop-cultural praxis, these insights from Ntarangwi and Mueller inform us that cultural exegesis is necessary. The reason is that even among Church-going youth, you will find them humming the latest pop-cultural songs and sharing the most "viral" videos on YouTube. Although some of them may profess Christ, based on their need of "identity" based on their life stage, culturally, there are similarities with other youths. The point we learn from these scholars is that this is the case because youth do not live in a vacuum but are influenced by the wider culture. The task of the youth minister would be to understand the meanings that the young people associate with different cultural symbols (such as dressing, hairstyles, language) and what linkages these meanings have with particular theological concepts. By doing this, the youth practitioner will be equipping the young people with the theological tools to engage their own unique cultures and aid them in their formation as the people of God.

2.3.2.3 Traditional values and western postmodernism

In this age of globalization, the two cultural forces that face young people in Africa can be termed as African traditional values and postmodern ideals. The genre of hip-hop music serves as an illustrative example. Ntarangwi (2009:26) informs us that ethno-musicologists have observed a linkage between hip-hop music and African traditional musical expressions. They note some of the hip-hop elements as "call and response, short, repeated phrases and interlocking patterns" which are based on traditional musical expressions such as *Nyatiti* (eight-string lyre) among the Kenyan and Ugandan musicologists, Dholuo and *Obukano* (bass lyre) among the Kisii of Kenya, for example. Although a genre that emerged in the 1980's New York context, this type of music has been localized through use of local idioms and languages, African spaces and monuments as well as attired with local dress. Thus, through this cultural expression, the ideals of traditional African values as well as the postmodern ideas of subjectivity and subliminality are embraced and transmitted through music. A local example is also Sauti Sol, a Kenyan Afro-pop band of international repute. Their lyrics often straddle both cultural forces, even to the extent of exploring theological themes. The lyrics of their song *kuliko jana* could be seen as a juxtaposition of their song *short and sweet:*

Bwana ni mwokozi wangu, *(the Lord is my saviour)*

Tena ni kiongozi wangu *(and also my leader)*

Ananipenda leo kuliko jana *(he loves me today more than yesterday)*

Baraka zake hazikwishi, *(His blessings never end)*

si kama binadamu habadiliki *(not like human beings, he does not change)*

Ananipenda leo kuliko jana *(he loves me, today more than yesterday)*

In their other song, *short and sweet,* there is a strong undertone of sexual expression that is common among the liberal human values that define much of the Kenyan, and global, youth culture – in fact more recently (2019), there has been an appeal at the Supreme Court to change Act 162 of the Constitution, popularized on Twitter as #Repeal162, to encompass more liberal sexual ethics and values. Sauti Sol, in the aforementioned song say:

I think you fell in love too fast

African night and a cool rush

And I remember you refused to kiss me

And now you using my toothbrush . . .

Now you wearing my t-shirt

And I don't want this night to end

Before you know I love you

I don't want this night to end

Before you know I need you

A refrain follows, that carries sexual undertones, and it is easy to identify the issues of identity, acceptance, culture, love, and religion, that are important to the young people. The African conservative values for instance are juxtaposed with the liberal

sexual ethos of the West stemming from the 1960s "sexual revolution", that has now become common place in African villages. Here is a theology of love and on the other hand a liberalization of sexual expression, thereby juxtaposing postmodern ideals with traditional African perspectives. Culture, in this case expressive culture in the form of music, is an important factor for understanding young people so as to minister more effectively to them.

2.3.2.4 Technology and youth culture

This hybridity of the African traditional values as well as postmodernism in youth culture in Africa has been entrenched by the digital age. Any consideration of youth culture in the globe and in the continent must therefore consider the place of the internet, which largely defines the cultural context of the millennials and generation-z, as sociologists observe. One of the most provocative accounts is by the professor of Psychology at San Diego State University, Jean Twenge. Twenge (2017) looks at how the internet is shaping a more tolerant, less contented, and unprepared generation of young people who find it difficult to transition into adulthood. Her study is based on those born after 1995 (iGens) and founded on four large nationally representative surveys among 11 million Americans since 1960s. Her earlier doctoral work looked at generational differences between generation X and millennials and compared to the differences between the corresponding earlier generations, millennials and iGens, the differences were gradual (Twenge 2017:3-4). What marks iGens is the rapid transformations brought about by the use of the cellphone in the early 2010s which have transformed their understanding of the world.

Of pertinence to the discussion on sexual ethics as a postmodern phenomenon, the reality of social media applications such as Tinder have increased hook-up culture, advanced multiple sexual partners, led to earlier ages of sexual expression and delayed long-term relational commitment (Twenge 2017:203-204). For instance, in a comparison with their millennial counterparts, approval of premarital

sex increased – from 50% of 18-29-year-olds of the millennial generation to 65% of the same demographic of the iGens (Twenge 2017:205). On the issue of racial diversity, because iGens are more multicultural in their physical and digital spaces, they are much more inclusive in the area of race (Twenge 2017:242). We could stretch this inclusivity to tribes and ethnicity in Africa, although political influence disfigures that cross-cultural salience among young people. Other studies expand the correlation between the internet and sexual ethics, to citizenship, cultural identity, popular music expression, political activism, and agency (Bosch 2016; Eze & Obono 2018). In fact, more positively, the internet makes it possible for young people to borrow from foreign cultures and explore positive themes such as the common mantra among millennials, "life, love and peace" – for instance, in the way that hip hop culture has been acculturated into Chinese youth culture (Liu 2010:151).

In summary, the place of youth culture in faith formation should consider the influence of technology among African adolescents in the 21st century. The internet influences youth worldviews and expressions through music, sexuality, identity, political engagement, and spirituality. Since these issues of identity and religion are facets of digital culture as well as faith formation, there is need for theological reflection on the same as Cloete (2015:3) says and has modelled. Thus, faith formation of young people in Africa must include the digital context of the young person and how it influences their way of life. We have also observed that the internet is a feature in the confluence of western postmodernity and African traditional values, and how these are key in the practical theological reflection of youth ministry.

2.3.2.5 Youth and contemporary Christian music (CCM)

The linkages between Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) and youth cultural expressions have also been explored in various literature. The relationship between the two reveals not only the role that youth culture plays in the faith formation of young people but also how youth culture shapes popular Christian understanding and expression. CCM may be defined as popular music that merges Christian lyrics with contemporary genres and styles of music (Cusic 2009:77). These contemporary music genres include pop, rock, hip-hop and heavy metal, just to name a few. Cusic here locates the history of CCM to the counter-culture movements in North American Christianity in the late 60s and 70s, and its growth spearheaded through the booming business of the music industry. Needless to say, as a child of the American evangelical sub-culture, it has received global impetus through the support of churches and para-church organizations including youth organization, publishers, and the entertainment industries (Howard & Streck 2014:6).

As a musical expression, CCM was an appropriation of the faith into genres that were part of the popular culture. Howard & Streck (2014:15-16) observe the global discourses and contentions surrounding CCM. First, there is the idea of what constitutes artistic expression that is Christian. Some have critiqued the style of dress, the mode of worship and the use of say tattoos among Christian musicians. According to the critiques, the underlying argument is the relationship between Christianity and culture whereby according to one of Niebuhr's (1951) Christianity and culture models, the two are seen to be antagonistic towards one another. The second critique stems from the interaction between cross-cultural missions and biblical discipleship. Although CCM is premised on the idea of using contemporary forms of music to reach a post-Christian world, some have contended that CCM does little in grounding new Christians into biblical discipleship (Yoon 2016:316). CCM has been seen by critics to be selective in exploring the doctrines of Christianity that are countercultural while at the same time being a means through

which young people are indoctrinated with prosperity gospel and word of faith, which some see as antithetical to the Christian message. For example, Milemba (2015) has explored the impact of prosperity theology among youth in contemporary churches, whose style of worship is based on the CCM model.

However, some people have interpreted CCM as a genuine mode of Christian worship, several scholars in the global south note how the effects of CCM on youth may be negative. Yoon (2016:335-336) examining Korean youth observes that CCM in its highly emotive expressivity, hinders a sober reflection between the worshipper and the worshipped (God), is inundated by an extreme individualism and further entrenches capitalistic ethos, whereby CCM is usually a staple for urban and highly mobile congregations. In such congregations, the target is usually the urban young people and families, thereby cutting of those from different socio-economic classes. Lindhardt (2012) explores how Pentecostal Chileans have appropriated youth culture to challenge traditional church structures and create a new identity that interacts with their popular culture. Although Lindhardt (2012:497) commends this as a remarkable feature of innovation and adaptation, the church leaders within those circles are cautious concerning popular cultural influence on their faith. Young (2012:336) also explores the positive effect that evangelical youth culture has had. He observes that evangelical youth culture, globalized through the rise of digital media and through the musical expression of CCM, has found resonance across ideological, political, and religious differences. CCM bands like Hillsong and Bethel, have received popular acclaim across the globe, from Cape Town, South Africa, to Nairobi, Kenya to Sao Paolo, Brazil and to Berlin, in Germany. The question that still remains is whether the premises of CCM are founded on biblical worship, or on shifting contemporary cultural impulses.

Within the reformed tradition, worship is seen as the God-centered response by the people of God (Carson 2002:26; Frame 1996:4).[8] By expanding worship from merely the contemporary understanding of musical expression or cultural appropriation, the Bible describes worship as a response of the community of faith to the redemptive acts of God. Bloesch (2002:118) carefully observes that though worship employs a wide range of rituals and expressions, it must never be reduced to those forms. When worship is defined merely as an expression, it loses the doctrinal substance which is the worship of God "in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4:24). Whereas it is appropriate to practice worship in terms that are culturally appropriate to the people, worship is in its essence trans-cultural. This moves beyond the over-emphasis on emotionalism, individualism, and performance, which underpin much of CCM. Secondly, worship within the reformed tradition is not only what happens during the "singing of hymns" or during "praise and worship", but it is the corporate responses of God's people, from the beginning of the Lord's service to the end. According to the earliest reformers such as Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and John Oecolampadius (1482-1531), these include prayer, singing, preaching of the Word, and administering of the Sacraments (Nichols 2014:29; Frame 1996:5; Old 2002:3).

By beginning with worship from the biblical standpoint, it can thus be appropriated into a wide variety of cultures while maintaining its core emphasis as a God-centered response of God's people (Adedeji 2007:99). The reformed tradition has defined worship through the *regulative principle of worship* (WCF 21.1; BCF 32; HC 96)*.* The narrow definition of this means that the Bible should strictly define how we worship, and those who interpret it this way only permit exclusive psalmody and or hymnody in congregational worship (Dyck 2009:2). Those who

---

[8] One recent resource on a biblical theology of worship within the reformed tradition as well as a look at the liturgies of Martin Luther, Jahannes Oecolampadius, Huldrych Zwingli, Guillaume Farel, Heinrich Bullinger, Martin Bucer, Thomas Cranmer, John a Lasco, John Knox, Zacharius Ursinus and others is recorded in the fine work of Gibson, Jonathan & Earngey, Mark. 2018. *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press.

define it in a broader sense make room for wider expressions, style, and forms of music, with the condition that the lyrics are doctrinally sound (Frame 1997:2; Jolly 2015:64). What this section shows us is how much sensitivity and wisdom is needed in exploring the place of youth culture in Christian culture (Bloesch 2002:136). Contextualizing the forms of Christian expression such as worship in order to engage youth popular culture, must be done in a manner that is thoughtful, relevant, and ultimately biblical.

2.3.3 Youth ministry models

Based on the foregoing conversation, we may then proceed to the next theories pertinent to the study, that is, what models of ministry may aid in the faith formation of young people in Africa? To answer this question, we have to consider the approaches to youth ministry that have been proposed in the classical and contemporary literatures on the same. In the post-colonial turn, theologians within the African context have sort to find a more African way of theological reflection given the socio-political, economic, religious, and psychological underpinnings of Africa's past. Most of the theorizing on youth ministry models has been done from a European and North American context, from which there is much to learn. We now explore some of the existing literature on this topic of youth ministry models.

2.3.3.1 Existing literature

Although youth ministry has been historically situated within the discipline of Christian education, in the more recent past, it has been engaged as a practical theological task (Nel 2018:13). This is the reason that Root & Dean (2011) propose a "theological turn" to youth ministry, by considering young people as part of the faith community of the *ekklesia* and hence involved in all the ministerial aspects of the congregation. Thus, theoreticians and practitioners of youth ministry have utilized the practical theologies of western scholars such as Kenda Creasy Dean, Andrew Root, Fernando Arzola and Chap Clark. In terms of models of youth

ministry, the three foundational books have been Mark Senter's (2001), *Four views of youth ministry,* Fernando Arzola's (2008) *Towards a prophetic youth ministry* and Chap Clark's recent (2015) *Five views of youth ministry.*

Senter's book has been foundational in the theological understanding of approaching youth ministry. Fernando Arzola applies youth ministry models to his urban and Latina context, bearing fruitful discussions on how a "prophetic youth ministry" offers a more holistic approach towards youth in light of personal, spiritual, and social needs, which better aligns with the African context of young people. Chap Clark, together with four other scholars critiqued Senter's seminal work in light of the contemporary challenges facing the western context, including but not limited to, globalization, digitization, secularization, and thus offering a more "theological, psycho-social and ecological" grounding for youth ministry (Senter 2015:xiii). In Africa, much of the theoretical base for youth ministry has been engaged in a South African context. One of the foremost scholars, Shantelle Weber (2017:10) of Stellenbosch University, has for instance looked at the role of international youth organizations (Scripture Union) and issued a challenge to decolonize youth ministry. Much more is however left pending in what that would look like, in light of the pertinent issues she raises for the faith formation of young people.

2.3.3.2 Youth ministry in practical theology

The history of the theological enterprise concerning youth ministry is a recent 20th century phenomenon. Rather than being based on a biblical theological precedence, youth ministry has been engaged from a sociological and psychological underpinning of "youth" as a transitory stage according to Stanley Hall's seminal work on *Adolescence* (1904). Root (2017:17) helps us to see how the initial conceptualization and practice of youth work by organizations such as Youth for Christ and Young Life was based on the socio-political currents of the World wars, the cold war, capitalism, and industrialization. The point is that youth ministry is as contextual as any theological enterprise, and in our case, should

therefore consider contemporary African realities and their relevance for ministry to young people.

In the wider context of international youth studies, Nel (2017:4-7) notes that in addition to "youth cultures" and "youth transitions" in the recent developments in the field, an African theological enterprise must employ a comparative paradigm in light of the "hybrid" realities of young people on the ground – thereby expanding theological reflection beyond the traditional church, seminary, and university contexts. This means that the theological reflection on youth ministry must consider the realities of the young person in Africa as well as the cultural sites where these young people are located. A survey of the models in the western context follows, which shall then create a basis for exploring similar models for the African context.

2.3.3.3 Traditional youth ministry models

Senter et al (2001) conceptualizes youth ministry around the horizontal axis of mission and fellowship/training/discipleship and the vertical axis of time. They conceptualize their understanding as represented in Figure four below:
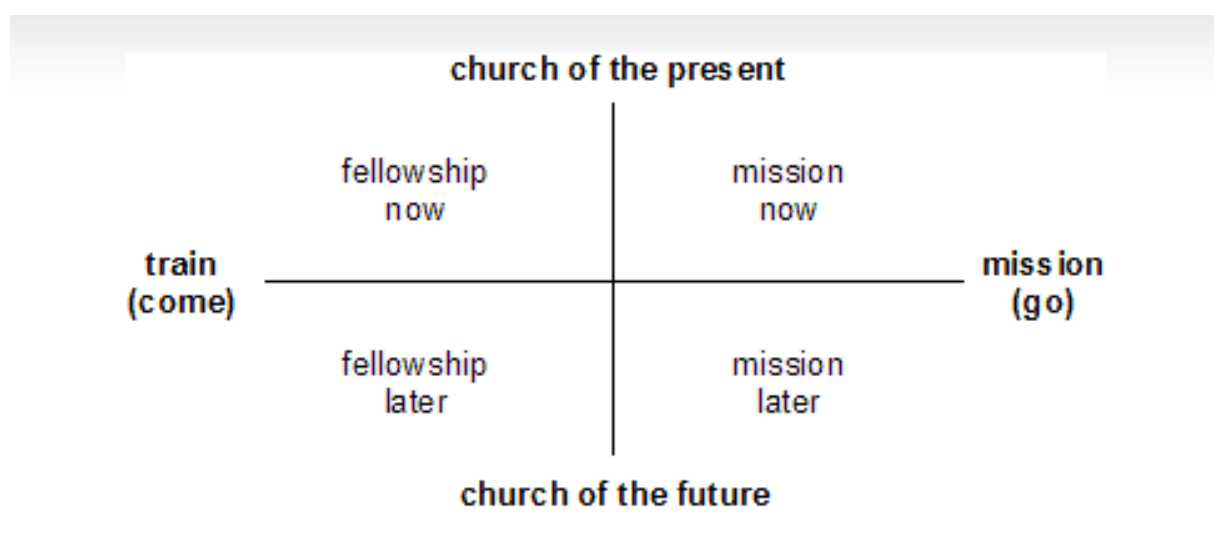
Figure 4: Senter's matrix of youth ministry models

From the pictorial, if a youth ministry focuses on mission, it can either have a time orientation of the present (missional) or of the future (strategic). If a youth ministry focuses primarily on fellowship, it's time orientation can either be in the present (inclusive-congregational) or in the future (preparatory). Of worthy mention is Nel's (2018:xvii) later expansion of his inclusive-congregational (2001) to inclusive-missional approach (2018), understood in his later reflection as ministry with and to young people, in the context of the congregation which is on mission. Arzola (2008:17) conceptualizes the emphasis on fellowship as the "traditional" approach of spiritual formation. In addition to this, he delineates three other approaches: the liberal that focuses on felt needs, the activist that focuses on social transformation and the prophetic that is more liberative.

Prophetic ministry happens in different contexts. While Arzola (2008:38) notes the differences between suburban and inner-city contexts, the African parallel of rural and urban may be made. Further, urban ministries may still differ – for instance, my own context in two different congregations is an urban setting within a suburban community with decade's long presence and the proximity of a peri-urban town, with the attendant social issues of poverty, compromised stability in the family unit, sexual immorality, substance abuse as well as economic oppression and segregation. Of course, these issues are prevalent in both contexts but the youth from the peri-urban areas may be faced with a form of segregation within the congregation, while the youths from the urban areas return to comparatively comfortable homes. Prophetic youth ministry within my context must first address the effect of sin in the structures of both contexts. Second, prophetic youth ministry must consider the messiness of incarnated youth ministry in the day-to-day lives and issues of real people. Lastly, prophetic youth ministry must transcend the denominational distinctives. In his own words, Arzola (2008:153) observes:

> Prophetic youth ministry does not dis-incarnate the Gospel message from the anthropological realities of urban youth. This would be dichotomizing the

human person – removing the Spirit from the body. Anthropology informs theology.

In this poignant statement, Arzola notes that youth ministry is an intersection of theological reflection based on inter-disciplinary insights from anthropology, psychology, and sociology. His prophetic model would thereby integrate the multifaceted contexts for the young people, and thereby lead to a holistic ministry, as can be seen in the infographic below (Figure five):

Figure 5: Arzola's prophetic model as integrating three foci of gospel growth, social justice, and personal development.

Senter's models, while biblically robust, have little engagement with the African youth context, with the exception of Malan Nel who is South African. Arzola's model is contextually rich, especially for his urban-Latina context, and creates a closer parallel to African. These views are extremely useful when conceptualizing what actual ministry should be about. If models are the prototypes of actual practical ministry, then theological frameworks are the basis of these models. These conventional models can be organized as per Table 3 as follows:

Table 3: Summary of youth ministry models in existing literature (Senter, Nel, Black, Clark and Arzola)

	Model	Aim/focus		Model	Aim/focus
Fernando Arzola	*Traditional*	Spiritual formation	**Mark Senter**	*Strategic*	Church-planting
	Liberal	Felt needs	**Malan Nel**	*Inclusive-congregational*	Integrating adolescents
	Activist	Social justice	**Wesley Black**	*Preparatory*	Training disciples
	Prophetic	Liberationist (integrationist)	**Chap Clark**	*Missional*	Evangelism

Clark's (2015) more recent work does not seek to offer distinct ministry models as does Senter's work, but the five views on *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century* are meant to offer a practical theology for what youth ministry really is. The necessity of offering such a framework is based on the contemporary challenges facing the Church's calling to young people – challenges such as the digital age, the lengthening of adolescence, the new religious movements and rising religious "nones". Five different theological frameworks are presented and discussed below.

Greg Steir's view is that the foundation of youth ministry is evangelism, based on the interesting claim that Jesus Christ was a "youth leader" – this is premised on

the fact that most of the disciples were in their teen years based on his interpretation of Matthew 17:24-27 that is founded on the temple tax law in Exodus 30:14. Since only Jesus and Peter paid the tax, which was to be paid by those twenty years or older, Steir infers that the other disciples were below twenty. Thus, in his view "If we really want teenagers to be like Jesus, then we must cultivate in them a driving passion to reach the lost" (Clark 2015:5). Brian Crosby's critique of this claim is that in traditional Jewish culture, adulthood was defined at a younger age than today. Because teenagers of that time participated in adult rites such as marriage, Crosby notes that Steir's interpretation is "anachronistic" (Clark 2015:18). Granted that Steir's view could be more biblically balanced, his approach that evangelism and discipleship are central to youth ministry is important for the church's ministry. This "gospel advancing view" would help turn youth ministry from a programme-oriented approach to a lifestyle-oriented approach of evangelism. And this must go beyond Steir's call to "gospelize everything" in a manner that pits gospel proclamation from gospel deeds, but as Clark (2015:24) observes, to remember that social justice and gospel proclamation are integral aspects to biblical evangelism.

