

SCHOOL ENTRANCE TEST STRESS SYNDROME IN SOUTH  
KOREAN SOCIETY: A CHALLENGE TO YOUTH MINISTRY

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the  
Department of Practical Theology  
Faculty of Theology  
University of Pretoria

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August 2016

## DECLARATION

I, Byoungjae Jeon, hereby declare that the thesis, “School Entrance Test Stress Syndrome in South Korean society: A Challenge to Youth Ministry”, submitted to the University of Pretoria has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university and I declare further that this is my own original work in design and execution and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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Date: August, 2016

Signature:



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank God for his grace and the opportunity I have been given to study youth ministry in the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. Furthermore, I would like to thank God for keeping my family safe, and for his provision for all our needs through his unlimited love and favour.

Many people have helped me to complete this thesis, despite their own busy schedules. I would like to make special mention of some of them:

My study supervisor and mentor, Prof. Malan Nel, who patiently and kindly guided me in this research and provided me with invaluable insights into building the youth ministry in the local church in South Korea.

In addition, I sincerely thank Prof. Francois Malan and the Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, Rev. Theo Groeneveld, who advised and helped me tremendously.

I would also like to thank my English tutor, Cameron Sparg, in particular for his diligent editorial work.

I must also give thanks to all the students who took part in the focus group interviews, and their youth ministers for their cooperation and enthusiasm, which made the process a pleasure. If they did not agree to be interviewed and to take part in the research, this thesis could not have been written.

I am always thankful to my parents, who have prayed for my family, and who supported us financially when things became difficult.

Finally, I must give thanks to my wife, Youjeong Jeong, who sacrificed so much in order to support me; along with my three beautiful daughters, Hari, Hayun and Hajin, who continue to grow in grace and beauty every day. Their concern, prayers and sacrifices made this thesis possible.

## SUMMARY

This research aims to construct a strategy for the support and care of students coping with entrance examination and academic stress within the South Korean Youth Ministry, through a relationship-oriented care ministry. For the purpose of this research, the researcher has adopted Osmer's practical theological methodology, and has used focus group interviews, in the context of qualitative research.

The structure of this research is as follows:

Chapter 1 defines essential concepts: it begins with a statement of the problem; it follows with the formulation of the problem and its purpose, the hypothesis of this dissertation, an outline of its structure, a description of various pertinent concepts and the various research tasks.

Chapter 2 looks at university entrance examinations and their role in the education system in South Korean society, and the entrance examination stress that high school students are experiencing as a result of the pressure placed on them by the pressure to excel in the entrance examination. The chapter describes both young people in the local churches, and the life they are facing as a result of the pressure placed on them by entrance examinations in the context of Korean society.

Chapter 3 describes the concept and characteristics of young people, and also provides a general theological foundation for an understanding of the youth ministry in the local church. The chapter also deals with the relationship between caring for and supporting young people, and the youth ministry, as part of the body of Christ, as it occurs in in the local church.

Chapter 4 strives to heed the voices of the young people in South Korean churches who are experiencing some sort of anxiety related to Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome, in order to ascertain precisely what is taking place. The focus group interview results indicate that young people's identities include a belief in being called by God to take the university

entrance examination. This interpretation is from a reformed worldview perspective, and was identified by means of dialogue with the social support theory. As a new theological concept, the researcher also establishes the important role of the congregation that cultivates friendship and open channels of communication within its youth ministry, to establish the youths' identity as being called by God to the entrance examination.

Chapter 5 is a discussion of the pragmatic task, which is the last of the four tasks of practical theology presented by Osmer (2008): the process of strategic action. Here, the researcher has attempted to create strategies, based on the relationship-oriented care ministry, to support students facing entrance examinations. These strategies are based on the concept of youths' identity as involving being called by God, and the inclusive congregational approach presented by Nel (2000:77-98).

## CONCEPTS

1. Practical theology
2. South Korean church
3. Youth ministry
4. Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome
5. Building up the local church
6. Calling
7. Congregation
8. Academic stress
9. Relationship-oriented Care Ministry
10. Identity

## ABBREVIATIONS

CAM	Christ's Ambassador Mission
CSAT	College Scholastic Ability Test
EBS	Educational Broadcasting System
EYC	Ecumenical Youth Council
FGI	Focus Group Interviews
GAPCK	General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in Korea
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IVF	Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship
JOY	Jesus first, Others second, You third
KCCC	Korea Campus Crusade for Christ
KHPF	Korea Health Promotion Foundation
KICE	Korean Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation
KNCC	Korean National Council of Churches
KSCF	Korea Student Christian Association
LMC	Life and Mission of Church
MYF	Methodist Youth Fellow
NEIS	National Education Information System
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SCE	Student Christian Endeavour
SFC	Students for Christ
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement
UBF	University Bible Fellowship
WCC	World Council of Churches
WSCF	World Students Christian Federation
YFC	Youth for Christ
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWAM	Youth With a Mission

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. MOTIVATION

I have personally served in the youth ministry in South Korea as a pastor for more than 10 years, and am currently serving as a youth pastor within a Korean church in Pretoria, South Africa. While serving as a youth pastor in South Korea I was struck by the stress placed on the youth as a result of academic pressures, a competitive education system, and the need to be accepted into a prestigious university. This often seemed to have a negative effect on the youth relationships with God and on their faith. Many of these youth would attend the worship service on Sunday but leave immediately afterwards in order to attend private study institutions in preparation for tests. They would not take part in any of the youth programmes on offer at the church. Some of the young people would simply skip the worship service altogether in order to go to the library to study for upcoming tests.

Within the South Korean culture there is a strong emphasis placed on education and the need to attend a good university. The university that one attends is often linked to one's success later on in life. The view is that, once one is accepted into a prestigious university, the path to success is set. The university a person attends is directly linked to his/her social status. This view has had a significant negative impact on the church; and more specifically the youth ministries within churches have seen a major decline in church attendance and in participation of other programmes.

The local church is generally aware of the seriousness of the problem, as well as the academic stress and pressure placed upon the youth within the churches. Yet, the churches have not taken any measures in order to deal with and support the youth within the church through the love of Jesus Christ. They seem to have generally adopted a passive view and attitude to this problem.

It is the church's responsibility to establish Christian values as well as a Christian perspective on this academic stress and the entrance examination stress in their congregations (Park 2008:124). The local church needs concrete, effective and strategic support systems that can take care of and minister to those young people who are suffering as a result of entrance examination stress and academic pressures.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find a way within the South Korean local church to effectively, strategically and specifically care for, minister to and support, with the love of Jesus Christ, those young people suffering from entrance examination stress and academic pressures.

## **2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The inherent problem within the South Korean education system is that there is major competition between students when applying for university, which places a strong emphasis on the college and university entrance examinations. Within the South Korean culture, people perceive being accepted into a prestigious university as the key to success. Young people are suffering from stress due to the excessive competition that accompanies these entrance examinations. Furthermore, many social problems have arisen among the youth of South Korea as a result of the stress and competition levels connected with university and college entrance exams.

According to recent data published by the state-run Korea Health Promotion Foundation (KHPF), the suicide rate among South Korean youth is much higher than the average suicide rate among children and the youth in other countries. According to data compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the growth rate of youth suicide in South Korea ranked second among OECD member countries. The average rate of youth suicides (10-24 years old) in most OECD countries is decreasing, whereas the rate of youth suicides in South Korea rose by 57% between 2001 and 2011 (*The Korea Herald* 2013.09.10). Currently, South Korea has the highest adult suicide rate of all OECD countries (OECD 2013:236-237). The suicide rate among Korean youth is increasing faster than that of adults. This is believed to be due to young people being more impulsive than adults.

According to data compiled in 2010 by the Korean National Statistical Office, the primary reason for the suicidal impulse among Korean youth (15-19 years old) was a result of high school and middle school grades and admission problems (53.4% of cases) (*Korea National Statistical Office* 2010.10.26). According to a study by Park & Shin (1990:20-32), salient factors influencing suicidal ideation are the levels of aspiration for first graders (Grade 10 in South Africa) and the levels of current academic proficiency for the second and third graders (Grade 11 and 12 in South Africa) in high school. This can be interpreted as young people committing suicide impulsively due to entrance examination stress. That is to say, these students often feel an impulse to commit suicide because of the entrance examination stress that they experience. The stress caused by the college entrance examinations and the pressure to enter a good university has also caused many other social problems, such as students running away from home, bullying, juvenile delinquency, violence, and internet addiction.

Due to the extreme competition for university admission and the belief that one's future success (including a good job, high wages, high social status and even a good marriage) is dependent on the university one attends, students are often overwhelmed by the stress to perform and receive good grades. Hence, many youth are suffering as a result of this stress. According to a statistical survey in 2006 conducted by the Korean National Statistical Office, the major worry of students was 'the results of an examination' (Ha 2009:371-405). The 2011 survey results of the Korean National Statistical Office found the same problem among the youth (Ministry of Gender Equality & Family 2012:XI). For a long time, the primary stress factor for the Korean youth has been the pressure placed upon them to study and achieve good grades so as to enter a good university. It has also been found that this stress seems to increase as the higher grades (Ministry of Gender Equality & Family 2012:180). This phenomenon is so much more prevalent in South Korea than in other countries, that in 1980 it was even given a name unique to Korea: 'Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome'. This phenomenon is also having a negative impact on the Christian youth who are experiencing the same stress and pressure placed upon them by admissions tests and the need to achieve good grades. According to research done by Park (1994:30-33), both non-Christian students and Christian students suffer stress as a result of examinations.

Many problems have emerged in the church as a result of this entrance examination stress; however, the local churches in South Korea have not found effective counter-measures to this serious problem. Osmer (2008:189) says that congregations have the specific functions of mutual care and service, which should build up the body of Jesus Christ. However, the local churches are not actively caring for young people suffering from entrance examination stress.

## **2.1 Statement of the problem**

The Korean society and the Korean Church are facing major social issues among the youth due to Korea's competitive university system and the pressure and stress placed upon the youth due to the competitive nature of the college and university entrance examinations. The Korean church is aware of the stress placed upon its youth, but to date has adopted a passive stance with regard to this problem. The research question concerns whether the local church has effectively, strategically and specifically introduced support systems based on Christian values in order to take care of its youth, who are suffering as a result of entrance examination stress and academic pressure.

## **2.2 Explanation of the problem**

Many general studies have been conducted regarding the effect of the stress of entrance examinations and academic pressures, but very little research has been done by the church itself. The main research trends in South Korea in recent times seem to be moving towards instituting protective, therapeutic and preventative approaches in order to help the youth who are suffering as a result of the pressure of college and university entrance examinations.

Firstly, with regard to the protective approaches, policies are being introduced to reduce the behavioural problems caused by examination stress, which often results in children running away, school-based violence, sexual deviance, game addiction, alcohol abuse, tobacco addiction, and so on. The systems used to conduct the entrance examination are being reviewed. Secondly, the therapeutic approaches try to help students to cope with stress and pressure by taking into account various psychological factors. Thirdly, preventative approaches make use of leisure activities, sports activities, career exploration programmes,

and the creation of a safety net for the youth, through the co-operation of youth counselling centres and other institutes. The Korean government has been trying to find solutions to the problems within admission policies, and the stress these create.

On the other hand, little research has been done from a Christian perspective in order to help the youth in the church who are experiencing stress caused by university entrance exams and academic pressures. This research can be classified into counselling approaches and Christian education approaches. Firstly, counselling approaches entail looking at ways to biblically counsel these youth. Secondly, Christian education approaches have mainly looked at studying the vocation education of Christian values, from a Christian perspective, in Christian education alternative schools.

Previous studies have revealed that there are no accessible, positive and effective care systems or active interventions for the youth in the church suffering as a result of this entrance examination stress. Furthermore, the local church is dealing negatively and robotically with the issue of the stress caused by these entrance examinations. Unfortunately, the local church in Korea has focused on evangelism in order to grow the church without resolving the fundamental problem of the youth undergoing academic stress. Ha (2009:404-405) points out that:

Teenagers' inordinate academic pressures also create a negative effect on local churches. Many youth group members quit weekday Bible studies and worship services. Some of them do not regularly attend Sunday worship service because they have to go to private tutoring centres. Christian parents, except for those who are devoted to the Christian faith and practice, ignore their children's decision not to go to church on Sunday. This trend gradually weakens youth group activities, and in some cases this even leads to the collapse of youth groups in local churches.

For this reason, the local church should focus on qualitative growth through a relationship-oriented care ministry rather than focusing only on the quantitative growth of the church. This means that the church needs to take active, practical steps in order to care for the souls

of the youth suffering under academic stress. One of the features of the church needs to be care in practice. A central aspect of the community of faith needs to be *Koinonia* with regard to Christian education as well. The community of the church needs to be in a relationship whereby members mutually care for one another's souls. This is the biblical view, as stated in John 10:12-13 and 1 John 3:16. Furthermore, John 13:34 says: 'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.' This is why the church exists. Stone (1991:14) states: 'Pastoral care is a task of the total Christian community, ministering to one another and reaching out beyond ourselves.' In the Bible, we find the importance of caring repeated on numerous occasions.

