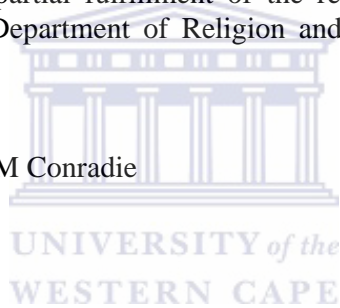


THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN YOUTH MINISTRY: AN ASSESSMENT OF
CURRENT APPROACHES

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A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Magister Theologiae in the Department of Religion and Theology, University of the
Western Cape.

Supervisor: Professor Ernest M Conradie



November 2007

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Jeremiah Jonathan Willemse

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“Starting Right”

Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa

K. Dean, C Clark and D Rahn



ABSTRACT

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This study focuses on the field of youth ministry as a sub-discipline of Practical Theology. It will offer a survey of current literature in the field of youth ministry in order to identify some of the current issues in this discourse as well as some of the approaches which may be followed in Christian ministry to the youth. This study focuses, more specifically, on an approach to youth ministry which seeks to integrate the role of families and family life in Christian ministry to young people. This thesis will offer a survey of contemporary literature in youth ministry, with specific reference to literature from the evangelical and Pentecostal traditions, in which the role of family life is emphasised. It will identify, describe and assess the different ways in which family life may be integrated in the context of youth ministry. The main aim of this thesis is therefore to describe and assess the current state of the debate in this regard and to classify the different ways of integrating family life in youth ministry.

The thesis is structured on the basis of an introduction dealing with methodological aspects and four further chapters.

Chapter 2 will offer reflections on the nature and composition of the “family” as well as a brief description of the challenges facing contemporary families (in South Africa). This will be done on the basis of a survey of the relevant literature, including literature from the fields of sociology and social work.

Chapter 3 will describe the challenges faced by ministries to the youth and will discuss seven approaches to youth ministry as identified in the book *Starting Right* (edited by

Dean Kenda and Clark Chap). One of these approaches is one where family life is emphasised and regarded as an appropriate point of departure for adequate ministries to the youth.

Chapter 4 will focus on especially three strategies which may be employed in order to integrate family life in youth ministry, namely the prophetic stance, the family-based youth ministry approach and the ministry to youth through family ministry. A description and comparison of these strategies will be offered while the strengths and weaknesses of each of these strategies will be identified.

Chapter 5 will summarise the state of current discourse on the role of family life in youth ministry and will offer some recommendations in this regard.



DECLARATION

I declare that *The role of family in Youth Ministry: An assessment of current approaches* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

November 2007

Jeremiah Jonathan Willemse

Signed:



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To my wife Juliana and children Amy Lee, Jessica and Emileo, for their love and support and willingness to believe in me.

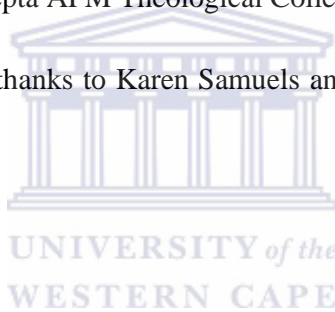
To my father, Andries Willemse and my late mother Rebecca Willemse for rearing me in the fear of the Lord.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Methodological aspects

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the field of youth ministry as a sub-discipline of Practical Theology. It will offer a survey of current literature in the field of youth ministry in order to identify some of the current issues in this discourse as well as some of the approaches which may be followed in Christian ministry to the youth. This study focuses, more specifically, on an approach to youth ministry which seeks to integrate the role of families and family life in Christian ministry to young people. This thesis will offer a survey of contemporary literature in youth ministry, with specific reference to literature from the evangelical and Pentecostal traditions, in which the role of family life is emphasised. It will identify, describe and assess the different ways in which family life may be integrated in the context of youth ministry. The main aim of this thesis is therefore to describe and assess the current state of the debate in this regard and to classify the different ways of integrating family life in youth ministry.

1.2 Context and relevance

1.2.1 The societal and ecclesial context of the study

As a Pastor in the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM) in Mitchell's Plain it seems to me as though the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa is unable to keep our children in the church, when they become adults. The last fifty years of ministry in the Apostolic Faith Mission have been characterized by ever increasing polarisation between young and old. This seems to be widespread problem within the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa and also in the contemporary South African society. Sharlene Swartz (2004:76) quotes Nelson Mandela in the journal of youth and theology that "poverty and the breakdown of family life have secondary effects. Children wonder about the streets

because there are no parents at home, because both parents (if there be to) have to work to keep the family alive.”

In his book, *Family based youth ministry*, Mark De Vries (1994:40, 49) writes that “the most damaging isolation that teenagers in our culture experience is from their own family ... teenagers seems to be inadequately prepared for the adult world. By denying teenagers opportunity for involvement with adults and parents, our culture sends many youth into the adult world relationally, mentally and morally unprepared for the challenges of adulthood.”

It has become clear that attention to the family in the context of youth ministry is crucial, neglected and difficult. It is crucial because of the many factors causing family disruption such as divorce, out of wedlock births and poverty (cf. Browning 2000). In the book *Gesinsverryking*, Louw (1989: 90) claims that, single parenthood and the “absent father” had a negative influenced on the family. In the book *Familie is 'n werkwoord*, Marais mentioned that issues such as ‘the move of women into the wage market, both-parents working, modernity and the political transformation in South Africa’, has had a crucial effect on the family (2002:18). Family life has become a daunting task for both parent and child. The rise of individualism and economic transformations has had a damaging effect on family life (Thomas 1996:14). The AFM and many other churches have made a number of age-based distinctions in Christian ministry. Churches have often relied almost exclusively on para-church organizations, such as the Sunday school movement, Young Men’s Christian Association and Young Women’s Christian Association, Youth for Christ, Scripture Union and a host of others, to provide age appropriate ministry to the young people in their church (cf. Senter 1992).

In the South African society family life is often neglected due to time constraints and because both parents are working. Fifty years ago families typically worked and ate together by necessity (De Vries 1994:41).

Growing up to adulthood is not an easy process. Dean Borgman, (1997:115) in his book, *When kumbaya is not enough*, writes that, “one difficulty of contemporary adolescence is the absence of markers or rites of passage”. Graeme Codrington (1999:1) in his Master’s dissertation argues that, “massive societal and cultural shifts, fuelled by changing

technology, increasing rates of change, globalization and disconnectedness have caused a deep divide.”

These disruptions, challenges and crises pertaining to the family have attracted attention amongst contemporary society, schools, churches and a wide range of scholars in different fields, such as psychology, sociology, education and theology.

1.2.2. Theological discourses on family life

There has been an interest in family life within various theological sub-disciplines. It may be helpful to note other theological discourses on family-related matters. This study will focus on theological contributions on the role of family in youth ministry.

a) In the field of moral formation

There has been considerable interest, also in South Africa, in questions about moral formation (see Vosloo 1994, Villa-Vicentio1994). Despite the many theories on moral formation that emerged over the century, there have developed a degree of consensus on the formation of virtue, on the way in which people manage to live, embody and practice virtues. This consensus indicates that moral formation is facilitated by the following preconditions:

- Virtues are rooted in a more comprehensive vision of the good life, of a good society;
- Virtues are embodied and carried through narratives, through pragmatic stories;
- Such paradigmatic stories are carried by “communities of character”, that is groups, traditions and communities of people who live with integrity, honesty and loyalty;
- Conversion, transformation and discipleship are necessary for those who participate in such “communities of character” (this also requires a long, intense and often painful process of moral formation);

- Regular exercises, rituals and (spiritual) disciplines are the context within which virtues can be internalized.
- Role models, examples, heroes, saints, martyrs, significant adults, (all inspiring figures) play a key role in guiding people through such processes of moral formation, providing direction, motivation and inspiration;
- Friendships (in a variety of ways and forms) are crucial to sustain people on this road to moral formation;
- Credibility is born from the concrete practicing of central convictions and virtues; such credibility eventually serves as the criterion whether or not moral formation has actually taken place (see Vosloo 1994, Conradie et al 2006:77).

Of the various groups to which we belong, the family has the most far-reaching impact on personality development. The focus of moral formation is to shape moral convictions and daily lifestyles. The received vision of the good life, pragmatic stories, spiritual disciplines, role models and conversions can be guided and developed in the context of family. A family must strive to be the primary moral agent where moral teaching and practices can be embodied.

b) In the field of personal ethics

The modern family struggles to keep abreast in this challenging time. Families are under severe pressure to earn money to sustain itself. Many a time both parents have to work to keep the family living. In homes where both parents work to earn a living, teenagers are often left alone during the day. Most of their education comes from their peers, the school and television. Parents and children do not spend enough quality time together in order for effective and adequate caring, direction and guidance from parents to take place (see Van der Ven:1998).

Family life is a preparation for the all-important event of leaving home. All humans will face the issues of leaving home, separation, self-reliance and independence. The family has to prepare children to make this transition of “leaving home” smooth, to help them to be

able to take care of themselves in the world (see Bellah:1996).

Memories of family life become a powerful tool for children when entering the adult world. Parents as role models for children become powerful images of goodness lying in the vestiges of their memories. Sad and dark memories can have a detrimental negative effect on the children as they take these memories with them into the adult world. Children may forget these memories, but find themselves prisoners of their past (see Wuthnow 1993:51).

Negative memories of childhood can have a disturbing effect on adult life and will influence a person's character. These negative personal character traits which were formed, shaped and influenced by parents become powerful forces in adulthood. Our character begins to take shape soon after birth and becomes a barometer when decisions must be taken (see Ellis 1992: 79).

c) In the fields of pastoral care and counselling

The primary focus of pastoral care and counselling is to assist people in finding solutions to their daily problems. Counsellors seek to establish a helping relationship with persons to help them understand themselves and the situation in which they find themselves better and then to help them solve their problems or offer other emotional support if the problem cannot be resolved.

The clergy involved in the process of pastoral care and counselling will be responsible for premarital counselling, marital counselling, counselling the physically ill, bereavement counselling, counselling people with spiritual problems and family counselling.

In the literature cited below there is a growing awareness of the importance and necessity of family counselling.

In his book, *Basic types of counselling* (1966:15) Howard Clinebell's writes that, "counselling is an instrument of renewal through reconciliation, helping to heal our estrangement from ourselves, our families, our fellow church members, from those outside the church and from growing relationship with God". Literature in the field of pastoral care and counselling shows fresh ways and insights on how family life can become a catalyst in

providing healing to troubled persons.

Douglas Waruta (2000:116), in his book *Pastoral care in African Christianity* writes, “marriage and family life is still one of the most honoured institutions in Africa. It is advisable for pastoral counsellors to work from this basic prevailing fact and enhance the positive aspects of marriage and family.”

The editors of the book, *Counselling troubled teens and their families*, writes: “in thirteen separate studies representing a diverse group of urban and rural clergy between 1979 – 1992, we found that those seeking pastoral counsel bring problems predominantly related to marriage, parenting and their families” (1999:18).

David Olsen (1993:15) in his book, *Integrative family therapy*, concludes that “family therapists, parish clergy and experienced pastoral counsellors find that working with families is rarely easy.” Olsen calls for “an integrated model of family therapy, which includes the basics of family systems theory” (1993:15). This model assisted not only counsellors in the work of family therapy, but also families in the predictable life transitions, with which clergy are so intimately involved.

The literature above focused on the importance of family in pastoral care and counselling. Traditionally, counsellors worked only with individual family members. However, over the years, it became more and more apparent that something more was needed, because the value of individual counselling was often undermined when the counselee went back into the turmoil of the family conflict. To meet this problem, some counsellors began to work with the family as a group. Youth form an integral part of the family and should be part of the counselling process.

d) In the field of catechism

Christian education for children in the context of church cannot be done without the active involvement of parents.

Eugene Roehlkepartian, (1993:177) in his book *the teaching church*, emphasizes “the need for systematic efforts to include the family as an emphasis in Christian education. Several

models for family ministry and parent education are used and promoted as effective for nourishing and supporting families, particularly in light of the changing shape of families today”.

Karen Leslie (1990:10) observes in her book, *Faith and little children*, that “many parents feel that they are not ‘qualified’ to teach their children about their faith and want to leave it to the ‘professionals’. As catechists, we need to encourage parents and to provide them with information, events and experiences that will better enable them to pass their faith to their children.”

In his book, *Teaching for spiritual growth*, Perry Downs (1994: 141,142) argues that, “responsible Christian education requires that from their earliest days children should be raised in the faith. That is, we are to ‘raise children in the training and instruction of the lord (Eph. 6v4). This is both a mandate and a privilege for Christian parents. Parents are still responsible for raising their children in faith and the church is responsible for teaching the children so that they may believe. Divine sovereignty does not eliminate human responsibility.”

In his book, *Educating congregations*, Charles Foster (1994:86) points out “during the past fifty years family and community involvement in the religious education of children and youth has diminished significantly.” He observes a great “exodus from churches” of many of the brightest and most capable of its youth.” (1994:86)

In order for the church to prevent this “exodus from churches”, a family friendly Christian education model is of paramount importance.

e) In the field of Christian ministry

The document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (B.E.M.), written by the commission of Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, is an attempt to provide “theological support for the efforts the churches are making toward unity.” (BEM 1982:Preface 1)

The section “Ministry” spells out in greater detail a vision of the role of ordained persons in a united or uniting church. The BEM document discusses ministry by insisting that God

calls all the people of God and gives to all Christians the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1, 1-4).