Brian Crosby offers the second view of youth ministry as the reformed view. To unpack the pillars behind his theology of youth ministry, he notes three issues that have caused a malnourished youth ministry and in turn led to the phenomenon of youth leaving the Church. First, he observes how an entertainment focus has led to the reality of a "Moralistic Therapeutic Deist" theology that has a low view of God, a low view of sin and a low view of Christlikeness. In this interpretation, youth have been bored out of the Church as the Church has not offered a robust theology in light of their developmental struggles of abandonment, loneliness, and identity. Second, youth ministries have downplayed the role of parents and the family as the covenantal sphere of discipling young people. Third, Crosby notes how the pressure on youth ministers leads them to abandon on a functional level what would be a more biblically or theological "consistent" method of ministry (Clark 2015:41). Thus, Crosby's call is to a more theological and practical approach that is faithful to the Scriptures through adopting a "means-of-grace" methodology to youth ministry

(Clark 2015:42). Crosby bases this on exegeting key New Testament passages such as Acts 2:42-47 as well as citing the Westminster and London Baptist Confessions of Faith to show that the means of grace, that is, Word, fellowship, prayer, Lord's Supper, and service, are key ingredients in forming young people (Clark 2015:42-43). Although I personally hold similar reformed convictions with Crosby, with Clark (2015:57-59) I would take issue with the lack of adolescent developmental insights that would help to contextualize and apply some of the helpful ideas that Crosby advances. For instance, though I agree that the Word is central, how would a youth leader preach it to an early adolescent? Given the reality of "systemic abandonment" of young people, that is, the lack of an adult community to walk with young people, how might this distrust shape the way young people view the adult youth leader (Clark 2015:58)? Ron Hunter's response to Crosby's views pushes more towards a family-integrated approach that deepens Crosby's thoughts – that is, while it is important to, for instance, ground young people in the Word, teaching parents the Word and equipping them with practical ways of sharing with their children, would multiply the ministry to young people (Clark 2015:66). Although the reformed model is helpful in reminding us of the biblical-theological grounding of youth ministry, there is much that can be said with regards to the implementation of the same.

Chap Clark himself offers a third view which he describes as the adoptive view. I think that among the other views, this view offers a great balance in terms of theological integrity and contextual sensitivity. Clark (2015:78) observes the fragmented culture that young people are growing up in a post-Christian culture, based on the systemic abandonment of adults, even in the Church. Malan Nel (2018:140), reflecting in the (South) African context has observed similar trends in the literature when he explores adolescent culture that advances the idea of the "plural self" – that is, how the adolescent has become a non-integrated self, in light of postmodernism. Further, faith has been interpreted in the often-individualistic sense of "accepting Christ" which reduces the holistic understanding of faith as trust "fiducia", emotional assent "assentus" and cognitive assent "notitia" (Clark

2015:86). Out of this sociological analysis of the state of adolescence within the North American context, Clark then offers a theological interpretation of the ekklesia as "family" through a survey of the New Testament usage, especially in 1 Corinthians 12. His underlying argument is that nurturing the faith of young people then must be founded on their adoption into a loving and caring community of faith. Helpfully, Clark (2015:78) helps us to see that a relational paradigm is what unites different youth ministry scholars in the history of the discipline. His view of adoption then becomes a helpful contextualization within youth ministry thinking that weaves the academic discipline together with the contemporary context of the adolescent. Thus, he brings together an essential unifying thread of Scripture which is covenant theology, together with a practical approach based on the Great Commandment – that is, that love of God is seen through our love for others, even those who are young, in the community of faith. This is the type of covenant theology that holds that "God remains true to his relational commitment to the world" (Nel 2018:67). Therefore, ministry to youth must apply this understanding to the contextual reality of the young people under its care. And adults, have a core role in nurturing a covenantal understanding for young people.

Fernando Arzola offers the fourth view, whereby he takes a different tangent to his earlier work in 2008, *Prophetic Youth Ministry.* In his article in Clark's book, he bases his youth ministry model on an ecclesiological approach. By noting the four characteristics of the Church as one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic, he calls for a more inclusive view of youth ministry into the ekklesia. Additionally, he observes that viewing youth ministry ecclesiologically would help the youth to be grounded in the orthodox Christian faith.

The last view in the book is by Ron Hunter who calls his view the D6 view. The D6 view is based on the *locus classicus* of parents as the primary disciplers in Deuteronomy 6. Hunter lists several principles drawn from this passage as discipling students through a robust teaching ministry, coaching parents to be able to coach their children and the importance of a transformational youth leader (Clark

2015:155-161). In my view, I think that although these principles are helpful for youth ministry, they are founded only upon one text and therefore could be reductionistic. To affirm my point, there are other larger themes in that passage that the interpreter could have missed out based on pigeonholing this single agenda for youth ministry. However, the importance of this particular passage cannot be overemphasized, especially read within the context of the covenantal understanding of God and the parental responsibility in the Jewish culture to pass on the faith through God's Word.

2.3.3.4 Intergenerational approaches

In contemporary scholarship, intergenerational approaches to youth ministry have received considerable attention within the North American context (Allen & Lawton 2012). Intergenerationally emerged as a focus of youth ministry research and practice as a response towards the age-segregated approach to youth ministry. The proponents of intergenerationally critique the age-segregation model as a recent innovation in church practice (Ward 1996; Root 2017). The intergenerational approach seeks to see the different generations as mutually beneficial to the life of congregation and seeks to create spaces within the different forms of ministry where this can effectively happen (Allen & Lawton 2012:17). Chancey & Bruner (2017:59) differentiate it from:

- *Age-separated ministry*: similar to the age-segregated approach, it separates different generational groups based on the perceptions of church leadership on what each group is able to handle.

- *Multi-generational ministry*: The presence of different generations without the full participation or interaction of the groups.

- *Cross-generational ministry*: The presence of different generations, with a unidirectional movement of ministry input from one generation with another.

- *Inclusive ministry:* The inclusion of all generations without any regard of their age.

Nel (2018:14) seems to expand the definition of "inclusive" as rendered by Chancey & Bruner (2017:59) to include the whole congregation in a comprehensive ministry to the youth of the congregation. What Chancey & Bruner (2017:60) observe about the uniqueness of the intergenerational approach is the mutual involvement and reflexivity between the generations. The reason it has garnered a lot of support and attention by scholars and practitioners alike is that it speaks to the disconnection that is evident in many congregations that separate the young people from the whole congregation. It becomes more difficult for them to transition effectively into the entire aspects of congregational life. Within the reformed tradition, youth ministry has traditionally been practiced within an intergenerational approach. Thus, in the traditional practices of congregations, young people, including children, were present in the worship service, from the start to the finish.

Among many Presbyterian congregations in Kenya, this is slowly changing. Several factors influence this: first, there is pressure from mainstream evangelical and charismatic church practice. As churches that have uniquely spearheaded youth ministry practice in contemporary times, what they do is easily mainstreamed within the broader church culture. Second, based on the unique challenge of family dynamics, there are many young people who enter the church as individuals and not in the traditional sense as families. This happens when young people have come from rural places to the urban centers to study in the university for example. The new family dynamics also arise from the reality of single-parent families. Usually, when these young people arrive at the church, they naturally build friendships with their peers and fellowships begin. In most cases, youth services

have begun from such informal and formal fellowships, especially when critical needs of young people have been met through these ministries.

Although age-separated ministries are a contextual ministry approach, there is need to evaluate how effective they are in the long run. Allen & Lawton (2012:20) unpack the uniqueness of the intergenerational approach as one where different generations can benefit from each other's outlooks, experiences, and ministries. This means that whatever strengths each generational group possess are passed on to the other groups and that the weaknesses are absorbed by the other groups. This is the reason why Aziz (2017:6) observes that the intergenerational approach is critical in the personal development of vulnerable youth as it enables the faith community to build "social capital" which ministers effectively to disadvantaged young people. Both Weber (2017) and Conner & Molla (2018) call for decolonization of youth ministry models in order to serve the African context. What Conner & Molla (2018) suggest in their "coffee-ministry" approach is a form of contextualized intergenerational approach. It is an approach that reconsiders the cultural practice of coffee drinking within Ethiopian culture, and thereby serve young people in light of the socio-economic, spiritual, and cultural struggles that Africans face and that are not addressed by traditional youth ministry practice in the west. The germaneness of the intergenerational approach to youth ministry is that it is easily translatable within an African culture where the concept of "community" is present. Whereas modern and postmodern influences are palpable within the African church, the intergenerational approach can be a way of Africa's contribution to the global research and practice of youth ministry.

2.3.3.5 Contextualizing youth ministry

The traditional models (four views) of youth ministry are very important for the practical theologian and would certainly enrich ministry to youth. They combine theological frameworks, with sociological and contextual understandings, to envision the formation of young people in their faith and in light of their

developmental stages. To apply them to the African context would involve an understanding of our context. Theologically, Brian Cosby offers a very broad biblical theology that could be easily translatable to our context. Clark stands out in his socio-cultural contextualization and it is precisely on this point that we could build on for our African youth context.

The general themes of abandonment and fragmentation of youth culture are important for the global youth. However, for African youths, we cannot ignore the issue of traditional African worldview that adds a level of complexity to the context. Several issues could be listed here: First, there is the issue of hierarchical ordering of society, whereby young people are expected to honor the adults in the society. Such adults include parents in the family setting and pastors in the ecclesial setting. Thus, this nuances the idea of adults winning the trust of the young people. In terms of youth ministry, this compounds faith formation because the whole concept of vulnerability becomes difficult to assess as young people may merely keep outward appearances in front of pastors and youth leaders. Second, we could talk of the underlying understanding of spirituality in the African worldview, that makes young people open to spiritual realities. Hence, in an age of new age spiritualities, faith formation must also then seek to be more objective within the African context so that young people can know Christ and grow in Christian maturity. Third, there is the question of identity in light of our checkered colonial past. This means that faith formation must take on an apologetic character as it seeks to commend Christianity as an African faith. Additionally, faith formation must seek to empower African young people beyond the desire to be westernized and help them to name and embrace their African identity as Christians. Therefore, youth ministry models in Africa must pursue a practical theological approach that is conversant with the cultural context of the young person.

From a broader perspective, in recent past, systematic, and practical theology has been pursued from a post-colonial perspective that seeks to deconstruct Eurocentric approaches and worldviews in the theorizing and practice of theology

(Kunhiyop 2011:72; Magezi & Igba 2018:2; Mokhoathi 2017:1; Schoeman & Van der Berg 2016:217). From the work of the foremost African theologians such as John Mbiti, Laurenti Magesa, J.N.K. Mugambi, Bolaji Idowu and Benezet Bujo in contextualizing Christianity into the African context, some critiques have raised concerns on how Christianity interfaces with culture – by contextualizing, some have veered off into "adiaphora" instead of finding a grounded basis for communicating the Christian message into the African context. In addition to Mokhoathi's (2017) integration of the Christian message to the African traditional religious worldview, theological reflection in the contemporary age must also engage the postmodern, digital, and highly plural context of the African young people. While the African traditional worldview is a necessary consideration for African theology, practical theology in particular must also speak to the generations that are further removed from Africa's colonial history of the early 20th century. Issues of African identity are important but they must also be engaged in the cultural milieu of postmodernism or even in light of the secular states that characterize African countries on the ground.

2.3.3.6 Elements of African youth ministry

Based on the literature review, youth ministry models must consider several thematic elements. First, youth ministry models must be Biblically centered. This means that the Scriptures must be at the center of any youth ministry engagement in the area of preaching, discipleship, counseling, or other similar practices. Certainly, various Christian traditions would approach the interpretative task differently, but nonetheless, Scripture should be the norm of all ministry. Second, the task of youth ministry must be incarnational. This has already been advanced by Andrew Root (2007) and seeks to explicate how adults can step into the world of the young people and model the person and love of Christ to them. Third, youth ministry in Africa must be liberative. Because ministry is essentially about service and given the marginalization of young people in the African society and church, youth ministry must seek to liberate the young people holistically – in the intellectual,

spiritual, financial, and psychological spheres. This means that the gospel of Jesus Christ should be applied to all the areas of the young person so that they can flourish and live for the glory of God. Lastly, from an ecclesiological context, youth ministry must be adoptive – according to Clark's (2015) argument. I find this to be similar to the inclusive congregational context of Nel (Senter 2010), with slight differences on how the two are envisaged. The adoptive model speaks to the function of adults in incorporating people in the congregation, whereas the inclusive congregational model speaks to how youth can be incorporated in the congregation. Further, the adoptive model is easily understood within the African context, especially because of our understanding of community and the reality of family issues. From a reformed perspective, the adoptive model can be envisaged within a covenantal framework. This is summarized in Figure six below:

Biblical

An African youth ministry model

Liberative

Incarnational

Covenantal
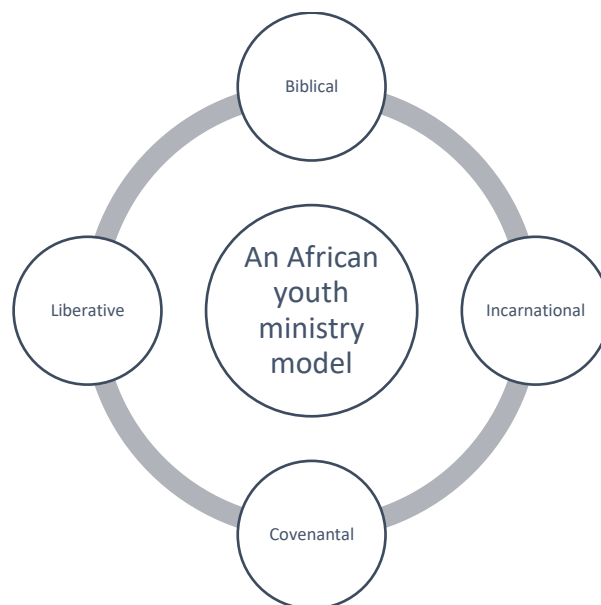
Figure 6: Elements of an African youth ministry model

2.4 Biblical-Theological Context

This section builds up on the conversation on adolescent development, faith formation, youth culture and the historical context of youth ministry, by engaging a biblical theology of some of these ideas in the Bible. It is hoped that this will animate the concept of "youth" and underlying issues in youth ministry in the Bible. If the Bible can be seen as God's action in the world, then that action can be seen from the lens of young people as participants in God's action in the world. I will pursue a thematic approach of relevant youth themes in the Scripture as a way of constructing theological themes for youth ministry.

2.4.1 The role of parents and adults

The idea of family within Jewish culture and religion is that it is a part of wider kinship relationships (Köstenberger & Jones 2010:85). Köstenberger & Jones (2010:86) observe that the Hebraic terms that are related to the concept of family include the concepts of "tribe", "people" and "clan". As part of Ancient Near Eastern Cultures (ANET), the constitution of families was:

- *Patrilineal* – tracing its lineage through the father.

- *Patrilocal* – married women tracing their lineage to the husband's household.

- *Patriarchal* – the father being in charge of the household.

This reading of the Old Testament family ethics reveals the importance of the family unit. Whereas different approaches to masculinity and femininity espouse divergent views, that is, egalitarian or complementarian, both are called to emphasize the value inherent in both genders. Accordingly, mothers also played

important functions in the Israelite communities including naming children, managing households, instructing the children, influencing their husbands, and participating in important public roles (Köstenberger & Jones 2010:89). Among the many duties that parents had, training and teaching their children the way of God is central to the understanding of biblical parenting from the Old and New Testament (Köstenberger & Jones 2010:92-96).

Perhaps the locus classicus of the role of parents in youth spiritual formation is Deuteronomy 6:4-25. This passage is founded on the Jewish *shema* that teaches God's nature as One Lord. Parents are commanded to instruct their children in the ways of God and to apply their faith to all the facets of their lives – their daily routines, their homes, their fashion and much more. The passage in verse 20 also shows how parents should seek to respond to the questions that the young people ask – here, they are instructed to share their religious tradition and the ethical demand of righteousness.

Two other passages in the Old Testament that negatively affirm the role of adult or parental formation on the children is the narrative of Eli's sons in 1 Samuel 2:12-26 and the haunting observation in Judges 2:10. Eli's sons display a pattern of carelessness with their priesthood office by participating in sexual immorality and showing negligence of God's Levitical code for the offerings in the temple (1 Samuel 2:12, 22; Leviticus 3:5). Eli then advises them concerning honoring God through changing their ways but they remain adamant on their course of action. They are publicly rejected by God. By contrast, the passage records the story of the boy Samuel, who was also ministering in God's house. His mother had been praying for his life purpose and Eli is able to guide him into his vocation. The point is that adults are tasked with significant responsibility in modelling faith and guiding young people into the complexities of the faith journey. Close to this is the record in Judges 2:10 as earlier mentioned: "And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel".

Dean (2010) has noted that the waning religiosity of teens in American culture is correlated with the lack of robust faith among the parents, and older generations. In her incisive chapter on the role of parenting on youth faith formation, she reaches back to Martin Luther and notes that the home is the sanctuary of forming the faith of young people – she goes to illustrate that Luther's *Small Catechism* was primarily designed for use in the home and not in the congregation (Dean 2010:111). The reality that Judges presents is that it isn't that parents will determine the faith development of young people, but that they influence it.

Wisdom literature is replete with aspects of the role of adults and parents in forming the faith of youth. For instance, Psalm 145:4 notes "One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts." The context of the passage has to do with the doxology given by all the nations when the Lord accomplishes his redemptive plan to all the world. Part of how this happens is through intergenerational narrative sharing. Older generations are tasked with guiding young people into the path of wisdom, which is personified in and through the person, life, and work of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:30). In fact, the book of Ecclesiastes can be pictured as a grandfather's sermons to a younger man after he has experienced the entire gamut of human life – in a sense, it is a theology of existential philosophy that culminates in the foundation of being in a right relationship with God (Ecclesiastes 12).

In the New Testament, there is a model of mature Christians discipling and mentoring younger "proteges". Paul and Timothy are an exemplary model (1 Tim 2:1-2). If Paul can be viewed as a youth minister, we can see how complementary youth ministry should be to family discipleship. In his epistles to Timothy, it is clear that Timothy had been acquainted with the things of God in the home through his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (1 Tim 1:5, 2 Tim 3:15). The point is that adults and parents have a significant role in forming the faith of young people through intentional relationships and processes, within and outside the Church.

2.4.2 Youth as a transitory life stage

Although the youthful stage of life is interpreted as a time of strength and vitality, the contrast offered by Isaiah points to the reality that there is something more to life (Isaiah 40:30). This lays an understanding that youth can also be construed as a period of transition, a period that can be characterized by formative mistakes. For instance, the Psalmist prays "remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions" to appeal to the steadfast love and goodness of the LORD. In another light, the psalmist in Psalm 71:17 notes the formative period of education and learning when he says, "O God, from my youth you have taught me". This should not be interpreted from a simplistic sense, that can be the case for African communities, that only young people learn. The entire life experience is a period of learning and formation such that adulthood should not be seen as a static stage of stability, but like youthfulness, a stage towards "wholeness and completion" (Fowler 2000:10-11).

Likewise, Ecclesiastes observes that youth can be a period of ecstatic emotional experiences and vigor (Ecc 11:9-10). A caution is however given to remember that in the midst of the existential nature of life, the young person ought to remember his or her creator (Ecc 12:1). These passages in the Old Testament, show that youth can be envisioned as a stage of making mistakes, learning, enjoying, growing, serving, and becoming. In an influential survey by Kelly (2016:17) on the theology of youth in the Bible, the usage of the words in the Old and New Testaments points to the fact that youth can be seen as a transitory stage characterized by vulnerability. The Lausanne committee on world evangelization (2004:17) noted the perceived needs of young people and how the Church is called to accompany young people as they answer questions of sexuality, drugs, unemployment, spirituality, and education. Ministry to young people must consider the transitory nature of youth and offer holistic programmes to meet these needs in light of the Christian faith.

2.4.3 Youth as partners with God on mission

Yet even though youth can sometimes be tumultuous, given the insights gathered in the research so far, young people are still part and parcel of God's mission. The biblical narratives of Joseph, Samuel, David, Esther, Daniel, Mary, Titus, and Timothy are representative of the powerful ways that young people, responsive to God's vision can transform families, churches, societies, nations, and the world. Kelly (2016) offers a theology of youth by looking at the Hebrew and Greek words that refer to the concept of youth or youthfulness in the Old and New Testaments. Two of the words are helpful for our discussion of youth as partners with God. In the Old Testament, *Na'ar* is used in its description of Joseph, Jeremiah, and David. Apart from the concept of youthful folly that is used in some of the contexts, an important meaning is how the particular young person fits into God's mission for the world. For instance, Jeremiah's excuse that he is "only a youth" happens in the context of his calling by God (Jer 1:6-7). Joseph as *Na'ar* captures the fact that he was seventeen years old, but the wider context is how God communicated his wider plan through the visions and interpretations to Joseph, and how this was formative of his mission to rescue the Israelites during famine in Egypt (Gen 37:2, 40-41, 41:37-46). Joseph participated in God's mission to safeguard the nation of Israel and to fulfil the promises he made to their patriarchs despite the famine of the land (Gen 46:3, 47:13-31).

The second word of youth that Kelly (2016:15) uses, among many others, in the New Testament is *Neaniskos.* This word has the meaning of "new" and refers to Eutychus in Acts 20 and Timothy in Paul's epistles to him. Instructively, this word captures the folly that characterizes youthfulness. An example can be seen when Paul instructs Timothy to "flee youthful [*neōterikos*] passions" (2 Tim 2:22). Barclay (1975:180) expands these "passions" beyond lust to cover such issues as self-assertion, impatience, love of disputation and novelty, which according to him, are as a result of youthful idealism. However, Fairbairn (2002:356) interprets the pursuit of righteousness, faith, love, and peace as a requirement of the Christian leader or

minister, showing that the vices earlier mentioned or the virtues in this section are not a reserve for young people. To summarize, although there may be particular issues that the *Neaniskos* must consider, they are fit vessels in the hands of God. Timothy himself, was tasked with the effective leadership of the Church at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3,3:1-7, 5:1-25, 2 Tim 2:14-26, 4:1-8). Many of the transformative movements in the history of Christianity confirm the fact that young people have a part to contribute to the affairs of the Church, society, and world. Youth are indeed partners on mission with God. The stories of Mary as the mother of Jesus Christ, Titus' leadership of the Cretan church as a young disciple compared to Paul (Fairbairn 2002:260) and many other young people in Church History, are a representative sample of how young people have been used greatly for God's purposes. The point is that youth are partners with God, and the faith community, on mission.

2.4.4 Conclusion

This chapter answered the interpretive question that is posed by Richard Osmer, by asking why is it going on? This chapter pursued this task through engaging the theoretical, theological, and methodological issues surround youth faith formation. Some of these themes include adolescent development, youth cultures and sub-cultures as well as contemporary models of youth ministry. This closing section has explored the predominant themes in order to give us a foundational theology of youth. The passages surveyed confirm the necessity of mentoring relationships between adults and young people; the place of the family in youth ministry and faith formation; the vulnerability of young people to the internal and external pressures as they pursue wholeness as well as a corrective theology of young people, not only as troublesome, but as people full of potential to serve God's purpose. These themes further affect the main research question by granting us a lens of envisioning faith formation of young people in light of popular conceptualizations of youth culture.