Therefore, the ministry of care is a necessary ministry. However, care ministry should be conducted through relationship-oriented work according to the characteristics of the youth. Young people are strongly affected and influenced by the general environment around them. This includes their relationship with their parents, but in recent times it seems that the youth in Korea are focusing more and more, as well as depending more, on their friends rather than on their parents. Having said this, the family environment as well as the youth's relationship with his/her parents is still a major influence within his/her life, including his/her academic life (Lee 2012:87).

On the other hand, Lee (2009:5-29) studied the role of resilient factors in relation to mental health and entrance test stress. The purpose of Lee's study was to investigate the impact of resilient factors on the mental health of senior high school students. As a result, the mediating model of resilient factors showed that resilient factors act as buffers against the negative effects of stress (Lee 2009:5-29). Thus, it was shown that by enhancing the social support of students, which included family support, friend support, and teacher support, the effects of entrance test stress were greatly reduced. In other words, social support had a significant effect on reducing the level of stress, through care of the youth within a supportive relationship. Micucci (2000:3) states that 'the most powerful resource for helping a person change is the relationships in which he/she participates'.

The local Korean church needs to find a solution that can help those young people who have been hurt and negatively influenced as a result of entrance examination stress. It is essential

that the church, through its youth ministries, finds support systems in order to offer spiritual care to the youth in connection with the strong academic pressure they feel. The local church must help young people who suffer from entrance examination stress, not only to share the pain with the love of Jesus Christ, but also to lead them to faith and a growth in faith, in order that they can better deal with the stress they are under. This can be done through the *Koinonia* of caring.

### **3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

Local South Korean churches need to actively find support systems in order to offer practical guidance to young people in the church suffering as a result of university entrance examinations and the competitive nature of these examinations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to actively find strategic support systems by means of which the Korean church can support and care for the youth with regard to the stress of university entrance examinations, through a relationship-oriented care ministry. The three main purposes are discussed below:

1. To discover the main causes of university entrance examination stress and academic pressures in an environment where the young people of the church are involved. Here I will look at the effects of entrance examination stress and academic pressures in relation to the youth and their environment. I will also look at the types of behavioural problems that have arisen as a result of entrance examination stress and academic pressures, and will assess the spiritual needs of the youth.
2. To explore the existing youth ministries and support systems of the South Korean local churches regarding entrance examination stress and academic pressures placed on the youth in the church. Here I will attempt to develop strategies according to the stress patterns and processes of the youth. This strategy will be developed on a theory based on both theology and the social sciences.
3. To formulate a ministry strategy in order to help the youth to cope with the stress of entrance examinations and academic pressures, as well as to integrate this strategy into the church community. Here I will look at how the developed strategies may be applied and integrated into the church. The purpose is to empower and facilitate a relationship-orientated local church where the youth may be ministered to regarding



the stress they experience as a result of examinations and academic pressures.

#### 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are young people still experiencing major stress as a result of university entrance exams and academic pressures?
2. Why are young people experiencing these feelings of stress and pressure as a result of university entrance examinations?
3. What is my understanding of the youth and the stress and pressure they experience as a result of these entrance examinations?
4. How can the local church help young people to cope with the stress caused by these entrance examinations?

#### 5. CONCEPTUALISING

1. **Youth, young people and adolescence:** Nel (2000:30) defines the concept of adolescence with reference to Koteskey (1991:43) as follows: ‘The Concept *adolescence* is derived from the Latin verb *adolescere* which refers to the *one that grows*. Today the term *adolescence* refers to the time between *puberty* and *adulthood*.’ Youth or young people, as referred to in this research, are middle school and high school students in South Korea between the ages of 13 and 19 years.
2. **Youth ministry:** Nel (2000:97) defines youth ministry in the following way: ‘Youth ministry is the mediation of the coming of God through his Word and through people, by means of all modes of ministry, and in a differentiated and focused way to, with and through youth as an integral part of the local church.’
3. **Relationships:** Youth are generally very relationally orientated and are greatly influenced by their peers, parents and environment. Youth ministry therefore is primarily relational (Nel 2000:160).

4. **Relationship-oriented care ministry:** Relationship-oriented care ministry includes the concepts of *Paraklesis* (pastoral care) and *Koinonia* (mutuality) (Nel 2000:91-92). *Paraklesis* (pastoral care) and *Koinonia* (mutuality) are connected to each other and therefore this form of ministry focuses on pastoral care and mutuality, which should build up the body of Jesus Christ in South Korea through relationships.
5. **Academic stress:** Currently Korea's educational system is focused and centred on preparing students for university entrance examinations, and every result within a student's school career is seen as a test for this entrance examination, which places a large amount of academic stress on the student.
6. **Entrance examination stress:** This is the name given to the stress which students experience when preparing for their college entrance test, and was spontaneously coined by a psychiatrist in 1980 because of the various mental and physical symptoms students experienced as a result of this stress. It is referred to as a disease in South Korea.
7. **Korean church:** Yun (2012:19) explains that this 'refers to the South Korean church, since Korea was divided into North Korea and South Korea in 1953. The Korean church that appears in descriptions of the historical background before that time includes both North and South'.

## 6. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

### 6.1 Practical theology

Practical theology is the study of the empirical practice (praxis) and content of theology applied in the field of the Church. However, in practical theology, there is a problem regarding where its boundaries are. This problem is found in all fields of study, including that of theology (Osmer 2008:240). This problem does not mediate the scholarly findings of other fields to church leaders in terms of its practical application (Osmer 2008:238). There is a bigger problem though. Osmer (2008:231) says: 'Most Protestant seminaries and divinity

schools today continue to educate their students along the lines of the encyclopaedic paradigm of theology.’

However, Browning (1991:8) argues that theology as a whole is fundamentally practical theology; and that it contains within it the four sub-movements of descriptive theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and strategic practical theology. In addition, Heitink defines practical theology as the theory of action. According to Heitink (1999:6) practical theology as the theory of action is an empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society. Heitink (1999:7) says that ‘praxis’ does not mean ‘practice’ but ‘action, activity’ as the divine action through the ministry of the apostles (Romans 12:4). Thus, practical theology deals with God's activity through the ministry of human beings. In other words, the interpretation of the theological practice of public life in general with regard to all human beings has become possible. Therefore, the interpretation of theological practice has become possible even in the youth ministry.

The research in this study is based on Osmer's practical theological method, which controls the direction of said research. The method chosen for the hermeneutical perspective is hermeneutical phenomenology, based on the work of Van Til (2008). This method provides an epistemological framework within which the process of this study will be executed. Practical theology, according to Osmer (2008), continues to expand within the framework of four tasks, namely the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative, and the pragmatic. Within Osmer's practical theology method, the following questions are asked:

- What is going on?
- Why is this going on?
- What ought to be going on?
- How might we respond?

Practical theological interpretation involves four key tasks: the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative, and the pragmatic. It is helpful to conceptualise these four tasks with the image of a hermeneutical circle, which portrays interpretation as composed of distinct but interrelated moments. The interaction of these four tasks distinguishes practical

theology from other fields (Osmer 2008:10). According to Osmer, these four tasks are independent of each other, but in their effect have mutual relevance. According to Osmer, practical theological interpretation creates a bridge between the sub-disciplines of Academic Practical Theology (Osmer 2008:17). It offers a bridge between the academic field and that of ministry. Therefore, the concept of the bridge brings about conversation with other fields. This, according to Osmer (2008:25), facilitates ‘dialogue between theology and other fields and is the congregation's interpretation of events unfolding inside and outside the church’.

Osmer describes the four tasks of practical theological interpretation, and the answering of each of these questions is the focus of one of the four core tasks of practical theological interpretation (Osmer 2008:4):

- *The descriptive-empirical task:* Gathering information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts.
- *The interpretive task:* Drawing on theories of the arts and sciences to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring.
- *The normative task:* Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from ‘good practice’.
- *The pragmatic task:* Determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable, and entering into a reflective conversation with ‘talk-back’ emerging when they are enacted.

These four tasks constitute the basic structure of Osmer's practical theological interpretation. Therefore, this research will expand through the four tasks of practical theological interpretation according to Osmer. A summary of the practical theology of Osmer is provided in the sub-sections that follow.

### **6.1.1 The descriptive-empirical task**

An important part of the descriptive-empirical process is to have particular episodes, situations, or contexts to create continuous interest. Interest such as this results in the research following a natural research investigation process. Research investigation can be made up of

both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research gathers and analyses numeric data to explore relationships between variables. Qualitative research seeks to understand the actions and practices in which individuals and groups engage in everyday life, and the meanings they ascribe to their experiences. Quantitative research is especially helpful in discovering broad statistical patterns and relationships. Qualitative research is better suited to studying a small number of individuals, groups, or communities in greater depth (Osmer 2008:49-50). In particular, the descriptive-empirical task requires systematic skill and attention in terms of describing, observing and interviewing. Among these, Osmer (2008:61) states: ‘The skill of interviewing is a very important part of attending in qualitative research. An interview is a conversation between two people in which one of the parties is seeking information from the other for a particular purpose.’

### **6.1.2 The interpretive task**

Osmer describes the interpretive task as follows: ‘Why did this incident take place? What sorts of theories might help me better understand and explain the patterns and dynamics I had begun to discover? These are the key questions of the interpretive task of practical theological interpretation’ (Osmer 2008:6). It shares with Proverbs the wisdom method of inquiry, deriving general insights from the observable patterns of nature and human life. The interpretive task makes use of this method as well (Osmer 2008:89). Drawing on theories of the arts and sciences to interpret the relevant particulars of episodes, situations, and contexts requires wise judgement and good moral sense, as well as a solid grasp of the theories being used (Osmer 2008:85). Furthermore, Osmer says that by observing the pattern of life and through natural interpretive guidance, one is able to reflect on the art of steering to elicit insights in general. Therefore, while the church continues to learn in the way of wisdom, reflecting on the meaning of the discernible patterns of life, it places such knowledge in a new and different theological context: the redemptive wisdom of Christ (Osmer 2008:100). In other words, one finds an answer to the question: ‘Who does what and why?’ (Heitink 1999:200).

### **6.1.3 The normative task**

With regard to the normative task, Osmer asks the following questions: ‘What ought to be going on? What are we to do and be as members of the Christian community in response to

the events of our shared life and world? These questions lie at the heart of the normative task of practical theological interpretation' (Osmer 2008:8). In addition, Osmer (2008:161) sees theological interpretation, ethical reflection and good practice as a threefold task:

1. *Theological Interpretation*: Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, and contexts, informed by a theory of divine and human action.
2. *Ethical Reflection*: Using ethical principles, rules, or guidelines to guide action toward moral ends.
3. *Good Practice*: Deriving norms from good practice, by exploring models of such practice in the present and past, or by engaging reflexively in transforming practice in the present.

Cross-disciplinary dialogue is required here. Osmer (2008:163) defines cross-disciplinary dialogue as follows: 'Cross-disciplinary dialogue is a special form of rational communication in which the perspectives of two or more fields are brought into conversation.' That is, through dialogue with other disciplines, one must be able to discern the subject with understanding, flexibility and sympathy.

#### **6.1.4 The pragmatic task**

This stage corresponds to the strategic perspective of Heitink (1999:201), who states: The strategic perspective links the 'who does what' first of all with the 'how' and the 'for what purpose'. Osmer (2008:139) states that: 'Just as attending in the descriptive task opens out to empirical research and sagely wisdom in the interpretive task, to dialogue with theories of the arts and sciences, so too the normative task opens out to forms of theological and ethical reflection.' This in turn should lead to the pragmatic task, which, as the final task, will have to answer the following question: How might we respond in ways that are faithful and effective? The pragmatic task focuses on strategies and actions that are undertaken to shape events toward desired goals (Osmer 2008:10).

Thus, throughout the pragmatic task, leadership is needed to change the church community; more specifically, servant leadership is needed. Servant leadership is leadership that influences the congregation to change in ways that more fully embody the servanthood of

Christ (Osmer 2008:192). Heitink (1999:202) says that practical theology aims at change along the way of conversion, and sees strategic action as communication action from the perspective of the actor.

## **6. 2 Methodology**

For the purpose of this study, qualitative research is used in order to gather information and data. The methods of data collection with which qualitative research is associated have been employed by social scientists for many years (Bryman 1988:45). Bryman (1988:61) states: ‘The most fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is its express commitment to viewing events, action, norms, values, etc. from the perspective of the people who are being studied.’ Qualitative research seeks to understand the actions and practices in which individuals and groups engage during everyday life, and the meanings they ascribe to their experiences. Qualitative research is better suited to studying a small number of individuals, groups, or communities in depth (Osmer 2008:49-50).

Qualitative research can be grouped into three main categories: participant observation, case studies, and focused interviews (Rubin 1983:336). This research will also employ focused interviews. A focused interview is a way of gathering qualitative data by asking respondents specific questions concerning social processes or behaviours of interest, in a face-to-face encounter (Rubin 1983: 339). The advantages of the interview process are as follows: Firstly, interview surveys typically attain higher response rates than mail surveys. Secondly, interviewers can also provide a guard against confusing questionnaire items. Finally, the interviewer can observe as well as ask questions (Babbie 1992:269).