The BEM document denotes Christian ministry in its broadest sense as, “the service to which the whole people of God is called, whether as individuals, as local community or as the universal church. Ministry or ministries can also denote the particular institutional forms which the service may take.” (1982:21)

Christian ministry comprises of ordained ministers who represent Christ to the church and proclaim His message of salvation. In the New Testament, especially during the second and third centuries, a threefold pattern of bishop, elder and deacon became established as the pattern of ordained ministry throughout the church.

The church living in the power of the Spirit will be characterized by a variety of gifts (charisms). This variety of gifts helps to enrich the life of the church. Christian ministry comprises of evangelism, small groups, preaching, healing, crisis ministry, women ministry, elderly groups, welfare ministry, youth ministry and family ministry. The purpose of Christian ministry is stated in the book of David Bartlett (1993:185), *Ministry in the New Testament*, as “preaching the gospel for the redemption of the world, the church exists for the world’s sake in the service of the gospel, ministry exists for the church’s sake in the service of the gospel for the sake of the world.”

The following additional Christian literature, emphasize the role of family life in Christian ministry:

Patton and Childs (1988:139) state in their book, *Christian marriage and family* that, “the total dependence of the child on the parent before birth continues after birth as well. While this dependence is mostly for physical comfort, feeding and cleaning, there is also a social dependence. The child is also dependent on the parent for social skills.”

Anita Marais (2002:16) in her book, *Familie is ’n werkwoord* observed the dramatic changes over the last 25 years in and around the family. “Changes such as divorce, divorces of families with young children and working patterns of women have fundamental influences on families” (2002:18). These changes put the parents under severe pressure and create a feeling of powerlessness.

Dewey Bertolini (1999:102) argues for the establishment of a ministry to parents when he writes in *Back to the heart of youth works* that, “first, God has given the primary authority over children to their parents, he did not place the church or youth worker in this position.”

Many questions surrounding the family are being debated in the context of Christian ministry. There is a growing awareness that families are both changing and in crisis. Lyon and Smith (1998:2) in their book, *Tending the flock*, they state that “the mass media presents us almost daily with a litany of the issues that have become coinage of this debate: teenage pregnancy, divorce, abuse, gender roles, gangs, sexual orientation and the effects of consumerism and the media itself on family life”. In the book, *A new day for family ministry*, Olson and Leonard, discusses seven challenges that face leaders seeking to minister to contemporary families. These challenges are “divorce, remarriage, two-career families, sexuality, cohabitation, longevity and gay and lesbian Christians.” These challenges call, first, for “ethical discernment and then for a bold response by the Christian church. Authors in this field call for an approach that innovative to youth ministry.” (1996:103)

Family ministry therefore forms an integral part of Christian ministry. In the field of Christian ministry the role of families is emphasized as vital for the life of the church.

f) In the field of youth ministry

We have seen in the previous sections that the role of family life is emphasised in various theological sub-disciplines. The significance of the family is also clearly recognized in the field of youth ministry. Since this study will focus on youth ministry I will explore the field on youth ministry and various approaches to the integration of family life in youth ministry in more detail in the next section.

1.3 The role of family life in youth ministry

a) Youth ministry

Youth ministry is one important dimension and focus of Christian ministry in general (see discussion under -e- above).

Youth ministry as an activity (not the academic discipline which studies the activity) required some explanation in terms of its origin and history. The history of youth ministry cannot be discussed without the role of Christian education. According to Cannister (2001:77) “the history of youth ministry and Christian education is easily seduced into a reductionistic paradigm that places youth evangelism and youth education at odds with each other.” Canister argues for a twofold approach to youth ministry that includes both evangelism and education of adolescence. It is not an “either-or” approach, but a “both-and” approach. Therefore, youth ministry must include a theology of both mission and education within the fields of practical theology.

Christian education can be traced back to the apostolic church, where the apostles’ primary responsibility was to “educate baptismal candidates” (Cannister 2001:78). The Didache or teachings of the Twelve Apostles, Alexandrian schools, Monastic communities, Martin Luther, etc. became highly influential in the development of Christian education. (see Cannister 2001: 78)

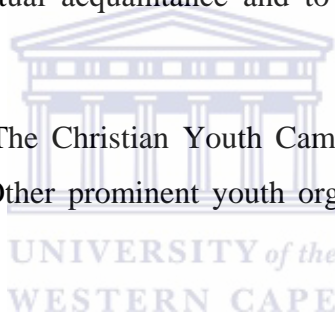
The origin of youth ministry as an academic discipline is not so easy to trace. Some will point to the early church as a starting point. Others would argue for the Society for Christian Endeavour, which was established in 1881. Still others point to Young Life’s beginnings in the early 1940s. There is an uncertainty among academics in the field of youth ministry about the history of youth ministry.

In 1780 Robert Raikes determined to educate the illiterate and impoverished children of Gloucester, England. Raikes’ primary focus was literacy training. Through the many unselfish efforts of this champion of the poor, the Sunday school movement was born. (see De Vries 1994:31)

Dwight L Moody transformed the Sunday school movement into a mission of evangelism. Other organizations such as Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) were birthed in 1851. According to Charles Hopkins in his book, *the history of the YMCA in North America*, witnessed that the "YMCA experienced revival from 1857-1859." (1951:81)

In 1881 the Society for Christian Endeavour stepped onto the scene. This period became an important era, because youth ministry was now studied as an academic discipline. The visionary of this movement, Francis E Clark, wanted to assist the young people of his congregational church to continue in their Christian faith after an initial salvation experience. Clark (2001:57) in the book, *Starting Right*, urges that the original objective of the Society for Christian Endeavour was, "to promote an earnest Christian life among its members, to increase their mutual acquaintance and to make them more useful in the service of God."

In 1929 Lloyd Bryant started The Christian Youth Campaign of America. Jim Rayburn later established Young Life. Other prominent youth organizations were established like Youth for Christ.



b) Approaches to youth ministry

Various approaches to youth ministry may be identified. In this study I will draw especially on the discussion of various approaches to youth ministry identified in the book *Starting Right*, edited by Dean Kenda, Clark Chap and David Rahn (2001). The editors argue that Youth Ministry is part of Practical Theology, and "all decent theology begins and ends in practice". As youth ministers we need more than models, strategies, youth cultures and theories. We need to seek who God is and what God expects us to do. Practical Theology is concerned with Christian action (2001:17). Our understanding of God will have an influence on how we practice this understanding. The book is organized and divided into four sections.

The first section of this book explores the nature of Practical Theology and its significance for Youth Ministry. It describes the way we understand the present context for ministry

with young people. Furthermore to understand adolescence it is important to appreciate the development of the history of youth ministry as an academic discipline.

The second section reflects on the present practice of Youth Ministry. This section looks at the different approaches that are used in Youth Ministry. In Youth Ministry various approaches are used. In the book seven approaches are discussed. They are described in terms of the following key word, namely “evangelism”; “family”, “Christian practices”, “student leaders”, “critical consciousness”, “community” and “innovation” (see the discussion below and in chapter 3).

The first approach focuses on youth ministry through evangelism. Terry McGonigal writes that, “parents and extended family, as well as the rest of the surrounding community, are expected to carry out their evangelistic responsibility of preparing the children and youth for the convergence of physical, spiritual and social maturity in adulthood”(2001:126). The objective of the Shema (Deut. 6v4-9) is to remind parents of the evangelistic mandate and responsibility towards their children. Observing the daily model of adults and interactions with adults, youth learn of God’s love towards them.

The second approach is called family-based youth ministry. According to Mark De Vries, the purpose of youth ministry is to lead young people to “mature Christian adults” (2001:142). Youth ministers have more resources, increase in funding, professional youth pastors, but there is a decrease of youth entering adulthood as mature Christians. Youth are “on their own” and “isolated from their parents and adults”. Church and family must navigate young people through the ‘passage’ to adulthood. The family based youth ministry is driven by a desire to empower and support families to play a fundamental role in youth ministry (2001:145).

The third approach focuses on youth ministry through Christian practices. Mark Yaconelli (2001:155) writes that “youth ministry is about inviting young people into a way of life. From the earliest records of the Bible, God has called people to show their children a pattern of life that is receptive to God’s love.” This “way of life” includes habits, disciplines and patterns of life through which Christians seek communion with Christ and solidarity with others. These Christian practices “begin in prayer, invite personal

confession, take place within the worshipping community and bear fruit in solidarity with the poor in communion with the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”(Yaconelli 2001:157)

The fourth approach focuses on youth ministry through student leadership. Dave Rahn (2001:170) describes that this approach have three perspectives. The first perspective is to encourage young people to develop in their organization and later on receive the torch of leadership. Another student leadership perspective is to involve the adolescents in the leadership of the youth ministry program. Interpersonal influences adolescent friends have a unique impact on one another’s life. The third perspective is when trusted teen models, have a positive influence on their peers. This type of student leadership recognizes the unique impact that adolescent friends have on another’s life.

The fifth approach focuses on youth ministry through critical consciousness. The youth goes through a long and rigorous confirmation class, where they are being educated about the “stories, symbols, values, practices and norms of the faith community” (White 2001:156). Yet we find a “powerful and unconscious cultural assumption that youth are not yet capable of being full participants in the life of the church” (White 2001:182). David White” (2001:182) argues for a “dimension of youth ministry that could empower youth to critically engage their communities as agents of faith. Youth as full agents of faith must engage these “powers” and “spirits” with critical consciousness. The modern church in general and youth ministry in particular has undervalued the role of discernment in the Christian life. White argues that Christian instruction is vital, but deep self and social critical investigation is vital. An example of this is the 19th century practice of teaching the Bible to African slaves, while ignoring slavery itself as evil structures. (White 2001:184)

The sixth approach is youth ministry through community. Kara Powell claims that effective youth ministry must be done through community. Youth pastors and youth leaders have multiple vocational roles associated with them. According to Powell (2001:201), the primary purposes of the Pauline letters were not their gathering, teaching, learning, worship, evangelism, social action, but “the strengthening of the church (Eph. 4v13). The church enquires its members of all ages to exercise these gifts in order to remain healthy and productive.” Youth ministry practitioners must understand the gifts are for the whole body, youth leader and members. Powell talks of “multiple ministering community”

(2001:203). Powell (2001:205) paraphrases C.S. Lewis' view of leadership and influence as follows, "think of me as a fellow patient in the same hospital who, having arrived a little earlier, could give some advice."

The last approach is youth ministry through innovation. Oestergaard and Hall (2001:209) write from the premise that our world is "constantly changing." Music, technology, fashion and people change at an amazing rate. The purpose of youth ministry through innovation according to the writers is, "to address the issue of this rapidly changing culture and the response to it as youth ministers. Youth culture is ever changing and this is calling for radical new approaches in youth ministry if we want to reach out to the many different youth subcultures. Oestergaard and Hall (20001:214-220) writes, that "we don't have to accept the values, beliefs and practices of the youth, but it is crucially important that we understand the background for their thinking and acting, so that we can address both the felt and existential needs of their lives." Reaching this generation calls for genuine innovation that demands "careful study, critical reflection, courage and much prayer." It is also crucial that we "continuously evaluate our motives" and "proper communication" if we want our innovative approach to be successful.

The third section looks critically at how effectively youth ministry is practiced. The measure stick for this effectiveness should be guided by theological doctrines. The third section seeks to "faithfully and self-consciously communicate the God we know." (2001:235)

The last section seeks the best means, strategies and forms which should be used in communicating the gospel to young people.

This project will focus on the approaches to youth ministry that recognise the significance of family life for youth ministry and that seek various ways of doing so. (see approach 2 above)

c) The integration of the family into youth ministry

In this research project I will investigate the literature in the field of youth ministry that emphasise the importance of family life in Christian ministry to the youth. Although most

authors would agree that family life should be integrated in youth ministry, different ways of doing so may be identified.

Integration of family life may take place in the context of youth ministry, liturgy, Christian ministry and catechism.

Doug Fields (1998:251) in his book *Purpose driven youth ministry* writes, that “youth workers are becoming increasingly aware that a young people only youth ministry is less effective than a family-friendly youth ministry.”

Spiritual formation forms an integral part of family life. Youth workers must join hands with parents in creating an environment for spiritual formation. Both youth workers and parents can become mentors in the process of preparing the teens for adulthood. Joe White and Jim Weidman (2001:91) in the book *Spiritual mentoring of teens* says, “parenting your child through the teen years, especially in the area of his or her spiritual growth, is a divine calling, a challenge that will demand the best you’ve got to give and a wonderful privilege.”

Churches have realized the importance of incorporating the family in their services. These family services have become an important landscape of worship in the Church of England in the last thirty years. These services are well attended in the parish. Barton (1996:43) in the book *The Family*, writes that “their essential elements are a lively more informal style, accessible music and vivid illustrated teaching ... people often speak of “all age worship.”

Youth ministries have played a vital role in churches and communities through the centuries. Many youth ministry programs focus on activities pertaining to young people, without involving the parents, has become the single most common characteristic. Youth ministry has to provide an environment in which youth could dialogue and collaborate with adults. Family-based or family friendly youth ministry can enhances positive growth in the life of youth.