The following chapter is the research methodology chapter which is the first step to the pragmatic question "how might we respond?" by exploring the experiences of young people in the PCEA. This is the empirical section of the study that will strengthen the research in interrogating the theory explicated so far in light of the data on the ground. By taking this theory-praxis synthesis of the research, this study will seek to offer practical recommendations to the church and theological institutions in light of youth ministry and faith formation, particularly in chapter four.

CHAPTER 3: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

3.1 The Qualitative approach

This research study seeks to explore the influence of youth culture on the holistic faith formation of the young person. As discussed in chapter one, this task squarely falls within the discipline of practical theology. Practical theology is "fundamentally hermeneutical, correlational, critical and theological" (Swinton & Mowatt 2016: 73). By hermeneutical, practical theology recognizes the centrality of interpretation in the way human beings encounter the world. By being correlational, practical theology tries to tie together a particular context (in this case Nairobian youth), Christian tradition (in this case evangelical and reformed Presbyterian) and another source of knowledge (in this case cultural studies and adolescent development) for deeper insight. By being critical, practical theology considers the issue of human fallenness and pursues research with openness. By being theological, practical theology is done within the metanarrative of the gospel story, from Genesis to Revelation. This lends weight to the topic of the discussion, which seeks to engage theological reflection with the intersection of youth culture (anthropology) and faith development (psychology).

Further, it has been argued that the nature of the study can best be engaged from a qualitative empirical approach. This is because the qualitative approach is concerned with a "search for meaning and the process of interpretation" (Swinton & Mowatt 2016: 97). This is appropriate to the research aims (RA) and questions (RQ) of this study, which are as follows:

RA 1: To investigate how understanding youth culture influences faith formation in youths.

RQ 1: What is the relationship between youth culture and faith formation?

RA 2: To examine African youth's understanding of faith formation and their influencers.

RQ 2: How is the African youth culture unique in the formation of young people?

RA 3: To explore the significance of an interdisciplinary approach to holistic youth faith formation.

RQ 3: In what ways can an interdisciplinary approach enrich a holistic concept and practice of youth faith formation?

Thus, in chapter two, the researcher explored the various theoretical approaches to the study. The historical section investigated the ecclesial context of the study, which is the history of youth ministry in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). This answered Osmer's descriptive question which simply stated is "what is going on?" The second step was to answer the interpretive question "why is this going on?" by looking at the theoretical bases for the research areas of study. Thus, the study explored faith development theory, youth culture and youth ministry models. The latter was considered because youth ministry models are used as the practical implementation arising from the theoretical bases of youth ministry. Osmer's third question is the normative task which answers, "what should be going on". This was partially explored through the biblical-theological reflection of youth and especially faith formation of young people in the Old and New Testament. The empirical research will assist in exploring the topic in question, by considering the data on youth and the concepts of faith formation explored this far. Through the data analysis and discussion, the pragmatic task will be better developed. This research design will be discussed in the following sections.

3.2 The research design

The qualitative nature subsequently informs the design of the research study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016:25-33) make the following distinctions between possible designs in qualitative studies:

- *Phenomenology* studies the everyday or specific experiences or phenomena outside the researcher's biases. The discipline of origin is twentieth century philosophy.

- *Ethnography* is primarily used by anthropologists to not only describe cultural practices, but to analyze them based on their own perspectives. The discipline of origin is nineteenth century anthropology.

- *Grounded theory* seeks to build theory from a particular data set. The discipline of origin is sociology (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

The opinion of the researcher is that it is impossible to conduct research from an unbiased perspective. This is because we all come to the research process from particular philosophical, theological, and psychological perspectives. Ethnography is based on a protracted study on particular phenomena which does not fit in with the design of this research. Phenomenology was also preferred to the grounded approach since the aim of the study is to offer practical suggestions and not necessarily to build theory. Thus, phenomenology would be the best approach in light of this foundational assumption. In addition, the preference for phenomenology for this particular research is based on the intentional nature of this study that explores everyday cultural experiences of young people and drawing out conclusions on the same (Osmer 2008:52).

3.3 Research Instrument, sampling, collection & analysis

The research study made use of a semi-structured interview schedule as it is more open ended and less structured which suits the phenomena of study (Merriam and Tisdell 2016:110; Edwards & Holland 2013:3). The additional reason was contextual in nature. As the researcher conducted fieldwork during the COVID 19 pandemic, online forms of data collection were preferred due to the social distancing guidelines by the Government of Kenya, in particular, the Ministry of Health. This offers a data collection method that views the young people not merely as objects but subjects, capable of offering meaning and clarifying assumptions. Secondly, it offers a framework for deeply understanding the youth cultural nuances that are the subject of much stereotyping. Thirdly, this data collection method honors the place where the young person is.

The semi-structured interview instrument was initially designed as APPENDIX A-1. After the pilot study and the COVID protocols in place, the research instrument was modified as per APPENDIX A-2. The instrument utilized the variables of study that have been presented in the previous chapters. The population and sampling methods of this research are defined in the following paragraphs. Population refers to the general subject of the study, in this case, young people. The population of this study includes all young people in Presbyterian Churches in Nairobi city. However, since the target population as defined above is very large, there is need for sampling the target audience. Sampling may be defined as a fractional selection of the whole population in order to observe in a proportionate sense, something of the whole (Thompson 2012:1). In terms of sampling methods, this research utilizes non-probabilistic and purposive sampling method due to the nature of study being based on a specific context (Marlow 2011:140; Merriam & Tisdell 2016:96).

The purposive sampling method chosen for this research is the criterion method because it focuses on specific data. For the case of this study, the focus is congregations of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Nairobi city. In

the PCEA, one or more churches or congregations make up a parish. Several parishes make a presbytery, which covers a specific geographical area. Several presbyteries in a wider geographical area are defined as a region. In Nairobi region, there are nine presbyteries. There are some presbyteries included in Nairobi region yet they are geographically distant from the area. The reason for this is administrative. The last two presbyteries include Pwani and Tanzania presbyteries. The remaining seven are Kajiado, Milimani North, Milimani South, Nairobi Central, Nairobi East, Nairobi North and Ngong' Hills presbyteries. Since qualitative interviews are not concerned with the numbers of the interviews but on the range of meanings of the interviews (Edwards & Holland 2013:64), the scope of the research will seek a geographical balance in the city. One congregation will be chosen within each of the five presbyteries in Nairobi region, totaling to five congregations, for a representative sample and further focus the "age" criteria on teen, campus student and young professional. These three sub-categories should result in a total of 15 youth in the PCEA context in Nairobi. The 15 respondents were considered as sufficient in order to mitigate the issue of saturation. These three categories were representative of the youth definition in Kenya and consent and assent forms have been shared in APPENDIX D & E.

The research process that was followed is captured in table four below:

Table 4: Research process

	RESEARCH TASK	PROCEDURE
1	Research Sampling	Purposive sampling based on age and geographical location.

		Age criteria: Teenage (14-19 years), Campus Student (20-25 years) and Young Professional (26-35 years). Geographical Location: PCEA congregations in Nairobi.
2	Designing and Testing Research Instrument	After the design, the instrument was tested with youth in the researcher's church youth group. This was achieved through issuing the research instrument to the three groups of the research study i.e., one teen, one college student and one young professional. This formed the basis of the pilot study which led to refining the research instrument prior to beginning the actual study. A few of the initial questions were re-worded to ensure clarity of the research instrument.
3	In-Depth Interviews	Semi-structured interview schedule: Conducted by the researcher with the key respondents in the congregations. The data was recorded in order to ensure integrity of the information.

| 4 | Thematic Analysis | Borrowing from Merriam and Tisdell (2016: 270), the thematic analysis was conducted as follows:

a) Simplifying data – e.g., from a simple question of "what was your previous occupation before ministry?" one can conclude 3 were nurses, 2 were cops etc.

b) Categorizing – naming, sorting, patterning, that is, creating themes and codes. Categorizing helped answer: how do the responses relate to each other?

c) Critical thinking – bringing in context and previous knowledge from the literature review.

d) Coherent reflection – "triangulation" i.e., step a to c and summarizing to identify patterns (Silverman 2011:188) |

3.4 Ethical considerations

UNISA's (2016) ethical policy 1.6.2 guided the researcher during the research process:

> The rights and interests of human participants, institutions communities, animals and the environment are protected. This is particularly important where the information that has been gathered has the potential to invade the privacy and dignity of participants and third parties, and where participants and third parties are vulnerable owing to their youth, disability, gender, age, poverty, disease, ignorance, or powerlessness.

Based on this policy, the researcher notified each respondent on the voluntary nature of the research as well as the benefits to be accrued by participating in the research project. The researcher also made it clear that each responded was free to withdraw from the study at any particular time. The researcher planned for de-briefing in the eventuality that a respondent needed counseling after the session. All these ethical dimensions were included in the opening section of the research instrument as shared in APPENDIX A-2 and a question added which stated "I have been informed of the benefits to the study, the voluntary nature and confidentiality of the study and the possibility of freely withdrawing at any point. I give consent (for myself or my teenager) to participate in this study" with an option to agree by clicking "yes" or disagree by clicking "no". All the respondents answered in the affirmative.

Part of ensuring ethical integrity included proper citation of all sources of information based on academic standards. The academic style for the department of theology is the Harvard referencing guide. Moreover, due diligence was conducted in order to avoid academic plagiarism. This was achieved through the use of Turn-It In software, which is accessible to all research students at UNISA. Clearance letters were also acquired from the relevant institutions in order to conduct the empirical research. These institutions include the PCEA Headquarters

through the national youth department office, congregations and UNISA committees and departments. A permission request letter to the PCEA is attached in APPENDIX B. Additionally, the researcher utilized consent forms for the purposes of responsibility and confidentiality through the entire research process and has attached them in APPENIDX C. This consent form was modified and attached as shown in APPENDIX A-2, as part of the research instrument because of the COVID dynamics that necessitated the use of an online research instrument.

Because of the changes necessitated by the COVID pandemic to the research process, the consent was attached as a paragraph as captured in APPENDIX A-2, which shared below:

> Hi. You have been invited to participate in this study which I, Mr. Kevin Muriithi, am conducting towards a doctoral degree in Practical Theology under the supervision of Dr. Garth Aziz, a Senior Lecturer in Practical Theology at the University of South Africa. You have been selected as you are a young person, between the ages of 14 to 35 years old. Your responses will assist the church to understand youth culture and how that influences how faith is formed in young people and thereby enrich the church's ministry to youth, young professionals, and young families. All the information will be confidential.

> By completing this survey, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings. You are, however, under no obligation to complete the survey and you can withdraw from the study prior to submitting the survey. The survey is developed to be anonymous, meaning that we will have no way of connecting the information that you provide to you personally. Consequently, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once

you have clicked the send button based on the anonymous nature of the survey.

The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes after which it will be permanently destroyed, hard copies will be shredded, and electronic versions will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey, but your contribution will inform youth policies at various levels.

The research was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee. In case of any questions, you can contact the research ethics chairperson of the Ethics Committee, Dr K.J. Malesa 012-429-4780 maleskj@unisa.ac.za. The primary researcher, Mr. Kevin Muriithi can be contacted on +254 780 934 743 or email kevin.muriithi89@gmail.com. You may also contact the primary supervisor, Dr. Garth Aziz, on 012 429 6450 or email azizg@unisa.ac.za.

This survey will only take about 10-15 minutes of your time.

Email Address:* _____

Consent

I have been informed of the benefits to the study, the voluntary nature and confidentiality of the study and the possibility of freely withdrawing at any point. I give consent (for myself or my teenager) to participate in this study.

Yes ☐

No ☐

These steps were undertaken with the view of ensuring all the ethical procedures are followed in the research process. Mugenda (2008:293) considers research ethics as the application of ethical standards throughout the research stages, from the planning stages to the data collection and analysis stages. The confidentiality of each respondent was maintained especially in the recording of the interviews, primarily through using initials in order to uniquely identify each person's response. This was communicated to them, in accordance with UNISA (2016) research policy 1.2.4:

> Researchers should respect and protect the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of participants and where relevant, institutions. Researchers should ensure that the personal information of participants used for research purposes is adequately protected to prevent possible loss, damage and/or unauthorized access as required by Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, No. 4 of 2013. They should never expose such participants and institutions to procedures or risks not directly attached to the research project or its methodology. Research and the pursuit of knowledge should not, in themselves, be regarded as the supreme goal at the expense of the rights of participants and institutions.

3.5 Data results and analysis

3.5.1 Summarizing the data

After data collection, the entire set of data was collated. This data could be summarized in two sections as shown in the tables below. Table five below summarizes the general information gathered from the initial questions:

Table 5: Summary of youth target sample

Question	Summary
Gender	8 males, 5 Females
Age	5 Teens (14-19 years)
	5 College students (20-25 years)
	3 Young Professionals (26 – 35 years)
PCEA Congregation	2 Enchoro Emuny' – Ngong' Hills Presbytery

	2 Bahati Martyrs – Nairobi Central Presbytery
	3 St. Andrews – Milimani North Presbytery
	3 Unity (Kitengela) – Kajiado Presbytery
	3 Kariobangi South – Nairobi East Presbytery

3.5.2 Categorizing the data

After summarizing the data from the general section, the researcher explored the specific questions. This section was designed to extrapolate the study's research objectives. The tabulated results in table six below show the summary of the questions, as well as the responses. Where the responses were based on a longer response, the researcher coded the responses based on particular thematic interests arising from the combination of the collected data and the literature review.

Table 6: Summary of data findings

Question	Themes	Summaries
Church attendance		12 Weekly 1 Every two weeks
Understanding of Christianity	Grace versus works	Grace-based e.g., 3 answered "believing", 1 answered "identifying yourself with Christ", 2 answers included "personal savior", 3 answered "follower of Christ." Works-based 1 had a law-based understanding e.g., "striving each day to be . . ."

Length of Christianity	Formation	More than 5 years – 8 people Not sure – 2 people 2-5 years – 3 people
Key questions they are asking	Developmental stages Faith Development	Integrating faith with all of life – 7 people Identity question – 2 people Morality (right or wrong) – 4 people
Key faith formation influences	Worship Service Culture Mentorship	Worship – 10 selections Music – 9 selections Service – 8 selections Culture – 6 selections Mentorship – 4 selections

Influence of popular culture	Culture	Insignificantly – 4 people
		Neutral – 3 people
		Significantly – 6 people
View on youth fashion from adults	Sub-culture	Adults care too much – 10.
		Adults do not care – 3
Personal view on fashion	Sub-culture	Most responses noted that decency and comfort are the crucial factors
Time spent on social media	Social media	4 to 6 hours – 7 people
		2 to 3 hours – 4 people
		Less than 1 hour – 2 people
Top social media platforms	Social media	WhatsApp – 6 people
		Facebook – 3 people

		Instagram – 3 people YouTube – 2 people
Top social media purposes	Social media Relational Spiritual formation	Learning – 12 people Connecting – 11 people Entertainment – 7 people Spiritual growth – 6 people Professional – 4 people
Shopping malls	Popular culture Consumerism	Insignificant – 11 people Neutral – 2 people Significant – 0
Movies and series	Entertainment Popular culture	Insignificant – 5 people Neutral – 3 people Significant – 5 people

Music	Popular culture	Insignificant – 5 people Neutral – 1 person Significant – 7 people
Social media for faith formation	Social Media Formation	Insignificant – 2 people Neutral – 4 people Significant – 7 people
Importance of relationships with opposite sex	Relationships Sex/sexuality	Insignificant – 2 people Neutral – 3 people Significant – 8 people
Negative effect of relationships with opposite sex	Relationships Sex/sexuality	"Yes" – 8 people "No" – 5 people

Importance of youth pastors addressing popular culture	Popular culture Youth ministry	"Yes" – 13 people
The tone in which youth pastors address popular culture	Popular culture Youth ministry	Firm but gentle – 8 people Rarely – 3 people Strong without understanding- 2 people
Greatest influence on spiritual growth	Formation Worship Mentorship	Worship – 4 people Mentorship – 3 people Bible Study – 5 people All – 1 person
African cultural values	Traditional African culture and values Ubuntu / Community	Respecting elders – 4 people Ubuntu / community – 6 people Negative – 1 person

	Elders	No influence – 2 people
African culture unique to global youth culture	Cultures African Traditional Religion and Worldview	Yes – 9 people. No – 4 people
Family Dynamics	Family systems	Both parents – 10 people One parent – 3 people

3.5.3 Emerging themes from the data

Theme 1: Youth understanding of the Christian faith

One of the questions included defining what being a Christian means. From the data collected, most of the respondents used language that revealed an understanding of being a Christian based on the doctrine of grace. For instance:

To be a Christian is total believe on Jesus Christ who died because of our sin, and through Him we are free. Believing in God. (O.G.M)[9]

Having faith in God. (K.K.G)

To be a Christian for me entails acknowledging Christ as the anchor of my life. It doesn't necessarily mean acting like a priest but basically believing that I'll receive eternal life once I die because of the Grace of God. It's more of believing in Christ. (M.K.S.)

To be a Christian is to identify yourself with Christ as you have allowed him into your life. (A.W.M)

A person who believes in Christ and accepts Him as their personal saviour and who confesses with their mouth that He is Lord. (M.W.N.)

The language used in the above comments like "believing" "identifying" and "accepting" all assume a theological understanding of grace. The biblical concept

---

[9] These are the initials of the respondents that have been used to maintain anonymity.

of grace is that it is an unmerited favor. This agreement in definition is likely the case because the respondents are part of the reformed theological background of the PCEA. On the other hand, two youth said the following:

Being a Christian means being a follower of Christ. For me it's striving each day to be more like Christ. (A.M.)

To abide by the laws set by Christ (B.W.G)

While these two responses emphasize the outworking of the doctrine of grace in the life of the Christian, the second response may reveal a legalistic understanding of the Christian life. The first response is softer, in comparison, and focuses more on what living as a Christian entails.

Thus, we could summarize that most of the youth in the study have a grace-based understanding of the Christian life, while a minority express a works-based understanding. It may be concluded that their congregations have managed to transmit this grace-based understanding based on the reformed theological understanding of the Christian life, that emphasizes saving faith as the bedrock of the Christian life (WCF 14).

Theme 2: Age-appropriate developmental issues

While there were several outliers, the general observation on the question of what young people are asking is that their responses were based on their developmental stage. This is represented in figure seven below. Thus, older youth, that is young adults, are wrestling with how their faith integrates with all of their life. The younger youth, that is teenagers, are grappling with the questions of identity and morality. The question of identity answers, "who am I" and the question of morality answers "what is right and wrong". This is supported by the psychosocial theories of Erik Erikson and Daniel Levinson (Fowler 1981:109-111). Although Erikson and

Levinson use slightly different language, they both see adolescence as a period of solidifying personal values, finding a framework for all of life as well as sharpening thinking and learning (Fowler 1981:109-111). Another key developmental issue that arose from the study is the issue of intimacy and relationships. This cuts across the board and is shown by a majority affirmative response to the question on the importance of relationships.

This shows that regardless of the specific age of the respondents, young people are generally interested in the theme of relationships. Literature in the area of adolescence reveals that based on the emotional development in this stage, young people grapple with different aspects of relationships. Early adolescents are learning how to express themselves emotionally, while older adolescents are stabilizing in their emotional expressiveness. There are indeed a few differences in emotional aspects in adolescence. For instance, a study of 484 Spanish, secondary school adolescents by Esnaola, Revuelta & Sarasa (2017:331) reveals that girls depict better interpersonal development as well as better stress coping management, compared with boys. Other differences go beyond gender and are also a factor of age across adolescence. For example, Wood et al (2018:130) argue that youth with better intellectual capacities have higher levels of emotional resilience. Thus, emerging adults may depict a marked difference compared with early adolescents. However, emotional development, resilience and adaptability are salient in adolescence. In summary, despite the reality that adolescence in contemporary literature has stretched into the mid- to late-twenties, themes of relationship are a critical factor across the youth stages (Hill 2015).
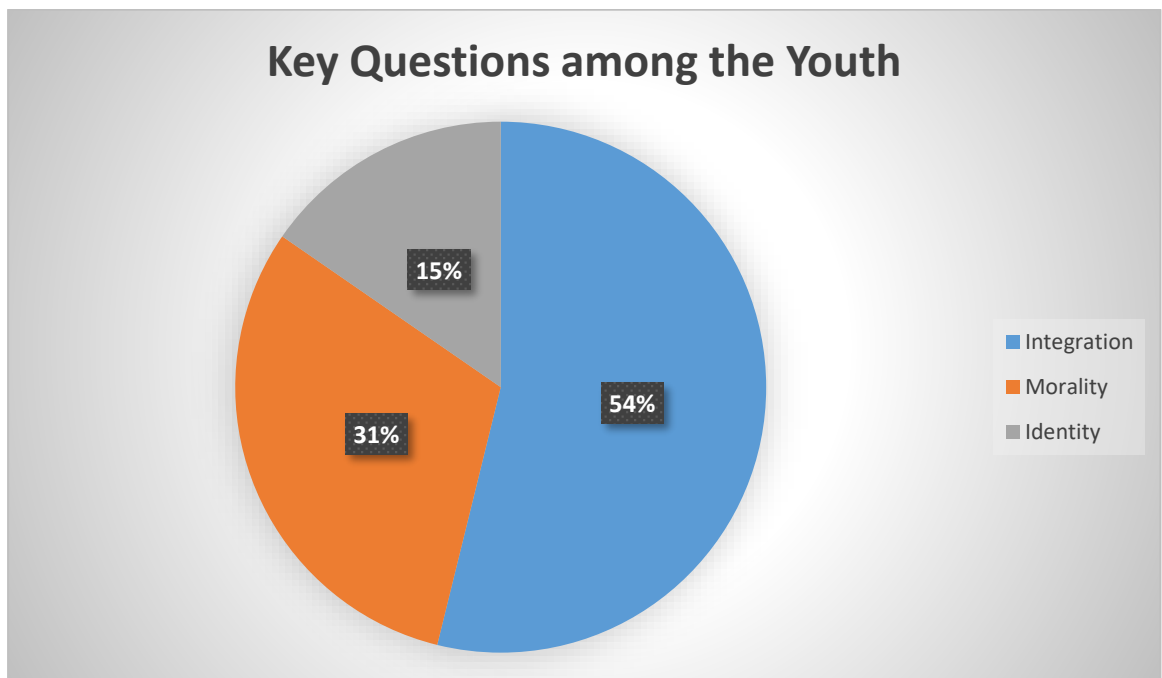
Figure 7: Key questions among the youth

