

**Exploring the Role of Religion in Social Reproduction: A Case Study of the Agape Christian Worship Centre in Pretoria.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores how young adults at Agape Christian Worship Centre in Pretoria understand the notion of work. A research strategy of participant observation, interviews and focus group discussions were used to study this phenomenon at Agape CWC in Pretoria. The study draws on Antonio Gramsci approach to cultural hegemony and Heidi Hartmann's Marxist Feminist theory that link reproduction and production. The study shows that work is defined as a calling amongst my participants. Similarly, despite work being understood as a calling, work is at the same time gendered. In a similar way, religious ideas about work affect the incorporation of young adults into the labour market. In addition, at the centre of Agape CWC teachings is the notion of integrity- a character that is enforced on young adults as a recommended Christian conduct in the church and the workplace. In return, members of Agape CWC understand themselves firstly as Christians then secondly as workers, hence producing the identity of a Christian worker. The religious ideas about work and Christian conduct were ultimately transferred from the church into the workplace; hence this shows that the private space (the church) shapes the functioning of the public space (workplace).

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Industrial Sociology in the University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university, nor has it been prepared under the assistance of any body, organisation or person outside the University of Pretoria.

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Agatha Dambo

-----day of----- 2013

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

This study is trying to find out the role of religion in social reproduction. Social reproduction refers to “the physical reproduction of the species, along with the care and work that goes along with meeting material and emotional needs; the reproduction of labour power through education and training; and the reproduction of broader cultural and social norms, practices and identities ”Barker (2007: 416). Basically, social reproduction is a process by which society reproduces itself, for instance through the provision of policies in order to address and provide social needs, such as the provision of jobs and the moulding of individual or collective group behaviours, that go unmet by the labour market.

As stated above, this study explores the role of religion in social reproduction as it concerns young adults. This research focuses on how young people in the Pentecostal Charismatic Church (the Church) understand the notion of work. The Church was chosen because of its unique beliefs and understanding of wealth. The Pentecostal Charismatic Church is a movement within Christianity that places enormous emphasis on the personal experience and the relationship between individuals and God (Frahm-Arp, 2010:47-70). Barker (2007:416) points out that this movement differs from other churches because of its strong belief in the Holy Spirit, which is assumed to enable a Christian to live a fruitful and holy life. Similarly, the Pentecostal Charismatic Church congregation is characterised by speaking in tongues, prophesising, as well as the deliverance of people from evil (Frahm-Arp, 2010:47-70). The Pentecostal Charismatic Church members are unified and are egalitarian (Frahm-Arp, 2010:47-70). Besides these facts, one of the Pentecostal Charismatic Church’s fundamental beliefs is the accumulation of wealth.

Weber (1958) argues that religion can be viewed as a source of social change. The Church understands that accumulation of wealth derives from the fruits of Christians' hard work, hence "work is seen as a calling" (Weber, 1958). The argument is that the theology of prosperity points out that the more members there are that work hard and accumulate wealth, the more blessed and closer they eventually become (Weber, 1958). In relation to the South African context (where poverty and unemployment are highly pronounced) this result in an increase in number of young people attending and becoming members of Pentecostal Charismatic Churches with the assumption that they will be removed from poverty.

Weber's work was among Protestants while this study looks at Pentecostal Charismatic Church. For instance, Weber's work on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* looked at the relationship between religion and production. Weber argued that religion was a source of social change for it informed and structured people's participation in the economy. This study therefore explores whether the same could be said about Pentecostal Charismatic Church with specific attention being focused on Agape CWC in Pretoria. This study asks the same question that Weber asked years back as to whether religion influences social reproduction, but with specific reference to Pentecostal Charismatic faith.

In this study I examine the connection between religion and production by treating religion as a set of beliefs informing an individual's outlook of life. Consequently, I place less emphasis on religion as a practice. I can only infer religious practice from the beliefs interviewees have about work. I believe that this provides a significant link between work and religion. I ask this research question against the backdrop of the historical context in South Africa.

Historically, churches in South Africa have played a significant role in the social and political development of the country. Churches played a central role during the time of apartheid, which was seen as a common enemy by a number of religious groups. Apartheid made the role of the church visible (Chikane, 1951:1). Apartheid itself represented an 'evil' to churches to the extent that it made race a determining factor in the processes of social reproduction. Chikane (1951:1) continues to note that the Pentecostal Charismatic Churches played no role at all in the fight against apartheid.

Apartheid, a system that supported the position and vulnerability of the poor – has been abolished in present day South Africa. However, even though apartheid was abolished, the



enormous challenge facing the country now is poverty. South Africa is facing enormous poverty amongst the majority of its citizens. The South African Human Development Report 2003 showed that almost half (48.5%) of the South African population of 44 million people in 2003 lived in conditions of extreme poverty (Swart, Rocher, Green and Erasmus, 2010:38). A group of people greatly affected by poverty were the young people, specifically those that were unemployed. Statistics indicate that about 42% of young people under the age of 30 were unemployed, compared with less than 17% of adults over 30 (National Treasury, 2011). In addition, it was pointed out that only one in eight working aged adults under 25 years of age had a job, compared with 40% in most emerging economies (National Treasury, 2011). The Report also argued that being poor does not mean having no access to fresh water, sanitation, electricity and health services, but rather being poor extends to not having any job opportunities, self- respect and dignity ( Swart *et al.*, 2010). ‘Many institutions, including churches, are narrowing this gap on poverty by means of programmes that make use of a variety of resources’ (Swart *et al.*, 2010:38).

It is against this backdrop of youth unemployment that the role of religion in social reproduction is studied. This is because the crisis of youth unemployment presented an ethical challenge as it pointed to the exclusion of a section of the population from resource distribution. In this study, the question of how young adults understand work is done with specific reference to Agape Christian Worship Centre.

In discussing the role of religion in social reproduction, this study follows the footsteps of a number of authors. Barker (2007) examined Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs) in the context of economic restructuring and social reproduction. Barker (2007: 409) argues that Pentecostal communities meet social reproductive needs in a neoliberal era by providing services along with moral frameworks regarding how social needs should be met, by recasting individual values and practices, and by reconfiguring community and social identity. The argument above clearly shows that the Pentecostal Charismatic faith fosters certain norms and behaviours and harmonises with neoliberal economic restructuring.

Similarly, Frahm- Arp (2010) found that in these particular churches (Pentecostal Charismatic Churches), roles and responsibilities were distributed according to gender. The church activities were referred to as “departments” within the church and each department had a departmental head or manager (Frahm- Arp 2010). Similarly, the focus was mainly on

the language of the business world in which a corporation is divided into departments which are each run by a head or manager (Frahm- Arp 2010: 174). Some of these managers managed individual home cells (home- based church activities) that met once a fortnight at Saturday leadership meetings (Frahm- Arp 2010: 175). It was noted that in the study, Frahm- Arp (2010) explains the role of religion as that of guiding men and women in their responsibilities in society according to gendered divisions of labour. Interestingly, Frahm- Arp (2010: 175) also found that the second cluster of church activities were aimed at building the faith and life skills of the members of the church, which explains the role of religion in the South African context. For instance, faith and life skills were achieved by establishing ministries within the church according to gender and age (youth ministries and women's ministries) (Frahm- Arp 2010).

In addition, one of Frahm- Arp's (2010) arguments is that in the two Pentecostal Charismatic Churches studied, it was noted that these churches offered people a meta- narrative that helped them make sense of their world and taught them how to negotiate the networks of ideological, social, political and economic power which surrounded them. For example, these churches offered help in understanding the male world of work (Frahm- Arp 2010: 174). Therefore, it is evident from the argument raised above that the role of the church can be seen in terms of the provision of social capital. The churches also provided women with leadership, motivation and communication courses and mentoring programmes to help them negotiate the various complexities of corporate life (Frahm- Arp 2010: 174). These churches were attractive because they spoke in the masculine language of the business world, one that men found easy to understand and that women were trying to comprehend (Frahm- Arp, 2010). It can be said that there is a gendering of the sermons that produce and reproduce patriarchy since most of the women in these churches were not well educated compared to the men's levels of education. Subsequently, Frahm- Arp (2010) explores what it means to be single and the 'dream' of marriage. These are also interesting notions to explore in the proposed study because they speak directly to the question of the role of religion in social reproduction.

An interesting account is given by Villas, Finlay, and Wharton (2009) in their study of structures and inequalities – concerns which are directly related to the proposed study. Villas *et al.* (2009: 487) argue that the meaning of work that was first attached to the preindustrial societies in the Bible was initially seen by the world (including humanity itself) as the

product of God's own work, which is evidently a shift that "blesses the idea of labour" (Ovitt, 1986:487). It is pointed out that Christianity continued this twofold conception of work in which labour appears as both an ennobling activity and a form of atonement (Villas *et al.* (2009: 487)).

Similarly, in the writings of the early apostles, the conception of work as a means of spiritual fulfilment and moral purification is encountered (Villas *et al.*, 2009:67). Christian theologians such as Saint Augustine warned against idleness and argued that "only those who labour and produce an excess of goods can be in a position to practice charity rather than to receive it" (Ovitt, 1986:492). As a result, Protestants have continued to preserve a doctrine that emphasises the purifying nature of hard work and that also invests work with spiritual significance (Villas *et al.*, 2009:67). The question of whether this view also exists amongst the young adults at Agape CWC is also explored.

Interestingly, Villas *et al.* (2009) demonstrate how some religious notions have changed over time, but to a large extent, these religious notions still present the role of religion in social reproduction as acting as a tool of behavioural social control. This behavioural social control ultimately encourages people to work extra hard in order to accumulate wealth, whilst at the same time, it encourages people to give away some of their wealth to charity (Villas *et al.* (2009). As a result, those people that work extra hard or who are involved in spiritual activities are presented as "purified beings" (Villas *et al.* 2009)). The researcher agrees with Villas *et al.* (2009) and intends to explore if this role of religion is also evident in the church under study in Pretoria.

Brusco (1995:6) points out that Pentecostal churches play a role in the construction of women's values in their role of caring for the family as important. For instance, the pastors presented themselves as successful patriarchal heads of families who did not need the props of the shebeen- street culture to prove their masculinity (Brusco, 1995:6). Hence from this presentation, the role of the church was seen in the ways in which it moulded people to be exemplary in their daily acts (Brusco, 1995). These churches marketed Christianity towards men rather than women (Brusco, 1995). Hence, it can be noted that the language and ideals of these churches were those of the masculine world of commerce and politics. It is of interest to explore the messages that are given out to young people in the proposed study and to note if

there are any differences in the messages based on gender, in addition to exploring what messages concerning work and employment are given out to young people by the church.

A study done by Davidson and Caddell (1994), “Religion and the Meaning of Work”, examines three personal attributes: gender, education and family income; that might affect the resources and incentives employees bring to work, their performances on the job and the way in which employers treat workers. It was found in this study that males, people with higher education levels and people with higher incomes were most likely to have been raised to believe that special roles in society have social networks that reinforce such attitudes (Davidson and Caddell, 1994: 145). As a result, such people have accumulated the means necessary to perform tasks that they consider important and have been rewarded most highly in the workplace (Davidson and Caddell, 1994: 146).

In addition, Davidson and Caddell (1994) found that people who view religion as integral to their identity and who are religiously active tend to have a holistic view of life. For instance, a person might foster a sense that faith is intimately related to everything else, including work. Therefore, people with less developed religious self concepts and who are religiously less active are likely to make strong distinctions between the religious sphere and other spheres of their lives (Davidson and Caddell, 1994: 145). These people are likely to have more secular views of work and are more likely to think of work as either a career or a job, not as a ministry (Davidson and Caddell, 1994: 146).

Based on the literature discussed above, this study has noted that none of them examined the role of religion in social reproduction in relation to ways in which young adults understand work. This is the missing gap that has been found and it is the intention of this paper to cover that gap by exploring how young South African people at Agape CWC understand the notion of work.

The key argument in this paper is that, the private and public realms are not distinct; but rather influence each other in one way or the other. In analysing data, five central arguments emerged and these form the basis of the discussion in this paper. The first argument is that work was understood as a calling. The second argument in the paper is an addition to what Peck (1996) illustrated in his book *Work- Place: The Social Regulation of Labour Markets* as he argued that through the process of incorporation (through education, and social capital) an

individual makes a decision to join the formal labour market; but since work was defined as a calling amongst the group of young that was studied at Agape CWC, religion emerged as a determining factor in their lives and this affected the way young people (young Christian workers) were incorporated into the labour market. The third argument in the paper is that, despite work being understood as a calling, gender still emerged as a determining factor when responding to the calling and this resulted in work being gendered. The fourth argument is that, religion is able to produce particular identities called Christian workers, through the ways it enforces members to conduct themselves in a submissive, loyal and hard working manners, suitable for the workplace in order to be productive, accumulate wealth and fulfil the purpose that God has called them for. The fifth argument in this paper is that, the church teachings at Agape CWC on Christian conduct were closely linked to work ethics of a workplace; hence they saw a direct relationship between the workplace and the church and this was basically how they understood their social world without necessarily forcing them to renegotiate their identities when they were located in different spaces of the church and work worlds.

The following is the outline of chapters in this study. Chapter One introduces the study and highlights the key arguments. Chapter Two of this paper is a methodology and theoretical realm discussion. The third chapter discusses the findings of the study in terms of themes; the first theme is looking at work as a calling. The second theme discusses what it means to refer work as a calling. The third theme focuses on the gendered nature of work as a calling. Lastly, a conclusion is made based on the overall discussion of themes.

Chapter Four discusses religion and workplace incorporation, as the first theme. The chapter then discusses the ‘theology of prosperity’ as the second theme. A conclusion is then made based on the overall discussion. The main argument in this chapter is that religious ideas and beliefs influence an individual’s decision into joining the labour market – hence, incorporation of labour is affected by religious ideas and not by education and social capital only. Christian workers and workplace integrity is discussed in the fifth chapter of this thesis. The fifth chapter is in three themes: with Integrity: preparing workers for the workplace, as the first theme. Then the discussion moves to look at the influence of pastors on young adults. The third theme under this fifth chapter discusses the experiences at the workplace and finally a conclusion is made. It is argued in this chapter that, ideas of Christianity are transferred from the church into the work. Lastly a recommendation will be made and this will be followed by a conclusion on the arguments raised in this paper. Overall, it is argued in this

thesis that the private space shapes the public space; hence, the private and the public spaces are embedded in each other.

## CHAPTER 2

### Theme

### **An analytical framework: linking production to reproduction**

#### **2.1 Gramsci's Approach to Cultural Hegemony**

This section builds on Antonio Gramsci's approach to the dynamics of cultural hegemony and examines the theoretical realm of hegemony in order to develop the role played by religion in the development of collective ideas and belief systems within an institution.

The sociology of religion emphasises the role of religion, its positive contribution to society, its role in social reproduction and the maintenance of social order (Durkheim 1965; Parsons 1964). Billings (1990:27) suggests that religion, like the workplace, is a contested terrain that reinforces certain existing power dynamics and the agency of human groups and individuals.