In his book, *Jeugbediening- n inklusiewe gemeentelike benadering*, Malan Nel (1998:110) writes that “the influence of the student’s family on his or her value system will exceed the influence of the youth worker on most occasions.”

Jim Burns agrees with Nel (1988:226) when he writes in his book, *The youth builder*, that “sometimes we in youth ministry forget that kids have parents and that they are part of a family system. Their actions, socialization process and faith are all intertwined with their family.”

In the previous section we noted that the role of families is emphasised in different theological discourses and sub-discourses. In this research project I will focus on contributions within the context of youth ministry where the role of the family in youth ministry is emphasized.

1.4 Statement of the problem

This research project will provide an overview of recent literature in which the role of family life in youth ministry is emphasized. It will identify, describe and assess the different ways in which family life may be integrated in the context of youth ministry. The main aim of this thesis is therefore to describe and assess the current state of the debate in this regard and to classify the different ways of integrating family life in youth ministry. It will focus, more specifically on contemporary literature on youth ministry from the evangelical and Pentecostal traditions as well as literature on youth ministry from within the South African context.

This formulation of the research problem calls for further conceptual clarification:

- a) “Approaches” are the different models, strategies, ideas and practices used in youth ministries, churches and para-church organizations to minister to young people.
- b) I understand the concept “family” to mean any network of two or more people linked over time emotionally and usually biologically and legally, sharing such things as home, spiritual and material resources, interpersonal care giving, memory, common agenda and aspirations. It may mean the nuclear family and the extended family also. (see Olson 1984:26)
- c) In this project the terms ‘youth’, ‘teenagers’, ‘adolescents’ and ‘young people’ will be

used synonymously. According to Thom (1990:393), the beginning of adolescence is between 11 and 13 years, while the end of adolescence may be between 17 and 21 years, while Balswick and Balswick (1990:111) define adolescence as between 13 and 21 years. Olson (1984:24) defines adolescence between 11 to 19 years. Generally speaking, this project addresses youth between the ages of 10 and 24, recognizing variance at both ends of the spectrum and distinctly different needs for young-, mid- and older adolescents. Youth ministry has to do with the place of teenagers in the community of faith.

d) Any relevant recent literature on youth ministry in English and Afrikaans will be taken into account in this study. A combination of South African, British and American literature will be read in order to get a wider perspective of the issues discussed in the field of youth ministry. Literature written by Pentecostal scholars will be read to understand youth ministry in the context that would correlate with my personal experience as a minister in a Pentecostal congregation.

All contributions to youth ministry that address the theme of family stress the importance of family life in youth ministry. However, various possible ways in which family issues may be integrated in youth ministry can be identified. In this research project I will classify the relevant literature on the basis of an identification of the following three strategies in this regard:

1. A prophetic stance will seek to inform parents, congregations and youth ministry about the importance of family life. This approach proclaim, inform and pointing to the family as a vital role player in the life of young people and as such must be consulted.
2. A family-based approach to youth ministry builds on the prophetic approach by suggestion practical ways of how family life may be integrated into youth ministry.
3. A ministry to the youth through family ministry.

1.5 Research Procedures

This study will entail an overview and critical analysis of texts on the role of the family in

youth ministry as discussed above. The argument of the thesis is developed in the following four chapters:

Chapter 2 will offer a brief description of the challenges facing contemporary families (In South Africa). This will be done on the basis of a survey of the relevant literature, including literature from the fields of sociology and social work. In this chapter I will merely provide a background to the present-day family and do not intend to contribute new thoughts pertaining to the debate on the family. Therefore, this chapter is included in this thesis in order to understand chapter 4, which will assess various strategies that may be implemented to integrate family life into youth ministry.

Chapter 3 will describe and discuss the various approaches in youth ministry. The different issues pertaining to youth ministry will be highlighted. This brief overview of the various approaches and issues in youth ministry will contribute to chapter 4, which will once again look at how family life can be integrated into youth ministry. For this reason I briefly discuss youth ministry approaches and youth issues, in order that chapter 4 may be understood, within the context of youth ministry and family life.

Chapter 4 will assess the three strategies that seek to integrate family life into youth ministry. This chapter is the core of the study, which will build on chapter 2 and 3 in order to seek various ways to integrate family life into youth ministry.

Chapter 5 will summarise the state of the debate and open avenues for further research.

Chapter Two

The Family: Some sociological perspectives

2.1 Introduction

In the first chapter we have noted that the role played by families in strengthening the moral fabric of society and in congregational life is both crucial and neglected. Moreover, the many challenges that families are facing today lead to changes in the nature and structure of the family. These challenges are related to a number of societal changes, including, the absent father, the entering of women to the labour market, an increase of single parent families, the composition of the family and tensions emerging in the family. These and several other societal changes affecting family life must be taken into consideration when working with young people, especially in the context of the local church.

The family is one of the oldest and most fundamental of all social institutions. Sociologists agree that the family is one of the social structures where socialization is taking place. In this chapter, I will consider various sociological definitions and approaches to the family. Specific attention will be given to the various changes to the nature and structure of family life.

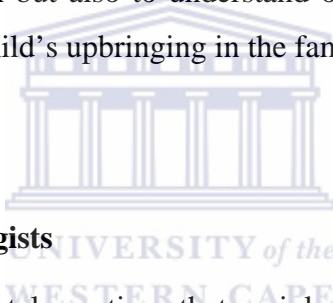
2.2 A sociological approach to understand family life

The family is a social institution. In order for youth workers to understand the role of the family in youth ministry, an understanding of the family as a social institution is important. Most sociologists agree that the family is one of the most important social institutions within which character formation and moral formation takes place.

Andersen and Taylor (2002:4) define sociology as the “study of human behaviour in society.” Sociologists are interested in the study of people and discovered that all human

behaviour occurs in a societal context. Our behaviour is determined to a large extent by the family, political parties, educational institutions, the work place, and the hospital. Factors related to class, gender and ethnicity which stretch across a wider society also have to be taken into account. These structures shape what people do and think. The family is one of those institutions where the formation of children takes place. The family has an influence in the way youth think about society and its influence on human groups. We can perhaps choose the type of life we want to live, but society will shape our behaviour in multiple ways through processes of socialization. Sociologists agree that the family is an important context where human behaviour is nurtured and formed.

The ultimate purpose of sociology is to help us to understand ourselves, the way we think, behave and feel. Fulcher and Scott (1999:4) write, that the purpose of sociology is, “to understand the world we live in but also to understand ourselves.” Sociologists therefore also have to pay attention to a child’s upbringing in the family.



2.3 Questions asked by sociologists

There are a number of fundamental questions that sociologists are dealing with, in order to understand the behaviour of humans in society. Fulcher and Scott (2003:4-5) describe four crucial questions that are asked in this regard.

The first question that they ask is: “How can we understand the world in which we live. The world we live in is a world of extraordinary choice. We have all these choices, but societal pressures influence us. Our values and our opportunities are shaped by the society in which we grow up. We also live in a world where the ability to choose varies enormously between people. The poor, the unemployed, the single parent all have less choice than others. Sociologists have this challenge to explain this strange world that gives us choice, but also takes it away.

Secondly, sociologists have the challenge to understand not only the world around us, but also our place within it. Here the question may be: where are we located within societal structures and the changes taking place in these structures? Sociologists use the term

“societal structures” to refer to any relatively stable pattern of relationships between people. Sociologists are challenged to help us to understand our place in this ever changing society and the impact it has on people.

Thirdly sociologists are challenged to help us to understand ourselves. We need an understanding of the way we think, behave and feel. The knowledge and understanding of the social processes which influence us can help us to understand ourselves.

We need to understand the world we live in, our place in this world and ourselves, but we must not become passive and allow these societal structures to constrain us. The last challenge which sociologists address is to enable us to see these social structures, resist those we wish to and to free ourselves from them, at least to some extent.

These aspects which sociologists study are also pertinent to an understanding of families. The personalities of individual members of a family affect relationships with people both in and outside the family. The family as a social institution has the capacity to change and to persist over time. The family plays a vital role in shaping and directing our actions within society. Other social institutions, such as the law, religion and education have an effect on the family too. Changes in one institution can affect the others, including the family. Changes in religious values affect family behaviour, including reproduction, marriage, divorce and sexual behaviour. Given the diversity amongst families, defining a family proves to be difficult (see Andersen and Taylor 2002: 416).

In the previous section we have noted the various reasons for the changes taking place within the family and how these societal changes have an influence on people and their behaviour. In order for us to proceed we also need to understand the term *family*.

2.4 Towards a definition of the family

Since the nature and structure of families may be highly complex it is not easy to define or to understand family life. Various ways in which a family may be constituted have to be considered. It may include parents and children, a wider group of relatives, a group of

blood relatives, extending cousins, grandparents, uncles and aunts. The categories of family seems to be universal, but the cultures of the world display so much diversity that the term *family* is difficult to define.

In this section I will discuss various definitions of the term “family” according to different sociologists. Andersen and Taylor (2002: 417) define the family as “a social unit of those related through marriage, birth or adoption and who engage in economic cooperation, socially approved sexual relation and reproduction and child rearing.”

Fulcher and Scott (1999:446) define the family as, “a small group of closely related people who share a distinct sense of identity and a responsibility for each other. This group is commonly, but not necessarily, based on marriage, biologically descent or adoption.”

Henslin (2001: 445) proposes that, “a family consists of two or more people who consider themselves related by blood, marriage or adoption.”

The above definitions are diverse and complex. It does not see marriage, between husband and wife, as the only criteria for a family unit. This view goes against the traditional understanding of the family. In an attempt to understand the nature and structure of the family, youth workers must understand the complexity and diversity of the family.

In order to define what a family entails, it is important to make a distinction between a household, nuclear families and extended families. A household consists of a person or group of people living in a particular residential unit. A nuclear family, on the other hand, consists of parents and unmarried children. The extended family includes other family members such as grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws, cousins, aunts and uncles. (see Fuller and Scott 2003:446)

Henslin (2001: 445) also identifies two forms of the family, namely the nuclear family (husband, wife and children) and the extended family (including people such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins).

The authors mentioned above find it difficult to define the family. Reflecting on the various definitions on the family one asks the question: why do sociologists struggle to define the

family? Although the family is universal it is complex, difficult and changing. In the next section I will discuss some of the reasons to why sociologists struggle to define the family.

2.5 The changing family

The nature and structure of the family has changed and the traditional family has given way to a more diverse form of the family. Andersen and Taylor (see 2002:446) describe the changing contemporary family as “diverse”. In the next section I will discuss the following: the absent father, the entering of women into the labour market, an increase of the single parent family, the composition of the family and tensions in the family.

2.5.1 The absent father

There are various reasons why a family may not have a father as part of their household. Some of the reasons the father may be absent are death, divorce, urbanization, unemployment, and fathers working away from home (trans-national). The absence of the father in the home affect children and this may lead to children seeking the love of a father in all the wrong places. Mothers in this context must fulfil the role of both father and mother, which could lead to depression, insecurity and remarriage in the case of death or divorce. In the section on blended families one can see the affects of remarriage. The absence of the father play a significant role in the life of young people and youth workers must take note of these kinds of families.

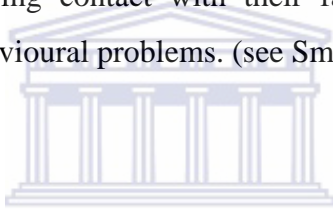
2.5.1.1 Death of the father

The death of a father is one of the primary reasons for the father to be absent. Another reason for the death of the father is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Many fathers are infected with the virus and die because of an AIDS-related disease. The death of the father because of HIV/AIDS may lead to decrease in income. Furthermore, it can lead to malnutrition. The

findings of the RGN report confirm that “Families waarvan lede vigs het, spandeer ’n derde van hulle inkomste aan mediese sorg. Vigs het ook werksverlies tot gevolg. Dit lei tot wanvoeding.” (2004:12)

2.5.1.2 Divorce in families

Divorce is one reason why women would often head families. The absence of a father in this context may result in inadequate socialization, particularly for boys. According to Fulcher and Scott (2003:472) there are two types of absent fathers. They describe them as the “committed” and the “uncommitted” father. The committed father is one who is actively involved in the child’s upbringing. The latter tends to maintain low contact with his children. The children having contact with their fathers occasionally suffer more deprivation and show more behavioural problems. (see Smelser1988:437)



2.5.1.3 The impact of urbanization on families

The term urbanization refers to the “shift of population from rural to urban areas” (see Fulcher and Scott 2003:502). The movement of the population from rural to urban areas had an influence on family life. New industrial cities contributed significantly to urbanization. Unemployment in rural areas led a growing number of fathers to leave their homes to seek employment in these new industrial cities. Women had to take on a new role as the mother and father of a family. In the process children grow up with the absence of their father for a long period of time.

2.5.1.4 Unemployment

A labour force survey revealed that in September 2002, there were 28 million people aged between 15 and 65 years living in South Africa. Almost 30,5 % of these are unemployed according to the South African yearbook 2004/05. Unemployment has serious

consequences for the father that is unemployed. Some of these consequences may be financial, damage to his sense of identity, self-esteem, physical illness, divorce, crime and violence. All these factors may cause serious family and marital conflict.