Theme 3: Key practices in faith formation

One of the questions assessed the importance of various faith formational practices such as worship, service, music, culture, and mentorship. The chart in figure eight below summarizes the top three selections among the young people. Four people each selected the "service, worship and music" and "culture, worship and music" selections, with three people selecting "mentorship, worship and service" selection and one person selecting "service, worship and culture" as the top three influences.
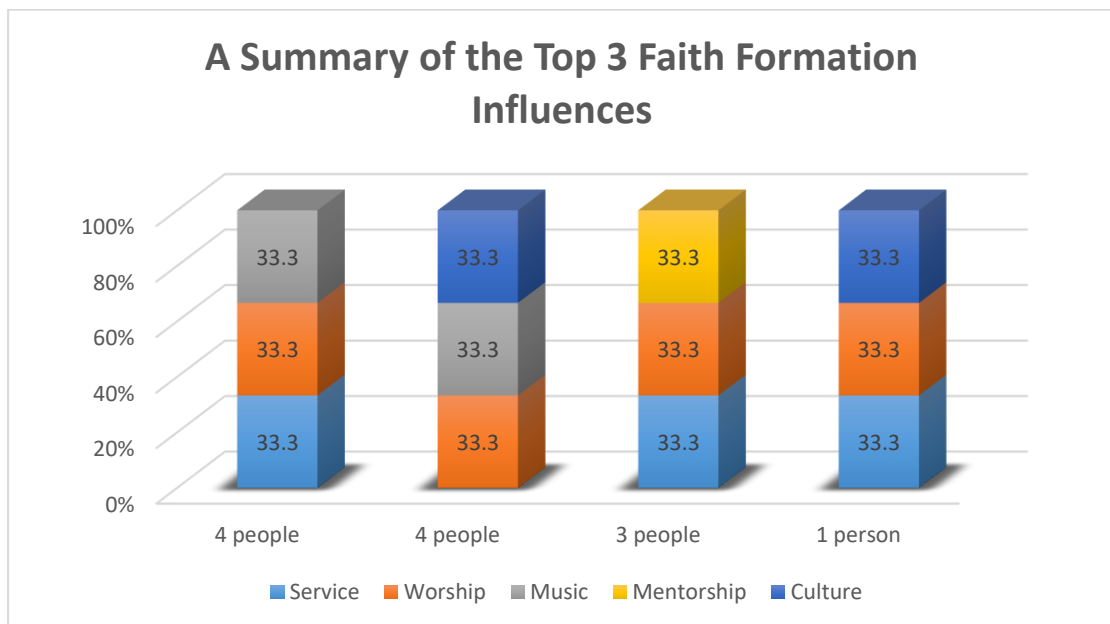
Figure 8: A summary of key faith formation influencers

Worship and Scripture reading (or Bible study) are highly regarded as formational practices among the youth. For those who selected "worship" as the highest influence of formational practices compared to "service", "mentorship" and "culture" had this to say:

> *This is because through worshipping him in truth and in faith I will inherit the kingdom. (O.G.M.)*

> *Worship- It deeply reminds me of the Great Love with which GOD, who is rich in Mercy, showed me, that even when we were dead through our trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ and that we are only saved by His all-sufficient Grace, which He gave us as a Gift, through faith in Jesus Christ, not because of works lest any man should boast - Ephesians 2:4-5,8. (K.M.W.)*

The last comment is instructive in understanding the concept of emerging adulthood. The sociologist Hill (2015:68) concludes that the narrative that young people are moving away from the church is more as a result of socio-cultural construction of myth rather than on actual statistical evidence. From a sociological perspective, he proves that the numbers do not show any decrease in spiritual abandonment among contemporary youth any more than for young people several decades ago. According to Hill (2015:67) young people do not leave church because of lack of faith but because the faith they have inherited, is not strong enough to sustain them in light of the cultural formation that they undergo through popular youth culture. This accords with the research from the National Study on Youth and Religion (NSYR) by Smith and Denton (2009) that depicts global teen faith as shallow or in technical terms as moralistic, therapeutic and deist (MTD). Thus, worship is how young people can deepen their formation and engage in an alternative liturgy compared to the liturgies of popular youth culture. The participant, K.M.W.'s response, above on worship points to how "deep" the worship experience can be for young people who have an over-abundance of this-worldly liturgies at the swipe of a button.

Other responses noted the importance of faith and cultural integration as important:

Learning how to engage the culture around me. It helps in understanding how to treat various group of people (B.W.G.)

Learning how to engage the culture around me - As I was being introduced into the faith, my understanding of Christianity was solely based on how many Bible verses I knew, or how many church school meetings I attended. Gradually, my understanding shifted and I started gauging the 'level of being born again' by the type of entertainment one engaged in and the kind of language a person used. Of late, my faith formation has come from observing the working of God in my life and in the lives of the people around me. The

common underlying factor is, the culture around me defined the basis on which my faith was formed. I've been keen to learn how to engage with my immediate cultural surrounding to avoid growing my faith on wrong principles. (M.K.S.)

Clearly, the youth understand the concept of faith formation. The last response shows that the youth appreciate the role of development in their faith. The respondent observes growth in their understanding and expression of faith since they began their Christian life. As young people transition into adult life, and as they acquire more responsibilities in life, the issue of integration becomes critical. Thus, rather than isolating young people and entrenching a blind following of rules, youth ministry must help young people to be open and to cultivate an ability of discernment (Nel 2018:366). Exploring the concept of identity formation among African American young people, Blount (2011:38) suggests that identity formation is also tied into faith formation. This argument from an African perspective has also been made by Cloete (2012b). Conversing with James Wertsch and Howard Thurman, Blount (2011:41) suggests that the way young black Americans can successfully negotiate the racial dilemmas of their context and thus find what God calls them to be is by listening to voices that allow them to do that. This means that youth ministry must offer an alternative voice to young people, and thus equip them to integrate their faith with socio-cultural concerns around them.

The second practice that is crucial in faith formation among young people is Bible Study. Several respondents who selected "Bible Study" as the greatest influence in had this to say:

You get to know the content and teachings in the Bible (D.E.).

I learn more and I get revealed in the word (O.G.M.)

Reading the Word of God enriches and nourishes me and strengthens my relationship and faith in Him for I get to hear and listen from my Heavenly Father (John 1:1) (K.M.W.)

By going through scripture and sharing reflections as a group, we are able to deeply grasp what the Lord says to us. (N.K.)

From these responses, Scripture engagement or Bible study is a key practice in faith formation among the young people. Secondly, young people view the Bible as a divinely inspired text. And third, young people desire to see their lives transformed through the Word of God. Figure nine below summarizes some of the key influences on faith formation among young people.


Key Influences on Faith Formation

■ Key Influences on Faith Formation

10	9	8	6
Worship	Music	Service	Culture
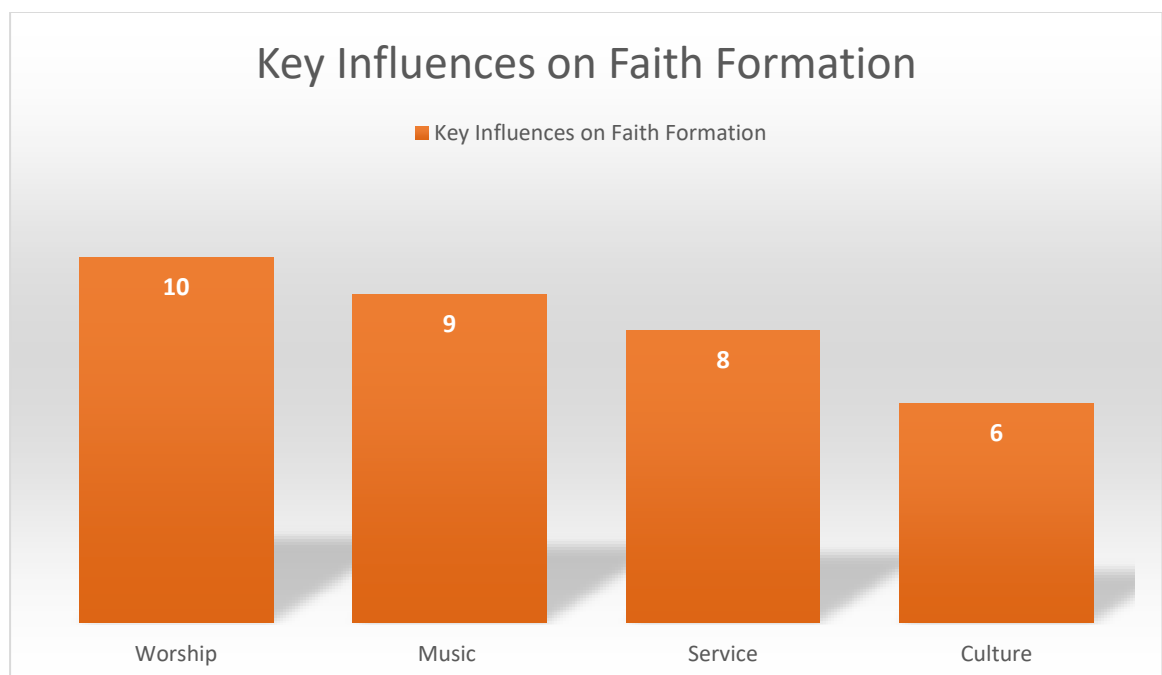
Figure 9: Key influences on faith formation

Theme 4: Understanding popular culture

On questions that desired to explore the understanding and influence of popular youth culture among the youth, the results were quite dynamic. Some of these results show a contrary understanding based on some of the generalizations that are made concerning youth culture. This theme is sub-divided into other sub-themes as enumerated below.

Sub-Theme 4a: Positive use of social media

The data showed that youth use social media for many hours. Seven respondents indicated that they use social media for 4 to 6 hours. Four respondents said they use it for 2 to 3 hours and two people said that they use it for less than 1 hour. Yet the length of social media is not directly correlated with time-wasting or negative use of social media, as can sometimes be assumed by adults in the faith community.

Although it is usually assumed that youth use social media for entertainment the data shows that they use it for other things as well. From a list of five uses, although entertainment emerges in the top three, it ranks third in use (seven selections) after learning (12 selections) and connecting (11 selections). Spiritual growth had six selections and professional development had four selections. The low selections for professional use of social media can be explained from the sample of the youth. Only a few of them are working class. This counterintuitive use of social media is supported by the large affirmations of youth whose use of social media has aided their spiritual growth. Seven of the respondents answered in the affirmative, four people were in the neutral and two people noted an "insignificant" influence of social media on their spiritual growth.
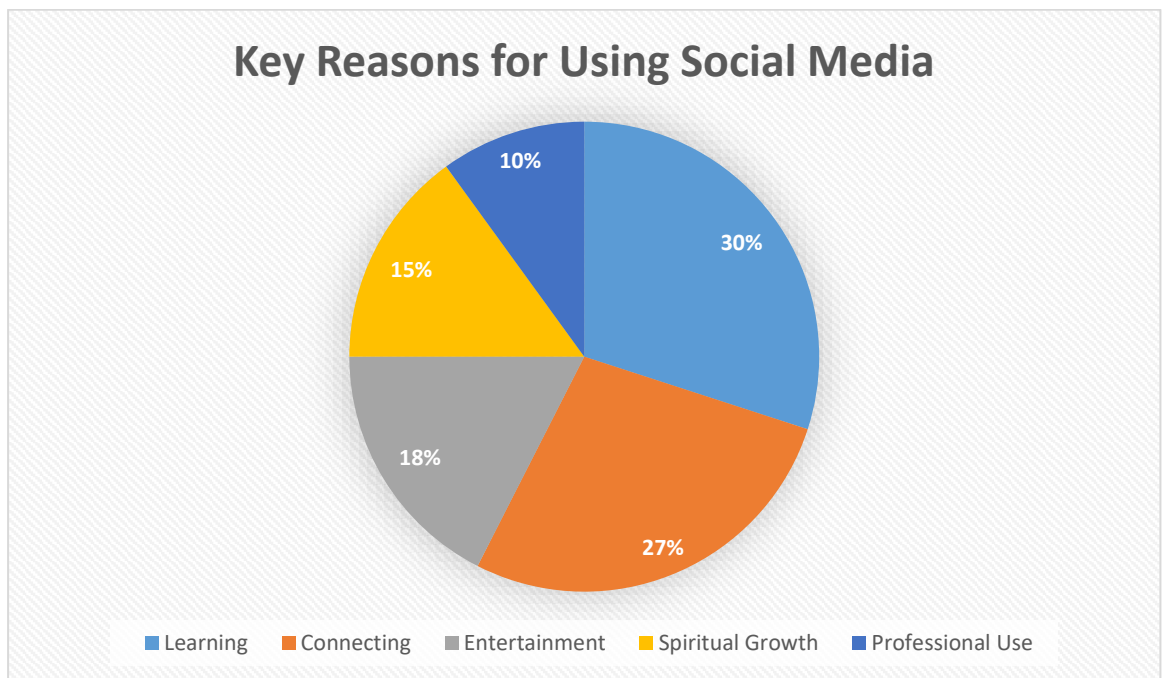
Figure 10: Key reasons for using social media

Sub-Theme 4b: Visiting of malls.

A huge majority of the youth do not visit malls frequently. Eleven respondents answered in the negative with only two respondents showing a neutral response of their daily experience in mall visitations.

Sub-Theme 4c: Music, movies, and series

Although music is influential, movies and series are comparatively not as essential. On the question of music as a pop-cultural influence, seven respondents answered "significantly", one respondent answered "neutral" and five respondents answered "insignificantly". For the question on movies and series, five respondents each answered "insignificant" and "significant" with three respondents answering "neutral".

Sub-Theme 4d: Youth sub-cultures (e.g., dressing and fashion)

Most youth value comfort and decency in dressing. This is an outlier based on the overly simplistic view towards youth and fashion. Of course, much can be asked on the question of what is meant by comfort, but by and large, based on the results, youth dress for comfort as opposed to indecency. Additionally, most youth acknowledge that their parents or adults view their fashion negatively.

Theme 5: The role of mentorship in faith formation

Mentorship is still a need and a great tool for faith formation according to the data. Several responses from different questions emphasized the importance of mentorship. Some questions differentiated between parents or guardians and pastors. Much more could be said in terms of the preferences as per this demarcation, but the overarching correlation between mentorship and positive faith formation is evident:

Walking with an older Christian. I look up to my father and he is the older christian. (K.K.G.)

His faith serves as an example for me. (K.K.G.)

Walking with an older Christian influences me the most because as we talk, they know what goes on in my life and give me advice accordingly. I find that this impacts me more as its more relatable and they even follow up to check on me and see the progress I've made. (A.W.M.)

Walking with an older christian because I can ask questions and be guided. (M.N.)

My mum has guided me majorly in my spiritual growth (M.N)

Theme 6: The role of African values and practices

One of the questions desired to explore the influence of traditional African values on youth formation. It was evident from the responses that they African values are important for young people. The top two values that emerged from the study are respect for elders and importance of community, which is termed as *ubuntu* (in different ways) among several Bantu ethnicities in Africa.

> *Yes. Respecting everyone and treating all people with modesty. Through this, I am able to accept and appreciate other people's ideas and values. (N.K.)*

> *Respecting my elders. Has helped me to reason with the elderly. (B.W.G.)*

> *Yes, African cultural values have shaped my life as a young person because there are some values that have been instilled in me for the longest time and help me navigate through these times. One value that comes to mind is respect for parents especially when it comes to mode of dressing, I have been taught to always be decently dressed. (A.W.M.)*

> *Yes. Respect. I have learnt to honor and respect my elders even when they are sometimes the ones on the wrong. (M.W.N.)*

However, one of the respondents viewed African culture in a conflicting position to their Christian faith:

> *Fortunately, I have grown up in a strict Christian family. African culture has never influenced my world though tempting most of the time. I was taught*

from a young age to stand my ground when it came to my being a Christian. (E.W.M.)

It was also evident that African youth observe a difference between African youth culture and global youth culture. From one of the questions that explored this correlation, nine people answered in the affirmative while four people answered in the negative.

Theme 7: The importance of a relational approach to youth ministry

In response to a number of questions, many of the responses used language such as "relationships", "connecting" that emphasized the importance of relationships among young people in the church. Relationships with opposite sex are also important for them. From the responses, two people noted "insignificant" as a response on the question relationship, three people were "neutral" and eight people noted "significant". These themes summarize the data from the research instrument.

3.6 Conclusion

These themes will be further analyzed in the next chapter in light of the theoretical explorations in chapter two. Additionally, these themes will be analyzed in light of the research questions of this study including the relationship between youth culture and faith formation; the uniqueness of the African culture in the formation of young people and lastly, the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in enriching the faith formation of young people. Chapter four will explore this at greater depth. Chapter three as the empirical aspect of this research study provides relevant data that is important for the practical theological reflection that will follow in chapter four. Thus, chapter bears the heart of the robust practical theological reflection which seeks to sensitively interpret ministry issues in light of interdisciplinary theories.

CHAPTER 4: PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the pragmatic question raised by Osmer (2008:4), "how are we supposed to respond?" These questions seek to offer wise and transformative action which is derived from the reflection on theories and practices in the study, in our case, faith formational practices (Osmer 2008:4). Whereas chapter one laid the methodological approach to the research question, chapter two explored the theoretical approaches that have been proposed in the ministry to young people – including youth ministry models, adolescent development theory and a biblical-theology of youth in the Scriptures. Chapter three collected data from the ground through an empirical observation and in this chapter, the research will make use of two approaches to the normative question which include theological interpretation and the exploration of good practices in faith formation as envisaged by Osmer (2008:131-132). The theological interpretation is approached from a confessional, Presbyterian, and reformed perspective, which is the location of the research study and will be comparing other studies on youth faith formation in the consideration of the data analysis in the chapter beforehand.

These areas of exploration are critical in engaging in the "hermeneutical spiral" that Osmer (2008:11) proposes. This spiral is composed of the four tasks of practical theology offered by Osmer as the descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic tasks. Whereas other disciplines in the humanities explore only one of these tasks, practical theology closes the hermeneutical circle conclusively. For instance, sociology may study various aspects of youth culture and explore various implications. But practical theology adds the theological reflection aspect so as to enrich the data that is revealed from the sociological study. This study has made use of anthropology and psychology to understand the concepts of youth faith formation, but it has also equally grounded this examination from a reformed and presbyterian theological perspective. This hermeneutical

process is summarized by Osmer's (2008) four tasks of practical theology as illustrated in figure eleven below.
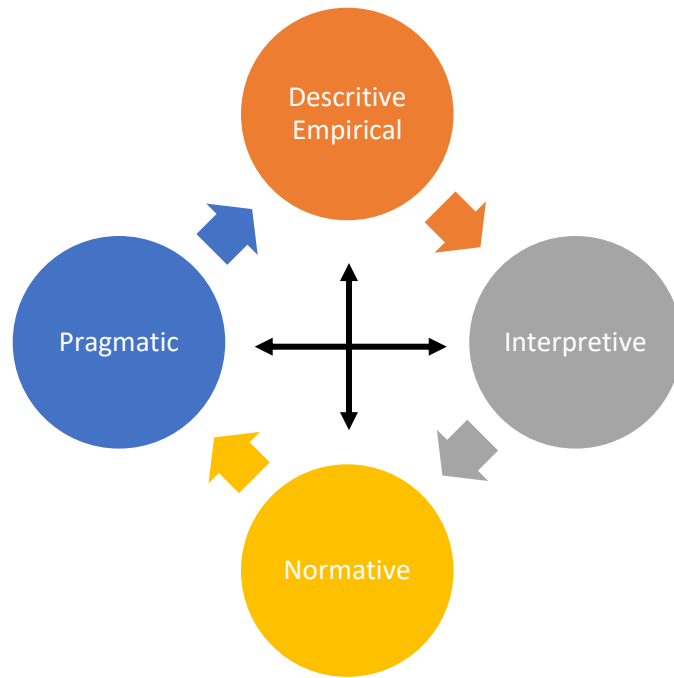
Figure 11: Osmer's four tasks of practical theological reflection (Osmer 2008:11)

This theological reflection is encapsulated in this chapter and engages the emerging themes as informed by the literature review. The aim is to explore the implications of the study for the PCEA youth ministry context. Practical theological reflection ends in transformation of praxis. The second sphere of implication is for theological education. This is because theological education that is relevant must inform and be informed by practical ministry in the local church. Third, I will explore some further areas of research in youth ministry, and particularly faith formation.

4.2 Practical theological reflection on the thematic areas

4.2.1 Intergenerational approaches

Studies on youth faith formation are anchored on the understanding of what it means to be a Christian. The American National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), referenced in chapter one of this study, concluded that the religiosity of young people reflects their parents' and their congregations' (Dean 2010:3). In other words, the understanding of faith of young people is not only informed by their individual understanding but also their familial and ecclesial environment. The young people in this research study revealed that youth have an understating of the reality of grace as foundational for the Christian life. This supports the above conclusion as the Presbyterian Church of East Africa is a reformed church, which emphasizes the doctrines of grace.

Jerry Pillay (2017:5), the South African theologian, proposes that grace is the foundation and motivation of the Christian life according to reformed theology. He notes that it is what saves the Christian, what sustains the Christian and what will glorify the Christian (Pillay 2017:5). Pillay (2017:6) reflecting on the implication of reformed theology to the issues facing African societies acknowledges that grace is the motivation behind seeking justice in our communities, dealing with those of differing perspectives and relating well with our neighbors. Within the history of the protestant faith, the five principles of protestant and reformed theology have come to be summarized as sola fide, sola gratia, sola Christus, sola scriptura and soli deo gloria. Sola gratia is the understanding that the Christian life is all of grace. B.B. Warfield (2002:505) observes that faith itself, which is what marks out the people of God, is a "gratuity from God" meaning it is mediated to us as God's free gift.