In this paper, the term hegemony is used to denote the cultural leadership of "organic intellectuals" (Ruther, 2000). The concept of "organic intellectuals" is borrowed from Antonio Gramsci (1971:325). Gramsci is concerned with how socially dominant groups attempt to influence the interests and preferences of subordinate groups and how these subordinate groups attempt to resist domination and achieve autonomy (1971:325).

Pastors are defined as organic intellectuals in this context. Marx acknowledges that "although the dominant ideas in a society, including religious beliefs, tend to be the ideas of the dominant class, they are never the only existing ideas" (Ruther, 2000). Hence, these ideas do not exist without conflicting with the ideas expressed as "protest of the oppressed" (Billings, 1990: 27). On this point, Gramsci (1971: 326) illustrates his position through his definition of popular culture. According to Gramsci (1971:326), "popular culture", which also includes "popular religion", is a "conception of life and the world" that on many points, conflicts with 'official' conceptions of the world. Thus, culture can be viewed as a "semiautonomous sphere

of society that plays an important mediating role in the totality of social life” (Gramsci, 1971:365-66). This is why pastors of working class churches can be seen as organic intellectuals. For example, pastors may protest against official conceptions of the world. As a result, this will lead to members of the church becoming products of such ideas. Gramsci (1971:365-66) speaks of organic intellectuals as people that bring about change in the society.

Gramsci, a Marxist follower, believes that men and women are not only ruled by force, but are also ruled by ideas (Ruther, 2000). Gramsci’s work focuses on collective ideas (Ruther, 2000). Ideas and beliefs are developed by intellectuals, who then manipulate and pass on to the masses to be accepted as norms (Ruther, 2000). Dominant ideology is formed in such a manner and then is used to justify the political and economic status quo as natural and inevitable, as well as perpetual and beneficial for everyone, rather than as a social construct that benefits the ruling class (Ruther, 2000). This therefore leads to hegemonic power that operates as everyday common sense. For example, if sermons are given by a pastor in church, emphasis is placed on the different gender roles that men and women have in the society in order to make it functional. These ideas are then passed on to the subordinate groups and are then internalised and normalised in the long run. Hence different gender orders are produced in the church and passed on to the labour market.

Gramsci (1971:365-66) thought it important to clarify the relationship that exists between religion and the social classes. Gramsci (1971:365-66) notes that hegemony operates within social institutions in civil society which, as viewed by Gramsci, consists of the church, education system, press and all bodies which help people to behave in ways and expectations consistent with the hegemonic order (Ruther, 2000). It is pointed out that civil society is like a market place – intellectuals enter as salesmen of ideas and create hegemony that extends the worldview of the rulers to the ruled and ensures that free consent of the masses to the law and order of the society is achieved (Ruther, 2000). The argument in this instance is that ideas of what it means to be a woman, man or a worker (or even what it means to do work) are sold to the congregation of the church. This raises questions such as what then happens when free consent is unsuccessful. If intellectuals fail to secure this free consent, the ruling classes or the state fall back on the state’s coercive apparatus which disciplines those who do not consent (Ruther, 2000). Hegemony emphasises the inherent conflict involved in constructing knowledge networks of power through knowledge and involves questions of moral awareness (Ruther, 2000). For the purpose of this study, one can question how moral awareness is

defined in relation to work and gender. However, Gramsci (1971:365-66) believed that with the leadership provided by organic intellectuals from within their own class and other intellectual allies, workers and peasants would be able to construct oppositional conceptions of life that would become popular and hegemonic, Gramsci (1971:365-66). The theory of cultural hegemony therefore proposes that the cultural norms of society, which are constructed by the ruling class, should not be perceived as natural and inevitable, but must be recognised as artificial social constructs (institutions, practices and beliefs) that must be investigated to discover their roots as instruments of social class and gender domination (Ruther, 2000). Domination through consent that is developed within civil society is an internalised form of domination whereby force is not used, Gramsci (1971:365-66) theory of hegemony shows how the state and civil society produce and maintain consent of the class hierarchies of capitalist societies.

It is further emphasised that the hegemony struggle is not just an intellectual struggle, but is a social, political and economic struggle (Ruther, 2000). Marx points out that society are dominated by economy (Ruther, 2000). Class is the field of social power and hence a materialistic perspective (or material reality) is the foundation of social consciousness (Ruther, 2000). Dominant ideologies of capitalist based material reality enable workers to take their exploitation within economic structures of inequality for granted (Ruther, 2000).

The theory on hegemony goes on to discuss how a revolution can eventually erupt when the workers (or proletarians) organise themselves by taking action in order to overthrow the ruling class (or bourgeoisie) Gramsci (1971:365-66). This is, however, a weakness of the theory in this particular context, considering that the study is not interested in exploring how young people can overthrow the church. Rather, the application of this theory with regard to the specific context is focused on the notion of ideology and how this ideology is passed on to subordinate groups, as well as how it is subsequently normalised in the long run as the natural way of thinking and doing things to an extent that, ideas of work inform people's choices to enter the labour market. Gramsci's (1971:365-66) theory offers a significant, but not a sufficient theoretical framework for exploring the role of religion in social reproduction. In particular, this theory overlooks the different genders, gender roles and the type of socialisation that takes place since its main focus is on class formation. It is here that Heidi Hartmann's Marxist Feminist perspective makes a valuable contribution to this study by



examining how men and women are placed in the labour market through the ideas that religion enforce on them.

## 2.2 Heidi Hartmann's Marxist Feminism

The dual system theory of economics is a theory that explains the relationship between capitalism and the source of oppression for women (Hartmann (1976:99)). According to Richardson and Robinson (1993:272), “women engage not only in paid work but also in unpaid work in the household, where they are responsible for the bulk of housework, childcare and other forms of physical and emotional labour”. Hartmann (1976:99) illustrates that there is a division of labour in the notion of work with regard to gender. As grounded in the Marxist tradition, the process of reproduction is viewed as a basis for the oppression of women (Hartmann (1976:99)). A sexual division of labour in productivity not only undermines women's capabilities, but also identifies a division in power differences in favour of men. Women, at times, fall victim to low paid jobs because of society's ideologies that have been propagated and internalised. Phillips and Taylor (1980:79-82) add that

Far from being an objective economic fact, skill is often an ideological category imposed on certain types of work by virtue of the sex and the power of the workers who perform it. It is the sex of those who do the work, rather than its content, which leads to its identification as skilled or unskilled.

These inequalities operate in class contradictions, contradictions within gender ideology and material differences. This could be because of the high demands of the family that require women to do the work. However, Hartmann (1976:99) argues that “capitalism is a form of subordination on women” of which women are subordinate to the ruling “men” (patriarchs) who are dominant, powerful and have control over the means of production, which is a form of inequality. For instance, domestic labour provides cultural and economic importance to women's unpaid domestic work. Hartmann (1976:99) thus, in addition, introduces an extension of the critique of class into the feminist history of the economic subordination of women.

Even though people are hired, there is structure of employment relations and power relations present in the workplace and this is used as a mechanism of control. According to Peck

(1996), “the unequal distribution of power shapes the choices made by the employers in terms of business location and the wages that labourers are supposed to receive.” The reproduction of labour is directly related to the theory of labour supply as this theory examines how labour is integrated into and allocated to the labour market and how this results in labour control within the labour market (Peck, 1996).

Hartmann (1976:99) examines the role of the family in producing wage labour. For example, the nuclear family is a logical product of the industrial capitalist order and the survival of which depends on a gendered division of labour in the household (Peck, 1996). Men carried out expressive roles and performed publically (they were breadwinners); whilst on the contrary women performed the private role of mothering (Peck, 1996). Hartmann (1976:100) continues to argue that as a result, these “traditional gender roles for women are contradictory and are a hindrance to women’s active participation outside the household if it is argued that domestic work is organised and conditioned as wage labour.” This implies that the construction of domestic work is similar to the labour market whereby women are nevertheless in charge of the household and look after men (producing the wage labour) (Hartman, 1976).

Hartmann (1981:295) also argues that “job segregation by sex has provided the major means through which male dominance in the labour market has been secured”. For instance, the low paid occupations that are mostly carried out by women, such as receptionists and nursing, have provided a pivotal means that enables men to ensure their dominance and power. Hartmann’s (1981) argument is that capitalism cannot survive without patriarchy. Hartmann (1971:295) states that “patriarchy and capitalism seem to work hand in hand by living with male order as capitalism is about owners of production”. Millet (1970:64) argues that patriarchy is the

Omnipresent system of male domination and female subjugation and that [men] benefit from the power over women in every way from ego-satisfaction to economic and domestic exploitation, sexual domination and political power.

Therefore men work for the ‘owners of production’ which tend to influence men’s power and control over women (Hartman, 1976: 100). Hence the nature of institutions seems to support the domination of men over women (Hartmann, 1976:100). As a result, it can be argued that women’s subordination starts at home and produces an environment that is not conducive for

women in which to realise their capacity to work fully in wage labour markets. In addition, Peck (1996) argues that “the production of men as wage labours depends on the unpaid domestic labour for women and the wider systems of social reproduction through family, community and state”.

Similarly, another conceptualisation of gender inequality by socialists is the notion of a “reserve army of labour” (Hartman, 1976). Women of different social classes, ages and races are portrayed as unwanted in the work system of capitalism and hence are not considered useful, unlike men who are considered useful (Richardson & Robinson, 1993:272). Women are consequently oppressed and become subordinates. The argument is therefore that economic inequality and patriarchy are the causes of women’s oppression (Hartmann, 1976:101).

The key argument from the theories discussed above is that ideology, knowledge and beliefs are sources of power and tools of marginalising some groups of people in society, such as women, to the extent that these groups of people’s roles are normalised. This ‘normalisation’ affects the social networks that individual’s develop. Religion (or churches), as an institution, have an influence on the construction of ideology and beliefs about men and women. For instance, a church may hold the belief that a man is required to work endlessly in order to support his family. On the contrary, women in the same church could be socialised to believe that working outside of the home is only meant for men and a woman’s work could be understood as that of teaching biblical scripts to children.

## 2.3 METHODOLOGY

### 2.3.1. Qualitative methods: ethnography and in-depth interviews

This section of the chapter explains the methods that were used in order to carry out the study. It gives a range of a number of questions that were asked and reasons why this was done. The study is exploratory in nature therefore makes use of qualitative techniques as it aimed to explore how young people understand work (relating it to social reproduction) by using Agape CWC in Pretoria as a case study. As indicated earlier in the paper, this paper understands religion as a belief and practice. This study did not explore religion as a practice but rather as a belief system because it was interested in how young people construct meaning of work. The study is not examining the workplace but the church but in the view that of a possibility of what is happening in the workplace. So the hegemonic ideas that are being talked about were coming from Christian worker's narratives of work as defined by religion and what happens in the workplace.

#### *Qualitative Research*

There are two types of research methodologies – qualitative and quantitative. It is important to discuss quantitative research prior to qualitative research. The quantitative method of research makes use of experiments (tests and trials) on a broader scale than the qualitative approach, while also focusing on a well- defined question (although the qualitative approach does, at times, make use of a particular type of survey) (Neuman, 1997). This mode of gathering data by quantitative researchers involves a precisely- formulated process of experimentation of subjects. As a result, Neuman (1997) argues that the process goes through a series of trials to reach the results and is carefully guided by a well- grounded hypothesis.

The subjects in the research are then divided into two or more groups which are identical in nature (Neuman, 1997). The one group is experimental (this group receives the treatment for the experiment) and the other group is a control group (Neuman, 1997). The control group does not go through the same treatment as the experiment group. It is pointed out however that both the control and experiment group are placed in the same context (Neuman, 1997). The qualitative method of approach does at times make use of these two groups (Neuman, 1997). In the quantitative approach, researchers measure the reactions of both groups by

using a specialised process of evaluation called a questionnaire (Neuman, 1997). By use of a questionnaire, the quantitative researcher assumes that they are able to conceptualise sociological concepts such as variables and are able to develop objective and precise measurements of numbers that capture important features of the social world, Neuman, (1997:330).

However, the qualitative method focuses on subjective meanings in the social world as interpreted by the subjects being studied (Neuman, 1997). In the study that I conducted, I explored the meanings that the young professionals attending Agape CWC attached towards work (though their understanding of the notion of work and their experiences at the workplace). As I conducted the interviews, I discovered that their definition of work was understood as working within the church and outside the church boundaries (in secular institutions). Hence, the qualitative method used in this study made provision for the research study to expand and develop questions and concepts for investigation throughout the research process.

A number of patterns emerged from the study. Neuman, (1997:330), notes that it is important that a qualitative researcher is aware of the patterns that emerge from the study. These patterns were themes, generalisations, motifs and categories discovered during the duration of the study Agape CWC in Pretoria. Some of the patterns that emerged in the study were not expected to develop during the study by the researcher. I paid particular attention to the study so that I reached a better understanding of the subject matter as well as understand the direction the study was taking. For instance, the majority of young people in the church reported that the reason why they continued to attend Agape CWC in Pretoria was because of the messages presented by the pastor, it was concluded that young people were attracted to this church because of the spiritual messages that were taught in the church guided young people in their work and encouraged them to work extra hard in order to fulfil their purposes and as a result God would reward them with wealth.

However, it is also noted that generalisations from this study are not necessarily applicable to other environments. It is not the aim of qualitative research to replicate the study as is the case for standardised procedures of quantitative methods (Neuman, (1997). It is therefore important to note that generalisations apply to one particular context only. If research is related to a particular topic, such as the topic in this study (the role of religion in social

reproduction), then the findings could be used as a reference or as a means to test whether the themes identified in one context actually apply in another context.

According to Neuman (1997:330) states that, the qualitative method is less standardised when compared to quantitative research. He continues to note that, there are a number of different approaches used in qualitative research and the way in which data is analysed by qualitative research. The qualitative researcher adopts no specific method in analysing data and does not always know what questions they will use in analysing the data (Neuman, 1997). Notably, data is often analysed much earlier in a qualitative study than a quantitative study, sometimes even while the researcher is still collecting the data (Neuman, 1997). For example, in the study that I conducted at Agape CWC, data analysis begun before conducting the interviews and focus group discussion through observing how young people conducted themselves, related with one another and the roles that they took in the church.

Therefore, during this time, the qualitative researcher looked for emerging patterns in the data, in addition to relationships between these patterns (Neuman, 1997). This early analysis by the qualitative researcher acted as a guide to subsequent data collection (Neuman, 1997). Analysis did not stop at this point, but rather continued throughout the process of interviews and focus group discussions. The aim of qualitative theory is not to have a set theory at the beginning of the research (as in the case of quantitative theory), but the researcher in this study managed to blend together concepts, ideas and themes gathered from the data to form a grounded theory or explanation of the research question, Babbie (2005:328).

Qualitative research encompasses the following methods: interviews, focus groups, participant observations, ethnography and phenomenology, case studies and historiography, grounded theory and content analysis (Babbie, 2005). For the purpose of this study, participant observation, focus groups and in- depth interviews were used as the main research tools used for data collection. The study was ethnographic. I spent six months attending Agape CWC in Pretoria central. I was directly involved with the participants (the church congregation) throughout the Sunday church services and youth activities on Saturday such as fundraising activities- car washing, as well as attending weddings for young couples outside the church as a participant observer.