2.5.1.5 Trans-national families

The new trans-national family that has emerged recently has an impact on the changing face of family. A trans-national family is where one parent (or both) live and work in one country while their children remain in their country of origin. Accepting employment as corporate executives, regional sales managers, truckers and seasonal labourers may lead to as the emergence of trans-national families. Mothers in such a situation have to develop new concepts of their roles as mothers. (see Andersen and Taylor 2002:448)



2.6 Participation of women in the labour market

The participation of women within the labour market has increased dramatically (see Marais 2002:18). The reasons for this increase can be attributed to women feeling that they are stuck at home, bored, lonely and with diminishing career opportunities. Another reason may be access to higher education. The rising standard of living may be another reason why women enter the labour market. The single parent family which consist mostly of women are forced to work to provide for her family.

The move of women into the labour market may have a crucial effect on the role she plays at home. The traditional role of a mother is that of child bearer and homemaker, while the father is the breadwinner and protector. Most modern families do not operate in this fashion. The redefinition of such roles poses a daunting task for both parent and child.

According to Henslin (2001:448), mothers “end up doing most of the housework”. Mothers get little or no help from the father with the housework and children. Men sometimes see housework as the duty of the wife and occasionally may “help out” when they feel like it. Some mothers feel tired, emotionally drained and resentful. The participation of women in

the labour market becomes a daunting task for them. The heavy schedule endured by women may result in less time spend with their children.

2.7 Single parent families

There is an increase in the number of single parent families. The increasing of single parent families has become a matter of general concern. There are two reasons for this increase. The first is the high divorce rate and the increase in births to women who are not married.

2.7.1 Divorce

Divorce, as we have noted above, has a damaging effect on children. Children of divorced parents may have more hostility, anxiety, nightmares and tend to do not very well at school. It is also true that children in a conflict-ridden home, where parents remain married, may also experience the above symptoms.

According to the RGN (2004:14) report it recorded that “Egskeidings in 1999 is net onder die 40 000 egskeidings aangemeld – die meeste in Gauteng en die minste in Limpopo. Wit families begin skei tussen 20 en 24, die meeste is tussen 30 en 34. Swart families begin tussen 25 en 29 en die meeste is tussen 35 en 39. 89% van almal wat skei, was minder as 20 jaar getroud.”

2.7.2 Female-headed households

Single parents have been the focus of much discussion amongst sociologists. The general discussion is not so much the fact that a single parent rears the children, but the fact that most single parent families are poor. Women are mostly heading the family. These women must survive with one income after divorce. Mothers who never married have little education and few marketable skills. (see Henslin 2001:459)

Poverty within the context of the single parent family may result in serious social problems for children, such as crime, dropping out of school and emotional problems.

2.8 Composition of the family

In the previous section we have noted the diversity and the complexity of the family, following the social changes which have affected the family. Such changes have clearly affected the composition of the family. The family is diverse in its composition and this gives rise to various forms of the family. Families may consist of a nuclear, extended family, blended family, gay family or child-headed families.

2.8.1 Nuclear families

Fulcher and Scott (1999:446) define the nuclear family as a “two generation unit consisting of parents and unmarried children.” The nuclear family is a relatively isolated and an inward-looking unit that is centred on domestic life. Close emotional relationships are another characteristic of the nuclear family.

The nuclear family has become the primary place of socialization. Socialization is the process through which children acquire the basic values from their family during their early years. Most nuclear families tend to be relatively small.

2.8.2 Extended families

The extended family may include other family members such as grandparents, grandchildren, in laws, cousins, aunts and uncles. In general, there has been a shift from the extended family to the nuclear family, also in South Africa. This resulted from insufficient accommodation, the difficulty to move with a big family, lack of money and resources. The extended family has some advantages such as the help that grandparents may offer with

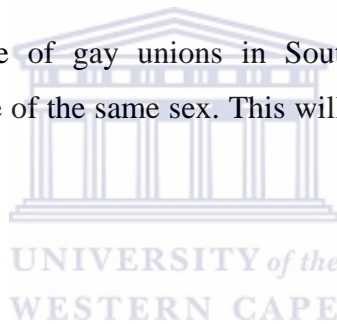
caring for children.

2.8.3 Blended families

The blended family may be defined as “one whose members were once part of other families” (see Henslin 2001:460). Two divorced people who marry and each bring their children into a new family unit become a blended family. One of the results of a blended family is the emergence of more complicated family relations.

2.8.4 Gay and Lesbian families

There is a significant increase of gay unions in South Africa. A gay union is the relationship between two people of the same sex. This will have an effect on the traditional family.



2.8.5 Child-headed families

HIV/AIDS has become one of South Africa's and the world's leading causes of death amongst people. HIV/AIDS has killed over 22 million people worldwide and 95% of people with HIV infection live in the developing world.

Women are at greater risk of infection, because they often lack the power to negotiate safer sex, unfaithful husbands and rape.

The South African context is not excluded from the devastating impact that HIV/AIDS will have on the increase of orphans. According to Thesnar (2003:37) in the insightful report of the RGN, *1st Baseline document for the development of a national policy for families*, that “1074 mense uit elke 100 000 mense in 2003 aan vigsverwante siektes sal sterf. Families waarvan lede vigs het, spandeer 'n derde van hulle inkomste aan mediese sorg. Vigs het ook werksverlies tot gevolg. Die toenemende getal weeskinders en kinder-families is 'n

groot bron van kommer.”

Orphans are perhaps the most tragic and long-term legacy of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Such orphans may well grow up as street children, or will form child-heaped households to avoid being separated from siblings. Others will be brought up by grandparents with a limited capacity to take on parental responsibilities.

Some children may need to become breadwinners in a single parent family, where the single parent is sick or when one parent has already died from AIDS related diseases. Children may become prostitutes and drop out of school to support the household.

2.9 Tensions within the family

The societal changes which have affected the nature and structure of the family also brought about new tensions within existing families. Youth in broken homes may experience various kinds of addictions, forms of violence and family crises. Youth workers are confronted by a dramatic increase of young people involved in drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape and gangsterism. Some of the reasons for this dramatic increase may be the dysfunctional family, poverty and divorce. Such problems occurring in the family will have a negative effect on the children.

2.9.1 Addictions

2.9.1.1 Alcohol

Alcohol abuse amongst young people is increasing at a rapid pace. This increase in excessive drinking amongst young people places strain on the entire family. It may cause isolation from family events, deterioration in health, emotional disturbances and disruptive behaviour. Excessive drinking of alcohol has major consequences on relationships in the family.

2.9.1.2 Drugs

Drug abuse has become a nightmare for many families. Drug addicts commit various crimes such as stealing, drug trafficking and murder to sustain their habits. Young people are often involved in drug abuse.

The following statistics were recorded in the report of the Thesnaar (2004:13) that “substans misbruik: 79% van swart jeug, 80% van bruin jeug, 71% van Indiër jeug en 51% van die wit jeug erken dat alkohol in hulle gemeenskappe ’n probleem is.30% van laerskool kinders in Kaapstad het al met alkohol geëksperimenteer en ’n derde van die kinders tussen 11 en 17 was al dronk.In KwaZulu-Natal gebruik 12% van die graad 8 kinders dagga; 14% van die graad neges en 18% van die leerders wat pas klaar is met skool.



2.9.2.3 Gangsterism

In his master’s thesis L.L.M Macmaster discusses the negative effect which gangsters have on children. The result of gangsterism on children is felt in our communities and will have a lasting negative in the memories of many children. “Die beeld wat die kind het van die omgewing rondom hom, is een van geweld, misdaad en wanorde” (Macmaster 2001:63)

According to Macmaster (2001:64), women are especially vulnerable in cases of domestic violence. Women become the victims of abuse and rape. Women are generally seen as weaker than men and are the victims of domestic violence.

According to Thesnaar (2004:13) it stated that “Misdaad: Moorde, verkrachtings en diefstal vorm 12% van ernstige misdaad. Dit het ’n geweldige effek op families en kinders. Gevangenisskap: Dit veroorsaak baie stres by families, veral as dit kom by die herintegrering van die gevangene in die gemeenskap. Gevangenes sluit in kinders, moeders met babas, mans en vroue onder 21.”

2.10 Conclusion

Given the impact of such societal changes on the nature, structure and functioning of families, it should be clear that family ministry and a youth ministry that seeks to integrate the role of families in youth ministry have to take such societal changes into seriously.



Chapter Three

Various approaches to youth ministry

3.1 Introduction

In youth ministry it is obviously crucial to understand the rapidly changing world of the contemporary youth. There are various issues which have to be taken into account in this regard.

Sharlene Swartz (2004:76) quotes Nelson Mandela in the journal of youth and theology that “poverty and the breakdown of family life have secondary effects. Children wonder about the streets because there are no parents at home, because both parents (if there be to) have to work to keep the family alive.”

Youth workers in Christian ministry seek to help young people to grow into mature Christian adults. They follow various approaches to accomplish this goal.

In this chapter I will describe different issues pertaining to youth ministry. I will also look at literature in which the different approaches to youth ministry are discussed. I will focus especially on the approaches to youth ministry identified and discussed in the book, *Starting Right*, which is edited by Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark et al.

3.2 Issues in youth ministry

Jim Burns: (1988:31) notes that young people are “filled with more stress, anxiety and pressure than youth of any previous generation”. Youth workers seeking to help young people to become mature Christian adults must understand such issues in order to ensure relatively adequate forms of youth ministry. Some of the issues which have to be addressed in youth ministry are adolescent development, the sexual explosion, relationships, media

and entertainment.

3.2.1 Adolescent development

Youth workers must understand that adolescence is a time of transition and change. It is important to understand these changes in the life of an adolescent's development. They develop bodily, socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Youth workers must seek opportunities in these areas of adolescent development to care, help and support young people.

3.2.2 Sexual explosion

We have noted above that adolescent development brings with it an acute sexual awareness. The media, peer pressure and internet access create this sexual awareness. There are an increasing number of young people engaging in sexual intercourse at a younger age. Teenage pregnancy has also increased dramatically. Youth workers must assist and teach young people to live the values of commitment and fidelity taught in the Bible.

3.2.3 Relationships

Family, friends and significant adults play an important part in the life of young people. The youth value friendship very highly. Youth workers can help youth to develop healthy friendships, where young people can influence each other in a positive way. Some young people come from broken and unhappy homes. Youth workers must be geared at helping youth people to restore broken family relationships. Youth needs to experience a feeling of belonging.

3.2.4 Media and entertainment

The media and entertainment play a major part in the lives of young people. The television, music and places of entertainment have a powerful influence on the behaviour of young people. Youth workers must understand this need of young people for the media and entertainment.

As one engages with young people one needs to understand the above issues in youth ministry. Understanding these issues will help youth workers to relate to the young people's surrounding culture. This will help in reaching our goal to help them to grow into mature Christian adults.

3.3 Approaches to youth ministry

All youth workers seek for a model, a strategy or an approach to help them to develop their youth groups numerically and spiritually. Most youth ministries have programme-orientated rallies, events and other gatherings. In this section I will discuss and describe seven approaches to youth ministry as identified and discussed in the book *Starting Right* (edited by Kenda C Dean, Chap Clark, et al 2001). All these approaches seek to nurture young people to become mature Christian adults. A contributing author was responsible for a chapter on each of these approaches.

3.3.1 An evangelism-based approach

Terry McGonigal wrote the chapter on the approach focusing on evangelism. He is an ordained Presbyterian Minister. He holds a Ph.D and is associate professor of Religion at Whitworth College in Spokane. He is the former director of the Institute of Youth Ministries at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is also a training director for young life.

The first approach focuses on youth ministry through evangelism. Terry McGonigal writes that, "parents and extended family, as well as the rest of the surrounding community, are

expected to carry out their evangelistic responsibility of preparing the children and youth for the convergence of physical, spiritual and social maturity in adulthood” (2001:126). The objective of the Shema (Deut. 6:4-9) is to remind parents of the evangelistic mandate and responsibility towards their children. Observing the daily model of adults and interactions with adults, youth learn of God’s love towards them. God created a perfect universe. Sin distorted this perfect harmony between God and His creation. McGonigal (2001:128) argues that, “God’s activity of restoring all the created order, especially people, is evangelism.” The Gospels narrate the story of Jesus’ involvement in the daily lives of people. Jesus proclaimed good news and affirming the Kingdom of God. He came to establish the rule of God. Christ became a perfect model of evangelism and calls others to participate in God’s saving activity. Jesus’ evangelistic mandate and approach was directed to children in different ways:

He linked the Kingdom of God to children (Mark 8 v 27 – 20 v 48).

He confronted evil tormenting children through His healing power.

Chuck Rosemeyer in, *Reaching a Generation* (1997:346), suggests 3 basics of an outreach ministry. Youth ministry becomes effective in their evangelistic approach when relevant, Christ-centred youth talks are offered. These talks encourage youth to include Christ in their everyday lives. Meaningful relationships with un-churched youth are necessary for evangelism. Lastly he suggests the need for quality investments in lay volunteers.

In *Organising Your Youth Ministry* Paul Borthwick (1988: 36) offers the following rationale for evangelism, namely that youth learn valuable lessons about human relationships through evangelism. Evangelism also creates opportunities to model the Christian life and Christian compassion to youth. Modelling leaves lasting impressions. Positive memories can be formed when youth become involve in sharing their story with others.