However, a caution needs to be given. Within Christian youth culture, there has been a movement of "hyper-grace" ministries and teachings (Acodesin 2018:7). The heart of these teachings is that the understanding of grace means that Christians

can now live as they please outside the freedom of God's Word. From this understanding, young people can engage in contradictory lifestyles in the name of Christian freedom. Reformed theologians have noted the distinctions between law and grace, while at the same time seeing the importance of both in the Christian life. Berkhof (2012:615) for instance notes the third use of the law as *a usus didactitus or normativus* whereby the law is a teacher, a rule of life that leads a Christian along the way of an upright life. Although antinomians discredit the law as beneficial to the Christian life, biblical faith as interpreted by reformed theologians expounds on the necessity of the law. According to Berkhof (2012:615), Lutheran theologians, reading the negative connotations of the law in the New Testament, focus on the second function of the law – that the primary function of the law is to condemn sin – the reformed consensus is that it is also beneficial to the believer. Even under the theocracy of Israel in the Old Testament, although the law-observance was not a guarantee of the blessedness that God promised, the law – especially the ritual law, contained "principles of grace" (Vos 2015:129). Libertarians, even within the Greco-Roman context of the New Testament, desired to live in freedom – outside the constraints of any laws and guided by their human passions. Yet Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 notes that "though he is free, he will not let anything master him" (Adeyemo 2006:1384). Thus, the doctrine of grace should be understood within the entire canon of Scripture, so that grace leads to the true freedom that Christ offers (John 8:31-32). This freedom leads to a lifestyle that is morally good. Obedience to God's Word or law, is a mark of living a good Christian life (Frame 2013:1103). That is why the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) observes that the law given to Adam and his descendants was given on the basis of perpetual obedience (WCF XIX).

The NSYR revealed that young people see God in moralistic, therapeutic and deist terms, meaning that, the Christian life is merely about a set of rules (moralistic), that God's main task is to give Christians ecstatic experiences (therapeutic) and that God is not involved in their day-to-day affairs (deist) (Dean 2010:16-21). The understanding of grace among young people would ground them

in a more biblical perspective of the Triune God of Scripture who calls them to a relationship with him and who is involved in their day-to-day lives. Calvin (2014:799) beautifully captures how the understanding of grace helps the Christian to go through tough times and to persevere in faith when he says that "because God's grace dwells in his [suffering Christian's] house, it will not leave it desolate". The doctrine of grace strengthens the foundation of young Christians, elicits in them the right motivations for the Christian life and grants them perseverance through the trials of life.

Therefore, grace is a central theological foundation for reformed theology and Christian life. It is not only how one begins the Christian life but also how one finishes. This doctrine is understood within reformed theology as preservation of the saints. In chapter 17 of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF 2018:85), the reformed understanding is connected with the realities of effectual calling, sanctification, and perseverance in grace. Those whom "God has accepted in his Beloved . . . shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved". Contrary to other theological positions that anchor perseverance on human free will, the reformed perspective rests on the doctrines of election and the covenant of grace (WCF 17.2). Yet, this does not mean that the process of persevering in the faith is a straight road. Far from it, it includes different temptations and failings in the Christian (WCF 17.2; WLC 81). However, through repentance that is empowered through the Spirit's work in a Christian, the Christian is encouraged to keep on in the faith. Therefore, the doctrine of perseverance is also tied to the doctrine of Christian assurance (WCF 18.1; WLC 80).

To summarize this section, what this means for faith formation is that youth ministry must make room for an intergenerational approach. This has been conclusively argued in section 2.3.3.4 and confirmed through the empirical study of this research. Youth ministry does not happen in a silo but must make room for the mutuality of interaction and presence of mature adults. This is the case that has been made for family-oriented, or multi-generational approaches to youth ministry

as nuanced by Cloete (2016) who proposes a "family-as-community" approach, Crispin (2017) who uses an "accommodative approach" and Aziz, Nel and Davis (2017), among others. Secondly, youth ministry must support the adults in the faith community in how to walk alongside young people as they answer their developmental questions. This approach already assumes a practical theological approach which seeks to listen to where young people are and to help them to discern God's calling for their life (White 2017).

4.2.2 Age-appropriate youth ministry

The responses of the youth in this research study to the question of the key question they are asking aligns with the findings of the developmental theories from the field of psychology. From the study, it was seen that:

- Teenagers (14-19 yrs.) are concerned about morality.

- Campus students (20-25 yrs.) are concerned about identity.

- Young Professionals (25-35 yrs.) are concerned about integration.

Another large-scale study of faith formation is the Confirmation Project conducted in the United States among five denominations including the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Methodist Church through a mixed-methods approach among 3,080 congregations (Osmer & Douglass 2018:162). Among their findings is the need to contextualize faith formation ministries among young people to fit in the contexts of different congregations. Interestingly, this study enumerated questions that teens (13 – 15 yrs.) are asking according to the following top priorities (Osmer & Douglass 2018:8):

1. The Trinity

2. The Bible

3. The Lord's Prayer

4. The 10 Commandments

5. Death and Resurrection

The bottom five questions are listed as follows:

1. Other Religions

2. Love and Sexuality

3. Drug abuse and criminal behavior

4. Gay marriage

5. Church governance

It is interesting to note that the top priority questions are doctrinal in nature, with the more practical questions being in the bottom half. This shows us that young people are asking important questions and need the guidance of mature and discerning reflections on these questions. From our research study, the questions of young people include the following three themes: morality, identity, and integration. What this means is that faith formational programs and efforts must help the young people answer the questions they are asking in each unique stage of their life. These questions are not to be answered through isolating the youth but

through an intergenerational approach. White (2017:46) argues that these intergenerational communities are what help adolescents to deal with the "formal operations" according to the cognitive theorists and "perspective taking" according to the moral theorists, thus aiding their developmental stages in a holistic way. The community of faith must help its young covenant members to respond to the key questions they are asking from a faith perspective. And the community of faith must also be open to how young people can serve them through using their gifts, talents, and experiences for the edification of the church. Thus, even with age-appropriate ministry platforms, the mutuality of an intergenerational congregational approach is vital.

4.2.3 Key practices in faith formation

Faith formation studies reveal that certain practices are important in the development of the faith of young people. Practices such as prayer, worship, service, and mentorship were seen as foundational in formational practices in the Confirmation Project (Osmer & Douglass 2018:6). The study concluded that young people who have gone through these formational practices are able to successfully integrate their faith to everyday life (Osmer & Douglass 2018:9). This research study revealed that young people value the place of key faith formational practices.

Worship and Scripture reading (or Bible study) are highly regarded as formational practices among the youth. For those who selected "worship" as the highest influence of formational practices compared to "service", "mentorship" and "culture" had this to say:

This is because through worshipping him in truth and in faith I will inherit the kingdom. (O.G.M.)

Worship- It deeply reminds me of the Great Love with which GOD, who is rich in Mercy, showed me, that even when we were dead through our

trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ and that we are only saved by His all-sufficient Grace, which He gave us as a Gift, through faith in Jesus Christ, not because of works lest any man should boast - Ephesians 2:4-5,8. (K.M.W.)

The second practice that is crucial in faith formation among young people is Bible Study. Several respondents who selected "Bible Study" as the greatest influence in had this to say:

You get to know the content and teachings in the Bible (D.E.).

I learn more and I get revealed in the word (O.G.M.)

Reading the Word of God enriches and nourishes me and strengthens my relationship and faith in Him for I get to hear and listen from my Heavenly Father (John 1:1) (K.M.W.)

By going through scripture and sharing reflections as a group, we are able to deeply grasp what the Lord says to us. (N.K.)

From these responses, young people view the Bible as an inspired text and through growing in their practice of reading it are able to find life transformation. Youth faith formation is therefore founded on the Word of God which is central to the transformation of young people's lives. Cole & Nielson (2016) argue that expositional preaching of the Word is central to transformative youth ministry. Additionally, the Word of God is central to the reformed understanding of the means of grace. The "means of grace" are ordinary ordinances that God has given his church for its maturity. These ordinary means of grace include the Word, sacraments and prayer and strengthen the faith of God's people (WSC 88). But what youth ministries must also do is to assist young people with deepening their engagement of the Scriptures by helping them integrate God's Word with their daily

life and contextual realities. Some of these contextual realities emerging from the study include sexuality and cultural engagement, to name a few.

Therefore, youth ministry engagement must take the "theological turn" suggested by Root & Dean (2010) by moving from entertainment to faith formational practices. Worship would allow young people to encounter the presence of God and the corporate community that strengthens them and guards them from a depressive individualism that they struggle with. Biblical engagement would clarify God's voice to them through the illumination of the Holy Spirit to assist them in discerning God's calling to their particular situations. Youth ministry must not neglect these key practices of faith formation. Despite the changing times, worship and Scripture are still critical practices of faith.

4.2.4 Understanding popular culture

From the research, it was evident that popular culture is rather nuanced. This research study expands on youth ministry engagement by showing the need for sensitive discernment that goes beyond what seems "popular" within youth culture. Mueller (2006:80), perhaps the foundational work on youth culture in ministry, sees adolescence as a "crossroads" filled with complexities in questions and formational experiences of life. This insight is helpful to the entire scope of ministry to young people, given the fact that contemporary research reveals that adolescence is extending into the late twenties. This research study looked at social media use, malls, media (music, movies, and TV series) as well as aesthetics (dressing and fashion). Whereas it supports some of the stereotypes held by youth ministry stakeholders, such as parents and church leaders, the research revealed possible avenues of engaging the "deep-level" cultural realities of young people (Mueller 2006:116).

4.2.4.1 Positive use of social media

The data revealed nuanced use of social media among the respondents. While most use social media for long periods (n=7, 4-6 hours), there is diversity in what exactly they use it for. Learning (n=12), connecting (n=11) and entertainment (n=7) are the highest functions that social media plays in the lives of young people. This critiques the generalization that young people only use social media for entertainment purposes. Professional use of social media emerges as the least use, probably given the majority demographic of the respondents. Most of them are still in the educational system as either students in secondary or higher education. Interestingly, social media has also positively affected the spiritual growth of young people with a majority of the responses in the affirmative "significant" (n=7). The minority responses were "neutral" (n=4) and "insignificant" (n=2).

This reveals the fact that there is more to the conversation of young people and social media use. For starters, Weber (2015:4) sees social media as important for the identity formation and faith formation of young people. Because young people live in a digital milieu, social media is part of their socialization process. Whereas social media can and has been used negatively, it is a powerful tool in the lives of young people that has brought with it identity formation, youth agency and global participation. Several examples within the field of youth studies illustrate this. Iwilade (2013) observes that young people have appropriated the social media space to challenge authority structures and to adapt to the economic crisis of the 21st Century. Several scholars have also explored the power of social media in bringing political and leadership transformation. Within the African context, practical theologians have explored how the 2015-2016 #feesmustfall movement sparked transformative conversations within the higher education industry in South Africa (Bosch 2016; Buttelli & Bruyns 2017; Langa 2017). With the COVID pandemic, social media has transformed education and learning processes (Mhlanga & Moloi 2020). Additionally, it has been the significant role of young people that has transformed how the church has responded to the COVID pandemic (Cloete 2020).

This shows that there are positive uses of social media in contrast to the hasty generalizations often cited.

With the transition of youth ministry, and even the wider church's ministries to digital platforms, young people have been at the forefront of this transformation. This lends weight to the opportunities that local congregations have in engaging their young people. As digital natives, young people have a huge stake in championing ministry platforms in the post-COVID context as well as offering missional insights that can impact our societies. This supports the understanding that social media can be used for good. To respond to the negative uses of social media, adults can assist young people in putting healthy boundaries that nurture their faith. When adults propose dichotomous thinking between faith and social media, this only serves to alienate young people and skews them towards using social media as an avenue for social media bullying, sharing of illicit sexual content or a space for psychological closure. These negative portrayals of social media use should present an opportunity for faith communities to engage in faith formational practices for their young people and thus, minister effectively to them.

4.2.4.2 Visiting of malls

Concerning the place of malls in youth culture, the research revealed that there is a paradigm shift with gen z. While malls within the Kenyan societies were popular a decade ago, the fact that 11 respondents saw malls as insignificant and two respondents were neutral reveals an interesting drift in consumer trends among young people. Twenge (2017:195-201) observes the interesting marketing trends among *igens* (digital natives born after 1995). Whereas they want some of the same things as older generations like earning a good income, cars and clothes, their reasons are slightly different. Whereas other scholars have attributed this shift to *igens* being "post-materialist" and therefore interested in purpose, Twenge thinks of this shift differently. She attributes the change in consumer trends to the individualism of the igens (2018:198). In this sense, even if they are materialists,

just as much as the earlier generations, they are also non-conformist. The trends can be observed in the Kenyan society.

Teenagers growing up a decade or two ago were accustomed to going to the malls. This symbolized a socially upward mobility expressed through dressing in the latest fashion. This was interpreted as positive socialization and also as a marker of success. However, given the digital landscape as it stands now, much of this socialization process has moved online. Thus, *igens* have a multitude of options for shopping online and combined with the individualism that Twenge speaks of above, malls lose their luster. What this means is that youth culture, especially "deep-level" culture has a direct bearing on the lived realities of young people.

4.2.4.3 Music, movies, and series

Similarly, a subtle distinction can be observed in the youth's consumption of music, movies, and TV series. Both had equal numbers of respondents on the "insignificant" and "significant" effects that these have on their lives. There were also decent responses on the "neutral" effect that they have.

4.2.4.4 Youth sub-culture

From the research study, it was interesting to hear from young people that they value comfort and decency in dressing. This is an outlier based on the majority view towards youth and fashion. Of course, more can be explored on the question of what is meant by comfort, but by and large, based on the results, youth dress for comfort as opposed to something indecent within church ministry engagements. This supports the research from the NSYR where modest dressing was a unifying factor among young people from different denominational backgrounds – setting them apart from their unchurched peers (Dean 2010:55). Additionally, most youth acknowledge that their parents or adults view their fashion negatively. The latter antagonism from the adults may simply be an issue of sub-cultural patterns or

cross-generational clashing. Since young people fashion their culture as a sort of response to the adult population, this is expressed through the visual and aesthetic cultures which include what they listen to and what is in vogue.

Further, sub-cultures are not merely a factor of spirituality or faith. Sub-cultures also create a pathway for young people to respond to the dominant culture and issues within the wider society. Within the Muslim world for instance, Ajala (2017) observes that rather than abandoning their "traditional dressing" in a globalizing and consumerist world, younger Muslims are seeking to be cool. This is influenced by the reality of the hybrid identities that color the lives of young people across the faith spectrum. This observation is similar to how the hip-hop culture, stemming from the 1970s New York city, has crossed borders into the majority world, influencing the music and fashion of young people. Liu (2010) observes how the music and dressing of this sub-culture has been absorbed within metropolitan cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. The porosity of hip-hop outside its original context of Afro-American life, is seen by Liu (2010:147) as a reaction to the constrictive communism of China, and the liberalization of the society through the inter-connectedness of new media.

Other scholars trace some of these changes to the ability of contemporary emerging adulthood to choose among many options (Konstam 2015:67). In Kenya for instance, there was a protest in 2014 dubbed "my dress my choice". This was a response to the assaulting of a woman who had dressed indecently near a public transport bus station. Largely championed by feminists, it was a response to gender stereotyping and gender bias, which several people feel is still a part of African society. Moving beyond protest, younger women, influenced by these feminist impulses, dress as they want even within ecclesial spaces. After all, "my dress my choice". Thus, dressing among young people may speak to individual preferences, comfort, and protests, which may be in line with their faith traditions or contrary to them. Thus, fashion may be influenced by a variety of factors and not just the faith or spirituality of the young person. This portrays that even in the area of dressing,

youth maintain a high level of hybridity that speaks to the fact that they are still "individuating" and on the journey of "integrating" faith and life.

4.2.5 The role of mentorship

One of the assumptions of this research is that young people cannot be simplistically defined. In summary, they live, move, and have their being in an "ecology of networks" including their peer groups, their families, their congregational community and their educational (or vocational) communities (Roberto 2015). This means that faith formation happens within an inter-connected web of relationships. Thus, mentoring provides a powerful tool for influencing the spirituality and faith of young people. Several responses from different questions emphasized the importance of mentorship. Some questions differentiated between parents or guardians and pastors. Much more could be said in terms of the preferences as per this demarcation, but the overarching correlation between mentorship and positive faith formation is evident:

Walking with an older Christian. I look up to my father and he is the older christian. (K.K.G.)

His faith serves as an example for me. (K.K.G.)

Walking with an older Christian influences me the most because as we talk, they know what goes on in my life and give me advice accordingly. I find that this impacts me more as its more relatable and they even follow up to check on me and see the progress I've made. (A.W.M.)

Walking with an older christian because I can ask questions and be guided. (M.N.)

My mum has guided me majorly in my spiritual growth (M.N)

According to the respondents, adults, guardians, and youth pastors act as a tangible personification of faith. As they wrestle with their developmental questions, young people are able to seek a sense of stability from those of mature faith – as they not only teach but model Christian character. Chiroma (2015:88) envisages the steps of mentorship of adolescents as discipleship, modelling and imitating. All these facets are important in forming the faith of young people. Since emerging adulthood within current literature includes the realities of alienation, isolation and complexity, mentorship is needed much more than ever. Brailey & Parker (2020:117) see mentoring as a tool for helping young adults growing up in a complex world to find their intimacy in Christ and consequently to discover their sense of identity. This is reflected in A.W.M's comment above from the research. The need for mentorship is clear from this comment and the effect of mentorship is seen as one that restores confidence and ensures guidance in the faith journey.

Both M.N.'s and A.W.M.'s response above show that openness in the mentee is critical in helping them find and develop their sense of identity in God. Because the faith formation process takes time and grace, "exploration and commitment" are foundational on the part of the mentee (Brailey & Parker 2020:118). These two scholars use the apostle Peter as an example of this kind of relationship – Peter first receives a revelation of the Messiah and it is through his response to the revelation that he is able to discover his sense of identity. Observing Peter's example in the records of the synoptics, it is clear that God had to work on his impulsive character in order for him to be what God wanted him to be. The same applies for young people who come into the Christian community from divergent circumstances and backgrounds. Mentorship becomes a powerful tool that God uses to work the character of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit into the life of the young person. Mentorship is at the heart of faith formation.

4.2.6 The role of African values and practices

One of the questions was designed to explore the influence of traditional African values on youth formation. It was evident from the responses that youth highly value the place of traditional African culture on contemporary African faith and life. The two highest values that emerged from the study are respect for elders and importance of community, which is termed as *ubuntu*. The concept of ubuntu is common among several Bantu ethnicities in Africa.

> *Yes. Respecting everyone and treating all people with modesty. Through this, I am able to accept and appreciate other people's ideas and values. (N.K.)*

> *Respecting my elders. Has helped me to reason with the elderly. (B.W.G.)*

> *Yes, African cultural values have shaped my life as a young person because there are some values that have been instilled in me for the longest time and help me navigate through these times. One value that comes to mind is respect for parents especially when it comes to mode of dressing, I have been taught to always be decently dressed. (A.W.M.)*

> *Yes. Respect. I have learnt to honor and respect my elders even when they are sometimes the ones on the wrong. (M.W.N.)*

However, one of the respondents viewed African culture in a conflicting position to their Christian faith:

> *Fortunately, I have grown up in a strict Christian family. African culture has never influenced my world though tempting most of the time. I was thought from a young age to stand my ground when it came to my being a Christian. (E.W.M.)*

It was also evident that African youth are antagonistic towards the relationship of African youth culture and global youth culture. From one of the questions that explored this correlation, nine people answered in the affirmative while four people answered in the negative. To them, there are distinctions between African youth culture and global youth culture. This supports the literature on glocal youth culture, where there is inter-dependence and at the same time, independence between globalization and local influences on youth culture (Ugor & Mawuko-Yevugah 2016:58). This means that in the socio-cultural research in youth studies, a cosmopolitan framework must not be easily assumed. Roudometof (2019:7) argues for the perspective of the "glocal" in youth studies, where specific local contexts are considered as part of theorizing youth culture.

Within the Kenyan context, there has been a resurgence of traditional African cultural practices. Within the ecclesial context, some of the older men have supported the practice of giving of goats (*mbũrĩ cia kyama*) as part of the elder initiatory rites among the Kikuyu ethnic group. Younger boys are being recruited to join the *kyama kia ma* (loosely translated, "the true council of elders" which is the traditional council of elders in Kikuyu culture). In fact, as I was running a mentorship programme in 2018, the Presbyterian Church Men's Fellowship in Kangemi area informed me that the programme was very necessary since a number of boys in the area were being approached by African traditionalists. From a socio-cultural perspective, some may read this as a form of *bricolage* whereby young people combine global cultural or faith practices with local cultural expressions (Roudometof 2019:28). Many who support this cultural practice from the church engage the issue singularly from a cultural standpoint. However, from the literature on African Traditional Religion and practices, this particular practice not only played a socio-cultural function but was also mediatorial in its priestly function as well as

covenantal, through the shedding of blood.[10] Some of these practices clash with biblical Christianity, in this case, as it pertains with the New Covenant instituted by the person and work of Christ.

Fortunately, the leadership of the PCEA has been clear on the need to differentiate between these syncretistic practices with biblical Christianity. The Rev. Dr. Thegu Mutahi, the moderator of the 23rd General Assembly made the following remarks during his opening speech for his term of service on Tuesday 6th April 2021:

"It is no longer beneficial to be made a Gĩkũyũ community elder when the responsibilities that went with that eldership have now been taken up by government and other institutions. In his book *Facing Mount Kenya,* Jomo Kenyatta outlined the roles of the elders "Mũthuri wa matathi" as:

1. Settling disputes.

2. Declaring war against enemy community.

3. Managing transition of power "Itũika".

4. Announcing and managing traditional circumcision of both male and female.

---

[10] A massive work on Agĩkũyũ culture, religion and worldview is the 3-volume work by Leakey, Louis S.B., *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903* (Nairobi: Richard Leakey, 2007). On the eldership rights and their religious symbolism, see also Jane Njeri Chege, *The Meru Religious Beliefs and Practices with Particular Reference to their Sacrificial Rites: A Case Study of the Igembe Sub-Ethnic Group*, Master's Thesis, University of Nairobi (1985).

> Why would anyone ask me to give a goat to make me an elder of the Agĩkũyũ for functions that are non-existent?[11]

In addition, debates concerning traditional marriage ceremonies, the consultation of witchdoctors as well as excessive pneumatological practices are common within Kenyan, and African, Christianity. These issues show that the African worldview is still part and parcel of the lived African and Christian experiences. Even though postmodernity and other western worldviews still loom large within African society, protracted by the proliferation of new media, it seems that African traditional worldview is here to stay. Ministry to young people anchored within a biblical worldview must conversantly engage with not only postmodernity, but also with African traditional religions and worldviews. This research reveals that the African values of ubuntu and respect for elders are critical, and could be appropriated in African youth ministry approaches as has been proposed through the intergenerational approach in section 2.3.3.

4.2.7 Relational youth ministry

Many of the responses from this research study used language that emphasized the importance of relationships among young people in the church. For example, the adjectives "relationships" and "connecting" were used in response to the questions on practices that influenced their spiritual growth. On the other hand, relationships with opposite sex are also important for them, given their unique developmental stage.