Importantly, the interviewer requires certain skills. Osmer (2008:61) says: ‘The skill of interviewing is a very important part of attending in qualitative research. An interview is a conversation between two people in which one of the parties is seeking information from the other for a particular purpose.’ Furthermore, Bryman (1988:46) says: ‘Unstructured interviewing, in which the researcher provides minimal guidance and allows considerable latitude for interviewees, is also a favoured technique.’

The aim of the interview process is to gain an in-depth understanding of the youth actions and the reasons pertaining to why they are suffering from academic pressures as well as stress due to university entrance examinations. Furthermore, the interview process will be used to understand the reality of the lives that the youth live and the reality of their lives within the South Korean church. I will conduct the interviews in South Korea, as my field of research is the South Korean church, and more specifically the youth within the South Korean church.



## CHAPTER 2

# ENTRANCE EXAMINATION STRESS SYNDROME AND YOUTH MINISTRY WITHIN KOREAN SOCIETY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Education in South Korea is often praised by other countries, mainly due to the strong and rapid economic development of the country. The college entrance examination system is simply intended for screening qualified people who are capable of studying at university. However, public education in South Korean society is becoming problematic, because students have become too fixated on the entrance examinations and being accepted into prestigious universities, such as the top three universities. Collectively, these are known as SKY (Seoul National University, Korea University in Seoul, Yonsei University). In order to get a good job and succeed within South Korean society, high school students are becoming more and more competitive, and this education fever has continued for many years.

As a result, the role and function of public education in South Korea has become distorted as competition among students has increased, especially with regard to the entrance examination. A large number of young people in Korean society face a lot of stress, pressure and pain due to the entrance examinations. The present government implemented the college entrance examination system in order to solve the problem of normalisation of school education, but a greater problem was caused in the form of competition and the pressure to achieve academically, which is a major social problem in Korean society to this day.

Therefore, Chapter 2 will consider the characteristics of the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) and an entrance examination education system as part of the education system within the South Korean society. Thereafter, it will look at the obstacles and challenges that young people are facing as a result of the pressure placed on them due to entrance examinations and the five-day school week system, in terms of school life, family life, and young people's leisure time. Finally, it will look at the relationship between entrance examination stress and the youth ministry. Pertaining to this, it looks at the brief historical features of the Korean

youth ministry with regard to schools, churches, Korean youth mission organisations, and the youth ministry as a whole, from the 1960s to the present day.

## **2. THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION SYSTEM WITHIN KOREAN SOCIETY**

The college entrance examination system has changed numerous times since the Liberation of Korea (called *Gwangbokjeol*) from Japan in 1945. These changes have often been the result of regime changes. Furthermore, there has often been conflict among educational leaders regarding the examination system, in terms of their autonomy in student selection. This has caused tension between the universities and the government (Kang 2007:85-88). Because of this, parents, teachers and students have had a difficult time in adjusting to the changes in the university entrance exam system.

Furthermore, social problems associated with the entrance examination system have been occurring for many years. As the social need to enter a top university increased, education fever increased, along with admission irregularities, the prevalence of private tutors, the expansion of private expenditure on education, school grades fraud, and increasing numbers of high school graduate students (called *jaesuseng*) who perform below their expectations on the entrance exam, and choose to defer going to university in order to try and achieve a higher score the following year. In response to these social problems, the government involved itself in the college entrance examination by trying to increase its fairness, and to level the playing field of the system. The government argued that private institutes (called *hagwon*) with good teachers and private tutors, who had a good ‘track record’ of getting students into the right schools, were charging exorbitant rates, especially through intensive coaching in Korean, English and Mathematics. Thus, students from wealthy families were given an unfair advantage in the admission process. The government therefore prohibited private after-school tutoring, cram schools, and so on. The Korean government has tried to crack down on such serious private institutes, and imposes fines on such institutes in order to normalise relations within public education .

## 2.1 The education system of South Korea

Education in South Korea is divided into formal education and non-formal education. Schools are largely classified as national, public, or private. Formal education comprises the education provided by national, public schools and private schools that are supported financially by the government. The education system of South Korea currently adopts a single-track system and the 6-3-3-4 ladder structure (Kim & Han 2002:16). This means six years of elementary school, three years of middle school, three years of high school and four years of university tuition, and incorporates a step-by-step process to the attainment of universal education. The period of compulsory education is nine years, including six years of elementary school and three years of middle school. Within the Korean school year there are two terms or semesters. The first semester runs from March to August and the second semester runs from September to February. The summer vacation is from July to August and the winter vacation is from December to February.

Generally, the youth are those students who are enrolled in secondary schools, meaning that they are either in middle school (called *Jung hakgyo*) or high school (called *Godeung hakgyo*). The grades and ages of the young people attending secondary schools are different from the grades of the West and of South Africa. Table 2.1 shows the difference in grades between Western society (including South Africa) and South Korea.

**Table 2.1 School grades and ages**

Division	South Korea		Western Society and South Africa	
	Level/Grade	Ages	Level/Grade	Ages
Middle School	1st grade	13-14	7th grade	12-13
	2nd grade	14-15	8th Grade	13-14
	3rd grade	15-16	9th Grade	14-15
High School	1st grade	16-17	10th Grade	15-16
	2nd grade	17-18	11th Grade	16-17
	3rd grade	18-19	12th Grade	17-18

The aim of the middle schools (lower secondary level of education) is to conduct standard

secondary education and to build on the basic education students received in primary school. All cities across the nation have adopted the compulsory education system since 2004 (Kim 2013:107). The duration of middle school is three years and the entry age is generally 12-13 years. Middle school in South Korea would be equivalent to Grades 7-9 in South Africa.

The aim of high schools (upper secondary level of education) in South Korea is to provide secondary education required for the university entrance examination, basic specialist education, and vocational education necessary for employment, by building on the base of education received in middle school. Kim & Han (2002:20) explain this as follows: ‘High school education is aimed at nurturing the ability to explore the career that fits one’s aptitude and talent as well as the capacity for global citizenship, based on the outcome of middle school education.’

The high school students who will take part in this research are graduates of the middle school and are either in their first, second, or third year of high school (Grades 10-12 in South Africa). Admission to high school is based on middle school academic records. Students usually enter high school at the age of 15 or 16. Since 2012, high schools have been divided into general high schools, vocational high schools, air and correspondence high schools, and specialised high schools or special purpose high schools: these were established to diversify high school education in order to meet different needs including foreign language ability, arts and physical education, science ability, and so on (Kim & Han 2002:20). The features of these categories of high schools in Korea are as follows (Kim & Han 2002:20):

Firstly, General high school provides education mainly to the students who wish to advance to university. Secondly, Vocational high schools provide basic education in specialised fields to prepare students for five vocational fields of agriculture, manufacturing, commerce, fishery and oceanography, and home economics and business. Goals of Vocational high schools are to train the workforce equipped with industrial skills and to nurture the vocational ability that individuals need for building their occupational career. Thirdly, Air and correspondence high schools are to provide high school diplomas to those adults who missed their high school education opportunity. While students are to attend

classes on Sundays, most learning occurs through radio and TV broadcasting systems or computer networks. Fourthly, Special purpose high schools are designed to provide students who are talented in science, arts and sports, and foreign languages with enriched education that is similar to education in General and Vocational high schools, yet more inclined to specialised fields. There are science high schools, arts high schools, international high schools, athletics high schools, foreign language high schools, and mercantile marine high schools. Fifty Specialised high schools provide students who are talented in specialised fields such as design and cartoon drawing with hands-on education needed to enter those fields after graduation. There are information high schools, design high schools, automobile high schools, animated cartoon high schools, and alternative high schools.

The duration of high school is three years and students bear the expenses of their education. General high school students choose their subject majors in their 11th grade. Korean high school education offers three different curriculum options: liberal arts or natural sciences or music, fine arts, and physical education. Those high school students completing Grade 12, high school graduates, or those who have passed the national qualification exam for college entrance or an equivalent, may apply to Korean universities. The national qualification exam can be written by those students who have not attended traditional schools, but have been home schooled or have lived abroad.

Universities in South Korea are divided according to the body that established them; for example, national universities are established and run by the Korean government, public universities are established and run by local governments, and private universities are established and run by incorporated educational institutions. There are various types of higher education institutions in South Korea. These include traditional universities, junior college, industrial university, educational university, broadcast and correspondence university, cyber colleges and universities, technical college, open university, miscellaneous schools, and others. The purpose of college and university education is to provide the theoretical education required for the development of humankind as well as the application of such theories, as well as the cultivation of students into responsible and productive citizens. This education

period is between four to six years long, and includes medicine, oriental medicine, and dentistry. As of 2013, there were a total of 367 tertiary institutions in South Korea, including 209 universities and 158 junior colleges (KCUE 2013:295).

## 2.2 University admission process

The application periods for students are classified as: occasional (or early) admissions (called *su-shi*), regular admissions (called *jeong-shi*) and additional admissions (called *chu-ga*) according to the Higher Education Act No. 41, in order to expand the width of the selection of the university (Oh 2010:8).

The occasional or early admission is generally carried out before the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). The grades, volunteer activities and so on, which are written in the students' school records, are used in the decision plans for college. Regular admissions generally come into force after the results of the CSAT are announced. The regular admission period is different for each university depending on its group: A group, B group or C group (called *ga* group, *na* group, *da* group in South Korea universities). Each university uses all the students' records and results of the CSAT when considering them for admission, but the CSAT results make up the largest portion of the application. The additional admissions pertain to the selection for filling vacant positions that occur after the regular admissions have been finalised (Oh 2010:8).

In addition, the admission types are divided into regular and special admissions. The regular admission is the type of admission for general students carried out with fair competition. The special admission can be used to select those students of special ability and quality, depending on the educational purposes of the university. In addition, the university may take into account the needs of those who have been disadvantaged in order to bring about some kind of social compensation and equality. These students may be enrolled outside of normal enrolment processes. These might include students from farming and fishing villages, college recommendations, young children who are heads of families, the descendants of independence fighters, workers, special education subjects, and immigrants living in South Korea (KCUE 2013:225-245).

## 2.3 Selection criteria for admission

The selection requirements to enrol at the universities are the College Scholastic Ability Test result, student records, and university-administered examinations. The admission process is different in each university, including the selection requirements and standards.

### 2.3.1 The College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT)

During the College Entrance Strength Test period (1982-1993), new students were selected based on the College Entrance Strength Test and their high school grades (Kang 2007:99). In other words, the students who took the College Entrance Strength Test applied to the universities that they wished to attend, and these universities selected new students based on their high school grades and results from the College Entrance Strength Test. However, the College Entrance Strength Test was criticised as it only evaluated the academic performance of the students' high school career of three years in order to measure the academic skills needed for college education. Therefore, by changing from The College Entrance Strength Test to the College Scholastic Ability Test, the focus changed from conventional memorisation skills to an evaluation of the thinking power of the student. This change was initiated in 1993.

Not unlike the American SAT, the College Scholastic Ability Test or CSAT (abbreviated as *Suneung* in South Korea) is a type of standardised benchmark test that is accepted by South Korean universities. This CSAT exam is only taken once a year. It was made official in 1994, and is of the highest importance when applying to Korean universities.

The Korean Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE) is officially in charge of developing and implementing the College Scholastic Ability Test, and is commissioned by the Ministry of Education. The KICE is in charge of setting the papers, printing the tests, marking the tests, and releasing the results. All the questions within the College Scholastic Ability Test are derived solely from the school curriculum, which is based on the national-standard textbooks, and are designed to test the thinking skills of those students taking the test. The aim of the CSAT is to evaluate the students' higher-order thinking abilities through a focus on the fundamental principles of the Seventh National Curriculum, which focuses on

the needs, interests, learning abilities and career goals of the students (<http://www.kice.re.kr/sub/info.do?m=0205&s=english>).

### **2.3.1.1 Current College Scholastic Ability Test**

The test has changed slightly each year since it was instituted in 1994, but generally remains the same. Since 2005 the College Scholastic Ability Test has allowed students to choose some or all fields and subjects, which include Korean, English Language, Mathematics, Social Studies/Science/Vocational Education, and Second Foreign Language/Chinese Characters and Classics. Most test questions have been based on lectures provided by the state-sponsored broadcasting company, EBS (KCUE 2013:65).

During the 2014 academic year, in the specific subjects of Korean, English and Mathematics, students were given the opportunity to choose between two levels (A or B) with B being more difficult than A. However, students can only choose two B level subjects out of the possible three, and taking the Korean B test with the Mathematics B test is restricted. Within the field of Social Studies students are able to choose a maximum of two of the ten subjects, within the field of Science students are able to select up to two of the eight subjects, and within the field of Vocational Education students are able to select only one of five subjects. For Second Foreign Language/Chinese Characters and Classics, students are able to choose one out of the nine subjects (KCUE 2013:64-66). The composition of the CSAT is shown in Table 2.2.