In this chapter Terry McGonigal (2001:127) discusses how adults as role models, could have a lasting effect on children. . The interaction of children with adults will allow children to grow in the knowledge and appreciation of God’s love. (McGonigal 2001:127)

Terry McGonigal and other authors, therefore place a great emphasis on evangelism as an evangelistic tool. When adults model a true Christian lifestyle to young people it becomes a powerful evangelistic opportunity.

3.3.2 A family-based approach

In this chapter De Vries (1994:141) argues for an approach to youth ministry where the family and the congregation takes hands in assisting youth workers to “lead young people towards maturity in Christ.”

De Vries (1994:142) observes that there is a crisis in youth ministry. He does not dispute the fact that there may be a record number of young people active in their churches’ programmes. Youth workers also found ways in attracting young people to events. De Vries suggests that youth ministry models have failed to lead young people to become adults who participate in the church. He suggests that the primary cause for this exodus of young people is the absence from relationships between youth and the parents or adults, who are most likely to lead them to maturity.

The church also plays a fundamental role in faith formation. When church and family abandon their role of helping young people to navigate their way to adulthood, teenagers look to their friends, music and the media as surrogate mentors. The family or the extended Christian family of adults partnering together will help teenagers into becoming mature Christian adults. The family-based approach to youth Ministry approach is driven by a desire to empower families to fulfil the vows taken to nurture their children in the Christian faith.

In order to gain parental support, youth workers must:

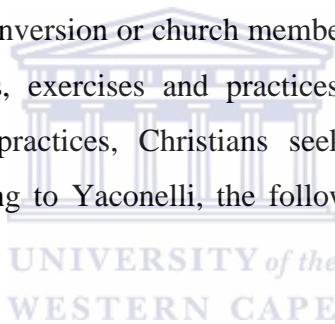
- Commit themselves to young people
- Communicate with parents
- Share resources

- Be sensitive to parents' needs
- Support the family unit
- Respond firmly to parents
- Build bridges between youth and parents. (see Borthwick:1988 and Burns:1988)

3.3.3. An approach focusing on Christian practices

In a chapter on this approach Mark Yaconelli explains the power of Christian practices to help youth to experience and develop practices of faith. The four Christian practices are: prayer, confession, the worshipping community and solidarity with the poor.

Youth ministry cannot end at conversion or church membership. Youth ministry becomes a place where habits, disciplines, exercises and practices of the Christian faith can be practiced. Through Christian practices, Christians seek communion with Christ and solidarity with others. According to Yaconelli, the following Christian practices may be identified:



1) Prayer

Prayer expresses the fundamental relationship of people to God.

2) Confession

Christian practices not only create an awareness of God, they also invite an interior awareness of self. Confession is the movement towards humility.

The confessional aspect of Christian practices is significant because it allows young people the space and time to reflect on their emerging integrity.

3) Worshipping community

The context of all Christian practices is the worshipping community. All Christian practices flow out of this holy gathering of praise, prayer and breaking of bread. In the worshipping

community our faith becomes communal, it seeks to unite us with the communion of saints, it shapes and articulates our faith and here we experience the presence of God's spirit.

4) Solidarity with the poor

All Christian practices are useless if they do not seek to address the poor in our midst. Solidarity with the poor is expressed in the form of acts of service, hospitality, humility and removing the cage of self-protection, safety and self-preservation.

Youth ministry is concerned with forming youth in the way of Christ through Christian practices. According to Yaconelli, these Christian practices must become a lifestyle to youth. He refers to Deuteronomy 6 v 7, 11 v 9. Here Moses instructs the people of Israel that God's way is to be modelled, taught and discussed with children. These Christian practices are the habits, disciplines and patterns of life through which Christians seek communion with Christ and solidarity with others.

Youth workers must encourage young people to exercises such Christian practices regularly. Christian practices are best inherited from a practising community. Youth must have opportunities to practice the way of Christ, alongside Christian adults if Christian practices are to take root.

In this modelled of Christian practices, Yaconelli encourages youth workers to promote and create opportunities for the four Christian practices outlined above. This model might look less popular and attractive to youth, but it will invite youth into the way of Christ.

3.3.4 An approach focusing on student leadership

Dave Rahn suggests that the student leadership approach focuses on three perspectives. Firstly, the aim of student leadership is to develop young persons in the church. Some young people are intentionally exposed to the way of life of the church, with the sole purpose of becoming a future leader in the local church.

The second aim is to involve young people to assist with programmes, activities and events.

Young people are encouraged to become more involved and this may lead to more meaningful participation by young people. This endeavours to assist young people to take charge and ownership of youth programmes and activities.

The third aim of student leadership is to recognize the impact that adolescent friends have on another's life. Interpersonal relationships between young people have a significant potential to influence people's character. This type of leadership can be implemented in youth ministry to assist in the process of Christian education. (see Rahn 2001:169-170)

Dave Rahn believes that all three these aims can play a meaningful role in student leadership. He also believes that the most important aspect of a student leadership focus is expressed in the third aim, namely student leadership through relationships. The reason why he chooses for this approach (student leadership through relationships), is related to theological considerations:

The essential nature of the church provides of the rationale behind this approach. According to Rahn (2001:1) "the church must be understood primarily as God's people" The church is called to be a relational network of people who love God and others. Adolescents almost always function as part of this community. They are not yet adults, but must share in the benefits and responsibilities of the local assembly. This involvement must be carefully weighed with respect to an individual readiness. The church's essential nature is that of uniting all ages, races, cultures and sexes.

According to Rahn (2001:9) the church as an organization has two important mandates. The first is to evangelise and the second is to disciple people to make new converts.

a) Rahn argues that a church that has an evangelistic influence needs student leadership. Rahn (2001:15) argues that "there are few biblical restrictions on how young people may function in leadership roles in the church."

There are three reasons why evangelism may become effective through student leadership.

More than one-third of the persons in the work are either teenagers or younger;

Evangelism becomes effective when an adolescent can evangelise his or her peers.

Most significant decisions for Christ took place during the teenage years.

b) God gifted the members of the Body of Christ with various gifts. The development of these gifts does not have a time or restrictions. Youth as members of the church must be encouraged to use their gifts in the church and in the world. Rahn (2001:173) suggests that the church must start early: “To help identify, nurture and utilise the gifts God has given the young in the church”. For Rahn this process of discipline is an important aspect in the model for student leadership in relationship.

3.3.5 An approach focusing on critical consciousness

The youth go through a long and rigorous confirmation class, where they are being educated about the “stories, symbols, values, practices and norms of the faith community.” (White 2001:156)

There is a powerful and unconscious assumption in the church that the youth are somehow not yet capable of being full participants in the life of the church. This assumption creates a feeling of alienation and uselessness, which causes an exodus of young people from the church. It is not fair just to allocate a youth event on the year planner or simply delegate youth to marginal congregational space on a week day. Youth must be integrated in the life of the church.

David White(2001:182) states that “many of the reasons Youth are not empowered as full agents of faith and equipped to transform their churches and communities have to do with deep unconscious forces or powers that shape adolescent life and inform our understanding of them”.

In the ancient worldview, prophets were able to discern the spiritual condition of an institution or state, and then bring that spirituality to awareness and depicting it as a demon on high (White 2001:183). In order to understand the issues in the church, the spirits must be discerned. Discernment has a long history in the Christian church. Records in the early church reveal this rigorous activity of discernment. The modern church in general and

youth ministry in particular, has undervalued the role of discernment in the Christian life. Youth ministry must discern and engage the powers and principalities – the social forces that constitute their lives. Youth should engage the church to understand the ethnic traditions, religious traditions, economic and political forces, etc. and how these social and cultural powers influence adolescent life. Churches must not deny the energy, beauty, questioning and the courageous challenge of Youth.

3.3.6 An approach focusing on youth ministry through community life

In his chapter Powell identifies and explores the role of youth ministry through community engagement.

He uses Don S Browning (2001:195) model, the theory-laden practice, to develop his focus of youth ministry through community. The theory-laden practice is an “act or behaviour that emerges from a principle or set of principles, however subconsciously these principles may be held.” Powell (2001:196) believes that: “Practices reflect beliefs and theories overflow into practice”.

Powell investigates the following three critical questions pertaining to youth group practices:

- a) What are the reasons young people come to a youth group?
- b) What is the role of the youth pastor?
- c) What is the role of the student leader?

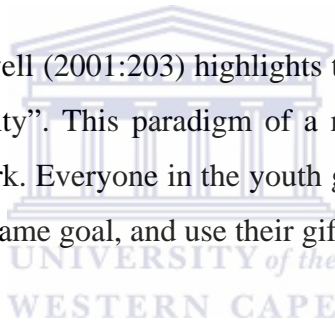
The answer given to the first question focuses mainly on relationship, friendship and membership of the group. According to Powell (2001:201), the greater purpose why young people come to youth group is the strengthening of the church. The members of the church are given spiritual gifts to be used for service within the community. These gifts are not given to believers at a certain age. Rather, they are granted when any child, teenager or adult surrenders his or her life to Christ. According to Powell, the members must function

and cooperate together.

The answer given to the second question focuses on the importance of leadership. The survey used by Powell implied that young workers should be omni-competent, omni-skilled and omni-gifted. According to Powell, the purpose of the youth pastor/leader is to “prepare God’s people for works of service”. The youth pastor does not have to do the works of service themselves, but by preparing, equipping and supporting others as they engage in the task of ministry.

The answer given to the third question focuses on visibility. Powell (2001:202) believes that all members of the youth ministry are gifted, but some members become “more visible” within the community. These student leaders do not have more important gifts or functions than others. Their role is ultimately that of service.

In conclusion to this model Powell (2001:203) highlights the importance of what he calls a “mutually ministering community”. This paradigm of a mutually ministering community recognises the need for teamwork. Everyone in the youth group must realise that they are a part of a team focussing on the same goal, and use their gifts to achieve the goal.



3.3.7 An approach in which youth ministry takes place through innovation

The world is constantly changing. The youth culture is changing rapidly and youth workers must know how to respond to these changes. Oestergaard and Hall (2001:212) agree that there are four main sources that influence our way of doing youth ministry: Scripture, tradition, personal pilgrimage and the local context.

In order to reach, understand and minister to youth, Oestergaard and Hall suggest the need to take cognisance of the four sources mentioned above

a) Scripture

Youth workers must encourage discussion and reflection on some of the basic and complex theological questions. This process can transform young people.

b) Tradition

Oestergaard and Hall (2001:213) make a distinction between tradition and traditionalism. Tradition usually means “taking the best of the old and changing it so it fits into a new setting.” Traditionalism, on the other hand, means “to take the old things and bring them into a new context, without changing a thing.” Youth workers must help young people to understand the context of their tradition and to seek ways to integrate it in their context. This will give youth an appreciation to tradition.

c) Personal pilgrimage

Young people are looking for authentic and transparent role models. People are looking for role models whom they can identify with. When we introduce young people to the various people and personalities in the Bible, “they discover that God takes our “personalities and experience seriously.” (Oestergaard and Hall 2001:213)

d) Local Context

New models and concepts that are developed in a different context must first be evaluated before youth workers implement it. Youth workers must understand the context of young people to effectively minister to them.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed some of the crucial issues in youth ministry. I have noted that youth workers must familiarize themselves with these important issues. I have also examined various approaches to youth ministry that seek to assist youth workers in this process of nurturing young people to become mature Christian adults. An understanding of these issues and approaches is necessary in order to develop an adequate approach to youth ministry in future.

The family-based approach to youth ministry will be explored in the next chapter in more detail. I will identify various strategies which may be used to integrate the role of family in

youth ministry.



Chapter 4

The integration of the family into youth ministry

4.1 Introduction

In chapter 3 I have explored seven basic approaches to youth ministry. We have seen that the role of the family in youth ministry is discussed in the second of these approaches. We also noted that although several authors emphasise the role of the family in youth ministry, they do not always provide a clear sense of direction as to how family life may be integrated into youth ministry. There have been many contributions on the family in youth ministry, but there has been no attempt to classify the various ways in which family life may be integrated in youth ministry.

The aim of this chapter is to offer a critical survey of Christian literature in which the role of the family in youth ministry is emphasised. This survey will indicate that there are different strategies which may be employed to recognise the role of the family in the context of youth ministry. The task of this chapter will therefore be one of identification, classification and an assessment of such approaches in order to describe the current state of the debate on family-based youth ministry.

In this chapter I will identify three main strategies according to which the role of family life in youth ministry may be emphasised. These strategies are:

- a) A prophetic stance;
- b) Family-based youth ministry; and
- c) Ministry to the youth through family ministry

In the sections below I will describe and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each of these strategies. On this basis this thesis seeks to provide guidance to those seeking

meaningful ways for parents to become involved in youth ministry and for youth workers to develop partnerships with the parents of the youth with whom they work.

4.2 A prophetic stance

4.2.1 A description of this position

In contributions to Christian literature on youth ministry there are many authors who recognise the importance of families for an adequate ministry to the youth. They typically stress *that* youth ministry should not estrange the youth from their parents and their families and *that* the family can and should play a constructive role in various activities in the context of youth ministry. They also stress the potential benefits of parental involvement in youth ministry. However, such authors do not suggest or demonstrate concrete and practical ways how this may be done. In my classification of literature on the significance of the family for youth ministry I have called this position a “prophetic stance”.