Youth ministries operate within a matrix of important stakeholders – including the young people themselves, a youth leader or worker or pastor, the guardians or

---

[11] PCEA. 2021. The 23rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Recorded live here: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1153413335119208&ref=search

parents and the church leadership, for example elders or other pastoral staff.[12] Thus for effective ministry to young people, the youth pastor or worker is called to build relationships with each of these stakeholders. Root (2006:272) notes the trend in the West of moving from a relational approach to an incarnational approach. The latter was used within the socio-cultural fragmentation of relationships after the wars and was utilized by youth workers as an initial step in influencing young people. But it was envisaged as a step to something better. The incarnational approach that followed it was geared towards entering the world of the young person, modelled after Jesus Christ's incarnation.

Whereas youth faith formation in the 20th century was geared towards the socio-cultural fragmentation, the issue for the 21st century, at least in the West is the secular age, borrowing from the analysis of Charles Taylor. Root (2017:99) following this thinking argues that contemporary culture has removed the "plausibility of transcendence" such that young people have construed their lives without the necessity of God. Thus, faith formation within this context means that we cannot take for granted assumed doctrinal content of the faith but must go ahead to define them for a new generation. Yet, what can assist to do this work of translation to a skeptical generation can be achieved through the webs of gospel-centered relationships. What is emerging from research and practice in African youth ministry is that this secularized global culture is influencing how young people are envisioning and interpreting reality. The mushrooming of Atheist societies in different cities in Africa are an indicator of this. There is therefore an increasing

---

[12] In the Presbyterian context, "youth pastors" are often called youth ministry coordinators or directors. They may either be ordained as elders or non-ordained. Some of them combine their youth pastoral role with the role of a children's pastor or additionally an evangelist in the church. In the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, there is an ongoing conversation on their nomenclature, function, and ministry practice. These are usually decided by each congregation and may be the reason why there is a high turnover or burnout in youth ministry – there is no policy guiding the calling, theological education and ministry skills for youth ministry coordinators or directors. Similar reflections for the South African context have been made by Aziz, Garth, Malan Nel, & Ronnie Davis. "The career youth pastor: A contemporary reflection." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* [Online], 73.2 (2017): 6 pages. Web. 23 Feb. 2021

need for apologetics ministry as a handmaid to evangelism. We cannot take for granted that our outreach to young people, as a necessary part of faith formation, is to people with a Christian conception of the world. Yet even this defense of the faith has to be anchored within the webs of relationships. A relational approach to youth ministry is here to stay, even with the changes happening in the wider global youth culture.

This relational or even incarnational youth approach has been synonymous with youth ministry practice over the past decades. The need is increasing, especially in the 21st century, given the fact that adolescents are much more isolated, stressed, and lonely. Nel (2018:295) observes that this "relational void" can be observed from the cultural trends affecting young people. For instance, Twenge (2017:51) reports on the decrease of team sports from 19% to 13%, decrease in the consumption of public movies from 13% in 1998 to 3% in 2008 and increase in renting of movies or watching TV from home from 24% in 1998 to 32% in 2008. The "igens" spend a total of 6 hours on new media – with the distribution as follows: 28% texting, 24% internet, 18% gaming, 24% TV and 5% video chat, as of 2013-2015 statistics from high schoolers. Another research examined literature survey from 2011-2015 on these themes from 12 studies, with a sample size of 21,231 in more than 14 countries across the world among 13- to 18-year-olds (Betul, McCrae & Grealish 2020). From these studies, there was a direct correlation between social media use and depression, identity issues, internalizing problems, and psychological distress. Pew Research Forum also indicates that increasing social media use has led to the reality of cyberbullying, with 59% of teens having experienced it online (Pew Forum 2018). The point is that social media use has created psychosocial and emotional problems for young people.

Some research shows that there is a direct co-relation between increased social media use and mental health dysfunctions, irregular sleep patterns, increase in self-injurious behavior and negative effects on cognitive controls (Abi-Jaoude, Naylor & Pignatiello 2020). Given the COVID context of this research, the themes

of youth mental health and social media have received some attention. For instance, a study by Cambridge researchers noted the negative effects of the disruptions in transitions among young people within the cognitive, emotional, and social spheres (Power, Hughes, Cotter & Cannon 2020:302). A report from China is cited that surveyed high schoolers and noted the effects of COVID as increased rates of anxiety, poorer sleep, and irritability (Power, Hughes, Cotter & Cannon 2020:302). The COVID pandemic of 2020, has shifted and will shift the psychosocial context of young people, and thus presenting youth ministry with an opportunity to explore how relational youth ministry will play a significant role.

Nel (2018:296) observes that what some of these statistics mean is that pastors must develop the capacity to see youth as fully human as well as to incarnate themselves into the shoes of young people through "place-sharing" (Nel 2018:299) – which was the product of Root's (2014b) thinking embedded in Bonhoeffer's Christology. Nel (2018:305) citing Burns (2008) notes the following as important facets of a relational approach to youth ministry: team ministry, modelling, unconditional love, nurturing, meeting students in their territory, and spending time with students. These facets will increasingly be more crucial given the socio-cultural context of families within African cities as well as the psychosocial context that is presented by the COVID pandemic.[13]

---

[13] Before COVID, every week I went to a neighboring public secondary school for Pastoral Programme of Instruction (PPI), which is a mandated 1-hour session per week within primary and secondary schools in Kenya. On Friday 5th February 2021, the headteacher of the primary section informed me of how the COVID situation has negatively affected the disciplinary cases in the school. In fact, the resumption of my pastoral care among the students was necessitated by a call from the secondary school teacher that she could sense the students were "spiritually dry" and needed some "spiritual guidance" in her own words. These anecdotal experiences show the necessity of relational youth ministry, now more than ever.

4.3 Practical implications in light of the research study

4.3.1. PCEA Youth ministry

Youth ministry in the PCEA has some structure in comparison to other denominational approaches. The youth ministry in the local church is coordinated by a youth coordinator or youth director, in a number of congregations. Each youth fellowship in the congregation is represented at the session meetings (elder meetings) by a patron, who is an elder. This is helpful especially for congregations that may lack a youth coordinator. The parishes are represented in regional presbytery meetings which allow for reporting and benchmarking of commendable ministry practice. At the national level, the youth director is an ordained minister who sits at the head office and has general oversight and coordination of the youth ministry in the entire denomination.

This research has shown the importance of being conversant with popular youth culture in the implementation of youth ministry. The different forms of youth ministry including preaching, teaching, fellowship, worship, and counseling must consider the cultural context of the young people. Nel (2008:232-240), viewing youth ministry as a part of the whole congregational life argues that the different forms of ministry must mediate God's action to young people. In the mode of preaching for example, the preacher must not only exegete the text but also deliver it to the practicalities of the lives of young people (Nel 2008:233). Through the teaching ministry of the church, young people as early initiates into the way of Jesus must be grounded robustly and guided carefully into what following Jesus entails in light of the challenges they face. This research study has revealed that African youth in urban cities navigate complex issues of identity, socio-economic mobility as well as complicated family dynamics. One of the ways that we can ground them into the Christian life is through retrieving the well-trodden path of catechesis. Catechesis within youth ministry in Africa has received substantial attention. In addition to the work of Malan Nel, 2018, *Youth ministry: An inclusive missional*

approach others have applied the concept to reformed youth ministry practice in several parts of Africa including South Africa, Uganda, and Malawi. See for example Moime, W.M., 2016, *Inadequacy of a model of discipleship in respect of the decline of youth ministry in Rustenburg/Tlhabane Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa (URCSA)*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria and Mdluli, M.G., 2010, *Catechetical strategy to effectively minister the Reformed Churches' Youth Movement*, Doctoral dissertation, North-West University. There is also similar research within a Catholic and Ugandan context by Tinkatumire, L., 2011, *Theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry in relation to the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Uganda - East Africa*, Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University. Van Wyngaard (2011:215) explores how catechesis within the African context must be contextualized to deal with the complex issue of racism in South Africa. We can expand this to include issues of poverty, unemployment, social justice, and mental health in the Kenyan context. Teaching the basics of Christian doctrine and life to young people means that teaching must be applied to the contexts that young people live in. However, this teaching will likely encounter apologetics issues such as faith and science, uniqueness of Christ in a pluralistic context as well as compassionate engagement with other religions and worldviews. Thus, the practice of catechism must be contextual and also transformational.

Secondly, there is need to have a differentiated approach to youth ministry. Although the PCEA youth ministry defines youth as those aged between 13-35 years, the different categories of youth are asking different sorts of questions. Sometimes it is difficult to have differentiated youth services, given the lack of competent and available youth workers or available meeting spaces. However, the church can supplement this through having programmatic approaches to youth ministry. For instance, even though it is impossible to have a weekly service for teens, the church should organize teens seminars during the holiday when they are available. To be clear, the differentiated approach does not mean a separational approach. It means that as a distinct group of people within the congregational life, ministry functions should be designed to minister to young people. Nel (2018:235-

239) considers how pastoral care, service, witnessing, administration, and fellowship, can be focused on young people.

Third, there is need to have intergenerational programming for youth ministry. This research study has confirmed the vast research that shows that faith formation for young people is most effective where they are exposed to mature Christians. Practical suggestions include older couples sharing their relationship and marriage stories to the young people. Pastors can also invite courting couples to their home so that they can learn by experience how to integrate faith with family life. Teens could be coupled with a college youth or young professional so that they can be guided through their developmental stage in a non-judgmental way. There is also need for intergenerational activities such as family fun days, as well as intergenerational worship experiences. All these can enhance the sense of "mutuality" in the whole body, between young and old.

Fourth, there is need to explore how African culture interfaces with faith formation. This research shows that young people value the communal aspects of African culture as well as the role of elders. This means that African youth respect the place of the elders in the congregation. This provides a clear bridge in exploring intergenerational youth ministry. Secondly, the resurgence of African cultural practices among "gen z" necessitate the need for thoughtful discipleship. Given the fact that this generation is three generations removed from the post-colonial fathers who were antagonistic to western culture, the opportunity this presents is a wise engagement of traditional and postmodern cultures. Thus, youth ministry must carefully explore the interface of these cultures by celebrating African culture and

digital opportunities for ministry for instance, while remaining watchful over syncretistic practices that could serve to weaken biblical faith.[14]

Fifth, the church in the PCEA must move beyond an over-emphasis of traditions that are focused on institutionalism to a missional praxis that reaches out to young people in the context of the contemporary 21st century. Congregations should engage professional youth workers who are competent in working with young people. The PCEA should also seek to professionalize the youth ministry by implementing policies of engaging youth pastors. Currently, youth workers in the PCEA are not recognized within the church's official policy, the "Practice and Procedure". Given the unique challenges and opportunities facing "gen z", the denomination will do well to standardize and professionalize youth ministry and pastoral work among young people, not only in the church but in other institutions.

Emerging research within the Nigerian context has explored the concept of double denominational belonging (Okwuosa et al 2020). This research reveals that because of the hybridity common among young people, they tend to belong to more than one denomination. The primary reasons given are not necessarily doctrinal, as they are not able in most cases to distinguish the doctrinal differences, but that youth may prefer more creative teaching ministry, expressive worship and a welcoming atmosphere that accepts them as they are. Thus, the reasons are more cultural than they are doctrinal. Okwuosa et al (2020:109) explore the negative implications of this double belonging as a fractured Christian identity, lack of commitment as well as shallow spirituality, among others. These points are salient for the Kenyan context as this flexibility in denominational affiliation is an emerging practice. The methodology of the cited research used a snowballing effect among

---

[14] This reveals that there is a need for cultural apologetics as a valid ministry in light of the worldview challenges of the continent. Apologetics Kenya is one such ministry in the Kenyan context that seeks to respond to the questions to the faith posed by African traditional religion and postmodernity.

340 respondents to explore the double denominational belonging among 34 males and females each. What this means is that within Christian youth culture, denominational definition may be a blurry issue among young people who are still individuating. While it is necessary to explain the differences between denominations and push the young people to commitment, youth faith formation must be clear in its focus on a relationship with Christ. This will help mitigate against the shallow Christianity that arises from the double denominational belonging as an expression of the MTD philosophy.

4.3.2 Theological Education

This research shows that theological education that is relevant must prepare church ministers and leaders who are conversant with the concepts of faith formation and youth culture. The implications of this research for theological education include the creation of professional development courses as well as the inclusion of key courses in youth ministry higher education curricular. These include and are not limited to, youth cultures, ministry in a digital age, adolescent development theory, youth and sexuality, popular culture, and youth ministry in addition to what Chiroma & Muriithi (2019) argue. This research reveals that for the successful ministry and mission to the "gen z" of Africa, there is need to reconsider theological education. The plural cultural context that we find ourselves in means that there is need for thoughtful and relevant theological education. This type of theological education will have to be inter-disciplinary in nature.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This research study set out to explore the influence of youth culture on faith formational practices within the ecclesiological context of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). The first chapter framed the conversation by considering the background to the research, discussing the theological rationale of the study, and describing the practical theological methodology to be employed. The second chapter explored the extensive literature pertaining to the research study themes, including faith formation, youth ministry models, youth culture, history of youth ministry and contextual approaches to youth ministry and scholarship in Africa. The third chapter utilized an empirical research methodology to collect data from the field. The respondents comprised of young people in PCEA in five presbyteries in Nairobi region. Chapter four engaged in practical theological interpretation of the data in light of the literature survey in order to describe possible implications of this research study. This conclusion ties up the research study by investigating whether the research study has adequately responded to the research problem and discussing the research aims and objectives.

5.2 Research problem

The research problem identified by the study was the passivity and disengagement of young people in and out of the Church. The research argued that the result was an inadequate engagement with youth culture of young people, in this research defined as 13 – 35-year-olds. The study has revealed that youth culture has a lot to contribute towards the conceptualization and practice of youth ministry. The research explored different facets of youth culture, including youth sub-cultures, music, fashion, and social media, both from the literature and empirically, from the ground. The research study revealed that the different cultural forms that are expressed by young people are expressions of their socio-economic,

cultural, psychological, and religious identities. By exploring the classical models of youth ministry, this research study showed that youth ministry to African youth must be contextualized in order to enrich the ministry engagement with young people. It was also noted that the concept of youth culture and subcultures is quite broad and dynamic. Thus, youth workers must be consistent and life-long learners if they are to translate the message of the gospel to contemporary youth life and culture. The following sections will build up on this.

5.3 Research aims and objectives.

RA 1: To investigate how understanding youth culture influences faith formation among youth.

The first question has been satisfactorily answered by the research study. It was noted that youth cultures and sub-cultures reveal the foundational values and beliefs of young people across socio-economic, spiritual, religious, and psychological spectrums. Rather than generalizing youth cultures and sub-cultures in a simplistic way, this research revealed that there are nuances among young people.

For instance, whereas global youth culture is marked by postmodern influences, African young people are also influenced by modern and African traditional influences. Secondly, African young people are using social media in a variety of ways, with some noting that it has helped their spiritual growth. This stands in contrast to the general sentiments held by some that young people waste time on social media. The study revealed that young people use social media for learning and connecting purposes, functions that are critical for their socialization. Third, interesting trends emerged in how young people in Africa view consumerism. A number of them no longer see the significance of malls, which a few years ago was a critical socialization factor of urban youth in Africa.

This speaks to the growing research among gen-z, and how their culture is unique. All this goes to show that there is need for youth ministry forms, such as counseling, preaching, mission and fellowship to be construed in such a way as to consider the actual engagement that young people have with youth culture. For instance, young people in the study observed that their pastors and leaders must speak about the issues that currently face them. The COVID context of the research showed for example how digital media and forms of ministry are crucial in the church's mission to minister to the world, and especially the world of the young person. Youth culture is very important for the faith formation of young people.

RA 2: To examine African youth's understanding of faith formation and their influencers.

African youth reveal similarity across the globe on key faith formational issues and practices in youth ministry. Worship, word, prayer, and mentoring emerged as significant issues or practices that have formed the faith of young people. This agrees with the global research that reveals that these practices are key for the formation of faith. What is perhaps unique to the African context of the study, is that young people still honor the African values of communality and eldership. This is an entry point for churches to explore how these can be avenues for effective youth ministry practice. For example, this research study has revealed how an intergenerational philosophy of ministry can be a good approach to youth in the congregational context. Given its effectiveness in the wider research and its easily contextualizable approach to the family dynamics faced in the urban African context, the intergenerational perspective is key to effective youth ministry. This study has revealed that young people have needs which congregations can meet through faithful ministry to their young people.

RA 3: To explore the significance of an interdisciplinary approach to holistic youth faith formation.

This research has showed how an interdisciplinary approach is crucial for holistic youth ministry. Through the insights from adolescent development and emerging adulthood, it is clear that churches must consider the different issues faced by the different stages as young people transition into adulthood. Secondly, the anthropological research has shown how culture reveals to us the deepest values and beliefs of people. Music, language, fashion, and media provides a platform for youth ministry practitioners and scholars to understand the world of the young person. Lastly, this paper has critically looked at youth ministry from a theological lens. This is because, as has been argued by many scholars, youth ministry is at heart a theological task. Therefore, it is crucial to use all the tools available to enrich the reflection and practice of youth ministry. This research study has purposed to exemplify what that can look like through holistic faith formation.

5.4 Limitations and shortcomings

The limitations of this study were based on the restrictions arising from the COVID pandemic. Whereas the researcher had initially planned on engaging in focused group interviews with youth leaders to enrich the data, he was not able to do so. Face-to-face qualitative interviews would also have allowed for free-flowing conversation that would add layers to the data collected, particularly from the non-verbal communication. Thus, because of the COVID restrictions, the research methodology was adjusted to include non-qualitative responses of people, including, gender, age, among others.

Secondly, time and resource limitations also played a factor in narrowing the scope of the research. With more time and resources, it would have been possible to engage a quantitative and trans-continental perspective that would lead to a broader sample size as well as more confidence in generalization the research

findings for the wider African context. However, these can be explored in further research.

Thirdly, the researcher's context is limited to a Kenyan and African context, and therefore contextualizes terms such as "evangelical" and "reformed" in the nature of the research. This therefore undergirded the researcher's epistemology, in terms of the theological and philosophical approach. The need to expand the scope of the study to the wider African context is critical. The reason is that Africa is a young continent and as such there is need for practical theological engagement across churches, institutions, and organizations, that work with young people. If people are concerned with transformation of the continent, then neglecting young people will be to their detriment. Perhaps practical theologians across the African countries, represented regionally, can work on enriching the scope of study. This will allow for different perspectives and even research approaches that can enrich the study. This would help African scholars and practitioners have something akin to the African Study for Youth and Religion, that can serve scholars and practitioners in the coming years.

5.5 Further research

This research study has merely scratched the surface of the influence of youth culture for faith formation. In addition, further research can explore the following areas:

- Deeper exploration of the specific youth cultural concepts. For example, exploring the place of music, fashion, language, or media, for youth ministry engagement.

- Expanding the context of study to study the research phenomena across different denominations.

- Specific exploration of the forms of youth ministry. Further areas of study can explore specific forms of ministry including preaching, counseling, and worship in light of popular youth culture.

- Exploring the influence of traditional African culture in popular youth culture and its significance for youth ministry.

- Exploring the philosophical and apologetic aspects behind the African traditional religions and worldviews in light of Christian theology.

- Exploring the connection of the theological foci with specific cultural aspects. For example, exploring ecclesiology in light of the phenomenon of double denominational belonging.

5.6 Dissemination of the results

This research will be disseminated in a variety of ways. I plan to present it for publication as soon as I can engage with a publisher. Secondly, I plan to use it through my youth ministry practice. Primarily, this involves using it in my youth ministry programming as well as in the training of youth ministry stakeholders in my denomination – parents, elders, and youth leaders. Alongside this, I plan to use these insights to enrich my teaching practice as a theological educator. Third, I plan to develop several of the chapters into published articles through my academic associations. These include but are not limited to the Journal of Youth and Theology of the International Association of the Study of Youth Ministry (IASYM) and the Langham series which are published articles derived from the annual conferences of the Africa Society of Evangelical Theology (ASET). Finally, I plan to utilize this research in my directorship of a newly formed non-profit that will be working around the areas of youth leadership training, youth ministry research and consultations.

5.7 Conclusion

These last two chapters have explored the pragmatic question in Osmer's methodology. The research themes have been explored from within a reformed theological perspective in light of youth ministry practice in the Presbyterian church context. It is hoped that the conversation will offer contextualized insights for youth workers (ministers, pastors, and mentors), parents, institutions, and other denominations in the Christian community on how they can aid the faith formation of the young people in their networks. This research will be relevant for practitioners and scholars working with young people specifically within the African context. Of particular interest, this research reveals the importance of understanding youth culture for youth ministry practice and scholarship. Additionally, this research reveals that an interdisciplinary approach is necessary for holistic faith formation. Therefore, there is need for engaging human development and anthropological insights of culture with theological reflection, for a robust engagement of theory and praxis. This is after all the nature of practical theology, which is the undergirding framework for this research.

REFERENCES

Abi-Jaoude, E., Naylor, K.T. & Pignatiello, A. 2020. "Smartphones, social media use and youth mental health". *CMAJ* 192(6), 136 – 141. DOI: 10.1503/cmaj.190434

Acodesin, Z.E. 2018. "Gratia omnibus". *In die Skriflig* 52(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v52i1.2355

Adedeji, F. 2007. "Christian music in contemporary Africa: A re-examination of its essentials". *Koers-Bulletin for Christian Scholarship 72*(1), 85-100.

Ajala, I. 2017. "From Islamic dress and Islamic fashion to cool Islam: An exploration of Muslim youth hybrid identities in the West". *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies* 12(3). https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-008X/CGP/v12i03/1-11

Allen, H.C. & Lawton, C. 2012. *Intergenerational Christian formation: Bringing the whole church together in ministry, community, and worship*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

Anderson, R.S. 2001. *The shape of practical theology: Empowering ministry with theological praxis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Arzola, F. Jr. 2008. *Toward a prophetic youth ministry: Theory and praxis in urban context*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Astley, J. 2018. "The naming of parts: Faith, formation, development and education". In Stuart-Buttle, R. J. S. (Ed.). *Christian faith, formation, and education*, 13-27. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Aziz, G. 2019. "Youth identity discovery: A theological journey". *Pharos Journal of Theology* 100, 1-9.

⸻. 2017. "Youth ministry as an agency of youth development for the vulnerable youth of the Cape Flats". *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v38i1.1745

Aziz, G., Nel, M. & Davis, R. 2017. "The career youth pastor: A contemporary reflection". *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(2). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i2.3856

Balswick, J.O., King, P.E. & Reimer, K.S. 2005. *The reciprocating self: Human development in theological perspective.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP.