Denzin and Lincoln (2002) indicate that most often qualitative researchers employ a variety or a combination of different, yet interconnected and interpretive practices or methods in the hope to better understand the matter at hand. The study on Agape CWC youth presents a commitment to using the methods indicated above in order to understand and explore the role of religion in social reproduction. Neuman (1997:328) points out that qualitative research seeks to understand the importance of the social context to understand the social world. For instance, the social context in this study was Agape CWC in Pretoria with regard to which the researcher intended to understand the specific social context in which these young people were located.

Neuman (1997) continues to argue that “the meaning of a social action or a statement depends in an important way, on the context in which it appears” (Neuman, 1997:331). For example, throughout this study, the researcher asked questions like how they defined work and what work means in this context. Qualitative research involves recording what people say and documenting real events (Neuman, 1997:331). In this case study, I managed to document and record various church activities that occurred during a Sunday service and Friday evening youth services in addition to how the pastors and young people presented themselves throughout the services and activities.

Qualitative research allocates an open and flexible approach to research where new responses can be explored (Neuman, 2007). For example, the qualitative researcher in the study that was conducted was in a position to organise ideas into categories or themes that provide explanations that give detail and capable of showing the complex processes of social life (between work and religion). In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:15) add that qualitative research assists in allowing the researcher to develop a thick description of a community by letting the important issues come to the surface. Hence, qualitative research permits an unstructured or semi- structured investigation, where the chances of the researcher imposing his or her own meanings on the idea of the investigation through the use of prearranged meaning categories is reduced and participants’ descriptions of their experiences can come to the fore (Neuman, 1997). It is for the reasons discussed above that the researcher opted to use the qualitative method of approach to the study that was conducted at Agape CWC in Pretoria.

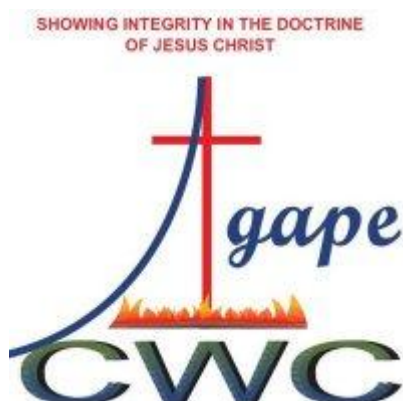
### 2.3.2. THE CHOICE OF A CHURCH STUDIED

The study was conducted at the Agape Christian Worship Centre in Pretoria Central. The researcher visited the Elim Christian Church (Pretoria East) and the Winners Chapel International (Pretoria West) prior to the choice of the Agape Christian Worship Centre. Agape Christian Worship Centre was chosen specifically for this study because it stood out from other churches in various ways. Unlike other churches that I visited, the congregation of this church was mostly comprised of young South African men and women that attend the church.

Similarly, many of the young men and women in Agape CWC were in the labour market already, whereas the younger members of congregations of other churches were either college and university students and many of them were informally employed. As stated earlier in the paper, the interest of this study was to explore how young people understood work and hence the young population group at Agape Christian Worship Centre matched the objectives of the study.

In addition, it was also convenient for the researcher in terms of gaining access into the church and the fact that the researcher had an informant that introduced her to Agape CWC church, it was best that the research should be carried out in this particular social context.

#### *Agape Christian Worship Centre in Pretoria*



At Agape CWC, many young people had a higher level of tertiary degree education. The church had a membership of 1750 people (men, women and children) that attend Agape



CWC every Sunday. 60% were young people whilst 40% were men and women above 36 years of age. The church conducts 4 services within a week. There are Tuesday prayers that are open to everyone from 5.30pm to 8.30pm. This service allows people to attend an evening service after a long day of work in their various workplaces. The second service in the week is the Friday youth service that runs from 5.30pm to 8pm) which accommodates young people of the ages between 18 to 35 years. These young people are all single. Some of them are students whilst some of them are professionals in various jobs. The third service offered at Agape CWC is the Saturday men's prayers that run from 5.30am to 7am (these prayers are meant for married men only). The fourth service offered at Agape CWC is on Sunday. This service starts at 8.30am to 1.00pm. Men, women, youth and children attend this service.

In the front of the church, where everyone faced the pastor when preaching, there was a huge logo with Agape's vision that said 'Showing Integrity in the doctrine of Jesus Christ.' In addition to this vision, another logo that captured Agape's key scripture that was taken from James 2 verse 18 said 'Show me your works without my faith and I will show you my faith by works.' The two logos could not be missed by anyone attending a church service at Agape for some of them were posted on the sides of the walls in the church.

### **2.3.3. Access**

Before beginning my interviews with my participants, I firstly spoke to the pastor of Agape CWC. We arranged several meetings in order to ensure that the research was in line with church's doctrine and to ensure that he protects the church and its members as well. I was later on instructed to email him the outline of my research, explaining why I was interesting in working with their church. Later on, I was referred to the youth pastor, who oversees the youth ministry. The youth pastor advised me to email him the outline of my research. Obtaining access to Agape CWC was not difficult. Being a Christian made it easier for them to accept me into their church and they were all eager to assist and support me whenever it was needed. The youth pastor introduced me to numerous young professional people in the church. The first people to interview were the pastor of Agape CWC, then the youth pastor and lastly, the young people themselves. I decided on the number of young people to interview at Agape CWC when I realised that I was beginning to see patterns emerge in their responses and hearing the same stories repeated. This ultimately indicated to me that I had a large enough representative sample to make generalisations for the group as a whole.

My sample consisted of 20 professional young men and women from Agape CWC. With each young person, I had 1 hour 30 minutes interviews. With the main pastor of Agape and the youth pastor, I had two hours with each one of them. In addition, I also had a focus group discussion with 6 young people (3 women and 3 men).

#### **2.3.4. Selection**

Sampling for my participants was very important as far as my in-depth interviews were concerned and to a certain degree in participant observation. I chose young South African women and men firstly. Secondly from that group, I had to choose those that were between the ages of 19 years to 35 years old. I also paid attention to questioning if the participant was a member of Agape CWC (I was interested in interviewing members only) and only interviewed those members that had been members of Agape CWC for more than six months in order to make sure that they were aware of Agape CWC doctrine.

#### **2.3.5. Ethics**

Data collection in research requires ethical considerations in relation to the participants and the researcher. The researcher obtained informed consent from the participants of the study prior to the research being conducted. Consent from the participants is essential. The participants were briefed about the research and that they can be in a position to choose to participate in the research or to choose not to participate in the research either way (they participation in this study was voluntary and participants were urged to willingly participate in the research). The participants were also made aware of why the researcher intended to perform the research and what exactly was required from the participants, as well as what the purpose of the research was. The researcher arranged a meeting with the Church's pastor in order to inform him about the scope of the study and the interest behind the decision to conduct the study in Agape CWC. It was also clearly indicated during the discussion with the pastor that the study was an academic study. In addition, it was indicated to the pastor that as a researcher, it was of interest to participate fully with the group under study. The researcher informed the pastor at the same time that the researcher was only undertaking the study and not joining the church itself.

In addition, the researcher is also aware that it is unethical to share information about a respondent with others for purposes other than research. Although this study was not considered to be of a sensitive nature, only little sensitive information emerged in the discussions and hence such information would be protected.

### 2.3.6. Research Design

This section of the paper discusses various research designs that were used in the study. The discussion will start with ethnography, then participant observation, followed by observation, then in depth interviews, in addition to focus group discussions, then documents, data management and analysis, structure of interview schedule and lastly coding of respondent.

### 2.3.7. Ethnography

This research project focused on unique individuals, young men and women of between the ages of 19 to 35. A total of 20 young professionals acted as participants in this research in addition to two pastors of Agape CWC.

The researcher was also aware of other factors that were to be considered such as class, race and gender during research and hence the sample group for the research included two factors of class and gender except race since all the members of Agape CWC were black people. The researcher opted for qualitative data for this research in order to locate how young people in Pretoria understood work and how their understandings may or may not ultimately affect social reproduction in the labour market within the religious, cultural, political, social and economic context in which they operate.

Neuman (1997:346) defines ethnography as a “means of describing a culture or understanding another way of life from the native point of view”. While on the other hand, ethnography, according to Geertz (1973), can be defined as a process by which a researcher aims to learn and understand the cultural phenomena of a particular group of people in a specific period of time of which reflects knowledge on how they construct meanings of their lives or a particular issue. As a result, ethnographers, according to Geertz (1973), describe the nature of the participants being studied through observation and interactions and write about these interactions.

In this case study, the researcher carried out an ethnographic study at Agape Christian Worship Centre in Pretoria to try to understand how young people in this congregation understood work and how belonging to this church may or may not contribute to their wellbeing. The ultimate aim was to analyse the roles that the church played in the construction of young people’s ideology, bodies or body images, beliefs and practices that may, in the long run, contribute to the social reproduction in society. In addition, ethnographers believe that sometimes people make assumptions and therefore it is the role of

the researcher to debunk these meanings (or critically analyse beyond the obvious) and what is seen and heard. During the study, the researcher paid particular attention to the physical body movements (ways in which the body was used and presented), the church's doctrines and its activities, as well as how the young people understood themselves and the church. The researcher then critically analyse these situations and meanings in relation to the roles of the church and social reproduction.

Ethnography, according to Silverman (2004), is characterised by the need for an empirical approach (which requires direct or physical observation in the field). According to Durkheim (1965), there is a need for a researcher in the field discovering and observing new phenomena to “treat social facts as things”. In addition, there is also a need to remain open to elements that cannot be codified at the time of the study (Silverman, 2004). Simply put, there is need to observe and discover the elements that people use as tools to mobilise their interactions with others and the world. Similarly, there is a concern for grounding the phenomena observed in the field.

Neuman (1997) argues that people display their culture (or think and believe) through behaviour (speech or actions) based on specific contexts. For example, in this particular social context, questions such as how young men and women think and what they believe in or how they act according to the church's doctrine were asked. It is however important to note that displays of behaviours do not give meaning, rather, the meaning is inferred or figured out by someone (this is where the key role of the researcher comes into play) (Neuman,1997). Ethnography is therefore centred on what is heard and what is observed amongst people in a specific social context in a particular period of time (Neuman, 1997). As Babbie (2005:296) argues with regard to “all these social settings, field research can reveal things that would not otherwise be apparent”. As a result, field research offers the opportunity of probing social life in its own natural setting.

### **2.3.8. Participant Observation**

The researcher entered Agape CWC as a participant observer. Babbie (2005:296) points out that participant observation is especially appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural settings as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys. Participant observation techniques involve observing

specific behaviours, for example, critically analysing how young people conduct themselves, what the expected roles of men and women in the church were and how these roles were presented by the young people themselves. Since the study area of this research was within the church itself, the researcher attended all the Sunday services every week, in addition to Tuesday evening prayers and Friday evening youth prayers and the Saturday youth activities. The researcher's role as a participant observer helped the researcher to build a rapport with the congregation and to gain their trust over time.

Babbie (2005:298) argues that direct observation in the field lets researchers observe subtle communications and other events that otherwise might not be anticipated or measured. This observation from within the field enabled the researcher to participate with the congregation and most importantly, it allowed the researcher to observe some of the unspoken activities or behaviours that existed. Another advantage of this method with regard to the study that was conducted in Agape CWC is that, the method enabled the researcher to have an opportunity to observe specific behaviours, study religious documents (such as sermons) or examine visual images (for example, the researcher was able to observe how the body was used in the church). The researcher used a small journal during the services in order to capture the observed behaviours during the weekly services.

There were also a few disadvantages of being a participant observer in the study. Babbie (2005:299) notes that a disadvantage of being a participant observer is that some people may choose to alter their behaviours (reactivity) because of the presence of the researcher. Very few people seemed to alter their behaviours at the beginning (upon realising my role as a researcher in the church) but they slowly gained their confidence in me with time.

However the argument extends to the fact that anything that the participant observer does or does not do will have some effect on what is being observed – it is inevitable.

### **2.3.9. Observation**

#### ***A typical Sunday service at Agape CWC***

I began attending Agape CWC in April, 2012 till November, 2012. Agape CWC is quite a huge church and accommodates approximately about 1745 people that attend Agape CWC Sunday services. Both men and women were normally elegantly dressed in suits, and women were dressed in dresses, alluring as skilled workers in a professional workplace. The sitting arrangement for men and women was mixed however the children had their own church

service separated from the main church. The pastor, pastor's wife and the church elders sat right in front of the church close to the altar. The Sunday services began at 9am and ended at 1.30pm. During the service, the pastor's wife greeted and welcomed the congregation then later on members broke into individual prayers, speaking on top of their voices whilst some prayed in tongues (a strange language that was associated by Christians that had a deep relationship with God). These prayers were then followed by testimonies by different announcing publically to the congregation what God had done to them in their families, school and in the workplaces; and they also thanked the pastor for praying for them in aiding the blessings that they received as miracles. The church band then sung a number of songs; most of them were in English. The pastor then took from the band and preached for 2 hours. Towards the end of the sermon, he prays for sick people, curses, witchcraft, business and any other problem that specific members suffered from by laying hands on top of their heads and delivering them from all the evil spirits that had taken over their spirits.

Through my participation in the church services, it was observed that, very few women held leadership roles in the church whereas on the other hand, numerous men took over leadership positions in the church such as church elders or intercessor leaders. Whereas amongst the young people in the church, their roles were divided into ushers, intercessors and these were distributed amongst both sexes. However, the leaders in many of these groups were men. Observing the young people during the Sunday and Friday (for young people only) services, their roles in the church were explicitly shown as they all actively participated in welcoming people in the church, assisted the pastor during the period healing and deliverance of people in the church, sweeping and mopping in the church on every Tuesday and Saturday morning and whenever it was required of them to give the addition to observations in the focus group discussions that were conducted, clear boundaries between men and women emerged vividly. However when questions related to gender relations were asked, many people hesitated before responding and this appeared as a sensitive topic for many of them.

Below is a discussion of the patterns that emerged from the interviews with the pastors and young people in addition to the focus group discussion that was conducted. These patterns are used as themes to explore the role of religion in social reproduction with reference to Agape CWC in Pretoria.

### 2.3.10. In- Depth Interviews

According to Neuman (2007), an interview, in general terms, is defined as a conversation with a purpose, specifically the purpose of gathering information. Interviews can produce rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, aspirations, values and norms, as well as attitudes and feelings (Neuman, 2007).

All the interviews were conducted in English. Observation methods during the interviews, such as the researcher becoming part of the culture, negotiating and being involved with the participants and observing their practices, body language and facial expressions were employed during the interview process. Since the topic of this study is not sensitive in its nature, the participants did not change their behaviour much because of the presence of the researcher. Therefore there was a low reactivity rate.

Babbie (2005:314) defines a qualitative interview as an interaction between the interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry, but not a specific set of questions that must be asked by using particular words or a particular order. It is required that the interviewers familiarise themselves fully with the questions to be asked because this allowed the interaction process (interview) to run smoothly and effectively in a natural manner (Babbie, 2005). The role of the interviewer was to establish the direction of the conversation and the role of the respondent or interviewee was to talk more than the interviewer during the conversation.