This position may be described as prophetic in terms of the classic role of the prophet as a messenger bringing the word of God. The English word “prophet” is derived from the Greek *prophetes* which means “one who could speak before” (see Coggins 1990:66). In ordinary language the word prophet is used to describe weather predictions, for developing political scenarios and to identify persons who are champions for a particular social cause. However, it will be used here in continuity with the biblical notion of a prophet. According to Anderson (1986:248), “Prophets were regarded as persons through whom God speaks to the people.” On this basis one may emphasise the role of the prophet as a messenger, announcing God’s verdict.

The contributions in the field of youth ministry of authors such as Lawrence Richards (1985) and Dean Borgman (1997) may be characterised in terms of such a prophetic stance towards the role of family life in youth ministry.

In his influential book *Youth Ministry* Lawrence Richards provides a framework for ministering to the youth. The book is divided into five parts in which various issues such as the youth in our culture, persons in ministries, processes of ministry, planning for ministry

and lastly the product of ministry are discussed (see Richards 1985). In chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 the author discusses the role of significant adults in the congregation and their role in helping young people to become mature Christian adults. It is with dismay that I discovered that there is nevertheless no detailed discussion in this book with regard to the role of parents or family life in youth ministry. One may therefore conclude that, according to Richards, the family does not enjoy any priority in youth ministry. He does not suggest any strategies to develop a relationship between parents and youth workers.

In chapter six of his book *When Kumbaya is not enough* Dean Borgman writes that young people are the products of several important social systems such as family, community, school and church. In this chapter he notes the powerful influence that the family still has on teenagers, even though the family may not necessary be the primary point of reference in the lives of teenagers. He reminds his readers that the family as a social system is undergoing a period of rapid social transformation and that this necessarily would have an impact on young people. He acknowledges the youth worker as an important complement to the role played by parents, because they provide assistance for the growth of young people.

The authors mentioned above does not show specific ways how to integrate family life into youth ministry. Although they do not make a significant contribution in this regard, they communicate the importance of family life and stress that youth workers must take parent involvement seriously.

On the basis of this brief discussion of the above literature, I suggest that one may identify the following strengths and weaknesses of the prophetic stance.

4.2.2 The strengths of the prophetic stance

Firstly, such a prophetic stance recognises the importance of family life in youth ministry and this may encourage parents to become involved in youth ministry.

Secondly, it points youth workers in the direction of the family as an important role player within the context of youth ministry. These authors may not say enough of how family life must be integrated in youth ministry, but they do point towards the importance of family

life. Youth workers will realise that they need parents as the primary agents in a child's development and moral formation.

Thirdly, this prophetic stance suggests that meaningful relationships can be developed between parents and youth workers in order to help young people to become mature Christian adults. This realisation may lead towards a strong partnership between parents and youth workers.

Fourthly, this position may help one to recognise that the family creates an environment for faith formation and nurturing. Youth workers must see this as a magnificent opportunity for parents to impart spiritual insights and lessons from experience in the lives of young people.

Lastly, the prophetic stance may help to point young people in the direction of their families as an important aspect of their lives. Many young people can get lost in the process of growing up. They experience identity crises and pointing them towards their family may create hope.

4.2.3 Weaknesses of the prophetic stance

This way of integrating family life in the context of youth ministry has various weaknesses that must be taken into consideration:

A first weakness which is often characteristic of a prophetic stance may be related to a lack of understanding about the changing structure of families and the impact that this may have for involving families in youth ministry.

Secondly, this stance does not suggest practical ways of how family life can be integrated in youth ministry. It is of no use if the importance of family life is encouraged but no practical ideas are developed for the integration of family life in the context of youth ministry.

Thirdly, some authors whose work may be classified under the prophetic stance recognise the role of the family without taking youth ministry into consideration. The role of youth ministry is underplayed and the role of the family is over-emphasised, while the goal

should be to create a partnership that can shape the lives of young people.

Lastly, family life may easily be added as just another programme component within youth ministry. Youth ministry typically includes many activities such as camping, programming, education, development, etc. In this way family events may merely be added to this list of activities within youth programmes. This still assumes that youth ministry is compartmentalised as working with youth separately from other interest groups, even where occasional interaction between such interest groups is encouraged. By contrast, it should be emphasised that the family plays an important role in the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical development of young people throughout their lives. A stronger form of integration is therefore imperative.

4.2.4 Conclusion

I have described the prophetic stance to youth ministry and noted its strengths and weaknesses. This stance is helpful in its emphasis on the importance of the family, pointing towards the family and recognising that the family is an important role player. Authors whose work may be classified under this stance should be encouraged to suggest significant practical ways how family life can be integrated within youth ministry.

4.3 Family-based youth ministry

4.3.1 A description of the strategy

This strategy seeks to integrate the role of family life in youth ministry. Authors such as Mark De Vries, Dough Fields, Jay Kesler, Dewey Bertolini, Paul Borthwick (1988) and Jim Burns (1988) offers a contribution to identify various ways in which family life may be integrated within youth ministry.

1) In his book *Family based youth ministry* Mark De Vries (1994) suggests two priorities for youth workers who endeavour to integrate family life in youth ministry. The first priority is to empower parents with different resources and the second is to equip the local Christian community, viewed here as an extended family, with material on issues pertaining to family life (see De Vries 1994:65-66). He criticises the effectiveness of the traditional

youth ministry approach which tends to isolate young people from the adult world and particularly from their own parents (1994:21). The role of youth in the traditional youth ministry approach is underplayed when their place or involvement in the congregation is neglected.

In his book *The church and youth ministry* Pete Ward (1995), defines the traditional youth ministry approach in the following way. The church leadership and parents view youth workers as ‘babysitters’ and ‘surrogate parents’ (1995:112-114). These youth workers must look after young people with little or no help from parents and church leadership

De Vries seeks a twofold strategy of integrating family life within youth ministry. The first strategy is to reach parents of teenagers and encourage the parents to greater participation in youth ministry. The second strategy involves other members of the congregation, seen here as representatives of the church as an extended family, in the activities of youth ministry and the extended family of the church. Both parents and members of the congregation are needed to help youth workers to support young people in the process of maturity.

De Vries suggests no less than 117 practical ideas to get a family based youth ministry off the ground. He sub-divides these 117 ideas into five sections.

a) Worship services must be designed in such a way to involve youth and their parents in the church’s life of worship. These worship services must be compelling, exciting and appealing, especially in terms of their music styles. Youth can become involved in worship by being asked to read scripture, leading prayer, ushers, youth choirs, greeters, youth services, etc.

b) De Vries suggests that young people may be involved in the mission and service of the congregation. They may be encouraged to volunteer to help with soup kitchens, with community involvement or to spend a night as a family with the homeless. Families may be encouraged to prepare food packages for the homeless. More suggestions include a family mission trip, visiting nursing homes, visiting children’s hospitals, adopting a grandparent, adopting a missionary or finding a need and meeting it.

c) In most churches Christian education is an activity where age groups are separated from

one another. De Vries is not advocating doing away with Christian education opportunities for teenagers separate from adults. He does encourage short term opportunities for youth and parents to learn together. Courses may include the following: dealing with your parents, understanding your teenager, talking to your child about sexuality, conflict management in your home and so forth.

d) Recreation activities provide teenagers with opportunities to be together with adults and parents in the church. These activities may also help to narrow the gap between different generations.

e) The following miscellaneous ideas may be implemented in a family based youth ministry approach: a parent book table at church, a newsletter for parents, a mentoring program, using parents on the youth committee, camping, etc (see De Vries 1994:175-191).

2) In his book *Purpose driven youth ministry* Dough Fields (1998:251) observes that “a student only youth ministry is less effective than a family friendly youth ministry”. Every student is a product of unique family system. This family system is responsible for forming beliefs, values and actions. Ministering to the entire family is vital. Fields understands the complexity of a family friendly youth ministry approach when he wrote in chapter 14 of his book “more out of necessity than credibility” (1994:252).

Fields (1998:253-268) suggests various ways how a family friendly / family based youth ministry approach may be implemented:

a) A family based youth ministry approach must create a team work mentality. Youth workers must team up with parents and must not see parents as enemies. They should not feel intimidated by parents of young people, but rather see these two parties as major influences working together to help young people grow in their faith.

b) Youth workers must recognise that they have an opportunity to narrow the gap between young people and their parents. Youth workers need to develop with parents to understand the concept of family-based youth ministry strategy. Youth workers must listen and understand the fears of parents. They need to be sensitive to family priorities and must support parental teaching.

c) Youth workers must keep communication clear. This communication must be regular, encouraging and professional. The communication must not just be from the youth worker, but should encourage a two way communication.

d) Another way to integrate family life within youth ministry is to identify family resources. Resources such as literature on the family, workshops for parents, support groups, etc. Many parents struggle with understanding their children and these resources will empower parents to become better and more informed parents.

e) Youth workers must facilitate family learning. Youth education must not stop at the youth evening, but can continue after youth programmes. Bible studies that parents and children can do at home may be encouraged.

f) Family programmes which may include parent nights, family bible studies, family fun days, etc may be designed. These suggested practical steps will enhance the participation and integration of parents into youth ministry.

g) Another way is to add parents to your youth ministry volunteer team. Making parents part of the volunteer team will create support, enthusiasm, ownership and compassion towards the youth ministry.

h) Lastly to include parents when youth programmes and curriculum for youth, etc. are developed and proposed so that parents may be part of the spiritual development of their children.

3) In his thought provoking book, *Back to the heart of youth work* Bertolini (1994) acknowledges that “God has given the primary authority over children to their parents”. He proposes that “the local church exists as a support to family, never as a replacement.”

He suggests several practical ways how parents and youth workers can combine their efforts to influence young people. He argues that youth workers must design a deliberate strategy to establish a ministry to parents.

Firstly the youth worker can send a personal letter to parents. This letter may serve as an expression of appreciation to parents, to remind the youth workers

of their commitment to support parents and to recognise and honour their authority in the lives of their children.

Secondly he suggests a regular parents' meeting. This gathering may serve to give information, to teach them about some aspects of youth culture, to pray together and to enjoy an informal time of talking.

Thirdly, youth workers can make available all lesson plans and youth meeting outlines to parents. This would create a sense of accountability to parents concerning the teachings of the youth workers.

Fourthly, youth workers may provide children with biblical perspectives on parental authority.

Fifthly, youth workers must accurately communicate the details of activities and stick to them. The time, place and date of activities must be clearly communicated to parents. Changes of these details must reach parents in order to make alternative arrangements in time.

Sixthly, parents may be invited regularly to youth meetings. Such meetings may be designed to interact with parents and to introduce new parents.

Lastly, occasional parent / teenager outings may be organised. This can create opportunities to deepen the relationship between the parent and the teenager. He notes that sensitivity towards those young people who do not live with both parents should be exercised. One way of doing this is to include stepparents and guardians (1994:102-110).

4) Youth workers must understand their limitations when it comes to ministry towards parents. There may be many reasons why youth workers avoid integration between youth and family. In *Youth education in church*, Jay Kesler (1978:469) writes about such limitations that youth workers may encounter:

The first limitation that youth workers must acknowledge is the fact of his [sic] own limited experience. Most youth workers are post-adolescent and may not

have much life experience about parenting.

The second limitation is the fact that they have limited exposure to the young person they work with. Workers may only see one side, while parents see many facets of the life of their child.

The last limitation that youth workers must realise is that they will make a limited contribution. The youth worker needs to understand that there are more other people contributing in the life of a young person. Contributors such as a schoolteacher, coach, peer, pastors, parents, etc are some of the influences in the life of the young person.

Kesler identifies the limitations mentioned above in order to acknowledge the difficulties that youth workers may encounter, but not to create a sense of pessimism with regard to the possibility of working together with parents in youth ministry. However, it is true that these limitations do create uneasiness with youth workers in developing a strategy to integrate other family members into youth ministry. They feel incompetent, inexperienced and unprepared for a ministry that focus on family ministry.

5) In the book *Organising your youth ministry* Paul Borthwick (1988) offers five perspectives that youth workers need to understand in order to overcome fear towards parental involvement in youth ministry:

a) A “realistic perspective” focuses on the realisation that youth workers cannot work with youth without the involvement of parents. Youth ministry without attention to the long term parental effect can yield only short term, shallow results.

b) A “biblical perspective”, according to Ephesians 6, assumes that parents should take the ultimate responsibility for raising their children. This biblical perspective reminds youth workers that they are partners with parents.

c) A “professional perspective” suggests the need for professional youth workers to engage parents through counselling, resources, seminars, workshops and support. Youth workers

must prepare themselves in such a way to be able to minister to parents as well.

d) A “parental perspective” indicates that youth workers must understand the hurts, frustrations and concerns of struggling parents. Parents must be seen as helpers and not as adversaries.

e) With a “practical perspective” Borthwick suggests two practical ways to involve parents in youth ministry. The first suggestion is the adding of parents to volunteer staff and secondly to include parents in the planning of youth ministry programmes (1988:185).