**Table 2.2 Test composition of the CSAT**

Test		Subjects (National Curriculum)
Korean Language	Type A	Speech and Writing I, Reading and Grammar I, Literature I
	Type B	Speech and Writing II, Reading and Grammar II, Literature II
Mathematics	Type A	Mathematics I, Pre-Calculus and Pre-Statistics
	Type B	Mathematics I, Mathematics II, Integration and Statistics, Geometry and Vectors
English	Type A	English, English I
	Type B	English II, English Reading and Writing, Advanced English conversation
Inquiries	Social Studies	Life and Ethics, Ethics and Thought, Korean History, Korean Geography, World Geography, East Asian History, World History, Law and Politics, Economics, Society and Culture
	Science	Physics I, Chemistry I, Life Science I, Earth Science I, Physics II, Chemistry II, Life Science II, Earth Science II
	Vocational Education	Agriculture Bio Industry, Industry, Commerce and Information, Fishery and Shipping, Home Economics and Business
Second Foreign Language/ Chinese Characters and Classics		German I, French I, Spanish I, Chinese I, Japanese I, Russian I, Arabic I, Basic Vietnamese I, Chinese Characters and Classics

**Source:** Adapted from KCUE (2013:66)

The number of questions, testing time and maximum raw score on the CSAT is as follows:

- Korean Language: 45 questions, 100 points total, 80 minutes.
- Mathematics: 30 questions (including 9 subjective questions), 100 points total, 100 minutes.
- English Language: 45 questions (including 17 listening questions), 100 points total, 70 minutes.
- Social Studies/Sciences/Vocational Education: 20 questions each, 50 points each, 62 minutes.
- Second Foreign Language or Chinese Characters and Classics: 30 questions, 50 points total, 40 minutes.

The students' results are assessed in standard scores, percentiles and evaluated grades from 1 to 9. The proportion of each grade, may be changed for each embodiment (KCUE 2013:66).

### 2.3.1.2 Culture of the College Scholastic Ability Test

A culture has been formed around the entrance examination in South Korea. It is strongly believed that the CSAT will determine which university the student will be able to enter. For high school seniors, November is a very important month, because this is when the CSAT is conducted. On average, the CSAT is a nine-hour long exam. The CSAT's schedule is shown in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3 CSAT administration schedule**

Session	Test	Time Schedule
Enter the room by 08:10		
1st	Korean Language	08:40 ~ 10:00 (80 min)
Break - 10:00 ~ 10: 20 (20 min)		
2nd	Mathematics	10:30 ~ 12:10(100 min)
Lunch - 12:20 ~ 13: 10 (50 min)		
3rd	Foreign Language (English)	13:10 ~ 14:20 (70 min)
Break - 14:20 ~ 14: 40 (20 min)		
4th	Social Studies/ Sciences/Vocational Education	14:50 ~ 15:52 (62 min)
Break - 15:52 ~ 16: 10 (18 min)		
5th	Second Foreign Languages/Chinese Characters and Classics	16: 20 ~ 17:00 (40 min)

**Source:** <http://www.kice.re.kr/sub/info.do?m=0205&s=english>

During the college entrance exam season, parents go to churches to pray for their children's entry into top universities. People give presents for good luck to students who will take the test. Traditionally, students are usually given *Chapsalttock* (a Korean glutinous rice cake) and *Yut* (a type of Korean candy) before the CSAT exam. The *Chapsalttock* is given in the hope that the university they wish to attend will cling to them, as symbolised by the stickiness of the *Chapsalttock*. Other gifts take the form of cookies, chocolate, cushions, candy, tissues, forks, mirrors and so on. The fork is given symbolically in the hope that the test taker will guess the correct answer, and the mirror in the hope that the test taker will not be confused by any questions.

The College Scholastic Ability Test is offered every November, but the exact dates may change annually. On the test day, middle schools and high schools are closed. Companies begin work one hour later, allowing students to travel to their test venues more easily. Furthermore, elementary schools and civil services also begin later. Buses and subway services are increased to avoid traffic jams that could prevent students from getting to testing sites. Some taxis are dedicated to the transportation of test takers. Test takers are also escorted by police officers. In some cases, test takers have arrived at the exam site by ambulance, and have hobbled in on crutches. Younger students gather outside testing sites to cheer on the students. The members of the students' families, especially the test takers' mothers, are often seen praying outside the testing sites for the duration of the test in the hope that their children will pass. Churches and temples across the country are packed with mothers praying for their children's success in this life-altering test (*The Korea Times* 2008.11.13; Jang 2011:331-332). During the listening tests, all means of transportation, including buses and trains, are required to slow down near exam sites, and honking of horns becomes prohibited. At the same time all aeroplanes, including air force planes, avoid taking off and landing during the listening tests. After completing the CSAT exam, students rejoice in the 'exodus' from studying and exam hell (*The Korea Times* 2010.11.17; Jang 2011:331-332). They receive their test results after about two to three weeks.

### **2.3.2 Student records**

The student's scholastic record is also added to the entrance examination. The scholastic record is made up of a book, which contains the student's school grades, as well as special activities in schools, physical development, behavioural characteristics, and so on. These scholastic records are referred to as the high school academic performance records (called the *Nasin*) and make up part of the college entrance examination.

A student's scholastic record is divided into two parts. The first part includes a student's high school grades that were created on the basis of the school grading system, which evaluates a student's performance by means of a mark from 1 to 9, with 1 being excellent. The 9 grades system in high school records is a relative evaluation method. This will generally include results from the mid-term and final exam. The report card will record the student's grades for each subject, raw score, standard deviation, and ranking. The second part of a student's

scholastic record includes non-academic achievements, such as voluntary service, certificates, certificates of English aptitude tests, awards won, and so on (KCUE 2013:53).

School grades are mainly awarded by a student's class teacher through the use of the National Education Information System (NEIS), which is an information system connected to the internet, high schools, and the educational offices. The NEIS was compiled by the Ministry of Education in order to improve service to the public, and the efficiency of educational administration (Kim, Lee & Lee 2011:242-243; KCUE 2013:62).

### **2.3.3 University-administered examinations**

A university-administered examination is an assessment that the university carries out autonomously. Top universities have to rely on their own tests because school records are not an accurate indication of an applicant's academic achievement. In addition to the admission requirements, some top universities have an individual university admission exam (called the *bongosa*). An individual university admission exam is an evaluation performed on a voluntary basis at the university. This usually involves an essay but might also include oral interviews, major aptitude tests, practical tests, and so on (KCUE 2013:204). In recent years, new students have also been recruited by the universities themselves, through the new college entry scheme called the Admission Officer System, to make up for the weak points in the current entrance examination system.

### **2.3.4 Admission Officer System**

The Admission Officer System has been implemented since 2007, and its prevalence is on the increase. The objective of the Admission Officer System is to give universities greater discretion in selecting students, so as to bring university admissions to a more advanced level, and to facilitate the normalisation of public education, by diversifying the student selection criteria to include various factors such as talent, aptitude, personality, and creativity (KCUE 2013:6; Oh 2010:9).

Admissions officers can interpret and apply extensive selection criteria such as student records, College Scholastic Aptitude Test results, and other supporting documents like essays, personal recommendations from teachers and others, or a letter of self-introduction. Records

of the non-curriculum activities (non-objective criteria) along with other details pertaining to school life are also considered. However, there are social issues regarding the objectivity and fairness of this system.

### **3. ENTRANCE EXAMINATION STRESS SYNDROME AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES**

In 2012, the percentages of primary school students advancing to middle school and middle school students advancing to high school were 99.9% and 99.7% respectively. The percentage of high school students advancing to tertiary education institutions was 71.3%. This means that 7 out of 10 students enter colleges and universities once they have completed their schooling. This reveals the importance placed on education in South Korea (Ministry of Gender Equality & Family 2013:270).

However, due to this extreme fever for education, the life patterns of young people have been negatively affected, because of the limited few who are able to pass the entrance examinations of top universities. This creates a great deal of stress for the students. This research therefore looks at the students' school lives, family lives, and leisure time in the five-day week in order to gain a deeper understanding of the Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome.

#### **3.1 Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome**

There are classroom quizzes, classroom tests, schoolwide tests, county tests, provincial tests, and so on in South Korea. However, the continuing fever for admission to a prestigious university is acting as an obstacle in by hindering normal school education. In addition, the young people of Korea become highly compulsive and stressed when preparing for entrance examinations in this highly pressurized environment (Kim, Oh & Kim 2011:159-160). Typical young Korean people are stressed by the burden of their schoolwork along with the university admissions process. They have been negatively impacted psychologically by the intense pressure of social expectations as well as the atmosphere surrounding entering a university. In South Korea, the psychological pressure caused by the entrance examination is

sometimes referred to as ‘examination hell’ or ‘examination war’, but academically it is referred to as Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome.

One of the most significant and characteristic mental health problems in Korean adolescents is the so called ‘Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome.’ This is called ‘*Kosambyung*’ in Korean, which means the third grade (12th grade) illness. This is a syndrome shown by the students facing college entrance examination. This syndrome was recognised by many practicing psychiatrists and labelled around 1980. (Lee 1993:121)

Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome in South Korea manifests as the following psychological symptoms in students: depression, irritability, anxiety, and conflict (Hahn 1972:235-242).

Han (2012:5800-5807) conducted a comparative study of the relationship between these physical symptoms and mental health, according to the stress factors experienced by selected Korean students who were in the 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd grade (i.e. middle school). The results of Han’s study were as follows (Han 2012:5800):

There was significant correlation between the stress and the mental health, the stress and the physical symptoms and the mental health and the physical symptoms of the students. The stress of middle-school students largely came from academic problems in school life, which is considered to reflect the reality of Korean middle-school students who have the burden of having to take the entrance examination for universities.

The intensity of the Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome increases as students advance in grades, with high school seniors suffering most from this syndrome and being the most stressed. Young people are not happy, due to the feeling that their academic results are considered a matter of life or death, especially when preparing for the entrance examination.

Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome has been linked to numerous social issues, but none more devastating than suicide. Students experience mixed feelings, joy and grief alternating in their hearts according to their grade results, which has been known to induce social maladjustment and deviant behaviour, as well as health problems. News reports of several students committing suicide after the college entrance exam season has become a yearly phenomenon.

### 3.2 School life

Generally, the school day in South Korea begins between 08:10 and 08:30. A period usually lasts for 50 minutes with a break of 10 minutes between each period. Many high schools offer early morning ‘0’ classes for students to prepare for the entrance exam before starting the first official class in the morning. The high school day usually finishes between 15:00 and 16:00. A typical high school’s daily schedule is as follows:

**Table 2.4 A high school’s daily schedule**

Class	Time	Remarks
0 Class	7:50-8:30	Study-room hour or English listening
First Class	8:40-9:30	Regular class
Second Class	9:40-10:30	Regular class
Third Class	10:40-11:30	Regular class
Fourth Class	11:40-12:30	Regular class
Lunch	12:30-13:30	
Fifth Class	13:30-14:20	Regular class
Sixth Class	14:30-15:20	Regular class
Seventh Class	15:30-16:20	Regular class
Eighth Class	16:40-17:30	Supplementary lessons

**Source:** Oh (2010:12)

However, after the formal school day has ended, students who aim to enter a university attend numerous supplementary classes and are required to do a lot of self-study at night. Some students only finish self-study between 21:00 and 22:00, and may even still go out to attend private institutes (called *hagwons*) from Monday to Friday as well as on weekends, in order

to supplement the core subjects (Korean, English, Mathematics) and for extra instruction in other subjects (such as art or music) from private tutors.

The curriculum of most schools is structured around the content of the entrance examination (Lee 2006:174-177). This curriculum is teacher-centred and involves memorising formulae for all the subjects as a result of the transfer of information. Furthermore, students do not typically pose questions to the teachers in the classroom, which means that many students' class attitude is passive and not active, and this does not promote creative personalities (Lee 2006:177-180). When young people enter high school they are taught the main subjects needed for the CSAT and class schedules are adjusted accordingly (Kim, Oh & Kim 2011:162-163).

Students are not able to take part in special activities or hobbies such as sport, as a result of having to study at night and attending supplementary lessons after regular classes in order to prepare for the entrance examination. Most seniors in high school are not able to go on any form of vacation either. Furthermore, in their final year, many high school students do not have any free time just to have fun and relax because of the CSAT and the fear of falling behind in classes. Except for a very few rebellious students, the idea of skipping classes for enjoyment with friends is extremely rare in South Korea.

Oh & Kang (2011:29-55) conducted an ethnographic study on the school life of senior students (3rd graders, or S.A. Grade 12) at an academic high school. This study analysed and investigated the school lives of students who were being affected by the pressure placed on them due to the various university admission requirements and screening systems. Students were screened through in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher, who was a senior homeroom and subject teacher.

Firstly, on the one hand, there were students who entered a university through a sophisticated management of academic reports over the three-year high school period, beginning with their entrance into the senior phase, aiming at the early admissions university system.