The interviews were open- ended and the researcher used an interview schedule (a set of questions that the researcher asked verbally and required the participants to respond to without physically being given the questions). Babbie, (2005) defines an interview schedule as an instrument that is not given directly to the respondent, but is filled in by an interviewer who reads the questions to the respondent. This method is adventurous because the nature of the questions is not exactly structured – it is rather flexible even though the researcher might have a set of questions to ask the respondents (Babbie, 2005). The in depth interviews lasted up to one and one half hours and these were facilitated by the researcher and digitally recorded the conversation. Its major strength was that it helped in soliciting more personalized sentiments in an open and free atmosphere that both the participants and

interviewer agreed upon. As a result, this method created a space for the researcher to probe for more details from a respondent when there was a need to do so.

However, there is no need to manipulate the environment or situation since respondents only answer the questions and therefore the interviewer is given an opportunity to explain (or clarify) questions (by rephrasing or repeating the question) that the interviewee finds unclear. The interviewer was able to probe for more information on some of the issues that came up during the interview. This method was advantageous in the way that the researcher could ask questions and at the same time could observe facial expressions and certain body movements of the respondents or interviewees that assisted in explaining the data. Face to face Interviews were preferred unlike telephonic interviews simply because they do not give the interviewer the opportunity to observe such body language and therefore cause high levels of control from the researcher (Neuman, 2007). The interview method is also adventurous in the way that it allowed the participants to be interviewed in their natural setting, inside the church, an environment that best suited all my participants and this gave an opportunity for participants to relax and ‘open up’ for longer interviews that provided detailed information . Likewise, in-depth interviews have a high response rate.

However, face-to-face interviews do have some disadvantages. Face-to-face interviews were sometimes time consuming as they demanded the researcher to travel to Pretoria central in order to conduct the interviews with the participants.

It is interesting to note that age, gender, religious background and race can play a tremendous role in bringing bias in a study and therefore affecting informants both negatively and positively. It is therefore important to discuss the kind of bias the researcher might have affected informants in the study. In this study, in terms of age, the researcher did not affect the informants simply because the study group was done amongst the average age group as of that of the researcher. However, if the participants were old people between 40 years and above, possible bias could have occurred. Similarly, in terms of race, the researcher did not bring any direct bias in the study that affected the informants. The researcher is a young black woman; and the study focused on young black men and women. However, even though the study was done amongst young black adults, the fact that the researcher is not South African could have brought about possible effects on the informants; for instance, some of the participants could have either exaggerated or reduced gender relations among men and



women in their communities. In addition, it should be mentioned that the researcher comes from a Roman Catholic background. When conducting the research, the religious background of the researcher was taken for granted by the participants since the participants were very eager to teach the Pentecostal Theology to the researcher which was highly considered powerful in their community. Therefore the researcher's personal beliefs as a Roman Catholic did not influence participants' views. On the contrary, it should be acknowledged that a female researcher conducting a study on young adults could have an impact on young men in terms of sex and gender- For instance, at the beginning; a few young men were holding back their views and perspectives due to the researcher's sex. In order to reduce this effect on the informants, the researcher developed rapport and good ties with the young men during the interviews. In addition, the researcher had equal number of young men and women as participants in order to prevent bias. Based on the above mentioned things, I argue that, it should be acknowledged that gender and race might have contributed to biasness but as a researcher I was able to involve a similar number of young men and women, similarly I was able to ask questions that were not gender or race sensitive in order to reduce bias from happening.

#### **2.3.11. Focus Group Discussion**

The Focus Group Discussion was done at Agape CWC in Pretoria. I firstly introduced myself to my respondents again even though I had met them earlier before the discussion. I went on to explain what the research was all about (academic purposes) and assured them of their confidentiality in the research. I managed to get an oral consent from them but however, the discussion lasted for 1 hour 30 minutes.

A Schedule was used during the discussion in a way that, the researcher would pose a question to the group then the participants took the discussion from there as they argued or agreed amongst themselves. On this note, the researcher was facilitating the discussion at the same time, probing for more details and explanations of what was being discussed. In the process, I was able to develop certain themes, of which were used to analyse against the views they had expressed during the Individual interviews

A focus group is a qualitative research technique dedicated to the collection of data through the use of group discussions and interactions (Neuman, 1997). A focus group discussion is simply a process of bringing groups of people together to engage in a guided discussion of a

topic (for example, young men and women from Agape CWC were brought together to talk about how they understood the notion of work). Neuman (1997) states the data is obtained from a focus group on the basis of group communication, on realities as defined in a group situation and on the analysis of group events that reflect the group's input.

In other words, by forming a group of individuals and introducing a topic of discussion regarding their collective attitudes and beliefs, the researcher obtained untapped responses and meaningful information from the nature and dynamic transmission of ideas that were raised in the group. Babbie (2005:316) states that it is also important to note that focus group discussions are based either on structured, semi- structured or unstructured methods. For the purpose of this study, the discussion was semi- structured in order to allow room for the formation of a rapport with the group members and this allowed unexpected questions to arise during the discussion. Similarly, by using a set of questions, it allowed the researcher to question the participants systematically and simultaneously.

It is vital for the researcher to account for the weaknesses and strengths of the particular method chosen for any research. There are several advantages for conducting focus groups for research purposes. For example, Morgan (1992) indicates that the advantages of a focus group discussion are not simply linked to an exploration of what people say in a group, but are linked to the direct outcome of the interaction of the focus group – what is termed the group effect. One of the greatest benefits of using a focus group is its flexibility which encourages an open situation in which participants can explain their experiences and perceptions in a form of discussion amongst themselves (Neuman, 1997). This flexibility during the focus group discussion amongst youths in Agape CWC provided an opportunity to clarify the questions whenever they were viewed as vague. Unlike in questionnaires, participants of focus groups were given the opportunity to ask other group members questions, which brought more clarity.

The researcher was also aware of the possibility of reactivity from the participants as they may try to alter their behaviour because of the presence of the researcher during the discussions. However, because the researcher could interact directly with the participants of the focus group, an opportunity to ask follow- up questions to probe for responses was made available. Neuman (1997) indicates that focus groups allow the respondents to reply and to add on to the responses of other group members and this synergistic effect of the group

setting may result in the production of data or ideas that might not have been uncovered in individual interviews. Focus groups, like individual interviews, also enabled the researcher to use the non-verbal expressions and behaviours of the participants as research inputs.

Like any other research method, focus group discussions also have disadvantages. It is noted that sometimes the group can be dominated by one or two influential people and this can lead to biased results where generalisations will be made on only two people's beliefs, notions and perceptions and not on the whole group (Neuman, 1997). In trying to solve this problem in the case study used, the researcher took the role as a facilitator – the researcher had the ability to ensure that the discussions in the group were kept on track and encouraged the participants' engagement in the discussion without allowing one participant to dominate another. At the same time, the researcher had some control over the discussion when the participants went off topic.

## **2.4. Documents**

The researcher also made use of background and contextual information from numerous written sources that included church publications, sermons, and publications, and training sessions that the church conducts.

### **2.4.1. Data management and Analysis**

The analysis was done manually by identify emerging themes which were organized and categorized into concepts, as in regard to the guide that was used. The data was also connected to show that one concept may influence another. The following are the categories: work as a calling, career path for young people in the church, Agape CWC in the changing traditional gender roles, Prosperity theology, Preparing Christian workers for the workplace: Integrity, Influence of the church on young people, Reciprocal relationship between the church and the workplace, Experiences at the workplace.

## **2.5 Structure of the Interview Schedule**

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first part consisted of the demographic data: age of the respondents, sex, highest level of education attained and marital status, questions on religion, followed by questions on work then lastly on gender. The respondents from the participants are detailed in this paper using pseudonym names in order to protect the

anonymity of the respondents and in other cases, direct respondent narratives were quoted in order to emphasize their point.

## **2.6 Coding of respondent**

A respondent in this study was any young person between the ages of 19 to 35 years, and was willingly to participate in the study by way of using face to face interviews and a focus group discussion. All the interviews in the study were fully completed.

## CHAPTER 3

### Work, religion and gender

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the theoretical realm. This comprised of Gramsci's approach to cultural hegemony in order to develop the role played by religion in the development of collective ideas and belief systems within an institution. In addition, the second theory by Heidi Hartman engages on the relationship between capitalism and the source of oppression for women. Together, the two theories link production to reproduction. Similarly in the same chapter, a section with methodology is discussed in order to show the different methods that were used in order to collect data from my participants at Agape CWC. This third chapter will discuss how young adults from Agape CWC understand work. It is important to discuss how young people understand work in Agape CWC simply because, the ideas about work that are formed in the church shape the foundation of the way in which young people approach work through their conduct in the labour market. These ideas about work create a relationship between the church (understood as a private space) and the workplace (understood as a public space). The chapter is divided into three sections, namely: work as a calling, what it means to say work is a calling and the gendered nature of work as a calling and lastly, a conclusion will be made. It is argued in this chapter that work is understood as a calling, however, at the same time work is highly gendered and these ideas are formed in the church and then transferred into the workplace environment.

#### 3.2 Work as a calling

Since the study is interested in exploring how young adults from Agape CWC understand work, I asked respondents what work is. Overall during the interviews with young adults and pastors at Agape CWC, all participants continuously narrated that work is a calling. This made the study realise that a worker within the Pentecostal Charismatic Church (Agape CWC) understands work as a fulfilment of one's purpose which is given by God. Due to this reason, it was thought important to discuss work as a theme in this chapter in addition to illustrating some of the examples directly quoted from the participants themselves.

The study is interested in understanding how young adults from Agape CWC understand the concept of work. I begin this exploration by asking the young adults why they came to Agape CWC. Mpho explained why she attends Agape CWC in this way,

‘I was invited to Agape CWC by my friend to attend one Tuesday evening service. I was cordially welcomed. Plus, the messages preached by the pastor that particular night was very touching; it was like as if he was talking about me, literally.’

Based on Mpho’s explanation, it is clear that the members of Agape CWC were active members that were concerned in increasing the number of people attending their church in order to share ideas and beliefs about life. Equally, the ideas that Agape CWC pastors preached to people in the church appeared appealing to a number of people. As a result of these teachings and ideas, many people continued to join the church.

In continuing our discussion on why people attend Agape CWC, Ngedzeni added by indicating that,

‘Agape CWC is like a family to all of us. It inspires us to be good Christians and good workers at the same time in order to improve our lives and the church to grow’.

Based on the above statement, it is clear that Agape CWC creates a space where norms and values are constructed and taught to young people. These ideas taught at church do not only benefit the individual Christian, but are also useful for the sustainability of the church. Since a number of young adults are attracted to Agape CWC because of its teachings and the cordial relationship that the church builds with its members, the study then moves the discussion in this section to the question of how the young adults understand work, based on the church’s ideas and teachings.

In order to explore how work is understood, I asked both the pastors of Agape CWC and young adults to explain what work is. Interesting enough, throughout the interviews that I conducted amongst the pastors’ and young adults in Agape CWC, work was defined as a calling. Work is strongly viewed as a process taken by the young people at Agape CWC to fulfil God’s purpose in their lives. In his explanation of what work is, pastor Humphrey said,

“Work is a calling. We believe that if you are misplaced, often you will not enjoy your work and you will be frustrated. Often times you will not see what you desire to see and I am saying this from experience. If anybody understands their purpose, they

will definitely enjoy their work because they understand the purpose which God has called them for. So for me, that's a key. So where ever you work, you shall be able to make tangible impact. I receive a number of complaints from Christian workers in the church.”

In accordance to the narrative above, it was interesting to note that, work is understood as a calling. For example, some young adults are formerly employed in institutions and organisations as nurses, information technology specialists, administrator in addition to many jobs. Similarly, numerous complaints were taken to Pastor Humphrey by the young adults simply because he was their source of comfort and inspiration- his words and advice towards work reminded the young people what a Christian worker was, what their roles were towards work and their fulfilment towards Gods kingdom.

This point of work as a calling is further illustrated in the following conversation with Nahfere. I ask Nahfere what he understands by work. This is what he had to say.

“As a child of God, if you understand your purpose, then you go to your workplace and approach your work in a manner of understanding the Christ in you and this is a key thing to remember when you are working in a secular job. We are just passing by towards heaven. Therefore you should be very mindful in the ways you approach your work with integrity.”

The quotation above illustrates that work is approached in a particular manner by a Christian since it is understood as a process of fulfilling one's purpose in life. Christians are requested to be faithful and hard working in their specific jobs.

Smiling gracefully, Nahfere responded by saying,

“At times, in order to fulfil the bigger picture or core purpose, we have got to be able read God's seasons. The Bible in Jeremiah 29: 11 tells us that, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give to give you hope and a future.”

Based on the above explanation, when a particular job is not your calling, you will not enjoy it or excel at it either. This clearly shows that a person will not be productive at their work if

a particular job is not meant for them. On the other hand, despite some people being allocated in the wrong jobs, many of my participants shared the idea that, God would eventually move you to another job that is suitable for you.

In agreement with others in the understanding of work as a calling, Theodore gave an example from the Bible,

“In the old testament, in the book of 1 Chronicles verse 17, when the Israelites were building God’s temple, there were people that were delegated for certain jobs. Each one had his own role and responsibility to fulfil.”

The verse used above only emphasises that, each person is assigned a role that he or she needs to fulfil. This ‘role’ is the calling that needs to be fulfilled in one’s life.

### **3.3 What does it mean to say work is a calling?**

Since work is understood as a calling, this then raises the question of what does it mean to say work is a calling and secondly, it also raises the question of when does work become a calling, considering that people keep changing their jobs. A reference was made to the Bible of Mathew chapter 6 verses 33 that says, ‘but seeks first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you.’ Several of the respondents stated that in order to find God’s purpose for us, we must read the source of God’s instructions, which is the Bible. The Bible will enable an individual to learn what God is and what his will and promise is for his people therefore this enhances in knowing when his calling had landed. In his explanation, the youth pastor of Agape CWC, Mr Mussa, pointed out that,

“When you wake up in the morning, ask yourself, why am I still alive? If anybody understood their purpose, they will definitely enjoy their work because they understand the purpose which God has called them for. So for me that’s a key to work. So where ever you work, you shall be able to make tangible impact.”

A calling is any sort of work that Christians are involved in. Similarly, a calling is basically one’s fulfilment in life in relation to the work that an individual is called for. When they say work is a calling, they meant to say that, every form of work that people are involved in, is a process of fulfilling their purpose in life. As a result, this means that, young adults are not just



doing the roles and responsibilities that they engage in but there is a reason why they do so. Hence, whatever the young adults do in relation to work, is simply understood as a response to God's call. For instance, being a social worker in the department of health is a calling for one of the respondents to the study. Based on the narratives of the participants on work, I started to raise a number of questions related to the challenges around work as a calling such as, when does work become a calling considering that one's career path might keep changing with time and place? And how can one differentiate between talent and a career? Similarly, when do we begin to separate a person (Christian worker) that only quit her job due to other reasons such as sexual harassment, how do we then explain that the work she was previously involved in was not her calling?