6. In his book *The youth builder* Jim Burns offers a comprehensive discussion of a relational youth ministry approach. In chapter 22 he discusses how youth workers can work with the family of young people. He stresses three objectives in order to strengthen and support the family:

Firstly, he suggests that there should be a clear line of communication between youth workers and parents. Communication to parents should inform them of the events and activities of the youth ministry. Personal contact with parents increases participation from parents with the youth workers. Have regular parent meetings to keep them inform of the progress and possible needs of the youth group.

Secondly youth workers should challenge young people to make family life a priority. The parents of teenagers experience different pressures and struggles. Teenagers must understand these challenges and seek ways to support their parents. They must be encouraged to communicate with their parents. Both parents and young people find it difficult to talk to each other and the youth ministry can give young people tools on how to communicate with their parents. Another way to make family life a priority is to spend quality time together as a family.

Lastly that resources and opportunities should be provided for family ministry (see Burns 1988:227). Burns sees himself as a youth ministry practitioner and not a theorist. There nevertheless seems to be a reluctance to suggest more practical ways to integrate family life in youth ministry. One may have expected from a youth ministry practitioner to give concrete guidance on the role of family life in youth ministry.

7. In his book *Family ministry* Chap Clark (1997) recommends various strategies and practical ideas for reaching the family of young people. He lists several practical ways on how to involve parents in youth ministry:

- a) Recruit a parent council to assist youth ministry leaders;
- b) The youth ministry leaders can schedule quarterly parents meetings;
- c) Publish a regular parent newsletter;
- d) Make sure that the youth ministry calendar is family friendly; and
- e) Develop a parent resource library (1997:57).

4.3.2 Weaknesses of this strategy

On the basis of the survey of this literature, the following weaknesses related to this strategy may be identified:

- a) This strategy seems to be driven more by practical considerations than by theological considerations.
- b) Most of the youth ministry approaches in congregations follow the traditional youth ministry approach. The traditional youth ministry approach assumes the isolation of young people from adults, particularly from their parents.
- c) Changing the traditional youth ministry approach to a family based ministry strategy may be difficult, complex and painful.
- d) Youth workers are mostly young, single adults who feel inexperienced and inadequate to develop a family focus to youth ministry. Youth workers feel immature to develop a relationship or partnership with parents in order to nurture faith formation with parents.
- e) Not all youth workers are paid as full time youth pastors. They are volunteers with other responsibilities. The transition from a traditional youth ministry to a family based youth

ministry will take time to develop. Youth workers need an in depth understanding of the changing family and the challenges that these changes pose for the family and youth ministry.

- f) Neither parents nor youth want a totally integrated parent-teen youth ministry.
- g) The one size fits all approach is not always possible or advisable. This approach of family based youth ministry may not be able to be implemented in every context.
- h) The pastor and leadership of the local congregation must be involved in the process of changing to a family based youth ministry strategy. Their year planner must reflect their commitment to the development of a family friendly church.

The assessment of the weaknesses of the family base youth strategy above shows us some of the pitfalls which may be avoided when the family base youth strategy is implemented.

4.3.3 Strengths of this strategy

The following strengths related to this approach may be identified on the basis of the above survey of the literature:

- a) This model for youth ministry may not be very strong in terms of its theological rationale, but it can be very practical. Most of the authors in the field of youth ministry are practitioners. They seek practical ways to engage parents and other family members in youth ministry.
- b) The family based youth ministry strategy promotes family values and a sense of belonging within a family context.
- c) This strategy creates a feeling that parents are important and cared for within the context of youth ministry and congregation life.
- d) This strategy facilitates a partnership between youth ministry and parents with regard to the faith formation of children.
- e) This strategy may help to create support and understanding for the changes taking place

within the family.

f) Through the participation of the family in youth ministry events a new appreciation for the role of families within the life of the congregation may develop. This may also enhance the interaction between families in the congregation.

The assessment of the strengths of the family base youth strategy will assist those who seek to integrate this strategy in youth ministry.

4.3.4 Conclusion

I believe that the biggest challenge for the implementation of a family based youth ministry approach is related to the need for a change in attitude, rather than to a change of direction or programme components. A family based youth ministry is based on a series of progressive steps that build on one another and lead toward a stronger focus on family life.

Parents are not the enemies of the youth workers, but must be seen as allies who may complement youth ministry programmes. To build a youth ministry without concern for the parents would be to neglect the most influential people in the life of a child. Parental support must form an integral part of youth ministry.

The family based youth ministry strategy may not necessarily be implemented in totality, but the principles outlined here provide a strong foundation for any youth ministry model.

The congregation, parents and youth workers must join hands to develop a long term relationship, to help young people to grow to maturity in Christ.

4.4 Ministry to the youth through family ministry

4.4.1 A description of this strategy

In his book *The complete handbook for family life ministry*, Don Hebbard (1995:6) defines family ministry as a “ministry of the church through preventive and therapeutic efforts designed to strengthen all forms of families in the church and the community.”

This definition includes all forms of families such as single parent families, blended

families, traditional family, etc. Family ministers must be committed to serving the family – which may include children and young people. The rationale behind the notion of family ministry is to seek to strengthen the family, which would result in developing strong and effective young people.

It is important to note that the point of departure for this strategy is not youth ministry but family ministry. The question is therefore not how the family may play a role in youth ministry, but how the needs of the youth may be addressed in family ministry. The intuition of this strategy is that, if youth ministry is taken as the point of departure, the significance of the family will always be underplayed.

The contributions of authors such Richard Olson and Joe Leonard, Charles Nell, Steve Thomas, Jay Kesler, Don Hebbard and Kenneth Gangel, James Wilhoit, Blake Neff and Donald Ratcliff, John Trent (et al) and Ronald Martinson may be classified under this approach. Let us investigate these contributions in more detail. Strictly speaking, these texts may not be regarded as contributions to the field of youth ministry, but they do address the needs of the youth.

1) The book *A new day has dawn for family ministry*, co-authored by Richard Olson and Joe Leonard (2004), gives a very insightful discussion of the contemporary family. They write that families are firstly social systems and secondly that economic and social forces are shaping a greater diversity of congregations with a family focus (Olson & Leonard 2004:65).

The social systems that they refer to are rules, patterns of authority and power, rituals and decision making processes. Families are going through various difficulties and struggles. The purpose of family ministry therefore involves “ministering with families respecting their needs, rather than imposing your pastoral care or programs on them” (2004:65, 66). Important steps of such supporting systems are listening and reaching out to families.

According to Olson & Leonard (see 2004:69-102) are the following five objectives for family ministry have to be taken into account:

a) The first dimension of a congregation’s family ministry is to seek a family friendly

culture. The church should research their community to see how they view family life. Some communities welcome families with children while others make it clear they are only for certain kinds of families.

b) Secondly, the church may see family life as base for mission. When the family go to church or engage in spiritual activities it will strengthen the family.

c) Thirdly, the church can and should make every effort to help the family be an enriching community for each member. The family needs to be a safe, reliable and economically secure place for all members of the family.

d) Fourthly, it should strengthen commitment to the covenant of marriage by seeking healthy marriages.

e) Lastly, the church may develop a theology and strategy for ministry with singles. There are various issues in singles' ministry and the church can provide opportunities for single people to meet together. Activities such as retreats, trips and different kinds of projects can contribute to the program of the church to be inclusive.

2) Charles Sell (1981:15) in his book *Family Ministry* suggests that, "Family ministry be integrated into the life of the church, rather than being merely one more program among many others."

Sell maintains that family life ministry should not be a mere appendage to the church's organisation. He believes that the church is in a strategic position to foster fellowship, growth for all ages, support and encouragement. However, the fragmentation of the ministries of the church may well hinder a healthy family life. As a result, the local church has been blamed for contributing to the family's decay. One of the many reasons for this is the separation of family members from each other when going to church (see Sell 1981:74).

The age group structure employed in the ministries of the church competes with the family in terms of time. The various ministries to each age group tend to have elaborate programmes during the week – which demand significant time and energy from both the family and from church leaders. The church structures developed for each age group thus

become a substitute for nurturing taking place within the context of the family and may cause life at home to be neglected or even damaged (see Sell 1981:75).

Sell argues that Christian education programme must be integrated with the activities of the family at home so that it is not regarded as a separate programme. Children and youth programmes will be constructed to cooperate with, not replace the home. In this way the process of socialisation that inevitably forms part of Christian education could become holistic. One may argue that the family needs the church and the church needs the family. These two institutions are independent, but yet interdependent.

He suggests a few practical steps that may be implemented to foster and preserve family life:

- The church can communicate family life concepts such as relationships and values that can enhance growth in families.
- Family life education can be integrated into existing programmes such as the Sunday morning service, Sunday school curriculum, informal gathering, etc.
- Family life should not be hindered by the activities of the church, both is God's design and should not be competitive.
- Christian education should be carried out in both the home and the church with an integrated program and plan.
- Provision should be made for children who have no Christian parents.
- Design intergenerational experiences so that different generations can interact with each other.
- The church life and program should communicate and be built on the concept that the parents are responsible for the child's nurture
- The teaching and training ministry of the whole church body should be related to family life (see Sell 1981:91-93)

Sell believes the church is a place where members of families can grow into healthy families and where all generations can feel comfortable. The family minister can play a significant role to shape the lives of various members of the family. The different practical steps suggested will help those involved in family ministry.

3) In his book *Family friendly* Steve Thomas (1998:72-73) also argues in favour of a family ministry approach, but allows for the continuing role of the youth minister. There are a few realities which make youth ministry a viable and valuable arm of the church. The reason why he acknowledges the continuing role of the youth worker is the fact that there will always be young people from families who have no roots in the church. The absence of godly instruction and nurture in the life of young people from their parents may create a void in the life of those children. Both youth workers and adults that love young people may help these children in these kinds of situations. On the other hand adults may not always be able to identify with young people and in this case the youth worker may assist in this situation. Or young people may not feel comfortable with adults. In these situations the role of a youth worker can become a necessity.

He observes that youth ministry has become a replacement for parents. The absence of solid and consistent parental models and parental participation has meant that some youth ministries have had to become substitute parents for the young people they work with. He believes that parents can and should minister to their children, but stresses that the input and influence of the youth minister remains vital. He views the parent as the most important 'youth minister' in the congregation.

He differs with the family base youth strategy when he suggests that youth ministry must support and assist parents and not the other way around. The family base youth strategy seeks the role of the parents in youth ministry while the family ministry strategy seeks youth ministry to get involved in family ministry.

There is a need for a ministry specifically to families which would be supported by youth ministry. He suggests that youth ministry may be seen as distinct from family ministry but that ways of integrating these ministries should be fostered.

4) In his book *Education in the church* Jay Kesler writes (1978:473-477) that, “The youth worker is very often in a strategic place between parents and youth”. This strategic position of youth workers allows them a certain access into the lives of young people. Although youth workers may enjoy this access, there are various issues that must be taken into consideration in this regard. He suggests that youth workers must be aware of six crucial facets of their work that relate to family life:

- Firstly, it is vital to build a relationship characterised by equity with parents. With equity he means that a youth worker must build a relationship with a teenager’s parents. The development of such a relationship can later become a place where youth worker can get help and advice from the parents.
- Secondly, he reminds youth workers not to take sides between parents and their teenage children.
- Thirdly, he recognises the importance of adult role models. The proper use of adult role models is essential to the balance and success of the youth worker’s programme.
- Fourthly, youth workers must turn a crisis into an opportunity by being available to mediate between parents and youth in the case of a family crisis.
- Fifthly, youth workers must recognise there differences amongst parents. It is vital for the youth worker to gain an understanding of the diverse personalities of the parents of the teenagers to whom he or she is ministering. A clear statement of the goals of the youth ministry will help parents to support the youth ministry and its activities.
- Finally, youth workers must affirm, encourage and support parents during the difficult times in which both parents and the youth may find themselves.

These practical steps are helpful to build a bridge between parents and youth workers. The youth workers are in a strategic position to attempt to mediate in the relationship between teenagers and their parents. The youth worker can facilitate mutual respect and appreciation

between parent and child.

5) In the book *Complete handbook for family life ministry* Don Hebbard (1995:15) is convince that family ministry can add value to the life of the local church. He offers the following ways how family ministry can assist the family:

- It addresses the spiritual condition of the home and family. The family minister can establish a place of forgiveness, understanding and confession.
- Another value of family ministry is the development of leaders. Introduced training on the importance of family ministry, communicating community concern and preparing families for crises. These principles of family life ministry bring all ages and family forms to worthwhile ministry. The focus of family ministry is to minister to all ages, races and life situations.
- The church leadership can create opportunity for Christian living and services. The church can help young people to discover their purpose in life and congregation. Many young people find the church to be uninteresting and irrelevant. The church can assist them to become participants and not spectators. The church can provide a place where they can learn to use their talents and abilities. Meeting the needs of young people in the church will result in effective youth and this can strengthen family life. The church that has a ministry to families must seek to integrate youth into the life of the church.

Family ministry is a vital component to enhance development of family members, leadership in young people and help to parents with teenagers.