Barry, S.M., Nelson, L., Davarya, S. & Urry, S. 2010. "Religiosity and spirituality during the transition to adulthood". *International Journal of Behavioural Development* 34(4), 311–324.

Bediako, K. 1999. *Theology and identity: The impact of culture upon Christian thought in the second century and in modern Africa*. Oxford: Regnum.

Berkhof, L. 2012. *Systematic theology.* Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.

Betul, K., McCrae, N. & Grealish, A. 2020. "A systematic review: the influence of social media on depression, anxiety and psychological distress in adolescents". *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25(1), 79-93. DOI: 10.1080/02673843.2019.1590851

Bloesch, D.G. 2002. *The Church: Sacraments, worship, ministry, mission.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity press.

Blount, R. 2011. "Toward whole-making: The power of voice in the faith formation of black youth". *Journal of Youth and Theology* 10(2), 35-47.

Borgman, D. 2013. *Foundations for youth ministry: Theological engagement with teen life and culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Bosch, T. 2016. "Twitter activism and youth in South Africa: The case of #RhodesMustFall". *Information, Communication & Society* 20(2), 221-232. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2016.1162829

Brailey, G.S. & Parker, S.D. 2020. "The identity imperative: Mentoring as a tool for Christian young adult identity formation". *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 25(2), 109-123. DOI: 10.1080/1364436X.2020.1819775

Brake, M. 2003. *Comparative youth culture: The sociology of youth culture and subculture in America, Britain, and Canada*. London & NY: Routledge.

Browning, R.S. 1995. *Fundamental practical theology: Descriptive and strategic proposals*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Buttelli, F.G.K. & Le Bruyns, C. 2017. "#FeesMustFall as social movement and emancipatory politics? Moving towards an apocalyptic theological praxis outside the limits of party politics". *HTS Theological Studies* 73(3), 1-7. https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4789

Calvin, J. 2014. *Institutes of the Christian religion.* Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust.

Carson, D.A. (Ed.) 2002. *Worship by the book.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Chancey, D. & Bruner, R. 2017. "A reader's guide to intergenerational ministry
and faith formation". *Discernment: Theology and the Practice of Ministry* 3(2),
59-78. https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/discernment/vol3/iss2/4

Chege, J.N. 1985. "The Meru religious beliefs and practices with particular
reference to their sacrificial rites: A case study of the Igembe sub-ethnic
group". *Master's Thesis*, University of Nairobi.

Chiroma, N.H. 2015. "The role of mentoring in adolescents' spiritual formation".
Journal of Youth and Theology 14, 72-90.

Chiroma, N.H. and Muriithi, K. 2019. "Transforming youth ministry higher
education in Kenya: A practical theological approach". *Journal of Education,
Society and Behavioural Science* 32(1), 1-10.

Church History 1600-1800, Reformed Presbyterian Church Manassas
http://rpchurchmanassas.org/drupal/ChurchHistory16001800

Clark, C. (Ed.). 2016. *Adoptive youth ministry: Integrating emerging generations
into the family of faith.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⸻. 2015. *Youth ministry in the 21st century: Five views.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker
Academic.

Cloete, A.L. 2020. "The Church is moving on(line)". In Campbell, H.A. (Ed.).
Digital ecclesiology: A global conversation, 27-31.
https://hdl.handle.net/1969.1/188698

⸻. 2016. "Revisiting a family approach in youth ministry". *In die Skriflig* 50(1), 1-
6. https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v50i1.2078

─. 2015. "Living in a digital culture: The need for theological reflection". *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 71(2), 1-7. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i2.2073

─. 2012a. "Youth culture, media and sexuality: What could faith communities contribute?" *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 68(2), 1-6. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v68i2.1118

─. 2012b. "Spiritual formation as focus of youth ministry". *NOMMERS* 3 & 4, 70-77.

Cole, C. & Nielson, J. (Eds.). 2016. *Gospel centered youth ministry: A practical guide*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Coletto, R. 2009. "Strategies towards a reformation of the theology-based approach to Christian scholarship". *In die Skriflig* 43(2), 291-313.

Conner, B.T. and Molla, R. 2018. "Beyond the limitations of applying western youth ministry thought to an Ethiopian context". *Journal of Youth Ministry* 16(3), 48-65.

Creswell, J.W. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Los Angeles: Sage.

Crispin, G. 2017. "A theology of accommodation as a resource for integrating youth and children into intergenerational church". *Christian Education Journal*, 14(1), 7–22. doi: 10.1177/073989131701400102.

Cronshaw, D., Lewis, R. & Wilson, S. 2016. "Hemorrhaging faith: An Australian response in exile". *Australian eJournal of Theology* 23(1), 14-31.

Cusic, D. (Ed.). 2009. *Encyclopedia of contemporary Christian music: Pop, rock, and worship.* ABC-CLIO.

Dean, K.C. 2010. *Almost Christian: What the faith of our teenagers is telling the American Church.* Oxford: OUP.

⸺. 2004. *Practicing passion: Youth and the quest for a passionate Church.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Dirks, D. 2001. "Faith development". In Anthony, M.J. (Ed.). *Introducing Christian education: Foundations for the twenty-first century.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Duncan, G.A. 2018. "To unite or not to unite? A case study of Presbyterianism in South Africa 1897-1923". *Acta Theologica* 38(1), 37-60.

Dyck, J.T. 2009. "Calvin and Worship". *WRS Journal* 16(1), 33-40.

Edwards, R. & Holland, J. 2013. *What is qualitative interviewing?* London, NY: Bloomsbury.

Esnaola, I., Revuelta, L., Ros, I. and Sarasa, M. 2017. "The development of emotional intelligence in adolescence". *Anales de Psicología* 33(2), 327-333. http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/analesps.33.2.251831

Erikson, E.H. 1968. *Identity, youth and crisis.* New York: Norton.

Eze, V.C. & Obono, K. 2018. "The influence of internet use on the political participation of youth in Ikeja, Lagos". *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* 11(7), 24-43.

Faix, T. 2016. "Hybrid identity: Youth in digital networks: A model of contextualisation for Christian youth ministry". *Journal of Youth and Theology* 15, 65-87.

Fowler, J. 2004. "Faith development at 30: Naming the challenges of faith in a new millennium". *Religious Education* 99(4), 405-421. DOI:10.1080/00344080490513036

⸻. 2000. *Becoming adult becoming Christian: Adult development and Christian faith*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

⸻. 1981. *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers.

Frame, J. 2013. *Systematic theology: An introduction to Christian belief.* Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.

⸻. 1997. *Contemporary worship music: A biblical defense*. NJ: P & R Publishing.

⸻. 1996. *Worship in spirit and truth*. NJ: P & R Publishers.

Gadamer, H.G. 2004. *Truth and method.* London, NY: Continuum.

Gatu, J.G. 2016. *Fan into flame: An autobiography.* Nairobi: Moran Publishers.

Gibson, J. & Earngey, M. 2018. *Reformation worship: Liturgies from the past for the present.* Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press.

Giroux, H.A. 2009. *Youth in a suspect society: Democracy or disposability?* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Glaser, B.G. & Strauss A.L. 1967. *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* New York: Adline de Gruyter.

Going, N. 2009. "The way of Jesus: Adolescent development as Christological process". *Lifelong Faith*, 3-13.

Griffin, C. 2014. "'What time is now?': Researching youth and culture beyond the Birmingham school". In Buckingham, D., Bragg, S. & Kehiley, M.J. (Eds.). *Youth cultures in the age of global media*, 21-36. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hall, G. S. 1904. *Adolescence: Its psychology and its relation to physiology, anthropology, sociology, crime, sex, religion, and education.* New York: D. Appleton and Company.

Hastings, A. 1979. *A history of African Christianity 1950-1975.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hazen, E., Schlozman, S. & Beresin, E. 2008. "Adolescent psychological development: A review". *Pediatrics in Review* 29, 161-168. DOI: 10.1542/pir.29-5-161

Heilbronner, O. 2008. "From a culture for youth to a culture of youth: Recent trends in the historiography of western youth cultures". *Contemporary European History* 17(4), 575–591. doi:10.1017/S0960777308004724

Heitink, G. 1999. *Practical theology: History, theory, action domains.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B Eerdmans.

Hill, J.P. 2015. *Emerging adulthood and faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin College Press.

Hodkinson, P. & Deicke, W. 2007. *Youth cultures: Scenes, subcultures and tribes*, London, NY: Routledge.

Howard, J.R. & Streck, J.M. 2014. *Apostles of rock: The splintered world of contemporary Christian music*. University Press of Kentucky.

Iwilade, A. 2013. "Crisis as opportunity: Youth, social media and the renegotiation of power in Africa". *Journal of Youth Studies* 16(8), 1054-1068. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2013.772572

Jolly, J.L. 2015. "Diversity in public worship: A biblical understanding of the regulative principle". *Masters dissertation,* Reformed Theological Seminary.

Jones, C., Wainwright, G.G. & Yarnold, E., SJ. (Eds.). 1986. *The study of spirituality*. London: SPCK.

Keeley, R.J. 2010. "Faith development and faith formation: More than just ages and stages". *Lifelong Faith*, 20-27.

Kelly, P.G. 2016. "A theology of youth". *Journal of Baptist Theology and Ministry* 13(1), 3-19.

Keuss, J. 2014. *Blur: A new paradigm for understanding youth culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Kinnaman, D. & Hawkins, A. 2011. *You lost me: Why young Christians are leaving Church...and rethinking faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Klaasen, J.S. 2014. "Practical theology: A critically engaged practical reason approach of practice, theory, practice and theory". *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 70(2). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i2.1950

Knoetze, J.J. 2018. "Marginalized millennials: Conversation or conversion towards a Christian lifestyle in South Africa?" *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 74(3). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i3.4999

Konstam, V. 2015. *Emerging and young adulthood: Multiple perspectives, diverse narratives* 2nd Edition. New York: Springer.

Köstenberger, A.J. & Jones, D.W. 2010. *God, marriage, and family: Rebuilding the biblical foundation.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Kraft, C.H. 2016. *Issues in contextualization.* Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

Krayer, A., Ingledew, D.K. & Iphofen, R. 2007. "Social comparison and body image in adolescence: A grounded theory approach". *Health Education Research* 23(5), 892–903.

Kunhiyop, S.W. 2011. "Challenges and prospects of teaching theology in Africa". *SBJT* 15(2), 64-76.

Kurewa, J.W.Z. 2011. *An African pilgrimage on evangelism : A historical study of the various approaches to evangelism in Africa (100-2000CE).* Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources.

Kwiyani, H.C. 2014. *Sent forth: African missionary work in the west.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Langa, M. (Ed.). 2017. *#Hashtag: An analysis of the #FeesMustFall Movement at South African Universities.* Johannesburg: Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

Larsen, T. and Treier, D.J. (Eds.). 2007. *The Cambridge companion to evangelical theology*. Cambridge University Press.

Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization. 2004. "The 12/25 challenge: Reaching the youth generation". *Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 52,* Thailand*.*

Leakey, L.S.B. 2007. *The southern Kikuyu before 1903*. Nairobi: Richard Leakey.

Lindhardt, M. 2012. 'We, the youth, need to be effusive': Pentecostal youth culture in contemporary Chile. *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 31(4), 485-498.

Liu, X. 2010. "Across the borders: Hip hop's influence on Chinese youth culture". *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 32, 146–53.

Lukalo, F.K. 2006. "Extended handshake or wrestling match: Youth and urban culture regarding celebrating politics in Kenya". *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet Discussion Paper* 32, Uppsala, Sweden.

Magezi, C. & Igba, J.T. 2018. "African theology and African Christology: Difficulty and complexity in contemporary definitions and methodological frameworks". *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 74(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4590

Magnusson, D., Stattin, H. & Allen, V. L. 1985. "Biological maturation and social development: A longitudinal study of some adjustment processes from mid-

adolescence to adulthood". *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 14(4), 267-283.

Maina, M.C. 2015. "Challenges of ministering to the youth: A case study of Presbyterian Church of East Africa Langata Parish, Nairobi County". *Master of Arts Thesis*, University of Nairobi, Nairobi.

Marlow, C.R. 2011. *Research methods for generalist social work*. USA: Cengage Learning.

Maseno, L. 2016. "Christianity in East Africa". In Bongmba, Elias K. (Ed.). *The Routledge Companion to Christianity in* Africa. New York: Routledge, 108-121.

Mbiti, J.S. 1970. *African religions and philosophies.* New York: Doubleday and Company.

McFarland, A. & Jimenez, J. 2017. *Abandoned faith: Why millennials are walking away and how you can lead them home*. Illinois: Tyndale.

McGoldrick, J. E. 2012. *Presbyterian and reformed churches: A global history [Kindle].* Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books.

Mdluli, M.G. 2010. "Catechetical strategy to effectively minister the reformed Churches' youth movement". *Doctoral dissertation*, North-West University.

Merriam, S.B & Tisdell, E.J. 2016. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mhlanga, D. & Moloi, T. 2020. "COVID-19 and the digital transformation of education: What are we learning on 4IR in South Africa?" *Education Sciences* 10(180). doi:10.3390/educsci10070180

Micucci, J.A. 2009. *The adolescent in family therapy: Harnessing the power of relationships 2nd Edition.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Milemba, E.K. 2015. "The influence of prosperity gospel on the well-being of youth: A contemporary study of Christian churches". *Master's Thesis,* University of Nairobi.

Moime, W.M. 2016. "Inadequacy of a model of discipleship in respect of the decline of youth ministry in Rustenburg/Tlhabane Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa (URCSA)". *Doctoral dissertation*, University of Pretoria

Mokhoathi, J. 2017. "From contextual theology to African Christianity: The consideration of adiaphora from a South African perspective". *Religions* 8. doi:10.3390/rel8120266

Mueller, W. 2006. *Engaging the soul of youth culture: Bridging teen worldviews and Christian truth.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP.

Muggleton, D. & Weinzier, R. (Eds.). 2003. *The post-subcultures reader.* Oxford, NY: BERG.

Muita, I. W. 2003. *Hewn from the quarry: The Presbyterian Church of East Africa 100 years and beyond.* Nairobi, Kenya: PCEA Jitegemea Press.

Mulholland, M.R. 2016. *Invitation to a journey: A road map for spiritual formation.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books.

Müller, J.C. 2013. "Practical theology as part of the landscape of social sciences and humanities: A transversal perspective". *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 69(2). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i2.1299

⸺. 2011. "Postfoundational practical theology for a time of transition" *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67(1). DOI: 10.4102/hts.v67i1.837

Muriithi, K. 2015. "Youth worldviews among the de-churched in Nairobi and implications for ministry". *Master's Thesis*, International Leadership University, Nairobi.

Mutahi, T. 2010. *My Presbyterian handbook 2nd Ed.* Nairobi: PCEA Jitegemea Press.

Nel, M. 2018. *Youth ministry: An inclusive missional approach.* Durbanville, Cape Town: AOSIS.

⸺. 2015. "Imagine-making disciples in youth ministry ... that will make disciples". *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 71(3). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2940

⸺. 2003. "Youth ministry as a practical theology: Making a case for youth ministry as an academic discipline". *Journal of Youth and Theology* 2(1), 68-83.

Nel, R.W. 2017. "Everyday life, everyday connections? Theological reflections on the relevance of international youth studies research". *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 73(4). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4627

⸺. 2015b. "Social media and the new struggles of young people against marginalization: A challenge to missional ecclesiology in Southern Africa". *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 1(2), 511–530. http://dx.doi.org/10.17570/stj.2015.v1n2.a24

Nichols, J.H. 2014. *Corporate worship in the reformed tradition*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Niebuhr, R.H. 1951. *Christ and culture.* New York: Harper and Row.

Nofoaiga, V. 2017. "A Samoan reading of discipleship in Matthew". *International Voices in Biblical Studies* 8 ed. Melanchthon, M.J. & Havea, J., SBL Press, Atlanta.

Ntarangwi, M. 2016. *The street is my pulpit: hip hop and Christianity in Kenya*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

⸺. 2009. *East African hip hop: Youth culture and globalization.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Okwuosa, L.N., Favour, C.U., Michael, M., Uchechukwu, M.A., & Stella, C.E. 2020. "Double denominational belonging among youths in Nigeria: Implications on Christianity". *Journal of Youth and Theology* 19(1), 95-114.

Old, H.O. 2002. *Worship: Reformed according to Scripture*. Westminster John Knox Press.

Osmer, R. 2008. *Practical theology: An introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Osmer R.R. & Douglass, K.M. 2018. *Cultivating teen faith: Insights from the confirmation project.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Parrett, G.A. & Kang, S.S. 2009. *Teaching the faith, forming the faithful: A biblical vision for education in the Church.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

PCEA. 2021. The 23rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Held on Tuesday 6 April 2021. Accessed on the 8th of April 2021: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1153413335119208&ref=search

⸺. 2018. The report of the central youth committee (CYC) to the 22nd General Assembly.

⸺. 1998. *The Presbyterian Church of East Africa practice and procedure.* Nairobi: PCEA Jitegemea Press.

Pew Research Center. 2018. "Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018".

Piaget, J. 2008. "Intellectual evolution from adolescence to adulthood". *Human development* 51(1), 40-47.

Pillay, J. 2017. "Reformation and transformation today: Essentials of reformation tradition and theology as seen from the perspectives of the south". *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(3). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4815

Plantinga, C. 2002. *Engaging God's world: A reformed vision of faith, learning and living.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B Eerdmans.

Presbyterian Historical Society https://www.history.pcusa.org/history-online/presbyterian-history/timeline-presbyterian-history.

Power, E., Hughes, S., Cotter, D. & Cannon, M. 2020. "Youth mental health in the time of COVID-19". *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* 37, 301–305.

Reader, J. 2008. *Reconstructing practical theology: The impact of globalization.* Hampshire, England: Ashgate.

Reed, A.H., Osmer, R.R. & Smucker, M.G. 2015. *Spiritual companioning: A guide to protestant theology and practice.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Robert, D.L. 2009. *Christian mission: How Christianity became a world religion.* John Wiley & Sons.

Roberto, J. 2015. *Reimagining faith formation for the 21st century.* Naugatuck, CT: LifeLong Faith Associates.

Roberts, R.C. 1982. *Spirituality and human emotion.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans.

Root, A. 2017. *Faith formation in a secular age: Responding to the Church's obsession with youthfulness.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⸻. 2016. "Regulating the empirical in practical theology: On critical realism, divine action, and the place of the ministerial". J*ournal of Youth and Theology* 15, 44-64.

⸻. 2014a. *Christopraxis: A practical theology of the cross.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

⸻. 2014b. *Bonhoeffer as youth worker: A theological vision for discipleship and life together.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⸻. 2007. *Revisiting relational youth ministry: From a strategy of influence to a theology of incarnation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Root, A. & Dean, K.C. 2011. *The theological turn in youth ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books.

Roudometof, V. 2019. "Cosmopolitanism, glocalization and youth cultures". *Youth and Globalization* 1(1), 19-39.

Sanneh, L.O. and Carpenter, J.A. (Eds.). 2005. *The changing face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the world*. Oxford University Press.

Sax, L. 2017. *Boys adrift: The five factors driving the growth of unmotivated boys and underachieving young men*. New York: Basic Books.

Schoeman, W.J. & Van der Berg, J.A. 2016. "Practical theology exploring interdisciplinary practices: The quest for engaging the lived religion in the South African context". In Venter, R. (Ed.). *Theology and the (post)apartheid condition: Genealogies and future directions*. Bloemfontein: SUN PRESS.

Senter, M.H. 2010. *When God shows up: A history of protestant youth ministry in America.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Senter, M. H., & Black, W., Clark, C. & Nel, M. 2001. *Four views of youth ministry and the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Setran, D. P., & Kiesling, C. A. 2013. *Spiritual formation in emerging adulthood: A practical theology for college and young adult ministry.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Silverman, D. 2011. *Qualitative research 3rd Edition.* London: Sage.

Singleton, A., Mason, M. & Webber, R. 2004. "Spirituality in adolescence and young adulthood: A method for a qualitative study". *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* (9)3, 247-262.

Smith, K. 2010. "Review of Richard Osmer, practical theology: An introduction". *Conspectus* 10, 99–113.

Smith, J.K.A. 2009. *Desiring the kingdom: Worship, worldview, and cultural formation.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Smith, C. & Snell, P. 2009. *Souls in transition: The religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults.* Oxford: OUP.

Smith, C., Logest, K. & Christoffersen, K. 2014. *Young Catholic America: Emerging adults in, out of, and gone from the Church*. Oxford: OUP.

Strong, P. 2015. "Effective youth ministry: Theology-driven in a cultural context". *In die Skriflig* 49(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i1.1889.

Swinton, J. & Mowat, H. 2016. *Practical theology and qualitative research*. London: SCM Press.

Taylor, N. 2001. "Spiritual formation: Nurturing spiritual vitality". In Anthony M. J. (Ed.). *Introducing Christian education: Foundations for the twenty-first century.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Thompson, S.K. 2012. *Sampling.* New Jersey: Wiley.

Tinkatumire, L. 2011. "Theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry in relation to the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Uganda - East Africa". *Doctoral Dissertation*, Duquesne University.

Tshaka, R.S. 2014. "On being African and reformed? Towards an African reformed theology enthused by an interlocution of those on the margins of society". *HTS: Theological Studies* 70(1), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2070

Twenge, J.M. 2017. *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy, and completely unprepared for adulthood.* New York, NY: Atria.

Ugor, P. and Mawuko-Yevugah, L. 2016. *African youth cultures in a globalized world: Challenges, agency, and resistance.* Routledge.

UNISA. 2016. *Policy on research ethics.* South Africa.

Van der Ven, JA. 1998. *Practical theology: An empirical approach.* Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishers.

Vos, G. 2015. *Biblical theology: Old and new testaments.* Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.

Vygotsky, L. S. 2004. "Imagination and creativity in childhood". *Journal of Russian & East European Psychology* 42(1), 7-97.

Van Wyngaard, C. 2011. "Post-apartheid whiteness and the challenge of youth ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church". *Journal of Youth and Theology* *10*(1-2), 23-34.

Walls, A.F. 2015. *Missionary movement in Christian history: Studies in the transmission of faith*. Orbis Books.

Ward, P. 2017. *Introducing practical theology: Mission, ministry, and the life of the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⸻. 1996. *Growing up evangelical: Youth work and the making of a subculture.* London: SPCK.