As discussed in the paragraph above, it is clear that, each Christian is assumed to have a purpose in life that needs to be fulfilled, from the moment they become a Christian. This 'purpose' in one's life is highly emphasised in Pentecostal Christians at Agape CWC through their teachings. The idea of work as a purpose ultimately influences young adults in Agape CWC to be excellent at what they are assigned to do in order to be productive and bring positive changes in their work. This means that, whatever work members of Agape CWC engage in, the same is understood as a process of responding to one's purpose in life. Through this understanding of work as a calling, people that attend Agape CWC in return understand themselves firstly as Christians then secondly as workers. Understanding themselves as Christian workers then becomes part of their identity.

In continuing our discussion on what it means to say that work is a calling, Agape CWC pastor explains his understanding on what a calling means below:

“God calls us to fulfil his duties anywhere and anytime. People can still operate effectively in the workplace because that's the market place. The Bible says that in whatever we do, we should do it holy. Whether you are in the workplace or in church, we need to remain pure and in line with the word of God. We cannot compromise the word of God just because we are politicians because you work in a particular organisation. The key thing is that, you must remain a child of God. Our bodies are the temple of God so He will guide you wherever you are.”

Similarly, from the interviews conducted, Christians were allowed to work in secular institutions or organisations since work is understood as a calling. This implies that, a Christian member from Agape CWC could work wherever he or she wishes because what is important to the church and the members is that, members should work and fulfil God's purpose on their lives. For instance, overall, everyone during the individual interviews and focus group discussion agreed that there was nothing wrong with a Christian working in a secular company, like the South African Brewery (SAB). Similarly, it is also assumed that, God wants more members to join his kingdom, hence, members are understood to have enormous capability and impact on other people in the workplace, and hence this may lead to more people joining the Pentecostal church. However, at the same time, the young adults are also required to conduct themselves in a suitable manner as recommended by the church and their work contract in order to fulfil their purpose in life.

### **3.4. The Gendered nature of work as a calling**

#### **Agape CWC in the changing traditional gender roles**

The previous two sections have dealt with understanding of work by young adults at Agape CWC. The discussion was further on continued to explore what it means to say that work is a calling. This section will look at work in relation to gender. Gender is discussed in relation to work because I am interested in understanding what religious ideas are formed in the church and how these ideas influence gender relations at the workplace. It is interesting to note as well from the interviews conducted and observations in the church how gender played itself out through church roles and teachings. Due to these reasons, I thought it was important to discuss the gendered nature of work as a calling in this section in order to show how these ideas on gender and work were eventually transferred into the workplace environment.

On the surface, roles in the church were distributed to both men and women as ushers. However, critically analysing their positions through gender lens of, who holds the position of chairperson for ushers of intercessors, men appeared to take up the leading positions. Similarly, it was evident from the role pastor's wife took in the beginning of each Sunday sermon of warmly and kindly receiving the congregation. Symbolically, this was a gesture of what is expected of a woman in the household, for instance, to be a 'home maker' as it was rightly pointed out by Agape CWC pastor. Hence some of these roles and responsibilities

were transferred into the church and its teachings. If the structure of the church as an institution is highly gendered, it is argued that, work despite being defined as a calling is also gendered and hence affects the way young men and women are incorporated in the labour market. Soothill (2007) points out that, the theology, structures and social concerns of Pentecostal Christianity are key elements of a religion that is said to challenge the stronghold of ‘traditional patriarchies’.

During the sermons in Agape CWC, the pastor showed how Christian principles were related to some of the African values and conduct. He encouraged Christians in the church to embrace their heritage. For instance, on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2012, dressed in their traditional attires, members of Agape CWC celebrated the South African Heritage Day. Celebrating heritage day was a way of showing how proud Agape CWC Christians were of their heritage.

Similarly, the church supported marriages. This was also evident during the Friday youth services where only young people met. Since my visit to Agape CWC, three weddings for young couples that were raised and worshipped in the church were officiated and celebrated. These weddings were highly pronounced and were used as examples to the rest of the young people in the church. I had the privilege of interviewing one of the male couples two weeks before his wedding. In explaining what his ideal woman is, Lebohang pointed out that,

“Ever since I was young, and became a born again Christian, I prayed to God that he gives me a God fearing woman who has a job as well. A God fearing woman would be loyal and submissive before me, as her husband and before God. In addition, if she is working, we would support each in buying food and other expenditures in our household.”

In support of the above quotation, finding a partner within the Agape CWC is seen as important because, this would ensure that the church’s ideas on what it means to be a man or woman would be reinforced, practiced and continue to be transferred into another generation. Hence, this would allow the church to grow and the members themselves. It is also interesting to note as well, that, in the case of Lebohang, finding a woman with a job despite being God fearing was seen as important. This implies that, work in this context would create a space for independence in the woman. This means that, a woman could be economically stable however on the other hand, still required to be submissive to her husband due to

biblical views that the church imposes on its members. But is it wrong for a woman to be submissive? Is a woman's submissiveness good for social order?

Following the discussion above on what an ideal woman is, the discussion moves to the question whether men and women can do similar kind of jobs. Many of the respondents in the study pointed out that there is no verse in the Bible that prohibits women from working outside the home. However on the other hand, it was noted that, being Africans and Christians at the same time, their religion was somehow affected by their own traditional norms and values that looked at what it meant to be a man or a woman. Using a gender lens in assessing the structure of Agape CWC and the roles that people were involved in, the church was gendered to some extent. Gender differences were still evident in the church through the ways roles and responsibilities were shared and distributed to men and women according to cultural understandings of what it means to be a woman or a man. Despite the fact that they all shared this view, in their explanations, they all collectively used a "BUT" in their responses which was quite contrary to their initial view. This clearly showed how traditional gender roles were still embedded in their practices at church. It was shared amongst 19 of the respondents that, despite men and women being equal, the physical bodies and our expectations, based on what it means to be a man or a woman, separated what men and men were capable of doing, achieving as well as their incorporation in the labour market. In answering if men and women can do similar kind of jobs, this is what Agape CWC pastor had to say.

"There are certain things that women cannot do simply because those types of jobs are designed for men. The Bible defines women as weak-vessels in 1 Peter 3 verse 7. So on that basis; you cannot expect women to do certain roles. But generally, God doesn't show partiality. But we would like to see things the way God see them."

The quote above clearly shows how traditional gender roles and expectations continue to be reinforced in the church and its teachings. Women are still required to do certain jobs despite work being understood as a calling. Differences between men and women are vividly seen in the church. This influences the way men and women relate in the church and in the workplace hence, the link between the private and the public space (religious ideas on gender and work shapes the incorporation of men and women in the workplace) is clearly shown.

In addition to what is said above, Litchi commented by citing an example of Ephesians 5: 22-24 that states,

“Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is Saviour. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything,”

This verse as well clearly creates the gender differences and gender roles between men and women. Despite men and women viewed as all children of God, the church continued to use teachings that clearly showed boundaries between a man and a woman. Some respondents noted that it was ideal for a woman to work.

“From the beginning in the Book of Genesis, after God made Adam, he noticed that he needed a helper that was a woman, Eve. A helper aids you to continue with life. So a woman can work in order to help the husband and to survive.”

The above quote clearly shows that, the role of a woman is of a helper and supporter of a man. Looking at it from a feminist point of view, women in the workplace continue to be submissive to the ‘men’s world’ due to patriarchal ideas that continue to be reinforced in the church and the workplace.

But if work was defined as a calling by members of Agape CWC, can a woman still work physically challenging jobs despite that being her calling? Although many young adults supported traditional gender roles, some respondents held contrary views about women and work. One of the respondents that held a positive view towards women’s work is Nahfere, and this is how he explained it.

“Young people work in different sectors; most of them are well equipped for such jobs in order to survive in such environments. I have female friends working in the construction factory. Once they do what they do, you will realize that they have to continue doing what they do and nothing else simply because God has equipped them well enough and has given them enough wisdom, courage and power to deal with such a dangerous environment.”

In this context, despite the church teachings on traditional gender roles, some young women recognised that some women had the potential and capability of working in ‘tough’ socially

constructed jobs just like men, in order to fulfil their purposes in their lives. This implies that, given the opportunity, there is still space for women to succeed in their workplaces.

Frahm-Arp (2010: 10) points out that gender continues to remain one of the basic but significant deciding element in our society that organises itself in several ways so that social roles are defined by one's gender. In this study, by focusing on the living gender experiences of young men and women at Agape Christian Worship Centre, it is suggested that, just like in a family and the workplace, gender is also built in the structures of the church as a social institution, hence, young people continually perform gender by conforming, modifying or either rejecting the gender ideologies presented by the church, as an institution. These ideas of traditional gender roles were evident through the church teachings as well as through the different roles that were assigned to young people inside the church. I argue that, young adults' understanding of work as a calling, gender expectations of what it means to be a man or woman continue to shape the kind of jobs young women were involved in the process of fulfilling their purposes that God had called them for. For instance, one of my respondents was forced to quit her program in engineering into nursing since it was seen as a woman's work by her family.

Marxist feminist approach has argued that in order for the labour market to survive, you need patriarchal systems. It is important to acknowledge how women are incorporated into the labour market and the challenges that they face. Despite work being understood as a calling, it is evident through the process they took in responding to their calling in addition to the ways in which women were incorporated in the church roles', ultimately reflect the ways in which patriarchal ideologies play out in the church.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed the ideas of work and its gendered nature. Work is understood as a calling amongst young adults that participated in the study at Agape CWC. A calling in this context is understood as a process of fulfilling one's purpose in life that is given by God. These religious ideas about work influence the young adults conduct both in the church and at their workplace; hence, bringing the private and the public spaces together. On the contrary, ideas of what it means to be a man or a woman also affect the fulfilment of the calling; and this was vividly seen through the teachings and roles that young people were involved in. Hence these ideas of work and its gendered nature are transferred into the

workplace. These ideas of work can help us see that the private space and public space are embedded in each other.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1 Religion and workplace incorporation

#### 4.2 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at how young adults at Agape CWC understand work as a calling. Similarly, it is noted that, the ideas and beliefs of work as a calling are at the same time gendered. As a result, these religious ideas about work are transferred from the church into the workplace; hence, I argue that, the private space shapes the public space. In this chapter I am going to talk about religion and workplace incorporation. The discussion in this chapter is adopted from Jamie Peck's (1996) book *Work-Place: The Social Regulation of Labour Markets* which looks at the incorporation of people into the labour market. Peck (1996) argues that, education and social determine an individual's chances into the labour market whereas at the same time, individuals may choose not to seek employment. The findings of this study show that religion is very central to the incorporation of people in the labour market. My argument seems to challenge what Peck (1996) says. Without any doubt, we agree with Peck (1996) to some extent but I want to argue for the significance of religion in the workplace incorporation. It is argued that, religion has a much deeper foundation that informs people's ideas and choices to joining the labour market than social capital.

I begin by discussing religion as a determining factor of incorporation. This will be followed by a discussion on the theology of prosperity then lastly; a conclusion will be made at the end of the chapter.

#### 4.3 Religion as a determining factor of incorporation

The definition of a workplace in Agape CWC is understood as either working inside the church or outside the church's perimeters. Six (6) of the participants that were involved in this study were formally employed by Agape CWC. Some were employed as administrators or in the production process as engineers (editing videos that were recorded by them during a church service on Sunday or Tuesday services or during conferences conducted by the church inside its compound or outside ministering). It was from this observation that I also began to expand ways in which work was understood by Agape CWC members. Litchi explained her career path briefly in this way.

“In my first job, I was employed by the South African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC). Some months later, I was approached by one of the church elders that the



church was offering me a job as an Information and Business analyst for the church. I did not hesitate but quickly resigned at SABC and joined my colleagues at Agape CWC because I knew that God wanted to bring me closer to his kingdom.”

Basing my analysis on Litchi’s narrative, it is clear that the church environment is understood as a workplace. Young people at Agape CWC chose their careers based on what they thought was called for them by God. Some chose to work within the church whilst others worked in secular companies as social workers, engineers, pilots or nurses. Their choices on their formal employment in the labour market is grounded on their religious beliefs and ideas, specifically on what their purpose is, in accordance to the word of God.

Subsequently, Agape CWC environment is understood as welcoming, peaceful and calm and this is the same reason why all my respondents chose to be interviewed inside the church premises. In Litchi’s understanding, it is assumed that her calling could be fulfilled effectively whilst working in a space like the church, where it is welcoming, peaceful and with people that she shares the same ideas and beliefs about work. I argue that, when people or individuals are comfortable in their workplaces, this eventually results to positive effectiveness and increased productivity of goods and services. Litchi’s position was followed with a reference to the bible in the book of Proverbs 28:19 ‘Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies will have their fill of poverty.’”

In her remark on the importance of Christian involvement in the work activity, Mpho said the following.

“The Bible encourages us to work. Apostle Paul in the book of 2 Thessalonians 3 verses 10 said, if a man will work, he may eat; if he does not work, he neither can eat, nor should he eat...but starve.”

From the above quote, work is understood as essential for one’s survival but most importantly, enable a person to fulfil a purpose. As we continued our discussion on Christian life and work, Pastor Humphrey of Agape CWC briefly shared his story in this way.

“I do what I do because of my desires to fulfil God’s purpose. I have qualifications outside the church; I have a master’s degree in chemistry. I have taken up managerial positions in many companies. But in 2004, I chose to start ministering in the church

fulltime because I realised that I had been running away from God’s call for me quite a number of years.”

It is clear from the above statement that religion is an important thing in many Christian’s lives and work. Like many young adults, religion appears essential in assisting individuals in meeting their callings.

On a similar note, Peck points out that the first process of understanding labour quality in the labour market is the incorporation of labour. Peck argues that, the first problem of the labour market is evident when labour is incorporated into labour market. By this, Peck illustrates that, incorporation of labour is the processes by which individuals are integrated into the labour market as “wage earners” in order to earn a living. Hence this becomes a determining factor on their capacity to enter the labour market at the same time, exposing their capacities in the work force. For instance, education and skills obtained can determine an individual’s choices and chances into entering the labour market as an engineer or a nurse. However at the same time, individuals may have alternative choices of whether to be formally employed or informally employed. For example, a qualified social worker might choose to stay home and establish her own care home for the elderly or stay home in order to look after her children. The argument is that, labour policies (education policy) may determine an individual’s chances into joining the labour market whereas at the same time, individuals may choose not to seek employment.

Using Agape CWC case study, I argue that, not only did the labour policies (education policy) affect the chances of the young people in the labour market, religious ideas and beliefs that were given to young adults in the church profoundly influenced young adults’ decision into entering into the labour market. I further argue that, workers that were at the same time Christians and were exposed to Agape CWC for some time (more than 6 months), made their choices about their work, for example, where to work, based on the purpose that God had assigned them to do. Amongst the group of people I studied from Agape CWC, work was understood as a calling. For these people, they stated that, through their work, they were simply fulfilling God’s purpose that was assigned to them. For instance, some of the young adults were involved in the work of nursing and social work by providing for the needs of vulnerable people in their families and communities in order to make a tangible difference.