On the other hand, there were some students who had been engaged in both academic report



management and CSAT preparation at the same time, which also allowed them to apply for the early admission procedure if they thought it was advantageous (Kim & Kim 2011:37). In the class of senior students there were some students who focused on specific subjects they liked and needed in order to enter university through the early admission procedure (Lee 2006:177-178). In a particular Mathematics classroom, one student studied Natural Science instead of Mathematics from the time of the summer vacation (Oh & Kang 2011:34). The participant said:

‘Yeah, I do not like to study other subjects because I do not need them to go to university. I really hate studying Economics and Chinese Classics.’ (Oh & Kang 2011:35)

Mathematics is the most avoided subject among students in human study classes, as they regard it as difficult, except for upper-intermediate students and top-ranked students, who get relatively high percentage, grade and standard score marks. With regard to difficult subjects like Mathematics, some students simply gave up during the test and made random answer selections, saying that they would leave it in God’s hands (Oh & Kang 2011:38).

Secondly, ‘There were students who entered a university they wanted through self-confidence and gaining better grades at school by changing the academic field, from which they had suffered due to a selection without looking at their aptitudes or interests.’ (Oh & Kang 2011:53)

Thirdly, there were those students who had been preparing for university through their academic report and CSAT preparation, along with self-study at night with the aid of the internet, through listening to lectures by famous lecturers. This is one of the main changes in current South Korean education, i.e. students watching lectures online. In addition, students still attend private institutes for those subjects in which they feel their results are below par.

‘Three times a week I study here [referring to a private institute]. I also come on weekends. This is the place where I used to go from middle school and I could study at ease and I get along very well with the teacher. I still have only a poor

knowledge of Mathematics.’ (Oh & Kang 2011:42)

Students feel uneasy if they do not attend these ‘cram schools’. Often as a result of the cram schools they are unable to concentrate in normal school hours, during which they struggle to stay awake.

Finally, the biggest burden on seniors was entering a university. Some students who were suffering under this burden could not describe precisely why they felt the way they did and would simply say to themselves: ‘Just as it is’, ‘I feel irritated’, ‘Please, cut me some slack because I’m a 3rd grader’. Some students tried to relieve their entrance examination stress by eating, exercising or playing games and so on (Oh & Kang 2011:54).

All the exams taken in high school (twice each semester) are extremely important for determining university admission. In South Korea, two major barometers are used when selecting university entrants, namely in-school grades and CSAT scores. Most universities require students to submit an application with their high school grades and CSAT results, along with letters of recommendation.

Many students resort to ‘all-nighters’ to study for tests. Furthermore, students do not have any free time for physical exercise, with so many expectations to excel in school and enter a good university. However, their test results do not always reflect this, mainly due to the pressure to succeed academically and a lack of sleep.

In addition, some students transfer to a new school in order to get better grades. Students from alternative schools that use non-traditional teaching methods and curricula also feel the same burden, because of their academic records. Song (2011:66-71) studied the daily lives of specialised alternative middle school students through an ethnographic research project. These students were satisfied with participating, which is the goal of alternative education to some degree. However, some students raised the problems facing them, such as the overheated competition for entering high school and university.

‘I’m worried about my grades not being good enough. My friends are so good at studying.’ (Song 2011:70)

High school students spend most of the day in the same homeroom classroom with the same classmates, like middle school students. High school students in South Korea spend more than 70% of their day at school. However, while there is the pressure of the CSAT, there is also pressure in the classroom and constant competition to score higher than other students (Cho & Kim 2009:83-87). The entrance examination system in South Korea makes the classroom atmosphere extremely unfriendly, because of students competing with one another for better grades (Lee 2008:87; Kim, Oh & Kim 2011:160-161). Due to this competition and pressure, some students are caught cheating in examinations.

High school students differ from younger students, in that they are taught by different teachers who move around from classroom to classroom, educating them in subjects such as Korean, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Economics, Chinese Letters, Physical Education, Arts, Music, and some physical activity. Homeroom teachers (called *damim gyosa*) have the added responsibility of not only teaching special subjects, but also taking care of their homeroom students. In terms of the relationship between student and teacher, there is no longer the respect there once was, and teachers are often seen merely as individuals who have been tasked with supervising the students.

There are several reasons for declining respect for teachers, but one of the main reasons includes the effects of the entrance examination. Teachers are aware that the school should not discriminate against students because they struggle academically in class, but this does happen, with some teachers even comparing their students with past graduated seniors when their students go for career support (Kim, Oh & Kim 2011:164-165). In addition, high schools are very interested in enhancing their status by boasting about how many of their students go to prestigious universities. There are therefore a number of maladjusted students in high schools, and the excessive entrance examination stress that young people face often has an adverse effect on them, with some students ultimately giving up on their studies (Sung 2005:314-315).

### 3.3 Family life

Modern Korean parents have dedicated themselves to their children's education. Koreans have traditionally been fervent believers in education. For example, there are 'Goose Dads' (called *gireogi appa*) living alone, apart from their wives and children, who are studying in an English-speaking country for an extended period of time in order to enhance their English ability. This reveals Korean people's excessive educational zeal. In these cases, 'Goose Dads' are left behind to work in South Korea in order to pay for their families to live and study abroad. This 'Education Exodus' is continually occurring in South Korea (Cha 2012:428-429).

Entrance examinations are also affecting the home. The senior year of high school is described as the most stressful period affecting all the family members (Yang 2005:49-61). Much of a family's social life concerns their children's education, which was traditionally the responsibility of the mother (Lee 2004:95-97; Kim et al. 2002:6-8). There are more parents in South Korea who are extremely educationally oriented than in any other country.

Parents in South Korea support their children by paying for private tutors or teachers in private institutions as well as by relying on the teachers of the school their child attends, in order that their child might achieve good grades in the entrance examination. Private education fees have been steadily increasing, especially with regard to preparing for the entrance examination, as a result of South Korea's continuing obsession with education. Most Korean parents carry the burden of their children's private education even once the entrance examination is completed. The excessive competition in the college entrance examination brings with it the added burden and expense of private education.

Parents support students so that they can focus exclusively on studying for the examination. Conversations with the parent are mainly related to performance and studying. South Korea's parents have high expectations for their children to succeed and to get good jobs (Lee 2008:89-91).

There are students who receive expensive private tuition in each and every subject. Parents are interested in information on private institutions and famous private tutors who are good at

creating sample questions, in line with the requirements of each school. Parents become the monitors and commanders of their children (Kim et al. 2002:16-17). Sometimes parents are also compared to the parents of other children who have better school grades. Sometimes, parents will give teachers a small present as a token of their gratitude, and to secure good guidance for their children. These gifts are called *chonji* in Korean.

### **3.4 Young people's leisure time and the five-day school week system**

Leisure time during adolescence is important for the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. However, due to the pressures of preparing for the entrance examination, there has been little focus on or development of sporting activities and leisure activities appropriate for the young people of South Korea. Kim (2008:41-57) conducted a study on the types of leisure activities among senior high school students. The goal of this study was to show the types of leisure and sports activities that senior high school students in South Korea took part in. The results of Kim's study were as follows (Kim 2008:41-42):

Their sympathy toward leisure activities is high. Especially, male students and general high schoolers feel sympathy with the idea that more leisure activities are needed. But the senior high school students in South Korea were unsatisfied with leisure activities. Their dissatisfaction with leisure activities was caused mainly due to a lack of time and the feeling of unrest as a result of preparing for the entrance exam. Especially, the study shows that the main causes are lack of time for male students; the feeling of unrest about the entrance exam for female students and general high schoolers; and lack of time for vocational high schoolers.

In March 2005, the Korean education system changed, in that one week of the month became a five-day school week rather than the usual six days. In March 2006, this changed to two weeks of the month being five-day school weeks (Kim 2009:1). From March 2012, this changed again to every week being a five-day school week, as is the case in most Western countries (Cho 2012:2). The leisure time of young people has increased rapidly as a result of a five-day school week system. Furthermore, this leisure time can easily be spent engaging in

wholesome and healthy activities. Youth in South Korea have access to natural environments such as parks, camp sites, hiking trails, beaches, rivers, snow fields, and so on. However, the young people of South Korea prefer playing computer games, watching television, playing video games, surfing the internet or listening to music, rather than being active. Furthermore, young people still think they do not have enough time for leisure activities. They are also not satisfied with the leisure facilities available to them (Kim 2013:170-171).

This means many young people are dissatisfied with leisure and sport. There is also an absence or lack of programmes and sporting facilities for enjoying active leisure activities. Furthermore, high school students are still highly constrained from taking part in leisure and sporting activities due to a lack of time, as a result of extra lessons for the entrance examination (Ji 2009: 152-153).

#### **4. THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AND YOUTH MINISTRY (1960-PRESENT)**

##### **4.1 Historical context**

South Korea's history from the 1960s to 1990s is characterised by alternating periods of democratic and autocratic rule. After the First Republic, beginning with Syngman Rhee being elected as the first president on 15 August 1948, a series of oppressive autocratic governments took power in South Korea. During the presidential elections on 15 March 1960, President Syngman Rhee committed electoral fraud in order to remain president for a fourth term. As a result of this, the April Revolution (the April 19 Revolution or April 19 Movement) occurred (Suh 2009:267-269; Lee 2013:50-61). The April Revolution was a popular uprising in 1960, led by students from various universities and schools, which overthrew the autocratic First Republic of South Korea under President Syngman Rhee. As a result, Rhee submitted his official resignation on 26 April 1960.

In 1961 The May 16 coup (Korean: *O ilryuk gunsa jeongbyeon*) saw a military coup d'état in South Korea by Park Chung-Hee, who formed the Military Revolutionary Committee and became the President of the Second Republic of South Korea (Park 2005:1-2). President Park

Chung-Hee led by military dictatorship until he was assassinated on 26 October 1979. President Park Chung-Hee was responsible for the greatest economic development in South Korea, more so than any other president. He built the Gyeongbu Expressway (Korean: *Gyeongbu Gosokdoro*) from 1968 to 1970, which is the most heavily travelled expressway in South Korea, connecting Seoul to Busan. He also focused heavily on the economic modernisation of rural South Korea through the New Community Movement known as the Saemaul Movement, which was a political initiative launched on 22 April 1970.

Thereafter, the coup d'état of 12 December (the 12.12 Military Insurrection) took place on 12 December 1979, led by Chun Doo-Hwan, a security commander. The Gwangju Democratisation Movement (Korean: *Gwangju Minjuhwa Undong*) refers to a popular uprising in the city of Gwangju, from 18-27 May 1980 (Lee & Park 2008:20). It was a pro-democracy movement with the aim of abolishing martial law and the resignation of the new military forces, including the Chun Doo-Hwan government. Many students were killed and beaten in an unprecedented attack by government troops (Lee & Park 2008:29-35). This military dictatorship continued through the 1980s, with democracy only being realised in South Korea in the 1990s. At the end of 1997, during the Asian financial crisis, South Korea joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in order to avert the effects of the financial crisis (Lee 2001:70; Hwang 2000:355-357).

#### **4.2 The campus mission of Christian schools**

A fully-fledged mission was launched in 1885 by missionaries. Missionaries first began work through activities such as health care, education, publishing, and social reform. Preaching of the Gospel in Korea first began in schools, and emphasised education. Missionaries first focused on the establishment of missionary schools, with indirect mission work being conducted through these schools, followed by more direct mission work. The main purpose of establishing missionary schools was to promote the Gospel through education, and as a result, mission schools built by missionaries increased in Korea (Kim 1998:7). The number of Christian schools, which were built with the assistance of the church system, was 796 in February 1910 (Kim 1998:11).

The Japanese Government-General of Joseon served as the chief administrator of Joseon/Korea while it was held by Japan from 1910 to 1945. However, with Korea coming under the rule of Imperial Japan in 1910, there was a major crisis in the mission schools, as the education policy of the Japanese colonialists was to assimilate education and align it with the Japanese educational policy. In addition, Japan banned Bible education, Geography, and History in the Christian schools, and revised the regulations placed on private schools. From the 1930s, the Japanese Government-General of Joseon, which is today known as Korea, actively urged Shinto shrine worship in all Korean schools, including mission schools. Many missionaries decided to reject this and as a result, mission schools closed, with some schools closing voluntarily, such as the Soongsil School, the Union Christian College and the Soongui School in Pyongyang which was known as 'Jerusalem in the Orient' since late nineteenth century (Park 2010:103-109; Park 2010:159-161; An 2009:115). During the 1940s, Korean schools including mission schools had descended into institutions for war, and were used to create student soldiers, forced labour and forced mobilisation under the rule of Japanese imperialism.

Many mission schools returned after Korea's liberation in 1945. After the liberation, mission schools set out to fulfil the following goals: the realisation of equal opportunity in education and the democratisation of education under the American military government in Korea. After the government of the Republic of Korea was established in 1948, mission schools adopted an education policy of human prosperity and a state-led educational policy of '*HongIk InGan*', or broad benefit for the human world (Chung 1984:70). In this era of rapid change after Korea's liberation, mission schools were responsible for the education of South Korea and had the largest influence on the education of South Koreans. However, the mission schools did not adopt a proactive approach to educational content purpose, which resulted in mission schools simply fulfilling the educational philosophy and goals of the South Korean government.