WCF. 2018. *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.

Weber, S. 2017. "Decolonising youth ministry models? Challenges and opportunities in Africa". *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 73(4). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4796

⸻. 2015. "A (South) African voice on youth ministry research: Powerful or powerless?" *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 71(2). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i2.2973

Wells, D.F. 1993. *No place for truth: Or whatever happened to evangelical theology?* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Wepener, C.J., Dreyer, Y. & Meylahn, J.A. 2017. "The tradition of practical theology at the University of Pretoria". In "Theology at the University of Pretoria - 100 years (1917-2017): Past, present and future". *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38(4). https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v38i4.1677

West, G.O. 2016. *The stolen Bible: From tool of imperialism to African icon*. Brill.

White, D.F. 2017. *Practicing discernment with youth: A transformative youth ministry approach.* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.

Wilhoit, J.C. 2008. *Spiritual formation as if the Church mattered: Growing in Christ through community.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Wilkins, M.J. 2004. "Unique discipleship to a unique master: Discipleship in the Gospel according to Mark". *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology/SBJT* 8(3), 50-68.

Willard, D. 2015. *Personal Religion, Public Reality? Towards a Knowledge of Faith*. Hachette UK.

⸻. 1998. *The divine conspiracy: Rediscovering our hidden life in God*. New York: Harper San Francisco.

Wood, D., Crapnell, T., Lau, L., Bennett, A., Lotstein, D., Ferris, M. and Kuo, A., 2018. "Emerging adulthood as a critical stage in the life course." *Handbook of life course health development*, 123-143.

Woodbridge, N. 2014. "The EDND model". *Conspectus* 17, 89-121.

Yaconelli, M. 2006. *Contemplative youth ministry: Practicing the presence of Jesus.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Yoon, S. 2016. "Tuning in sacred: Youth culture and contemporary Christian music". *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 47(2), 315-342.

Young, S.D. 2012. "Evangelical youth culture: Christian music and the political". *Religion Compass* 6(6), 323-338.

Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J. & Skinner, E. A. 2011. "The development of coping across childhood and adolescence: An integrative review and critique of research". *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 35(1), 1–17.

Zittoun, T. & Glaveanu, V.P. (Eds.). 2018. *Handbook of imagination and culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX A-1: SEMI-STRUCTURED RESEARCH INSTRUMENT [DRAFT]

PART I: GENERAL QUESTIONS

Age: Date:

Congregation: Parish: Presbytery:

Participant No.

Which describes you best?

☐   Teen (14-18 years)

☐   Campus/College (19 – 24 years)

☐   Working (25 – 5=35 years)

Gender

☐   Male

☐   Female

How long have you been attending PCEA?

PART II: SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: How often do you attend Church?

□ Weekly

□ Every two weeks

□ Once a month

□ During church celebrations (Easter, Christmas)

Question 2: In your own words, what does it mean to be a Christian?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Question 3: Which question about the Christian faith do you wrestle with at your stage of life?

□ Differentiating right and wrong

☐ Understanding who I am

☐ How my faith affects all of my life

Question 4: Which of these are important in your faith formation?

☐ Attending youth service

☐ Worship

☐ Learning how to engage my youth culture.

☐ Listening to Christian music

☐ Walking with a mature Christian

Question 5: Which of the above would you rank as number 1? Kindly explain why in a few sentences.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Question 6: From a scale of (1-not at all, 2-a little, 3-neutral, 4-significantly, to 5-very much) do you think youth culture affects your faith formation?

_____

__

Question 7: Why do you say so?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Question 8: Do you think the following influence your faith negatively?

- ☐ Radio music

- ☐ Social media / influencers / bloggers

- ☐ Relationships and sexuality

- ☐ Movies or series

Question 9: Which of the above would you rank as number 1?

_____

__

Question 10: Why do you say so?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 11: Should the Church / pastor mention these things in preaching or talks in the youth group or fellowship?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 12: What among these has contributed to your spiritual growth?

- ☐ Bible studies

- ☐ Worship experiences

- ☐ Talking to the pastor / Christian adult

- ☐ Parents / guardians / mentor

- ☐ Other

Question 13: Which one would you rank as number 1? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 14: How have your African cultural values influenced your faith?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 15: Any other comments…

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX A-2: FINAL RESEARCH INSTRUMENT [ONLINE – GOOGLE FORMS]

SECTION 1

Hi. You have been invited to participate in this study which I, Mr. Kevin Muriithi, am conducting towards a doctoral degree in Practical Theology under the supervision of Dr. Garth Aziz, a Senior Lecturer in Practical Theology at the University of South Africa. You have been selected as you are a young person, between the ages of 14 to 35 years old. Your responses will assist the church to understand youth culture and how that influences how faith is formed in young people and thereby enrich the church's ministry to youth, young professionals, and young families. All the information will be confidential.

By completing this survey, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings. You are, however, under no obligation to complete the survey and you can withdraw from the study prior to submitting the survey. The survey is developed to be anonymous, meaning that we will have no way of connecting the information that you provide to you personally. Consequently, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once you have clicked the send button based on the anonymous nature of the survey.

The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes after which it will be permanently destroyed, hard copies will be shredded, and electronic versions will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey, but your contribution will inform youth policies at various levels.

The research was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee. In case of any questions, you can contact the research ethics

chairperson of the Ethics Committee, Dr K.J. Malesa 012-429-4780 maleskj@unisa.ac.za. The primary researcher, Mr. Kevin Muriithi can be contacted on +254 780 934 743 or email kevin.muriithi89@gmail.com. You may also contact the primary supervisor, Dr. Garth Aziz, on 012 429 6450 or email azizg@unisa.ac.za.

This survey will only take about 10-15 minutes of your time.

Email Address:* _____

Consent

I have been informed of the benefits to the study, the voluntary nature and confidentiality of the study and the possibility of freely withdrawing at any point. I give consent (for myself or my teenager) to participate in this study.

Yes ☐

No ☐

SECTION 2 – GENERAL QUESTIONS

Question 1: What is your age?

Question 2: This describes me.

☐ I am in High School.

☐ I am a Campus Student.

☐ I am currently working or a businessperson.

Question 3: What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

Question 4: What is the name of your PCEA congregation or local church?

Question 5: What are the initials of your name? (this will help to uniquely identify each interview schedule and maintain confidentiality)

SECTION 3 – SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: Roughly, how often do you attend Church?

- ☐ Weekly

- ☐ Every two weeks

- ☐ Once a month

- ☐ During special celebrations (Easter, Christmas)

Question 2: In your own words, what does it mean to be a Christian?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 3: I have been a follower of Christ for:

☐ 1 year

☐ 3-5 years

☐ More than 5 years

☐ Not sure

Question 4: Which of these three questions do you wrestle with at your stage of life?

☐ Differentiating right and wrong

☐ Understanding who I am

☐ How my faith affects all of my life

Question 5: List the top three things that influence your faith formation?

☐ Attending a church service

☐ Worship

☐ Learning how to engage my youth culture.

☐ Listening to Christian music

☐   Walking with a mature Christian

Question 6: Which of the above would you rank as number 1? Kindly explain why in a few sentences.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 7: I think that popular youth culture (e.g., music, going to malls, movies, my friends) affects the formation of my faith.

   Insignificantly   ◯   ◯   ◯   Significantly

Question 8: Why do you say so?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 9: Older people in the Church make a big deal about fashion and hairstyles than what is in the heart.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 10: What is your view about youth fashion (e.g., types of hairstyles, how people dress) and faith?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 11: How many hours do you spend on social media (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, Facetime, YouTube)?

☐ Less than 1 hour

☐ 2 – 3 hours

☐ 4 – 6 hours

Question 12: Which social media app do you use the most?

_____

__

Question 13: I primarily use social media for THREE major things:

☐ Entertainment

☐ Learning

☐ Connecting with friends

☐ Spiritual growth

☐ Professional growth

Question 14: I like to go to the malls.

Not often   O   O   O   Often

Question 15: I frequently watch series or movies.

Not often   O   O   O   Often

Question 16: I spend a lot of my time listening to music.

Not often   O   O   O   Often

Question 17: Social media has helped me to grow in my faith.

Insignificantly   O   O   O   Significantly

Question 18: I think that relationships with the opposite sex are important.

Insignificantly   O   O   O   Significantly

Question 19: Relationships and sexuality is something that affects my faith in a negative way.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 20: Why do you say so?

_____

_____

_____

Question 21: Should the church or pastor talk about these things in his or her preaching?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 22: In what ways would you say your pastor talks about these things?

☐ Firmly but gently

☐ Strongly but without understanding.

☐ My pastor rarely mentions these things.

Question 23: Which is the greatest influence on your spiritual growth?

☐ Bible studies

☐ Worship experiences

☐ Talking to the pastor / Christian adult

☐ Parents / guardians / mentor

☐ Other

Question 24: Why do you say so?

_____
_____
_____

Question 25: Would you say that African cultural values have shaped your life as a young person? Which one cultural value can you mention and how has it shaped you?

_____
_____
_____

Question 26: I think that there are some things that are unique about being an African young person compared to being a young person from another background.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 27: Why do you say so?

_____

_____

_____

Question 28: I have grown up.

☐ with both parents

☐ with one parent

☐ with a stepparent

☐ with a relative (uncle, aunt, grandparent)

Question 29: Any other comments…

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B: REQUEST LETTER FROM RESEARCHER TO THE PCEA OFFICE

Mutongoni Road,

Athi River,

Machakos County,

16 February 2019

Secretary General,

Presbyterian Church of East Africa

Nairobi

RE: Request to research on youth ministry in the PCEA

I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ.

My name is Kevin Muriithi, a doctoral student at UNISA (University of South Africa) and I am researching the influence of youth culture on the faith/spiritual formation of youth in Nairobi. I am writing this letter to request permission to use PCEA as the context for my study.

The reasons for this study are many. On a personal level, I am a lifelong and dedicated member of the PCEA church and currently serve as a youth coordinator

at PCEA Loresho parish. On a ministry level, I am passionate about how PCEA can continue to empower young people to serve in the Church and society. In the past, there are some young people in PCEA churches who have left for other churches. That concerns me as I think that the PCEA church has the institutional capacity to empower young people spiritually, economically, and socially. The importance of the study is then to understand youth culture and how this influences ministry to young people within the reformed and Presbyterian context.

The study will be based on literature survey as well as an empirical approach, based on interviews with select congregations in Nairobi city. The literature survey will seek to understand the history of youth work in the PCEA and will require access to archived material at the Head Office in addition to visiting various libraries. The research plan involves:

- Literature survey (academic material in libraries and archived material, reports, and minutes of the PCEA)

- Empirical survey (interviews with youth)

- Practical theological reflection (to analyze and store the findings in the research study)

In terms of sampling the congregations, my focus is Nairobi region. I plan to engage FIVE Presbyteries in Nairobi region. ONE congregation will be chosen from each Presbytery, totaling to five congregations, for a representative sample and further focus the "age" criteria on teens, campus students and young professionals. These THREE sub-categories should result in a total of FIFTEEN youth in the PCEA context in Nairobi who will be engaged in an in-depth manner. These are representative of the youth definition in Kenya.

Consent forms will be handed to participants and their guardians, where necessary. According to the UNISA research policy, no participant is to be paid for the research. I plan to travel to each respective congregation and where applicable, to contact the respective parish ministers or youth coordinators prior to that. Findings of this study will be made available to all research stakeholders. In particular, the final thesis will be available to the Head Office.

I humbly request your permission to use PCEA as the focused case for this research study. If this is agreeable, I plan to begin my empirical research by January 2020. Ethical clearance is also being sought at UNISA and has been granted. I will make the final draft of my research proposal accessible to the Head Office as soon as it is approved by the academic committee.

I hope that through granting permission, we shall be able to partner in making our institution better in serving the young people under our care.

Yours faithfully,

Kevin Muriithi

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (BASED ON UNISA GUIDELINES)

Ethics clearance reference number:

Research permission reference number:

24th May 2019

Dear Participant

My name is Kevin Muriithi and I am researching on THE ROLE OF YOUTH CULTURE IN HOLISTIC FAITH FORMATION OF YOUTH IN NAIROBI: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPROACH for a Doctoral project at the University of South Africa. My supervisor is called Dr. Garth Aziz, who belongs to the Department of Philosophy, Practical, & Systematic Theology. We are inviting you to participate in this important study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could help the Presbyterian Church of East Africa better serve young people in their spiritual formation.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You were recommended by the youth pastor based on the different criteria we are considering in the study such as age category and gender balance.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves audio/video taping and semi-structured interviews. Some of the questions are general and others specific, like, what enhances your spiritual growth? The time duration for an interview is about 30 minutes.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation is voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The highest benefit is that you will be giving real and authentic information that will help young people within and outside the Church to find and grow in their relationship with God. You will also help those who are working with young people to enhance their work in the Church.

HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

I/we will not record your personal name anywhere and no one will be able to trace the answers you give to you. In our records, your responses will be given a code or an anonymous name to ensure confidentiality in case of publication of research findings such as journals or conferences. In all such cases, your personal identification will be confidential.

This assurance will be confirmed by a Research Ethics Review Committee to ensure that we stick to these guidelines.

HOW WILL YOU SECURE THE DATA?

I/we plan to store a hard copy of this research for a period of five years in a secure filing cupboard. The reason is that we may need to publish the findings as already shared. Beyond this period, we will need the approval of the Research Ethics Review. After five years, hard copies will be shredded and soft copies deleted using relevant software.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

According to the UNISA policy 2.8 we are not allowed to offer incentives to participants and their participation is on purely voluntary terms.

IS THIS STUDY APPROVED BY ETHICS COMMITTEE?

Yes, this study has received written approval from the relevant body of UNISA. If you so wish, I can share it with you. In case of inquiry, you can contact research ethics chairperson of the Ethics Committee, Dr K.J. Malesa 012-429-4780 maleskj@unisa.ac.za.

HOW CAN I ACCESS RESEARCH FINDINGS?

You can contact Kevin Muriithi on +254 780 934 743 or kevin.muriithi89@gmail.com. In case of further inquiry, you may contact the primary supervisor Dr. Garth Aziz, on 012 429 6450 or email azizg@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Kevin Muriithi

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ confirm that the researcher has explained everything with regards the research concept.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand my voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw.

I am aware that findings of this research may be published but my personal information is secure.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname …………………………………………………………………

Participant Signature……………………………………   **Date** ………………………

Researcher's Name & Surname ………………………………………………………….

Researcher's signature……………………………….   **Date** ………………………

APPENDIX D – PARENT'S CONSENT FORM

Project Title: THE ROLE OF YOUTH CULTURE IN HOLISTIC FAITH FORMATION OF YOUTH IN NAIROBI: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

Investigator: Kevin Muriithi – PhD (Practical theology) Student at University of South Africa

Supervisor: Garth Aziz – Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Practical, & Systematic Theology - University of South Africa

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Thank you for considering the participation of your child in my research project. I am currently a PhD student at University of South Africa interested in learning how faith is formed among young people in Nairobi. If you agree to have your child in this study, I will be interviewing your child. This study will provide more detail about how the Presbyterian Church can better serve young people and strengthen their faith. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before you agree to take part.

WHAT I WILL ASK YOU TO DO

If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, I will ask you to sign a consent form granting me permission to interview your child to gather information relevant to the study.

WHY YOUR CHILD IS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Recommendations were made by the youth pastor based on the different criteria we are considering in the study such as age category and gender balance.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves audio/video taping and semi-structured interviews. Some of the questions are general and others specific, like, what enhances your spiritual growth? The time duration for an interview is about 30 minutes.

WHAT I WILL DO WITH THE INFORMATION YOUR CHILD GIVES ME

I/we will not record their (i.e., your child's) personal name anywhere and no one will be able to trace the answers given back to them. In our records, their responses will be given a code or an anonymous name to ensure confidentiality in case of publication of research findings such as journals or conferences. In all such cases, their personal identification will be confidential.

This assurance will be confirmed by a Research Ethics Review Committee to ensure that we stick to these guidelines.

HOW WILL YOU SECURE THE DATA?

I/we plan to store a hard copy of this research for a period of five years in a secure filing cupboard. The reason is that we may need to publish the findings as already shared. Beyond this period, we will need the approval of the Research Ethics Review. After five years, hard copies will be shredded, and soft copies deleted using relevant software.

IS THIS STUDY APPROVED BY ETHICS COMMITTEE?

Yes, this study has received written approval from the relevant body of UNISA. If you so wish, I can share it with you. In case of inquiry, you can contact research ethics chairperson of the Ethics Committee, Dr K.J. Malesa 012-429-4780 maleskj@unisa.ac.za.

HOW CAN I ACCESS RESEARCH FINDINGS?

You can contact Kevin Muriithi on +254 780 934 743 or kevin.muriithi89@gmail.com. In case of further inquiry, you may contact the primary supervisor Dr. Garth Aziz, on 012 429 6450 or email azizg@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Parent's Name(s) _____ **Child's name(s)**_____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Name & Surname _____

Researcher's signature _____ **Date**_____

APPENDIX E – MINOR ASSENT FORM

Project Title: THE ROLE OF YOUTH CULTURE IN HOLISTIC FAITH FORMATION OF YOUTH IN NAIROBI: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

Investigator: Kevin Muriithi – PhD (Practical theology) Student at University of South Africa

Supervisor: Garth Aziz – Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Practical, & Systematic Theology - University of South Africa

We are doing a research study about *how faith is formed in young people*. A research study is a way to learn more about people. If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you will be asked to *answer some few questions for about thirty minutes.* I will record so that we can have a clear record of what was said.

There are some things about this study you should know. These are *procedures, things that take a long time, other risks, discomforts, etc.*

Not everyone who takes part in this study will benefit. A benefit means that something good happens to you. We think these benefits might be *helping the PCEA church, helping young people to have a stronger faith* and *making the nation better through empowered youths*.

When we are finished with this study, we will write a report about what was learned. This report will not include your name or that you were in the study. We will use anonymous names to protect your identity.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. If you decide to stop after we begin, that's okay too. Your parents know about the study too.

If you decide you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

I, _____, want to be in this research study.

Researcher: _____   _____
                        (Sign your name here)   (Date)

APPENDIX F – ABRIDGED CV

KEVIN MURIITHI

Box 6225-00100 Nairobi

kevin.muriithi89@gmail.com | +254 780 934 743

1. EDUCATION

PhD Practical Theology. University of South Africa. **2019 - 2021**.

M.A. Biblical & Theological Studies (3.7 GPA). International Leadership University. **2015**.

> **Thesis Title:** *Youth Worldviews among the De-Churched in Nairobi and Implications for Ministry*

BSc. Electrical & Electronics Engineering (2nd Class Hons.). Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. **2013**.

> **Project Title:** *A Study on Energy Management Opportunities and Energy Monitoring for Non-Residential Buildings*

2. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2.1 **Assistant Secretary.** Africa Society of Evangelical Theology. **2019 – Current.**

2.2 **Adjunct Faculty.** Pan African Christian University. **2018 – Current.**

I have been teaching the following courses:

- *DYM 106 Adolescent/Youth Growth and Development*

- *DYM 108 Emerging Youth Issues*

- *DYM 109 Juvenile Delinquency and Deviance*

- *DYM 111 Youth Ministry Models*

- *DYM 113 Youth Programmes and Structures*

- *DYM 110 The Person of the Youth Worker*

- *DYM 116 Youth Media*

- *DYM 119 Youth Pastoral Ministry and Ethics*

- *BTCL 2143 Apologetics*

2.3 **Chairperson.** Apologetics Kenya. **2018 – Current.**

2.4 **Youth Pastor.** PCEA Loresho Community Church. **2017 – Current.**

2.5 **Electrical Engineer (Power Systems).** Kenya Power. **2015 – 2017**

2.6 **Deacon.** PCEA St. Andrews Parish. **2013 – 2017.**

2.7 **Associate Consultant.** Ashoka East Africa. **2013**

2.8 **Founding President.** AIESEC. **2010 – 2012.**

3. **CONFERENCES / SEMINARS**

3.1 **Africa Society of Evangelical Theology (ASET) Annual Conference 2017**: Theme on "Governance and Education" 3-4 March 2017 at Daystar University (Nairobi Campus)

3.2 **ASET Annual Conference 2018**: Theme on "God and Creation in Contemporary Theological Discourse" 9-10 March 2018 at St. Paul's University (Limuru Campus). Main Speaker: Prof. Samuel Ngewa (African International University, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology)

3.3 **Africa Regional Conference of the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry (IASYM) 2018** at Justo Mwale University in Lusaka, Zambia on 6-8 September 2018. Theme: *African Youth Identity – Being African and from Africa*.

3.4 **Youth Ministry Seminar 2018**: "Ministry to/with Millennials" held on the 23 March 2018 at the Pan Africa Christian University. Main facilitators: Rev. David Ewagata and Rev. Dr. Nathan Chiroma (Dean of School of Theology)

3.5 **The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) Nairobi Regional Conference 2018**: 17-19 June 2018 at Jumuia Conference & Country Home, Limuru. Theme: "Reconciling People, Nurturing People that all May be One" (Ephesians 2:14)

4. PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

4.1 Kevin Muriithi, **"Integrating a Biblical Worldview and STEM: Implications for the Kenyan Public University and Theological Education"**. Paper presented at the Africa Society of Evangelical Theology (ASET) Annual Conference March 2017 and published in David K. Ngaruiya & Rodney L. Reed (eds.). *Governance and Christian Higher Education in the African Context.* Langham Publishers. 2019. pp. 133-144.

4.2 Kevin Muriithi, **"A Theology of Creation: An African-Integrated Approach"** presented at the ASET Annual Conference March 2018 at St. Paul's University, Limuru Campus. In peer-review process, awaiting publication in a monograph by Langham Publishers.

4.3 Kevin Muriithi, **"A Kenyan Theology of Ethnic Reconciliation: An Inclusive-Congregational Youth Ministry Approach"** presented for review to the ASET Editorial team for the Annual Conference, March 2019.

4.4 Kevin Muriithi, **"Relational Apologetics in Faith Formation: An Ethnography of Youth Ministry in Nairobi"** presented at the African Regional Conference for the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry (IASYM), Lusaka Zambia, September 6-8, 2018.

4.5 Kevin Muriithi, **"Christians and the Environment"** article for *African Bible Commentary* Revised Edition.

4.6 Nathan Chiroma & Kevin Muriithi, **"Transforming youth ministry higher education: A practical theological approach"** *Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Journal* 32(1):1-10, 2019; Article no. JESBS.50779 ISSN: 2456-981X.