#### 4.4 The theology of Prosperity

In this section of the chapter, I discuss prosperity theology as a theme. During the interviews conducted, the theology of prosperity was highly pronounced amongst the participants. It manifested itself in an emphasis on success and abundance. Prosperity theology refers to the belief that God intends every Christian to be successful, healthy and wealthy and the believer needs simply to claim these gifts as his or her right as a child of God. In essence, it means that a true Christian will inevitably enjoy wealth and success. Soothill (2007) notes that, poverty and suffering on the other hand, indicate sin, or at least an inadequate faith or understanding of God's law. The doctrine is justified by scripture for example, the law of sowing or 'seed faith' which dictates that whatever you sow (usually in financial donations is evangelism) you will reap; develop largely as a result of the financial needs of televangelism.

Notably from the interviews and focus groups conducted, it was agreed by the respondents that it is important to recognise that everything belongs to God therefore it was essential to be a good steward in doing what God has entrusted you to do by paying God's things to God. For instance, it was argued that Christians need to invest in God's kingdom. Mathew 6 verse 20 was used to support the above position

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

Since members of the church understood themselves as God's stewards, they were encouraged to invest their money (God's money) in ways that God instructs. Ngedzeni strongly argued that “if you disobey his instructions, you will no longer be his caretaker or God will likely quit blessing you with success. The church gives a biblical management for money. Romans 213 verse 1.”

Luke 19:17 tells a story of a hard working servant of whom the boss rewarded extravagantly, “Well done my good servant! His master replied. Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.” Many of my respondents constantly referred to this Bible verse in order to explain that God will multiply an individual's success based on the work that one does; for a person 'reaps what he sows.' In order to support the position raised above, Litchi referred to Joshua 1verse 8 that says, 'keep this Book (the Bible) of the law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do

everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.’ This simply indicates that Christians need to act according to the word of God and as a result God will bring success upon their lives.

The prosperity theology in the Pentecostal charismatic church demands that Christians should give to the kingdom of God, mostly through money. But for these groups of young, not only did they give their tithes to the church every month but they also showed their good works by cleaning the church and the church surroundings on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 6am. They often quoted Agape’s key scripture to justify this act of dedication to the church.

In the process of fulfilment of one’s call, most of the respondents also understood the need to accumulate money for the kingdom of God. This explained why young people in the church strived in responding to their calls so that they could give tithes in order to assist the church to grow in its functions and outreach programs because young people were able to return what belonged to him and at the same time fulfilling Gods purpose on their lives. Mr Musa explains his career path in this way.

“I started my career as a social worker but I stopped in the middle of the program when I was left with seven (7) modules to complete the whole program. I stopped because of financial issues since social work profession does not provide one with the maximum monthly salary that I needed in my life. I saw it as a career for poor people, which was contrary to the view God’s promises to his people.”

It is clear that, financial stability was evidently seen as important in Christian life in order to sustain the church and its various projects such as providing for the poor both inside and outside the church. In continuing the discussion on financial stability, Agape CWC pastor explained that,

“You must save to become wealthy. When someone saves money it implies that you spend less than you earn. This is not easy but it demands self control and self discipline with your money and this is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.”

Young people were encouraged to save money. The teachings in the church were of the business world. The congregation, especially young people that had just started working were encouraged to save the excess portion of the salary that they got from their hard work.

In addition, the youth pastor pointed out that, “the Bible tells us in the book of Proverbs 21 verse 17 that whoever loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and olive oil will never be rich.’ It was pointed out that, ‘God has a pattern of conduct and he wants people to follow it.’ For instance, people should be willing to give 10 per cent of their salary to the church since this was understood as God’s pattern. Having riches was not as a problem in the kingdom of God. However, one’s wealth had a purpose and that was to increase the Kingdom of God. As a result, young people were urged not spend it for their own personal luxury.

Proverbs 22 verse 29 says, ‘do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank.’ This was understood by the young people in the context of prosperity; that God will offer them prosperity in their process of fulfilling their purposes in life. It was finally concluded by Agape CWC pastor that ‘good production in your work produces wealth and this assist the church to grow.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is clear from the discussion above that Peck’s argument on the incorporation of labour into the labour market reinforces the idea that the private and the public spaces are embedded in each other. As it was observed, there were particular ways in which religion was able to produce certain subjectivities amongst its members. For example, in the central part of their work, religion influenced the way young people approached their work through Christian conduct (a manner that was taught at church) and this shaped the ways in which they participated in the economy. From the interviews conducted with young adults from Agape CWC show how hegemonic ideas of accumulation of wealth are both derived from the structures of the church and the workplace in order to sustain their two environments.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.1 'Christian workers' and workplace integrity

#### 5.2 Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed religion and workplace incorporation. I argued that, social capital and education are not the only determining factors of incorporation of labour into the labour market; rather, religious ideas also influence the incorporation of labour into the labour market. The discussion in this chapter mainly focuses on Christian workers and workplace integrity. Through this discussion, I will show that religious ideas taught in the church are able to create a particular identity for workers that are Christians. In addition, I will also show that, the ideas, norms, values and conduct of a Christian worker are transferred into the workplace environment, which is understood as a public space. In a similar way, I will also demonstrate in this chapter that the church (private space) shapes the workplace (public space). I argue in this chapter that workers (members of Agape CWC) managed to conduct themselves in a similar manner both in the church and the workplace spaces because they view their two worlds as one. In order to demonstrate this argument, I will look at various themes beginning with Integrity: Preparing workers for the workplace, secondly, Influence of the church on young people, thirdly Relationship between the church and the workplace, fourthly, it will be a discussion on the experiences of Christian workers at work. Finally, a conclusion will be made based on the key arguments raised in the chapter.

#### 5.3 Integrity: Preparing workers for the workplace

During the process of exploring how members of Agape CWC understand work, a concept of integrity of workers in the workplace repeatedly emerged in the discussion. At the heart of Agape CWC is the teaching of Integrity. One crucial teaching in which Christian conduct was taught and emphasised at Agape CWC was through the concept of integrity. This notion of integrity is observed to be important in Agape CWC through my observation of paintings and posters written integrity that were pasted on the walls. At the altar of Agape CWC and on the sides of the walls in the church, posters and messages on integrity displayed the vision of Agape CWC which says, "Showing integrity in the doctrine of Jesus Christ." These letters were clearly and strategically displayed that no one would miss them: a symbolic gesture to all members to pay attention to their daily conducts. The concept of integrity then raised a

number of questions such as, what integrity is understood as according to Agape CWC members in addition to how Christian worker showed integrity at the workplace.

Integrity is a means of teaching young people to behave in a Christian conduct that required characters of submission, loyalty, faithfulness and hard worker. In explaining what integrity is, the youth pastor, Mr Mussa, explained that integrity was understood in the following way

“Integrity says that to the person, whether I am working at the South African Brewery Company, you are a Christian in the manner in which you render services to your employer or employees. When everyone else is stealing the employer’s property, integrity demands that you remain a Christian because the Bible commandment says that ‘thou shall not steal’. Similarly, you remain a Christian by working efficiently at work without supervision. Integrity separates everything else from what it does not belong to it by being true to who you are without bending back or forth.”

The significance of the above narrative in this discussion clearly emphasises that, integrity amongst Agape Christian young adults is understood as a constant characteristic which has no boundaries based on time and space. Due to this, Christian workers are required to conduct themselves according to the church values and what their work social contract stipulate. Peck (1996) argues that, labour contract is a “social contract” implying that, it comes with conditions of what is expected of the worker to do in order to fulfil her duties in relations of “trust”, skills and educational qualification. The church therefore understood the social contract as ‘a document that listed the things that workers were not expected to do and what was expected of them as well’ hence, they understood the church (private space) and the workplace (public space) as spaces that consist of ‘dos and don’ts’. Young adults at Agape CWC understood the “social contract” and South African Constitution and other workplaces as secular entities. However, the church teachings were taught and understood in relation to the “social contract” and the South African Constitution and work ethics for workers (contract) in ways that forced young people to be submissive, faithful and hard working workers by displaying ethical Christian conducts. Reproduction of labour in Agape CWC was evident through the ideas of the church on work and the messages that were given to young people on the notion of work and Christian conduct. I argue that, by way of understanding the work social contract and Christian teachings on ethical Christian conduct brings the private space and public together.

The pastor of Agape CWC explained that he believed that Christian conduct was evident in the daily life of Agape CWC Christians at the workplace. In his explanation during the sermons and in the interview, he argued that,

“A Christian has to be loyal, submissive and not stubborn (for stubbornness in the kingdom of God is related to witch craft- and such a person needs to be delivered from such behaviour). So whether you are at the workplace or in the church, you need to be submissive to your elders and God’s teachings.”

Based on the above teaching, the church expected the Christian workers to not only to work hard in their jobs but to work efficiently and not waste time. Proverbs 20 verse 13, ‘do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare’. As a result, young people were urged to work hard in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the work they did in order to be more productive. In addition to the discussion on the Christian worker conduct, Agape CWC pastor added that,

“The Bible in the book of Proverbs 10 verse 4 says ‘lazy hands make for poverty but diligent hands bring wealth.’ Therefore, we want to be the walking letters at the workplace as ambassadors of Christ in line with the purpose that God has given us. We seek to develop and build a generation that is submissive and excellent at their calling that shows integrity and love in Christ and this will radiate at the workplace.”

Using the narrative above, a good Christian worker’s conduct both in the church and at the workplace is believed to influence other workers in the work environment. Christian workers are forced to be exemplary and excellent workers in order to fulfil their purposes.

The teachings were also related to the work ethics (contract) at the workplace which demands that workers conduct themselves in manners that were acceptable in their environment. The church and the young people therefore understood worker conduct and Christian conduct closely linked since they all demanded them to be exemplary. The aim of the church was therefore to make sure that the young people were indeed acting according to the word of God. Obedience was also taken as a key to God’s kingdom through the teachings of integrity. Young people were taught that it was important to honour God by obeying the instructions he



gave them. Reneilwe explains how a Christian is supposed to conduct himself or herself as follows.

“If you are stubborn in the workplace, you are also being stubborn in the house of God. So even at the workplace, when you obey your boss, you are also obedient to God and honouring him by following his words”

Young people were urged to take the responsibility of acting towards the word of God and the church’s teachings since their bodies were seen as the temple of God. Stubbornness was prohibited both at work and the church because it provided a space for workers to be unproductive at their work; hence workers will not be able to fulfil their purpose in life. This implies that they are accountable to God through their works (and this is related to Agape’s key scripture that is taken from James 2 verse 18 which says, ‘show me your faith without my works and I will show you my faith by works.’ Nahfere points out on what it means to be a good Christian worker by illustrating that,

“God has given us the will power to make a choice. Being a Christian is a choice- hence you choose to live like Christ by showing integrity. Integrity is the glue that holds character, talent and aspiration.”

Based on the above statement, integrity continues to be emphasised as a crucial tool in a Christian workers conduct in the workplace. It is by being a Christian worker with integrity that effective production can take place in the workplace.

During the process of healing and deliverance of evil spirits from the members, the pastor lays hands on the heads of the people, prays and speaks loudly in tongues. For some Christians, the impact of this process is seen through falling on the ground, mumbling deeply whilst some cried bitterly. These gestures of falling and crying were indicators of surrendering and giving themselves wholly to God and accepting before the church that their follow up acts and behaviours would be holy where ever they go (including at the workplace). Below, Agape CWC pastor explains the role that the church takes in preparing workers for the workplace.

“We equip believers in this church according to Ephesians 4 verse 11 where we note that Paul was told to be the apostle of his ministry. We believe that believers are the ones that are supposed to do this work where ever they go. Not only through the spirit

but also through their bodies; hence in this church, we prepare our Christian workers through the healing and deliverance of the body since we are aware that the devil often times attacks the bodies of the Christians in order to prevent them from being productive at work.”

With reference to the above statement, workers are required to take a leading role in their work and serve their communities as well, like the church. It is interesting to note from the above quote that integrity is also demonstrated in the workplace through the way they present their bodies to the public. This shows that, there is a subtle form of control of the body both in the workplace and at church.

It was agreed during the focus group discussion that when you become a child of God (born again Christian), whether you are serving as a pastor or serving as a civil servant in the market place, you are still in the kingdom of God. God expects you to show integrity in the gospel of Jesus Christ by being the light to the world through your Christian conduct at the workplace.

For those young people that were not employed yet, the church also held services to prepare them for the workplace. On this note, Richard, points out that,

“God’s desire is to see us succeed. We are urged to listen to our calls. Similarly, the church conducts services on how to prepare our curriculum vitae and how to prepare for interviews as well. We need to be successful so that we can also support our church”

By the church assisting young adults in creating their own curriculum vitae, this shows that the church influence and support young people to find jobs so that their callings can be met. In addition, Barker (2007:413) points out that work is being rapidly reorganised in multiple ways because of the global integration of markets and production and the transformation of identities, expectations and values surrounding work. Barker (2007) speaks directly to the concerns of this study.

## 5.4 'Influence' of the pastors on young people

Young people in Agape CWC were motivated and inspired by their pastor and the youth pastor who appeared to be their role models. In a similar way, the pastors as well tried to live exemplary lives in whatever they did in order to teach young people the Christian conducts that were seen ideal before God. They often emphasised to the young to understand that it is God that 'has placed us here and made us what we are for a reason; it's not a coincidence.'

The young people in the focus group discussion recognised and acknowledge the need of having a pastor in the church to lead them all the time. A reference is made to Hebrews 5 verse 12 that says, "in fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again." In a similar way, the two pastors that I interviewed for the study also recognised their role in the young people's lives and pointed out that,

"We believe that you create an impact through what you do. If you preach the gospel, you are going to make an impact on the young people. Malachi 2 verse 7 says that "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth."

Notably, the influence of the pastors on the young people was not only through the ways in which they conducted themselves but also through their appearance and self presentation. Agape CWC pastor briefly narrated his influence on young adults in this way,

"I know that I have enormous influence on the young people in Agape CWC. If I came to church with trousers half-way down and a long shirt, everyone else would follow suit, especially among the young people. They would say if the pastor accepts this then we might as well do the same. I have direct impact on these young people"

The example cited above clearly shows that not only was the church influencing on how to conduct themselves but also taught young people how to be presentable in the church but also at the workplace since dressing was understood as part of an individual self discipline.

In conclusion, the pastor of Agape CWC pointed out that,

“Everyone in Agape is urged to identify with God’s words. Our vision in this church is to submit to his word that God should be the final decision. The aim is to make an impact in our workplaces, whether locally and globally in order to live what we preach, hence James 2: 18”

Based on the quote above, it is assumed that Christian workers should act according to the word of God at all times in order to be effective in their work and make a difference in the long run.

### **5.5 Relationship between the church and the workplace**

During the interviews with the young adults and pastors at Agape CWC, all the participants pointed out that there was a direct relationship between the church and the workplace, which could not be separated. It is for this reason I thought it was best to discuss this relationship. I argue in this chapter that the church and the workplace share similarities in their values and this create a reciprocal relationship between the private and public space.