The Education Equalisation Policy in South Korea was put into effect in 1969. The Education Equalisation policy's core emphasis was to do away with the student selection policy, which focused on students' results and created a culture of strong competition and stress among students (Kim 2008:306, 310). However, the autonomy of private schools blocked this move,



as they were able to develop and pursue their own pedagogical philosophy and methodology (Kim 2008:321). Christian schools were handicapped when it came to evangelism, which was the main purpose of the establishment of such schools, as a result of the Education Equalisation Policy limiting worship and Bible education in these Christian schools. By limiting the particularity and autonomy of the Christian private school, it became impossible to conduct Christian education in Christian schools.

As an example, in 2004, Kang We-Seok, a student at Daekwang high school, a typical Christian educational institution in South Korea, refused to attend his high school chapel services based on his civil rights (religious freedom). On 8 July 2004, Kang was expelled, but he petitioned the National Human Rights Commission, citing his religious freedom of choice. He won his case in the Supreme Court in 2010. This has led to more problems regarding religious education arising in secondary schools. Kim (2008:321-322) says the following concerning some guidelines for religious education in private schools under the current school laws:

Firstly, prayer or religious speech in a school ceremony should be acceptable.  
Secondly, if a school wants to make it compulsory for its students to attend a religious event, it needs consent from the students and their parents.

As a result, the percentage of Christian students in mission schools along with Christian schools has decreased in recent times. On the other hand, Christian alternative schools have grown rapidly within the Christian alternative education system since the 1990s. As of June 2012, there were 131 Christian alternative schools in South Korea. The need for alternative schools is increasing not only because of the number of school dropout students, but also as a result of school education becoming so competitive (Park 2013:288). Compared to mission schools, Christian alternative schools selectively or rarely enforce extra self-study time and supplementary lessons at school. Christian alternative schools practise higher levels of character education, chapel services, Biblical knowledge education, Q.T. (quiet time), and Bible study (Hwang 2009:294). These Christian alternative schools are receiving much attention in the field of the Christian School Movement.

### 4.3 Mission organisations

Most youth organisations in Korea were dissolved under the rule of Japanese Imperialism (1910-1945). However, with Korea's independence came the reopening and rebuilding of these organisations. One of these organisations was the Young Men's Christian Association or YMCA. The YMCA of Korea was started at the BaeJae School in 1901; HwangSang YMCA was established in 1903. The YMCA was built thanks to the support of the early missionaries to Korea such as H.G. Underwood, H.G. Apenzeller, J.S. Gale, and so on. Since then the YMCA has been used as a means of evangelism to spread the Gospel. The YMCA brought young people together through sports and education. One example was baseball, which was introduced to Korea for the first time in 1904. The American missionary P.L. Gillett taught members of HwangSang YMCA baseball for the first time (Son & Lee 2011:21). After Korea's liberation, branches of the YMCA arose spontaneously in high schools, colleges and churches.

However, in 1959 The Presbyterian Church in Korea was divided into the Korean General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (*Hapdong*) and The Korean Presbyterian Church (*Tonghap*) as a result of theological differences (Kim 2010:89). The theological difference was a matter of WCC registration. Kim (2010: 105-114) remarks, from the standpoint of the Korean General Assembly of Presbyterian Church (*Hapdong*), about the WCC as follows:

Firstly, the WCC movement always has been led by leaders in theological liberalism, and the movement resulted in the diminution of the Gospel of Christ in and out of the Church. Secondly, the WCC movement accelerates the tendencies of religious pluralism and religious amalgamation. Thirdly, the WCC movement tends to do harm to the biblical unity of the Church.

In the late 1950s these theological differences divided the Christian student movements into progressive and conservative associations. In 1957, the YMCA and the YWCA, being part of the progressive association, participated in implementing the Life and Mission of Church (LMC) programme to provide for and support the World Students Christian Federation (WSCF) and they began to participate and show an interest in political and social issues

(Paek 2009: 278-279). In 1969, the progressive association was founded in the form of the Korea Student Christian Association (KSCF). The progressive association placed the Korea Christian Student Association (KSCF) in universities belonging to the six denominations under KNCC (the Korean National Council of Churches). The Christian Student Association aimed to work in schools and churches, for social reform. Then in 1976, the KNCC youth sub-committee was established by the organising Ecumenical Youth Council (EYC), which was configured to register the denominations (Paek 2009:279). The more liberal YMCA and YWCA participated in society to lead urban industry ministry, urban poor missions and so on, for social justice. They were actively involved in the pro-democracy movement, human rights movement, and church union movement, among others.

Thereafter, the YWCA and the YMCA of South Korea became civil movement organisations. The YWCA and YMCA are based on volunteerism and have been active as social movement organisations, on the basis of the ecumenical movement, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC). For example, the YWCA and YMCA of South Korea are in the business of evangelism and education, physical education in business, publishing in business, rural movement, and the consumer movement, such as in connection with the international exchange rate.

On the other hand, more conservative associations focus on missions around the missionary organisations. The Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) for foreign missions, or SVM, was an organisation founded during the 19th century that sought to recruit college and university students in the United States to train for missionary service abroad. However, SVM was severely hampered in the 1930s due to the Social Gospel Movement, inefficiency of operations, financial pressure, and the overall training programme, and as a result the programme did not have such a major impact. Student mission movements began to diversify through the various student missionary organisations. Student missionary organisations were born in South Korea either directly or indirectly as a result of this (Paek 2009:278). Paek (2009:275) says this of the Student's Mission Movement in South Korea from 1960 to the 1990s:

From the latter part of the 1940s the student mission societies developed into two types, the mission society affiliated with specific denominational churches and the interdenominational mission society. The interdenominational student mission societies, which are evangelical in terms of faith, are classified into the two sorts by origin: one established as a regional extension of the international mission society and the other developed from within South Korea.

Organisations in the background of the mission society, affiliated with specific denominational churches, are the Students for Christ (SFC), Student Christian Endeavour (SCE), Methodist Youth Fellow (MYF), Christ's Ambassador Mission (CAM) among others. Most of the missionary organisations that stemmed from a denomination focused on the promotion of fellowship among Christian students in the church and the operating of the union, rather than complaining about the primary purpose of campus evangelisation (Paek 2009:280).

Secondly, organisations as regional extensions of the international mission society within the interdenominational student mission societies are the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVF), Korea Campus Crusade for Christ (KCCC), Youth for Christ (YFC), Navigators and so on. Student missionary organisations that began spontaneously with the help of missionaries are Jesus first, Others second, You third (JOY), University Bible Fellowship (UBF), and Youth With a Mission (YWAM) (Paek 2009:280-281).

Evangelical student' mission organisations were growing rapidly during the 1970-80s on university campuses. Since the start of the 1960s, the direction of these organisations has focused on campus evangelism and discipleship training, missions abroad, and the culture ministry (Paek 2009:283-286). In recent years, missionary organisations have introduced school student camps and retreats during school holidays.

#### **4.4 Sunday School**

Sunday School in Korea was first started by missionaries. The first Sunday School was started by Mrs M.F. Scranton, a Methodist Episcopal Church missionary who began with 12

students, including three Korean girls at Ewha Girls School (Korean: *Ehwa Haktang*) on 15 January 1888 (Sohn 2008:169). The purpose of Sunday School was to create faithful Protestant Christians among non-Christian children and young people (Lee 2008:102-103). Sunday School became popular nationwide after the Pyongyang Great Revival Movement in 1907. The church revivals were closely related to the education of the church, which was the focus of the Sunday School movement. The starting of Sunday Schools followed the beginning of the church revival, but their development also strengthened the revival movement (Lim 2007:125). At the end of 1919 there were more than ten thousand Sunday Schools nationwide (Lim 2007:122). However, Sunday Schools began to feel the oppression of Japan under Japanese colonial rule, and the Joseon Sunday School Association was dismantled on 21 June 1937 and Sunday Schools in Korea fell into a dark age (Kim 2013:322).

After the Korean War, Sunday Schools were vigorously expanded within each denomination. Student mission Societies and churches in South Korea grew in line with the economic growth of Korea in the 1970s and 1980s. With the growth and expansion of the churches in the 1960s, an officer called the Evangelist of Education was created, due to the request for an era of professional ministry within Sunday Schools (Kim 2013:323). Since the end of 1997 and the Asian financial crisis, to date, not only the number of young people in the churches of South Korea, but also the number of young people in the student mission societies belonging to parachurches, has decreased. Furthermore, since 1995, the number of young people in Sunday Schools, despite the growth of Korean churches, has experienced stagnation or decline (Kim 2013:323). The birth rate has gradually decreased and many young people have also left their churches.

The Presbyterian Church of Korea has also seen a decline in the number of students attending Sunday Schools recently (from 1996-2005). The number of students in the youth departments of the Presbyterian Sunday Schools, made up mostly of middle and high school students, has seen the greatest decline: 7.8%, with the number of students in the youth department decreasing from 230 672 people in 1996 to 180 496 people in 2005. More worrying is the fact that students in these youth departments decreased by 31.9% between 1997 and 2002 (Park 2009:54).

The negative growth of youth departments and the growth of the Church seem to have some relation. According to the 2005 Population and Housing Census Report, published by The Korean National Statistical Office, the main cause of this decline in the Christian population was the result of a decline in the number of youth, which was greater than the increase in the number of adults (Jeon 2006:3). This has led to negative growth or stagnation within the church. It is a fact that young people play an important role in the growth of the church. The youth are finding themselves under more and more stress as well as pressure as a result of academic pursuits and the need to achieve good grades in order to enter a good university. Qualitative and quantitative church growth has been negatively influenced by this problem.

Weekly attendance suddenly fell by half when it came to the test period. This included children of elders, exhorters and deacons. (A Methodist Church Middle Sunday School responsible evangelist in Seoul) (*Kukmin Ilbo* 2013.01.08)

Professor Park Sang-Jin conducted a survey of 1 500 students in Sunday schools, from fifth graders to high school seniors, in the metropolitan area of Seoul. One of the questions asked of the young people was why they did not attend church. The number one response to this question was that the young people needed to attend private academy classes (*Christianday* 2008.10.23).

It is no time to go to church because I should go private institute. (*Christianday* 2008. 10. 23)

This means that young people are attending extra classes, going to libraries, and studying at 'cram schools' on Sundays as well. As the years go by, the church attendance rate of the youth is declining. This is especially true among senior students. The youth departments within churches have begun to change their events schedules so as not to clash with test dates. As a result, these events are also becoming shorter and quicker. If students fail their university entrance exams or are unable to attend a good university, they withdraw from the church due to the shame and disappointment they feel. Examination results are widely spoken of and are often general knowledge in the community.

Entrance examination stress has also resulted in a distortion of Christian values among young people. The youth, due to unbiblical values, tend to live a dualistic life where their studies and academic lives become separate from their faith. Many of the youth study simply wish to be successful and make a lot of money. They see this as their reason for working so hard. They simply place more value on studying, and by implication, their desire to make money and be successful. Thus, the standard by which career choices have been made over the past decade is that of financial gain (Lim, Park & Hyun 2012:33).

These distorted views then enter the church, and often result in the youth struggling to find the meaning of life within the church. This results in the youth leaving the church and the creation of a vicious cycle that began with Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome. The behavioural problems created as a result of examination stress are bullying, depression, running away, violence, and suicide. These are also found within the church and not only within the secular world. The young people within the church feel the pressure, both physical and psychological. They face the same problems and often react in the same way as young people outside the church.

Often, as a result of entrance examination stress, there is a gap that develops between the church and young people. Furthermore, this Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome also creates a gap between parents and their children. According to research, parents, especially mothers, have a major effect on the college entrance examination stress of their children, and in turn are also affected by this stress (Kim et al. 2002:5-42).

In addition, this indifference towards the church has caused many young people to leave the church. Many of the youth suffering with worry and conflict about their grades do not easily open up and talk to their Sunday School leaders (Jeon 2006:84-85). The youth seem to prefer speaking to their friends. On the other hand, the teachers within the Sunday Schools do not fully understand the pain of young people who suffer from this academic stress. Many problems have emerged in the church as a result of this entrance examination stress. However, the local churches in South Korea have not found effective counter-measures to this serious problem. Furthermore, the local church is dealing negatively and robotically with the issue of entrance examination stress.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Both young people in the local church, and in Korean society as a whole, continue to face the stress caused by the entrance examination system. However, Christian schools have focused on the training needed to reach the kingdom of God, through the teaching of the Gospel. Youth mission organisations have organised camps and retreats to share the Gospel with young people, and in so doing have taken a short-term approach. The Korean Sunday School system has mainly offered Christian education focusing on spiritual maturity, through the formation of a spiritual relationship with God, thereby attempting to sustain the Sunday school system through evangelism, worship and Bible study. The local church in Korean society has, however, been keenly aware of the phenomenon of decreasing church attendance by young people. However, congregations have been indifferent to young people preparing for the entrance examinations. Youth ministry is mostly separate from the congregation in Korean churches. The result is a limited ability to provide care for, and to actively support, young people suffering from entrance examination stress.