6. Kenneth Gangel and James Wilhoit (1996:16) reveal in their informative book *The Christian's handbook on family life education*, various results from a survey they have conducted amongst various denominations and family life ministers. The following aspects were provided by those that were interviewed:

- Families must be led into a personal relationship with God and His Word.
- Families need encouragement and support

- Families need to be trained in practical skills such as parenting, managing money, communicating, solving problems and managing time.
- Families need opportunities to gather with other families for mutual accountability and discipleship.
- Families need mentors and models to share with each other life experiences.
- Families need a positive, fun and safe environment to serve together and play together.
- Families need preventative and biblical counseling training
- Families need access to practical resources that will help them to grow together.

7. James White (1995:219), a contributor, in the book, *Handbook of family religious education*, acknowledge “that the church is one of the few institutions in society with people of every age in its constituency.” Many families look to the church for personal counsel, Christian education, moral guidance, etc. The church as an institution have the opportunity to be generational inclusive. Through family ministry the leaders in the church can introduce programmes that encourage integration between young people and their parents.

8. The editors John Trent and Rick Osborne (et al 2000) concludes in their book *Focus on the Family parent's guide to the spiritual growth of children*, that the local church is the frontline support for spiritual training. The church can fulfill a role assisting parents in passing on the Christian faith to their children. They suggest a few practical things parents can do to partner with the youth workers:

- Parents must encourage praying together as a family.
- Parents may follow up and reinforce what their children learned by asking them about their youth programme.
- Another practical way is to be patient with the growth of the young person (2000:143).

9. In his book *Effective youth ministry* Ronald Martinson (1988) writes passionately regarding the role the congregation can play in the life of young people. Youth friendly congregations value young people as one of the most important group in the church. He recommends the following ways to a congregation that would like to become more youth friendly:

- Design inclusive congregational worship services that will develop into significant and welcoming places for youth to worship.
- Introduce good preaching that will communicate the gospel to young people. Preaching must be relevant, practical, clear, simple and stimulating.
- Youth ministry programmes must work together with the educational programme of the congregation.
- Congregational life offers an opportunity to integrate young people with persons of all ages. Young people spend most of their time with their peers; therefore youth workers should invite others from time to time, in the congregation to join them in intergenerational events.

The above conclusions will assist those who are interested to establish a ministry to youth through family. These principles will enhance the relationship between the youth workers and the family ministers.

4.4.2 Weaknesses of this strategy

The following weaknesses related to this strategy may be identified:

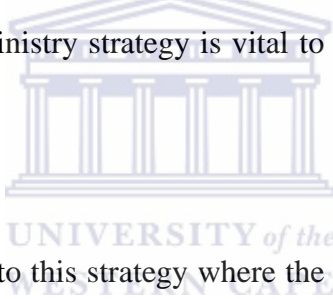
- a) The authors following this strategy do not clearly explain the roles of the specialised / departmental ministries in the local congregation. Their view is that there should not have been separated ministries such as youth ministry, men's ministry, women's ministry, welfare ministry, etc in the first place. The question is what would happen to youth ministry, children's ministry, and women's ministry if these distinctions are no longer taken into account.

b) The transformation of the structures for ministry would be a demanding task and would need the participation of the whole local congregation.

c) The exclusive focus on the family in family ministry programmes may be problematic. Not all members of the church would belong to a nuclear family. Moreover, there may well be a strong desire for specialised ministries that could address the specific needs of specific target groups.

d) There are numerous dysfunctional families in the contemporary society. How will the local congregations be able to deal with all types of family and the quite different issues that emerge in different family set-ups (see chapter 2)?

Youth workers may have a need to transition or implement aspects of the family ministry strategy into their youth programmes. In order to start with such a process an assessment of the weaknesses of the family ministry strategy is vital to integrate those aspects of family ministry into youth ministry.



4.4.3 Strengths of this strategy

The following strengths related to this strategy where the needs of the youth are addressed on the basis of ministry to the family as a whole may be identified:

a) One may argue that the programmes and ministries of the whole congregation should indeed be family friendly.

b) In the context of family ministry various resources for the empowerment and support of the family are available. The availability of such resources will assist those families who need those resources and will empower them in parental skills and nurturing their teenagers.

c) Intergenerational programmes may be developed to assist families to narrow the generational gap.

d) Families are regarded as part of the life of the church, not just another specialised programme aimed at families, but the whole focus of the congregation is aimed at the need

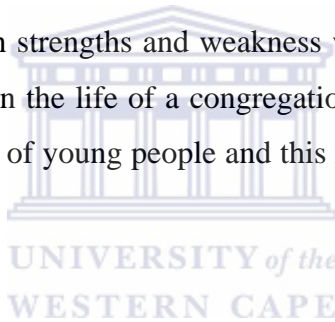
of the members of various kinds of families.

e) The Christian education programme is designed to empower both parents and children.

f) The integration of adults and young people may create an opportunity for positive role modelling. Young people spend a large amount of time with their peers and this may produce a lack of adequate role modelling in their lives. The movement of adults and young people towards each other will produce great learning opportunities for both young people and adults.

g) The family ministry model has the ability to create opportunity for young people to grow in their faith. The youth can develop leadership skills when the leadership of the church allow them to participate in the programme of the church.

It is important to recognise such strengths and weakness when this strategy is followed to address the needs of the youth in the life of a congregation. The congregation will always play a significant part of the life of young people and this relationship cannot be ignored or neglected.



4.4.4 Conclusion

One may conclude that the main strength of a family ministry strategy is also its main weakness. Where family life is taken as a point of departure for the various ministries of the church this may indeed help to foster a healthy family life and this may provide the backbone for a flourishing congregation. However, given the many dysfunctional families, especially in urban contexts, this approach may marginalise people who do not live within the context of a nuclear family even further. They may well feel that the church does not address their needs. In such cases there would be a clear need for distinct ministries, for example where the needs of the youth are addressed specifically. It is true that youth ministry as a distinct ministry is not necessarily abandoned where the focus is on family ministry. However, according to this strategy, it has to complement the focus on family ministry. This may also help the members of the congregation not to compartmentalise their lives any further. The pressures of society are such that various age groups do not get into contact with one another on a regular basis – to the detriment of all groups. The value of

this strategy is that it may help to affirm that all the parts and facets of a person's life are connected. In this way the ministries of a congregation may help to establish a network of events, responsibilities and relationships between the members of the congregation.



Chapter 5

Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter I will summarise the state of the debate on the role of family life in youth ministry. I will also suggest possible recommendations for further research.

The following conclusions may be derived from the discussion on the integration of family life in youth ministry in the previous chapters.

Firstly, I have noted the importance of the family. I suggested that parents, youth workers and the leadership in congregations must take responsibility to help young people to become mature Christian adults. They should become sensitive towards the needs and priorities of families. Youth ministries in particular have a daunting task to support young people to become mature Christian adults.

Secondly, the market of youth ministry has been flooded with many approaches and strategies, but the role of family in youth ministry is often neglected. In this thesis I have identified three strategies that seek to integrate family life within youth ministry.

Thirdly, I discussed the limitations of the traditional youth ministry approach and how these approaches isolate young people from the adult world. My assumption is that most youth groups in the AFM implement the traditional youth ministry approach. The traditional approach has the effect of isolating the youth from others and this has a negative impact on the development of young people. Parents, who are involved in youth ministry, are seen as enemies by youth workers and are left out as the most influential people in the life of their children.

Lastly, I have noted that family life can play a crucial role in congregations, that this role is often neglected, but that the difficulties which families experience are often difficult to address. Factors such as divorce, the absent father, the increase of single parent families,

unemployment and the composition of the family, must be taken seriously when working with young people. The changes taking place in the family may have forced the youth workers to change their views about parental involvement in youth ministry. Youth workers must become aware that working with students only is less effective than a family-friendly youth ministry.

Youth ministries that seek to integrate family life in youth ministry must take note of these suggestions when transitioning their youth from the traditional youth ministry approach to a family based youth ministry approach.

5.2 Ways to employ these strategies in youth ministries

In chapter 4 I have identified and discussed three strategies which may be followed to recognize the role that family life may play in youth ministry:

1. The prophetic stance,
2. The family-based youth ministry approach and,
3. Ministry to the youth through family ministry.

In chapter 4 the strengths and weaknesses of each of these strategies were discussed. In the discussion below I will suggest a plan for the practical implementation of the three strategies, with specific reference to ministry to the youth in the AFM. In my view the three strategies can work together over a period of time in order to build a more effective ministry to the youth ministry and to help young people to become mature Christian adults.

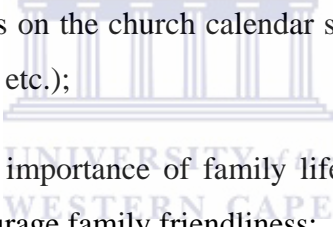
Plan 1: The prophetic stance

The prophetic stance as described in chapter four proclaims the importance of family. The strategy does not show enough ways of how family can be integrated in youth ministry. The prophetic stance as the first step is vital for sensitizing people with regard to the

importance of the family. Explaining and describing the contemporary family is a necessary exercise to inform people of the current situation of the family. Informing young people, parents and congregations of the challenges facing families today, may create a desire to become more involved in family matters. This may lead to youth ministries becoming friendlier to family life. If we want to develop practical ways of how to integrate family life in youth ministry, the prophetic strategy may be regarded as a necessary first step.

The prophetic stance is a powerful tool in youth ministry to narrow the gap between parents and their children. Youth workers who would like to integrate family in youth ministry may therefore use the prophetic stance as a first step to introduce a family friendliness into youth ministry.

Various ways of implementing the prophetic stance may be identified:

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- Sermons (important dates on the church calendar such as mothers day, fathers day, youth day, women's day, etc.);
 - Dramas that portray the importance of family life in youth ministry can become powerful visuals to encourage family friendliness;
 - Family prayer requests may encourage common interest in family issues and can become an opportunity for family members to pray together;
 - Bible studies on family matters empower families to draw strength and encouragement from these bible lessons;
 - Writing articles in church newsletters serve as information and this may broaden the views of family members concerning family life;

These suggestions are of course not entirely new. However, they can help to design a plan to introduce the prophetic stance. The prophetic stance is a first step in the right direction. This will have to be supplemented by a second step, based on the family based youth ministry approach.

Plan 2: Family-based youth ministry approach

The family based youth ministry approach discussed in Chapter 4 suggested practical ways for those seeking to integrate family life into youth ministry. Each of the practical suggestions may be valid in a given local youth ministry, but not all are transferable to all youth groups. Youth groups vary from place to place and resources are different. Youth workers must develop practical ways how family can be integrated into youth ministry. Youth workers can learn from authors in this classification of practical suggestions to achieve the goal of integration. The family-based youth ministry approach is one of the best approaches that show us the practical side of this new paradigm in youth ministry approaches.

The family based youth ministry approach go beyond the prophetic approach by suggesting practical ways of how family can be integrated in youth ministry. The implementation of this second step may lead to the creation of a stronger link between youth ministry and family life. Transitioning from the traditional youth ministry approach to the family based youth ministry may be painful, but this transition is vital to the effectiveness of youth ministry. The traditional youth ministry approach has isolated young people from their parents. The family based youth ministry approach, seek frequent interaction with adults and with their own parents.

Plan 3: Ministry to the youth through family ministry

The focus of the family ministry strategy is on the ways in which the needs of the youth may be addressed in the context of family ministry. There is however a few challenges that family ministers must consider before implementing this approach as a third step towards integrating family life in youth ministry.

Firstly, congregational leadership must be actively involved in this process. The vision must be driven by the leadership in order to maintain stability.

Secondly, the continuing role of the youth worker must be clearly defined within this context. Furthermore, leaders in family ministry must seek practical ways how this role will be fulfilled in the context of youth ministry and the broader congregation.

Thirdly, most congregations, and in particular congregations within the AFM, have various departments such as youth ministry, Sunday school ministry, women ministry, men ministry, etc. The question that leaders within family ministry must answer is what the role of these departments will be in the context of family ministry. Congregational leadership must seek ways to structure these departments to be family friendly, because these departments can take up family time.

5.3 Recommendations

I recommend that further research needs to be done on practical ways of how family ministry can address the needs of the youth. The family ministry strategy can play a fundamental role to bridge the gap existing between adults and young people. The isolation of teenagers from adults and especially from their own parents can be addressed in the context of family ministry. The challenge, however, will be to design a workable plan to find ways to address the needs of young people. Another challenge is the fact that both parents and children do not want a complete integration and that must be discussed and planned by all concerned.

Within the context of the AFM youth I suggest that further research must be undertaken to assess the success of the current youth ministry approaches. The researcher has been involved in youth ministry within the AFM at local, regional and national for the last 22 years. This exposure showed that most youth groups within the AFM follow the traditional youth ministry approach – the isolation of teenagers from their parents. There is a worldwide exodus of young people from the church and the AFM youth are not excluded from the widespread phenomenon.

Most AFM congregations isolate children from adults in the worship service by having separated services for children and adults. Pastors and the national youth structures in the

context of the AFM, need to take a fresh look at the importance of family life in the church and youth ministry. Furthermore the leadership of congregations must seek ways to integrate family life in the congregation and youth ministry.

These three most important role players: parents, youth leaders and leaders in the congregation will have to deliberately think of practical ways to minister to the family. The family base strategy as an emerging model of youth ministry, although refreshingly new, may reach the farthest in its attempt to restore the family and faith community to a central place in the nurture of young people.



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