During the interviews and focus group discussion, all the members could not separate between the relationship that exists between the church and the workplace. The first similarity was drawn through the rules and regulations at the workplace- that clearly state how a worker is required to conduct him or herself in order to produce and services for people in the market. On the other hand, the church has ‘do and don’ts’ that force people to behave in a particular recommended way that is referred to as Christian conduct. In continuing our discussion on the relationship that exists between the church and the workplace, Agape CWC pastor emphasised on the relationship as follows.

“A Christian community is not an isolated place from the workplace. There is a direct relationship between the two. The workplace is a bigger community within a bigger community where we are meant to make an impact. One can make a similar impact within a workplace just like in a Christian community. There is a direct relationship between the Christian community and the workplace. Hence, we cannot separate the two.”

On one particular Sunday, as the pastor of Agape CWC was preaching, pointed out that, “in your workplace, you don’t receive the fire of God but rather you extent your blessings and

fire of God to your workplace.” This implies that, Christian conduct in the workplace is affected by religious ideas that are imposed on the individual as a Christian worker.

In his emphasis on the strong relationship that exists between the church and the workplace, the pastor of Agape CWC argued that,

“God is life; hence a human being can not be broken down into social or spiritual. A person has to be whole in everything. For this reason, that’s why we are not preaching the gospel of Christ in isolation because we know that our homes, communities and workplaces affect us in different ways. There could be some challenges in life but God has called us to be everywhere.”

## 5.5. Experiences at the workplace

From the Focus Group Discussion that was conducted, it was agreed by all the respondents that, being a Christian in the work place never prevented an individual from facing challenges. Most of the respondents reported that, the biggest challenge that they faced was due to the fact that some of their work colleagues were not Christians. This sometimes caused tensions between them when it came to making crucial decisions on a particular issue for instance on ways of providing services to their clients or working hours. Most of the Christian workers claimed to have been using their religious ideas and beliefs in order to justify their decisions and choices.

The second challenge that some respondents noted was that, their age also affected the way they conducted their work simply because the expectations from their work were sometimes too much for them to meet. In order to explain the coping mechanism to challenges that Christian workers experience at the workplace, Nokuthula, explains her story as follows.

“The Bible urges us Christians should cry out to God at all times and place. When having trouble at work, Jeremiah 29: 12 motivates me as it says to us Christians, then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen

Similarly, some young women reported to have been facing challenges at the workplace due to the expectations that were attached to what it meant to be a woman. “The gospel pushes

me to be productive at work and that's what separates me from my colleagues through the way I conduct myself despite being a woman," said Amanda.

In order to show the relationship between men and women at the workplace, Theodore briefly explained, "The lady that I work with in the same office plays a good role in the office of a mother and a sister. It's interesting to work with her and we treat her with respect as well."

Ngedzeni, one of the respondent explained how he got retrenched at his first job as an engineer. He was angry at God,

"If God gave me this job as my call, why did I get sacked? This is contrary to what, 2 Peter 1:4 says. The verse points out that 'the fruit of the holy spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. '"

Suffering for a Christian is understood as an important thing in a Christian's life. First all, suffering is understood as a way in which people see themselves in relation to the relationship they have with God. Secondly, suffering is understood as a justification in building and renewing character as a Christian worker. Suffering in the workplace is acceptable for Christians.

Ngedzeni continued to narrate his story in the following manner,

'But with time, I learnt in my church that without no doubt, God has complete faith in His own plan and purpose, in all he does. I needed to be retrenched so that I developed my own character as Christian and at the same time a worker, and also learn within them'

Ngedzeni

The church as an institution continues to emotionally support its members that are going through suffering process (a cleansing processing) so that a good character that is in accordance to Christian values can be accomplished.

With reference to Ecclesiastes 7 verse 14 that say "when times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future." The verse was used by the respondents to explain that God created circumstances so that Christians could consider circumstances that they were experiencing in order to enhance them develop themselves. It was understood by the

respondents that, despite God calling Christian workers to fulfil a certain purpose in their lives, the Christian workers sometimes had to grieve and endure because it is acceptable by God. In addition, this process of facing challenges and suffering at the workplace allowed the workers to reconstruct their own identities because suffering was presumed to build a good character in a person and find their own true calling. In agreement to the above mentioned, Nahfere smilingly said,

“If only you knew the number of Agape CWC Christians that call our Pastor whilst at the workplace when faced with a challenge you would be amazed. I personally have called him on a number of times when I am so down and cannot face the challenge in front of me. After that magical phone call, my attitude changes for the better and I become productive again.”

It is interesting to note that, the role of the pastor in the Christian workers lives is also evidently important during the process of work in the workplace environment. In agreement with Gramsci (1971:365-66) hegemonic ideas sold by the pastors (organic intellectuals) in the church are not only effective in the church arena but are transferred into the workplace space. On the other hand, the pastor of Agape CWC pointed out that,

“You don’t need to grumble. Christians like to complain at the workplace. This behaviour of complaining is not acceptable because as you do that, you allow the spirit of deception to interfere in your work therefore you become less productive.”

Christian workers, like any other worker at a workplace also experience suffering through various ways. However, young people in the church are urged to focus more on the ways of bringing impact within the various work sectors they were involved in order to serve God’s kingdom and not complain.

Furthermore, Peck argues that, labour contract is a “social contract” implying that, it comes with conditions of what is expected of the worker to do in order to fulfil her duties in relations of “trust”, skills and educational qualification. Arguably, if levels of trust are low between the managerial staff and workers in general, this eventually leads to conflict and disagreements’ in the workplace. Young people at Agape CWC understood the “social contract” and South African Constitution and other workplaces as secular entities. However, the church teachings were taught and understood in relation to the “social contract” and the

South African Constitution and work ethics for workers (contract) in ways that forced young people to be submissive, loyal, faithful and hard working workers by displaying ethical Christian conducts. Reproduction of labour in Agape CWC was evident through the ideas of the church on work and the messages that were given to young people on the notion of work and Christian conduct. In the month of September, 2012, the main pastor of Agape CWC emphasised on the concept of Christian conduct. Through these ideas the church, enabled young people to suit into the work environment easily without necessarily having to renegotiate their identities at the workplace. For instance, many of the young that were interviewed explained that they started their day at work with a prayer, carried their Bibles in their bags; and this represented a contract that they had signed at the workplace between them and God (guiding them throughout their day at work). Individuals understood their social world using religious ideologies hence this evidently separated them from other workers in the workplace through their Christian worker conduct. It was noted in the study that religion was very useful in relation to social reproduction. As it was observed, there were particular ways in which religion was able to produce certain subjectivities amongst its members. For example, in the central part of their work, religion influenced the way young people approached their work through Christian conduct (a manner that was taught at church) and ways in which they participated in the economy.

Agape CWC key scripture states, “Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by works” James 2 verse 18. By using the verse shown above in the church, taken from the bible clearly constructed particular identities of workers for the labour market. Religion in this case was able to develop collective ideas and belief systems within an institution and these constructed identities were transferred into the workplace. For example, the pastors in Agape CWC understood work as a calling. As a result urged the young people to find their calling and try to make an impact within their workplace through the ways they approach work by being excellent in their work in addition to being faithful and loyal to their bosses. Their bodies were firstly understood as Christians then as workers. Hence they were required to represent Christ where ever they were located at a particular point in time and history through the works that they were involved in. Acknowledging the debate on structure and agency, raises the question of what extent are these young people able to maintain the church teachings on integrity considering that when they are located in the workplace, issues of individuality (resulting to the opening on questions of subjectivity) that come into play



since human beings have got multiple identities. From the interviews conducted, it was noted that many of the young people were reluctant to renegotiate their identity simply because as discussed earlier in the paper) the church teachings on the notion of integrity were already in line with the work ethics that already linked the workplace and the church.

### **5.7 Conclusion**

One crucial teaching in which Christian conduct was taught and emphasised at Agape CWC was through the concept of integrity. Integrity is understood as aspect of character that shows loyalty, submissive and hard worker. Young adults in the church are urged to practice integrity both at church and in the workplace. In addition, based on the ideas that the church enforced on their members, workers formed particular social subjectivities as Christian workers. They firstly understand themselves as Christians then secondly as workers. Due to this identity, it provides a space were by young adults from Agape CWC can understand both the church and the workplace as one space since their teachings are understood as one. This proves that the private and the public spaces are indeed embedded into each other.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In the study that I conducted at Agape CWC, the main research question that I ask is what is the role of religion in social reproduction? Barker (2007) defines social reproduction as

*“the physical reproduction of the species, along with the care and work that goes along with meeting material and emotional needs; the reproduction of labour power through education and training; and the reproduction of broader cultural and social norms, practices and identities”*

I located the study in a church simply because I wanted to explore the role the church plays in social reproduction, a process that involves society reproducing itself, for instance through the provision of jobs and the moulding of individual or collective group behaviours and ideas, that go unmet by the labour market. In order to explore the role of religion in social reproduction, I focused on how young adults understand the notion of work at Agape CWC in Pretoria.

The young adults in this study were from a Pentecostal Charismatic Church. My study focused on the Pentecostal Charismatic Church. The Pentecostal Charismatic Church is a movement within Christianity that places enormous emphasis on the personal experience and the relationship between individuals and God (Frahm-Arp, 2010:47-70). Subsequently, Barker (2007:416) points out that this movement differs from other churches because of its strong belief in the Holy Spirit, which is assumed to enable a Christian to live a fruitful and holy life. I conducted the research at Agape CWC with 16 young adults of between 19 years to 35 years old and 2 pastors. All the participants were formerly employed in the labour market and attended Agape CWC for more than six months. In carrying out the research, I used a qualitative method of approach by using interviews, focus group discussions as well as participant observation.

Many people illustrated that they attended Agape CWC because the messages and teachings that the pastor preached were practical and related to their lives, so it was easy for them to act according to the word of God. It was found during the study that, work is understood as a calling- a process of fulfilling of one’s purpose which is given by God. Hence the ‘purpose’ is understood as the reason for which anything is done, created or exists. So in this case, work is understood as a process of fulfilling the reason why they exist on earth. For instance, the

purpose of Christians is to do or achieve what is hoped for or expected in order to achieve one's potential or desires, contentment, happiness, pleasure, satisfaction towards one's work. In explaining what it means to say work is a calling, it is deduced that, work is any form of activity that Christians are involved in. This suggested that a Christian member of Agape CWC could work wherever he or she wishes because what is important to the church and the members is that, members should work and fulfil God's purpose on their lives. Equivalently, the young adults are also required to conduct themselves in a suitable manner as recommended by the church and their work contract in order to fulfil their purpose in life.

Interesting enough, it is noted as well that despite work being understood as a calling, it is at the same time gendered. The church has particular ideas of what it means to be man or a woman; for example, it is vividly pointed out that women are not allowed to do some particular jobs that are assumed to be energy consuming, such as construction and mining, since they are assumed not to be physically capable to do such jobs. Ideas of traditional gender roles are evident through the church teachings as well as through the different roles that are assigned to young people inside the church. Soothill (2007) adds that Pentecostal Christianity contains within its theology and practices the power to transform gender relations and gender specific behaviour. In this study, by focusing on the living gender experiences of young men and women at Agape Christian Worship Centre, I suggest that, just like in a family and the workplace, gender is also built in the structures of the church as a social institution, hence, young adults continually perform gender by conforming, modifying or either rejecting the gender ideologies presented by the church, as an institution. These religious ideas about women and work are ultimately transferred into the labour market and result to negatively affecting the incorporating of women in the labour market as they are understood as '*weak vessels*' by the bible. Marxist feminist approach to women in the labour market has argued that in order for the labour market to survive, you need patriarchal ideas. In this particular case study, religious ideas about men and women's work clearly reflect the ways in which patriarchal ideologies play out in the church and eventually shape the functioning of the workplace environment. As a result, this clearly shows the relationship that exists between the private and public space as I argue that, the private space (church) shape the public space (workplace) through the ideas that are transferred from one space to another by the Christian workers.

On another note, my findings show that religion is very central to the incorporation of people in the labour market. As observed in the study, many young adults at Agape CWC choose their jobs based on what they think is called for them by God. For instance, some choose to work within the church whilst others work in secular companies such as the South African Brewery Company. Their choices on their formal employment in the labour market is grounded on their religious beliefs and ideas, specifically on what their purpose is, in accordance to the word of God. My argument challenges what Peck (1996) says but I want to argue for the significance of religion in the workplace incorporation. Peck (1996) argues that education levels and social capital determine an individual's choices and chances into entering the labour market. This simply implies that, as an engineer or a nurse, your decision to work in the labour market will be influenced by social capital that you developed over time or the qualification that you have earned as an individual. However at the same time, individuals may have alternative choices of whether to be formally employed or informally employed. With reference to the case study that I conducted at Agape CWC, not only did education affect the chances of the young adults joining the labour market, however to a very large extent, various ideas and beliefs that are given to them in the church also influence their chances of seeking employment. I argue that, workers that are at the same time Christians and are exposed to Agape CWC for some time (more than 6 months), make their choices on their work, for example, where to work, based on the purpose that God has assigned them to do. I argue that, religion has a much deeper foundation that informs people's ideas and choices to joining the labour market than social capital. This clearly shows that the private space influences the public space.

The pastor in Agape CWC represents the church. In agreement with what Gramsci pointed out in his theory of hegemony (that is used in this paper), the pastor appears as a form of 'organic intellectual'. Gramsci (1971:365-66) speaks of organic intellectuals as people that bring about change in the society. The pastor's ideas of what it means to be a good Christian worker are passed through the pastor to the young adults. This is the process in which ideologies are sold to the young adults and ultimately these ideas of work are transferred from the church to the workplace, hence the private space shaped the public space.

Furthermore, Peck argues that, labour contract is a "*social contract*" implying that, it comes with conditions of what is expected of the worker in order to fulfil his or her duties in relations of "trust", skills and educational qualification. The church understand the social

contract as ‘a document that list the things that workers are not expected to do and what is expected of them as well hence, they understand the church (private space) and the workplace (public space) as spaces that consist of ‘do’s and don’ts’. In addition, the church teachings are taught and understood in relation to the “social contract” in ways that forced young adults to be submissive, loyal, faithful and hard working workers by displaying ethical Christian conducts. Reproduction of labour in Agape CWC is evident through the ideas of the church on work and the messages that are given to young people on the notion of work and Christian conduct. One aspect of a Christian conduct that is emphasised by the pastor is the teaching of integrity. Integrity amongst Agape Christian young adults is understood as a constant characteristic that has no boundaries based on time and space. Due to this, Christian workers are required to conduct themselves according to the church values and what their work social-contract stipulate. Through these ideas the church, enables young adults to suit into the workplace environment easily without necessarily having to renegotiate their identities at the workplace. For instance, many of the young adults explained that they started their day at work with a prayer, carried their bibles in their bags; and this represented a contract that they had signed at church and at the workplace between them and God (and this guided them throughout their day at work). As a result, the young adults understand their social world using religious ideologies hence this evidently separates them from other workers in the workplace through their Christian worker conduct. It is clear in the study that religion is very useful in relation to social reproduction. As it was observed, there are particular ways in which religion is able to produce certain subjectivities amongst its members. For example, in the central part of their work, religion influence the way young people approached their work through Christian conduct (a manner that was taught at church) and ways in which they participate in the economy.