## CHAPTER 3

### UNDERSTANDING YOUTH MINISTRY AND PASTORAL CARE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the concept and characteristics of young people, and also provides a general theological foundation for an understanding of the youth ministry in the local church. Firstly, this chapter looks at the concept and characteristics of young people in order to understand those who are suffering from stress as a result of entrance examinations. Secondly, different perspectives on the youth ministry, and the roles and positions of the youth within the local church, will be explored; along with the relationship between young people and the youth ministry, from a biblical perspective. Thirdly, this chapter considers the principle of pastoral care within the youth ministry in terms of its relationship with the local church, and assists people involved in youth ministry and the support and care of young people under entrance examination stress, through the network of the congregation.

#### 2. THE CONCEPT OF YOUTH AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

##### 2.1 The concept of youth and its historical context

In erstwhile agrarian societies, there was no concept of adolescence, as children began working during early childhood and usually participated in various productive activities, having learnt from their parents while still very young. However, in response to the Industrial Revolution, ‘adolescence’ became a recognised social concept. Throughout most of the Industrial Revolution, children were made to take part in commercial activities (Choi 2008:376-380). There was no concept of adolescence in the early Industrial Revolution: people became adults at the onset of puberty. In fact, ‘puberty’ is derived from the Latin *pubertas*, meaning ‘adulthood’. Before the start of the Industrial Revolution, puberty was the beginning of adulthood, not the beginning of adolescence. However, the modern meaning of ‘adolescence’ arose during the Industrial Revolution (Ratcliff & Davies 1991:42-43). Koteskey (in Ratcliff & Davies 1991:42) says the following concerning adolescents: ‘Both

the meanings and the ages of puberty and adulthood have changed during the last century so that people pass through puberty several years before they are defined as adults.’

Young people were allowed to enjoy or experience adolescence more as changes in culture and society were introduced, due to urbanisation and industrialisation. A major change was a reform movement that legislated compulsory education. This forced young people to attend school, where they could experience adolescence. From the late 19th century, young people were not allowed to work and it was compulsory for them to attend school (Choi 2008:371-374). During this time, it was discovered that a person grows through transitional stages of physical and psychological human development. This led people to accept that there is a distinct period of adolescence. With regard to children, John Comenius (circa A.D. 1650) saw growth processes that led him to a unique theory of nurture; a theory that teaching and learning must be adapted for the characteristics of the child (Richards 1983:90). With regard to the extension of the adolescent period, Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century called for a ‘the second birth or rebirth’ of adolescence in his book *Emile*. Among the various theories of youth developments, Freud believed that human beings are raging seas of passions and aggression. In other words, Freud assumed that the process of growth toward control took place in stages that are directly linked to human sexual nature. On the other hand, Erikson’s emphasis was not on illness but on health, including the significant concept of developmental tasks (Richards 1983:92-93).

In 1904 the American psychologist G. Stanley Hall introduced the concept of adolescence in his book, *Adolescence*. He described this time in a young person’s life as being a period of ‘storm and stress’ (Dean 2010:23). He argued that the psychological changes experienced throughout this time in adolescence are a natural and universal phenomenon in human beings. G. Stanley Hall was influenced by an evolutionary way of thinking, which included Charles Darwin’s view in the *Origin of Species* published in the 1859, and applied Darwin’s views to his psychological perspective (Berk 1999:13). With the conclusion of World War I, young people in the United States began to gain the attention of the masses as being a ‘new generation’. Senter III (1992:51) says:

During the Vietnam conflict, a period of extreme social unrest in the United States, young people felt alienated from adult values. The media described it as a ‘generation gap’. Clothing, hair styles, music, and the flaunting of societal taboos symbolised the disaffection felt first by later adolescents, and later by even grade school children. The movement was led primarily by young adults who were uncomfortable with the status quo, especially in the church, or had experimented with counter-culture lifestyles and had found them empty.

Later in the 1960s young people in their twenties were known as ‘flower children’ in the United States, and were largely responsible for the anti-war movement, especially aimed at the Vietnam War. In South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s young people in their twenties became the centre of the political demonstrations that led to a change in society, such as the April 19 pro-democracy movement and the May 18 *Gwangju* uprising for democracy (Lee 2011:369-370).

However, the concept of youth may also be classified in various psychological, social, cultural and legal dimensions. Psychologically, youth refers to a period of time where self-identity or ego-identity is formed. These are the developmental tasks needed for young people to grow into adults. I presume Robert Havighurst agrees that it is also possible to define adolescence in terms of the achievement of developmental tasks (in Richards 1985:21). There are also developmental tasks pertaining to relationships with others. Within the social structure, the rite of passage clearly distinguishes between adults and children. However, the period of youth is seen as being until such time that, through the process of socialisation in general, the youth obtains the social status of adult independently from the parents. Because it is now defined as a variety of youth, it is also defined differently from country to country. Youth under the current law in South Korea are explicitly categorised by age. Consequently, in South Korea, it is difficult to define a youth precisely, and when the period of ‘youth’ begins and ends. Dean (2010:24) says:

Biological markers signal the beginning of adolescence, but the end of adolescence is far more ambiguous. If fertility is no longer the sign of adulthood, then what is? Some scholars argue that since adolescence no longer functions as

a transition into adulthood, it should be abandoned. They believe that middle-class interests have artificially reinforced and prolonged adolescence, infantilizing young people who are sexually, intellectually, and psychologically capable of making adult commitments far sooner than our laws or our morals allow.

However, the period of youth begins earlier and ends later today than in the past. This has resulted in the period of adolescence becoming longer (Choi 2008:381).

## 2.2 The Korean youth concept

Adolescence in Latin means ‘to grow up’ or ‘to reach a mature growth’. This era saw a major turning point within society, physical development, and psychology. Adolescence was traditionally defined as the concept of youth that was generally seen as a physical and psychological change within the teenager during the period from puberty to legal adulthood. In other words, the adolescent period begins around the onset of puberty, and ends with the adoption of adult roles, such as a job and marriage (Wild & Swartz 2012:204).

In addition, Koteskey says the following of the meaning of *adolescens*: the Latin present participle of *adolescere* means ‘growing one,’ referring to the sudden growth spurt experienced by teenagers. Therefore, the word *adolescens* was used in the Apostle Paul’s day. Today adolescence is defined as the period between puberty and adulthood (Ratcliff & Davies 1991:42). Additionally, Nel (2000:30) also says, quoting Koteskey: ‘The concept *adolescence* is derived from the Latin verb *adolescere* which referred to the one that *grows*. Today the term *adolescence* refers to the time between *puberty* and *adulthood*.’ Of course, the legal adulthood period differs between the different cultures and social systems of each society. There is also disagreement as to how exactly to define adolescence; it is generally linked to the second decade of life (Wild & Swartz 2012:204). Social phenomena such as this highlighted the need for a separation between early adolescence, mid-adolescence and late adolescence.

Today, society defines young people within a number of categories, such as adolescent, youth, pubescent, teenager, juvenile, new generation, and so on. The developmental perspective regards adolescence and puberty as stages in development unique to humans, the function of which is the preparation for adulthood. However, new socio-cultural perspectives on young people strongly question the developmental model of adolescence. New socio-cultural perspectives have suggested that there is no single and universal experience or understanding of young people. The terms ‘youth’ and ‘teenager’ are more closely related to this socio-cultural perspective (Choi 2008:371-374). Furthermore, terminology for young people differs according to changing historical perspectives on young people. Choi (2008:374-376) says:

The largely agrarian world of pre-industrial society kept young people in a condition of semi-dependence. In this period, the term ‘young’ was more pervasively applied to people in the semi-dependent condition. The semi-dependence that previously had characterised ‘youth’ in the pre-industrial society gave away to even more dependence that characterises ‘adolescence’ in industrial society.

In the case of Korea, the purpose of this ‘Fundamental Law of Youth’ is to prescribe the rights and responsibilities of juveniles, and the responsibilities of families, the society, the state and local government towards juveniles, and to lay down the fundamental issues concerning the policy of nurturing juveniles. The definition of the term ‘juvenile’ used in the ‘Fundamental Law of Youth’ established in 1991 refers to a male or female older than 9 years old and younger than 24 years old (Kim 2010:3-4). The purpose of the Juvenile Protection Act is to regulate the distribution of harmful media materials and drugs, etc. among juveniles, their access to harmful entertainment establishments, and to protect and rescue them from the injurious environment and from harmful acts such as the abuse of sound character. According to the Juvenile Protection Act established in 1997, a juvenile is defined as any person under 19 years of age. In civil law in South Korea, young people may only vote once they turn 20 years old (Kim 2010:3-4).

## 2.3 Characteristics of adolescence

### 2.3.1 Physical and physiological characteristics

One of the key features that appears in adolescence is a rapid within the body. This phenomenon is often referred to by many people as a ‘growth spurt’. The adolescent growth spurt is the rapid increase in physical growth that occurs during adolescence (Wild & Swartz 2012:206).

Firstly, in terms of the physical and physiological characteristics of young people, is the change in physique. Of course there are both individual differences and gender differences along with the physical changes during adolescence. During adolescence the height and weight of an individual generally increases.

Secondly, the ‘growth spurt’ of adolescents coincides with the sexual maturity of the adolescent. Secondary sexual characteristics appear during puberty. The primary sexual characteristics are those that involve the reproductive organs, such as ovaries, uterus, and vagina in females; penis, scrotum, and testes in males. During puberty, girls experience menarche (the first menstrual period) and boys start to produce viable sperm and experience their first ejaculation, or semenarche (Wild & Swartz 2012:207). Secondary sexual characteristics refer to those changes in physical characteristics such as breasts for girls, pubic and underarm hair in both sexes, and deepening voices for boys. Changes associated with secondary sexual characteristics are the result of sex hormones, androgens and oestrogens. On average, puberty takes place two years earlier in girls than in boys (Wild & Swartz 2012:206).

Physical changes are accelerated during adolescence due to the pituitary system and the hypothalamus within the centre of the brain becoming more active in secreting growth hormones and sexual hormones. Puberty is the period of human development during which a person becomes sexually mature and capable of producing a child (Wild & Swartz 2012:204). The sexual maturation of puberty refers to those physiological changes that make pregnancy possible. Menstruation in women and wet dreams experienced by men are considered as two of the indicators that inform the start of puberty.

There is a belief that the rate of the ‘growth spurt’ of young people has become faster than in the past due to improved living standards, such as public health services and nutrition (Wild & Swartz 2012:207).

### **2.3.2 Psychological characteristics**

Most young people go through a stormy period during adolescence. Referring to this period as a period of ‘storm and stress’ is to speak of the impossibility of predicting the psychological changes that occur during adolescence. Some people say that youth is a period of revolt, conflict with parents, moodiness, and reckless, antisocial behaviour, while others call youth a period of stress and strain.

Firstly, the young person’s egocentric nature leads to feelings of confusion, and wondering who they are, which leads to conflict. However, there are some young people who go through puberty without conflict with the older generation and their parents.

Secondly, physical and physiological changes also affect the young person’s identity. Young people are stressed, due to comparing themselves to their peers. Young people feel inferior or superior based on their appearance and these feelings can change instantaneously. Emotional changes can be felt differently between women and men, especially with regard to physical appearance and changes.

Thirdly, sexual drive and sexual feelings associated with the secondary sexual characteristics of puberty can affect the emotions. Sexual feelings within the youth stimulate curiosity and interest in the opposite sex. Young people tend to be very sensitive and nervous about the opposite sex. This is revealed through their shyness, excitement and tension. In addition, young people might feel guilt or shame due to being attracted to the opposite sex.

Fourthly, young people’s feelings are greatly influenced by their peer group, customs, and the norms and values of the socio-cultural community. In particular, bullying (called *wangtta* in South Korea) results in depression and anxiety because of the avoidance of social relationships. Often those young people that cannot adapt to the standards of their socio-

cultural environment follow a pattern of feeling rebellious, critical of the society in which they live, and move toward deviant behaviour.

Fifthly, adolescence recognises the uniqueness of individuals, conceptualising themselves through the recognition of others. In particular, young people are egocentric and are concerned with what others think of them or how others view them. Adolescent egocentrism manifests as an ‘imaginary audience’ and a ‘personal fable’. Berk (1999:572, 573) says: ‘Imaginary audience is that adolescents’ belief that they are the focus of everyone else’s attention and concern. Personal fable is that adolescents’ belief that they are special and unique.’ An ‘imaginary audience’ implies that young people always thinks that other people are watching them and what they do. The ‘personal fable’ is evident in that young people believe that they themselves are special.