On the notion of integrity, Moodie (1994) chapter on *worker identity: Migrant Cultures, Social Networks, and the Practice of Personal* in his book “*Going for Gold*: illustrates changes in the social conditions by which black miners in South Africa were made workers and men but also to show mine workers made each other and themselves, as they struggled to practice integrity in an alienated world. ‘Many scholars have considered migrants men of two worlds’, Moodie (1994). According to this interpretation, in migrating to work men cast off their rural home selves and take on mine selves. However, Moodie (1994) disagrees with this debate of multiple identities by arguing that, ‘while archival research and interviews in both

Lesotho and Pondaland have convinced me that the argument for dual identities is historically incorrect (and inadequate even for the contemporary period)’. Integrity in this context was defined in terms of the ability of a person ‘to personally practice and socially supported virtue in which one lives a life true to culturally derived but personally constructed purposes.’ Moodie (1994) continues to argue that, identity construction does not occur in isolation but rather, individuals act according to the context or the structure that is made available to them or where they are located at a particular point in time or historical period. Interestingly enough, the young adults that I interviewed at Agape CWC understand themselves as Christians and workers at the same time. Their identity as Christian workers is both formed in the church and the workplace through the religious ideas that are given to them through the organic intellectuals.

Agape CWC key scripture states, “Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by works” James 2 verse 18. By using this verse in the church every day, clearly shows how particular identities of workers were constructed for the labour market. Religion in this case is able to develop collective ideas and belief systems within an institution and these construct identities are transferred into the workplace. For example, the pastors in Agape CWC understand work as a calling. As a result urged the young people to find their calling and try to make an impact within their workplace through the ways they approach work by being excellent in their work in addition to being faithful and loyal to their bosses. Their bodies are firstly understood as Christians then as workers. Hence they are required to represent Christ where ever they are located at a particular point in time and history through the works that they are involved in. Acknowledging the debate on structure and agency, raises the question of what extent are these young people able to maintain the church teachings on integrity considering that when they are located in the workplace, issues of individuality (resulting to the opening on questions of subjectivity) that come into play since human beings have got multiple identities. From the interviews conducted, it is noted that many of the young people are reluctant to renegotiate their identity simply because as discussed earlier in the paper) the church teachings on the notion of integrity are already in line with the work ethics that already linked the workplace and the church.

Despite work being understood as a ‘fulfilment’ of one’s purpose in terms of happiness and pleasure, the experience of Christian workers at work interviewed in the study also showed some they also experience difficulties just like any other worker in a workplace. Most of the respondents reported that, the biggest challenge that they face is due to the fact that some of

their work colleagues are not Christians. This sometimes causes tensions between them when it comes to making crucial decisions on a particular issue for instance on ways of providing services to their clients or working hours. However, it is noted that the pastors at Agape CWC continue to play a prominent role in the lives of the Christian workers when they are still in the workplace. In a similar way, the church prepares the workers for the workplace through the process of healing and deliverance of evil spirits from the members. The pastor lays hands on the heads of the people, prays and speaks loudly in tongues. It is believed that the devil attacks the bodies of workers that are spiritually weak in order to make them unproductive in the workplace. As a result, the church believes in healing and delivering the body so that Christian workers are constantly effective and productive in their work at the workplace. While some scholars have argued that that the private space and the public space are separated, I have argued in this study that the private space and the public space are embedded in each other.

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## **APPENDIX**

In the first section of the appendix is a letter of consent, permitting me to carry out the research at Agape CWC. The second section of the appendix is the interview schedule for the pastors. The third section in the appendix is the interview schedule for the young adults. The last section of appendix gives a brief description of the participants from Agape CWC that were involved in the study.

### **1. CONSENT LETTER**

You are asked to participate in a research conducted by Agatha Dambo, a master's student in Industrial Sociology at the University of Pretoria.

#### **Purpose of study**

The purpose of the study is to explore how young adults at Agape Christian Centre understand work.

#### **Confidentiality**

The findings of this research and your participation will be very confidential. In order to assure your confidentiality, your names will not be mentioned, however, I will create code names for each one of you, when I am capturing direct quotations or when citing examples given during our discussion.

#### **Procedure**

You will be asked to answer questions that are divided into three themes: work, religion and gender.

I ----- accept to participate in the research being carried out by Agatha Dambo of the University of Pretoria on the topic titled, **Exploring the Role of Religion in Social Reproduction: A Case Study of the Agape Christian Worship Centre in Pretoria.** I am aware of the purpose of the study, procedures, confidentiality and that my participation in this study is voluntary.

**Participant's signature:** -----

Date-----

**Researcher's signature:** -----

Date-----

## **2. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PASTOR**

First of all, I would like to introduce myself. I am Agatha Dambo, a master's student in Industrial Sociology at the University of Pretoria. The research that I am conducting is Exploring the role of religion in social reproduction: A case study of Agape Christian Worship Centre in Pretoria.

Before conducting this research, I would like to assure you that, the findings of this research and your participation will be very confidential. In order to assure your confidentiality, your name will not be mentioned, however, I will create code names for each respondent, when I am capturing direct quotations or when citing examples given during our discussion. In addition, in order to build rapport on my part, I will make sure that I keep the conversation flowing.

Since this data will be stored at the University of Pretoria for maximum of 15 years from now, I will ask for permission from you, my participant if this data can still be used afterwards, thus if it will be of any value for academic purposes.

### List of questions to be asked to participants

The following questions to be asked to participants are divided into four themes: work, religion, gender and ideology. I will begin with questions related to religion, then followed by questions related to work. Thereafter, questions on gender will be asked, in relation to work and religion.

#### Religion

1. Please tell me about yourself (who are you)?
2. When did you become a Christian?
3. Why did you choose this church?
4. What is Agape Christian Worship Centre?
5. How often do you come to this church?
6. Why is this, the case?

#### Work

7. What is your role in Agape Christian Worship Church?
8. In your own opinion, how do you define work?
9. How does the church define work?

10. Does this definition have any reference in the bible?
11. What sorts of messages are given to young people in the church in relation to work?
12. Why is this case?
13. What beliefs do you hold that are in accordance to religion and work?
14. To what extent do these belief systems affect your capacity to work?
15. How do you assign jobs to people in the church?
16. The constitution of South Africa does not talk about God; so would it be ok if a member of Agape worked in secular entities such as government or a bar?
17. Do you see any link in ways you view work biblically to that of the State's mechanic project of maximising wealth?
18. Do you think that your ideas on work have any influence on how young people in this church understand work?
19. Do you think that young people act according to the messages that are given in church in relation to work?
  - How? AND why is this, the case?

### Gender

20. How do you define gender?
21. Does the church see gender?
  - Why is this, the case? (Any biblical reference to support this position?)
22. Are men and women treated differently in this church?
23. If yes, do you think that they should be treated different? If no, what is your reason
24. Do you think that it's ideal for a Christian woman to work?
25. Is there any evidence in the bible that supports this position?
26. By allowing women to work outside the home (apart from their traditional gender roles that are prescribed to a woman), are we not bowing down to the State's demands on gender equality?
27. Do you think that men and women should do similar kind of work?
  - Why do you think so?

THANK YOU

### **3. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

First of all, I would like to introduce myself. I am Agatha Dambo, a master's student in Industrial Sociology at the University of Pretoria. The research that I am conducting is Exploring the role of religion in social reproduction: A case study of Agape Christian Worship Centre in Pretoria.

Before conducting this research, I would like to assure you that, the findings of this research and your participation will be very confidential. In order to assure your confidentiality, your names will not be mentioned, however, I will create code names for each one of you, when I am capturing direct quotations or when citing examples given during our discussion. In addition, in order to build rapport on my part, I will make sure that I keep the conversation flowing.

Since this data will be stored at the University of Pretoria for maximum of 15 years from now, I will ask for permission from you, my participants if this data can still be used afterwards, that is if it can be of any value for academic purposes. This research is voluntary; hence you have the right to stop participating in the interview, if you may wish to do so.

#### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Sex

Age:

Highest Education Level attained

Relationship status:

Job type:

#### **List of questions to be asked to participants**

The following questions to be asked to participants are divided into three themes: work, religion and gender. I will begin with questions on religion, followed by questions related to work. Thereafter, questions on gender in relation to work and religion will be asked.

#### **Religion**

28. Please tell me about yourself (who are you?)

29. When did you become a Christian?



30. Why did you become a Christian?
31. Why did you choose this church?
32. What is Agape Christian Worship Centre?
33. How often do you come to this church?
34. Why is this, the case?
35. What is the importance of Agape Christian Worship Centre in your life?

### Work

36. What sort of work do you do?
37. How long have you been working?
38. Do you enjoy your work?
39. Where do you see yourself in 4 years' time?
40. Why do you work?
41. How does your age, race or gender affect your situation at work?
42. What are the most difficult aspects of your job?
43. What do you most like about your work?
44. How do men see or relate to women at work?
45. Have you recently been looked over for a promotion? And why?
46. Is there a female glass ceiling in your work?
47. What have or had you not prepared for in work?
48. In your own opinion, how do you define work?
49. How does the church define work?
  - Why is this, the case?
50. Is there anywhere in the bible that talks about work?
51. Is it proper for a Christian to work for a secular company like brewery South Africa?
52. Is there anywhere in the bible that supports this position?
53. What sorts of messages are given to young people in the church in relation to work?
54. What is your role in Agape Christian Worship Church?
55. How do you assign jobs to people in the church?
56. How important is Agape Christian Worship Centre in relation to the work that you do?
57. Do you see any link between work conception and religion?
58. What are the pastors' ideas on work?
59. What are your own ideas on work?

60. Do you think that the church's ideas on work have any influence on your understandings of work?
61. What beliefs do you hold that are in accordance to religion and work?
62. To what extent do these belief systems affect your capacity to work?
63. Do you think that you act according to the messages that are given in church in relation to work?
- How? AND why is this, the case?

#### Gender

64. Do you think that it's ideal for a Christian woman to work?
65. Are men and women treated differently in this church?
66. If yes, do you think that they should be treated different? If no, what is your reason
67. Do you think that men and women should do similar kind of work?
- Why do you think so?

THANK YOU

#### **4. DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS**

1. Pastor Alex is Agape CWC pastor. He is married to his wife Annette, who works in Agape CWC in the women ministry. Together they have three children. He holds a Masters degree in Chemistry as well as a diploma in Education. In 1983, something happened in his life that resulted to be turning point from being regular church goer to becoming a born again Christian. He continued to work closely with other people in the youth ministry of the Lutheran church that was situated in his Limpopo province. The Lutheran church youth ministry doctrine was run similar to the Pentecostal Charismatic faith. Later on in 1990, he changed from being a member of the Lutheran church to a Pentecostal Charismatic Church. He continued to be an active member in the youth ministry. The church could send him to minister in Botswana on behalf of the church. Pastor Humphrey worked in various companies such as a lecturer at the University of South Africa. In 2004, he decided to work in the secular world and decided to open his own church called Agape CWC. He decided to open his own church because he wanted to minister full time in Gods kingdom.
2. Mr. Mussa is the youth pastor of Agape CWC. He is married to Lucy who is also an active member in Agape CWC. Mr Mussa is a businessman and also employed in a secular company as an administrator. His wife on the other hand works as a lawyer in a secular institution. Mr Mussa became a born- again Christian in 1992 after he realised how God had impacted in his life.
3. Ayanda is a 26 years old young woman and is single. She joined Agape CWC in 2006. Ayanda holds a degree in social work. She has been working for an institution as a social worker for three years. She looks works with street children and other vulnerable children whilst in their communities. Ayanda continues to be active an active member of the youth ministry of Agape CWC.
4. Gule is a single woman of 23 years of age. She joined Agape CWC in 2011. Gule holds a college certificate in information technology. She has been working in a computer company for a year.

5. Joel is a 25 years old young man and is single. He holds a degree in Information Technology. Joel is employed by Agape CWC as an Information specialist. He has been a member of Agape CWC for three years and is an active member of the youth ministry.
6. Nahfere is a 27 years old young. He is a successful single man and very intelligent. He holds a degree in Zoology. He is employed in a medical company and he is role is to train doctors in how to use machines. In addition, Nahfere trains graduates that have newly joined the company. Similarly, Nahfere holds a position in the youth ministry.
7. Lebohang is a young man of 26 years. He holds a degree in aviation. He is a pilot, and working for one of the South African airlines. Similarly, Lebohang is active member of Agape CWC. He joined Agape CWC in 2007. Two weeks after the interviews were conducted; Lebohang married a young woman who is also an active member of Agape CWC.
8. Benita is single woman of 24 years of age. She joined Agape CWC in 2006. She is an active member of Agape CWC. In addition, Benita sings in the church choir. Similarly, she holds a diploma in accounting and works in a government department as an accountant.
9. Ngedzeni is a single man of 27 years old. He holds a degree in civil engineering. Ngedzeni works in a construction company as an engineer. Ngedzeni joined Agape CWC in 2009. He volunteers in the church and works as a church counsellor. His job in the church demands that he assists members of the church that consider them to be spiritually weak.
10. Rudjani is 25 years old. He is a single man. Rudjani holds a diploma in communication. He works for a secular company as a communication specialist. Rudjani joined Agape CWC in 2010 and continues to be active member in the church through the youth ministry.

11. Reneilwe is a single woman of 27 years. She joined Agape CWC in 2008. In addition, she is an active member in the youth ministry and assists in the organisation of youth activities such as car washing in order to raise funds for the church. Reneilwe holds a diploma in public administration and works in an institution as an administrator.
12. Richard is a 25 years old single man. He holds a degree in education. Richard works as a mathematics teacher in a high school. He joined the church in 2011. Richard continues to be active in the church and serves as an usher during the Sunday and Tuesday services.
13. Mpho is a young woman of 25 years of age. She has a degree in nursing and works in a hospital in Pretoria. Mpho joined Agape CWC in 2009. She works as an usher in Agape CWC; and serves during the Sunday and Tuesday services.
14. David is a 26 years old single man. He volunteers as an intercessor during church services at Agape CWC. His role as an intercessor in the church demands that he prays for people that need special prayers. David holds a college diploma in education. He teaches in a junior school in Pretoria.
15. Theodore is a 27 years old single man. He holds a mechanic engineering degree. Theodore was employed by Agape CWC in 2010 as a sound engineer. His job involves recording videos, editing the videos and making sure that the machines that were being used in the church were functioning effectively. Theodore joined Agape CWC in 2009.
16. Amanda is a single young woman of 25 years of age. She holds a degree in public administration. Amanda is employed by Agape CWC as the church's administrator. Her role as the church administrator requires that she organises various church activities and services. Amanda joined Agape CWC in 2008.
17. Ivy is a lady, 24 years old, single. She holds a college diploma in catering. Ivy is formally employed in a restaurant as a chef. Ivy continues to be an active member in Agape CWC. She volunteers as an usher in the church during the church services.

18. Litchi is a young woman of 26 years old and is single. She holds a degree in information technology. Litchi is employed by Agape CWC. Besides her formal employment in the church, Litchi leads the Agape CWC choir during every service.