Finally, the development of abstract thinking and changing social relations influence how adolescents think about the self (Wild & Swartz 2012:233). According to Erik Erikson (1902-1994), who accepted Freud’s basic psychosexual framework, one of the main developmental tasks of adolescence is to develop a coherent sense of identity in relation to other people (Wild & Swartz 2012:234). Erikson expanded the picture of development at each stage to the life-cycle. Erikson described a time of identity certainty versus identity confusion, and expanded this from five stages in eight stages. Here, identity certainty versus identity confusion is a psychological conflict during adolescence, which is resolved positively when adolescents attain an identity after a period of exploration and soul-searching (Berk 1999:602). Berk (1999:17) says:

The adolescent tries to answer the question: Who am I, and what is my place in society? Self-chosen values and vocational goals lead to a lasting personal identity. The negative outcome is confusion about future adult roles.

However, according to Erikson, in complex societies, young people experience an identity crisis, which is a temporary period of confusion and distress as they experiment with alternatives before settling on a set of values and goals (Berk 1999:602).





**Table 3.1 Erikson's life cycle**

Old age								Ego integrity versus despair
Middle adulthood							Generativity versus stagnation	
Young adulthood						Intimacy versus isolation		
Adolescence					Identity versus identity confusion			
6-11 years				Industry versus inferiority diffusion				
3-6 years			Initiative versus guilt					
1-3 years		Autonomy versus shame, doubt						
Birth-1 year	Basic trust versus mistrust							
	stage 1	stage 2	stage 3	stage 4	stage 5	stage 6	stage 7	stage 8

Source: Erikson (1968:94)

### 2.3.3 Social characteristics

The rite of passage (adolescent initiation ceremony) announces to the community that a young person is making the transition into adolescence or full adulthood (Berk 1999:536). The rite of passage of adolescence is different in timing and procedure depending on the culture of the society. However, the importance is in the course or procedure going from child to adult. Adolescence is the period when children change into adults. However, the when and how of a rite of passage are very diverse in each country. In Jewish culture, the initiation ceremony (bar mitzvah) is conducted for 13-year-olds. Initiation for these youth, ‘who took the Word of the Lord God’ (Romans 3:2), allows them to become a ‘child of the law’. At this time, a Jewish boy becomes responsible for his life before God’s law. In Korean Society, young people go through a rite of passage called ‘Coming-of-Age Day’ when they become a legal adult of 20 years of age or older.

Therefore, in order for young people to become adults, they must first be able to be responsible for themselves independently from their parents. They must be able to be responsible for their families. They must be able to fulfil their rights and obligations as citizens. Adolescence is a period of preparation for independence. Adolescence is characterised by changes in ego-consciousness, relationships with the opposite sex, and relationships with parents. These changing relationships with families and peers play a central role in shaping the experience.

Firstly, socially adolescents are trying to act as and be independent and autonomous from the parents on whom they used to depend. This is a necessary psychological weaning from and conflict with the adolescent’s parents because although the adolescent wants to be independent, he/she is still reliant on his/her parents financially. Secondly, this desire for independence from the parents of the adolescent leads to more intimate relationships within the adolescent’s peer group. This gives the young person a sense of belonging to the group and the young person is influenced by the peer group’s identity. This is mainly revealed in their conformity to the same apparel, language, hobbies, and leisure activities. Here, ‘conformity’ speaks of the degree to which an individual is affected by other people’s attitudes and behaviours. Children and adolescents are significantly different in those things they wish to imitate. Young people usually imitate the behaviour and habits of entertainers

and adults. They want to imitate that which is fashionable, such as a song, clothes, hair styles, or even a way of walking. At this time, it is very important that the adolescent has the right role models.

Adolescence is a period when young people relate best to their role models. Children spend a lot of time with their parents, but as they get older and move into adolescence they spend more time with their peer groups. As they spend more time with their peer groups they build friendships. Throughout adolescence young people become less ‘family-centred’ and more ‘friend-centred’ (White 1993:97). High-quality friendships are important for adolescents’ success in the social world (Scholte & Van Aken 2006:176-178).

### **2.3.4 Spiritual characteristics**

One of the most important religious characteristics of young people is that they are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Calvin (1960a:44) said that there is a ‘seed of religion’ in humans, which is to say that humans instinctively recognise God because it is engraved on their minds. Adolescence is the time in a young person’s life when they are interested in religion and more open to it. It refers not only to religious activities but also to their pursuit to discover a clear purpose in life.

James W. Fowler admitted to the universal faith of human beings. In other words, the faith of young people can be seen as an ‘action to find meaning.’ Fowler says this action to find meaning occurs in six ‘stages of faith development’ (Fowler 1981:113):

1. Undifferentiated Faith (Infancy)
2. Intuitive-Projective Faith (Early Childhood)
3. Mythic-Literal Faith (School Years)
4. Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Adolescence)
5. Individuative-Reflective Faith (Young Adulthood)
6. Conjunctive Faith (Mid-life and Beyond)
7. Universalising Faith

Based on the Piaget stages and Kohlberg stages, Fowler developed his theory of six stages that people go through as their faith matures (Parker 2010:234).

**Table 3.2 Fowler's Six Stages of Faith**

Stage		Description
Stage 0	Primal Faith	This stage is characterised by a basic attitude of hopefulness about one's self and environment that is felt rather than communicated through words. It is reminiscent of Erikson's (1968) stage of basic trust but is hard to describe in terms of Fowler's 'structures' due to the child's lack of verbal skills.
Stage 1	Intuitive-Projective Faith	A type of faith, found in children, that is characterised by the egocentric ways of thinking about the cosmos that Piaget (1970) describes as 'pre-operational'. One's sense of right and wrong is governed by rewards and punishments (cf. Kohlberg 1976) and symbols are poorly grasped.
Stage 2	Mythic-Literal Faith	At this stage of faith development, the person (generally children to young adolescents) is able to identify with and connect to the grand stories of his/her faith tradition (cf. Greek <i>mythos</i> ), but appropriates the symbols of the faith in more one-dimensional and concrete ways.
Stage 3	Synthetic-Conventional Faith	This stage of faith development generally emerges in adolescence and may continue throughout life for some. It is characterised by strong interpersonal connections, and authority is located in respected leaders. Beliefs tend to be strongly but tacitly embraced.
Stage 4	Individuative-Reflective Faith	This faith stage is characterised by a more explicit examination of one's faith structures and commitments. One's previously valued authorities are often challenged by a new understanding that faith traditions have a political history; one strives to ferret out 'truth' from 'cultural trappings.' Often seen in late adolescence or young adulthood and may extend throughout life for some.
Stage 5	Conjunctive Faith	If present, this faith stage does not emerge until mid-life. It is characterised by an appreciation of the multivalent nature of symbols, an ability to accept multiple perspectives, and the desire to think beyond the simple either/or dichotomies of the previous stage. There is an appreciation that faith transcends rational categories to include unconscious dimensions of human knowing.
Stage 6	Universalising Faith	Empirically rare, this faith stage is characterised by idealistic descriptions of a faith terminus. It is described as a deepening of the particulars of one's faith until it becomes inclusive of all beings. Those said to possess this level of faith are characterised as transformers of culture, but often have their lives cut short because they are seen as subversive.

**Source:** Parker (2010:235); Fowler (1981:113, 117-213)

These stages of faith development mean that faith development is dependent on the growth of an individual. Within Fowler's six stages of faith development, adolescents can be found at stage 3, which is the Synthetic-Conventional stage. The faith of youth in this stage develops through a reflective abstract extension of their thinking ability. Youth who are able to comprehend abstract religious ideas have the ability to interpret the Bible theologically. This is marked by conversion, a desire for a practical religion, a time of spiritual awakening, and a desire for social impact.

Firstly, adolescents mainly want a practical religion because they are trying to find their own identity. They believe that religion can change their life and that they can find their identity in the calling of God. Adolescence is a time when many faith decisions take place as well as conversions through a decision to accept Jesus Christ as saviour. During this time a young person shows a lot of interest in, with many responding to, the Gospel. During this period of adolescence more people accept Jesus Christ as their saviour than at any other stage in their lives.

Secondly, adolescence is a time of spiritual awakening with an increasing interest in spiritual questions. Engstrom (1976:14) says:

Evangelist Tom Rees of England found in his meetings that of all the Christians in England, 75% came to Christ before the age of 14, 20% between 14 and 21, and only 5% were saved after they had passed the age of 21. Also George W. Truett, famed Baptist minister, took a census of more than 1 200 men and found that 3 were converted when over 45 years of age, 13 were converted between the ages of 40 and 45, less than 30 were converted when over 30 years of age and 1 100 were converted when under 21.

Young people who have a spiritual awakening and go through this conversion adapt well to church life and a large number attend church youth camps and retreats as well as other church events.

Thirdly, the decision for spiritual conversion starts a continued life of faith to find the meaning and purpose of life. Spiritual conversions lead to adolescents who want to be more like Jesus and who are devoted to doing something for the Lord.

Fourthly, the nature of the faith of young people is connected with their physical, cognitive and social change, and does not separate the three. The nature of faith of young people is a give-and-take relationship (Luke 2:52). The concept of the biblical youth does not see each characteristic as being independent, but in relationship with each other, because we are related to each other as spiritual beings. In addition, the faith growth of young people is affected by their relationships in the local church. Jacober (2011:62-63) says:

Individuation does not take place in a vacuum. One needs only look to any seventh grader with whom you have an inside relationship to see the beginnings of what is, at times, seemingly a split personality. Changes in adolescence appear in every area of life-not merely biology but cognitive, social and spiritual areas as well. Each of these areas influences, and is influenced by, each individual's ever-changing pace of life and growth.

The individual young person requires the transformation of God in his/her life through relationships in the church community (Jacoer 2011:66).

### **3. THEOLOGICAL THEORY OF YOUTH MINISTRY**

#### **3.1 The historical context of youth ministry**

From a practical theology perspective, one needs to look at the history of the Protestant youth ministry in order to better understand why and when youth ministry started. It is also necessary to understand with whom youth ministry began within the short history of the Protestant youth ministry. First of all, we look at when and why youth ministry began. There was not a concerted effort to minister to young people within the context of the church until the late 18th century (Senter III 1992:53). Before that time the congregation was merely a family-organisation with very few activities for specific age groups (Nel 2000:51).

However, the terms ‘*youth work*’ and ‘*youth ministry*’ officially began to be used after the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century in England (Nel 2000:51). The Industrial Revolution occurred around the late 18th and the early 19th centuries and brought a lot of changes to England. These changes included economic changes and the rapid advancement of technologies that changed the paradigms of the manufacturing processes. Factories started to replace family-owned shops and mass production became the normal process for making everything from clothing to horse carriages. This change in manufacturing processes brought on the need for a new labour force. Eventually, children were employed in factories, and young people moved to the cities to obtain jobs, which were no longer available in rural areas (Senter III 1992:56).

During the Industrial Revolution child labour led to a high rise in the number of children working in factories, and from 1856, the law permitted child labour. Children worked for up to 14 hours per day, six days a week (Senter III 1992:56). The children were not treated well, and were often overworked, and underpaid or not paid at all. The so-called Factory Acts of 1901 led to the decline in child labour, thereby improving the welfare of children. However, the available evidence implies that the Factory Acts only speeded up a movement which was already taking place (Nardinelli 1980:739). As the Industrial Revolution continued, social problems began emerging, such as crime, violence, sexual temptation and so on. Something needed to be done to redeem the youth of England (Senter III 1992:56).

Robert Raikes, who saw the need to prevent neglected children in the slums descending into crime, popularised a ministry that ministered to children on their one day off from the factories in Gloucester, which came to be known as Sunday School, in 1780. Within five years since the start of this Sunday School in 1780, Sunday School had spread to cities of America like Virginia, Boston, New York, etc. (Senter III 1992:56). Sunday Schools aimed to teach children to read and behave properly using the Bible as a textbook, because in 1780, children could not attend schools during the week. The Young Men's Christian Association (commonly known as the YMCA) was founded on 6 June 1844 by George Williams in London, in response to the needs of children (Senter III 1992:56). The great missionary awakening from 1787–1830 also played a large role in the launching of a whole range of young people's societies, and this led to great youth movements like the YMCA. Like the

Sunday School, the YMCA spread quickly around the world and was founded in the USA and Canada in 1851, in 1853 in the Netherlands, and in 1903 in Korea. From the end of the 19th century more and more churches began entering youth ministry and denominations began to build a youth ministry with 'head offices' (Nel 2000:51-53). Youth ministry movements began to help the neglected middle class youth from a social context, by middle-class congregations' so-called 'voluntary work' (Nel 2000:54). As a result, most youth ministries have been led by volunteers.

Senter III (1992:50-53) speaks of the youth movement as follows: Firstly, it can be described as spontaneous youth groups or student movements. Secondly, the type of youth movement is that which utilises adult leadership sponsored by church or parachurch agencies to work with young people in non-formal settings. Thirdly, the type of youth movement is that of the graded educational system.

Furthermore, Senter III (2014:83-103) found two forms of youth ministry education throughout the history of youth ministry in America. The earliest forms of youth ministry education were found in non-formal forms and in non-schooling models. Later on more formal youth ministry education followed, which was tied to the professionalization of youth ministries, as it began to be incorporated in college classes, majors, and eventually research degrees. Senter III (2014:83) says:

No substantive change in youth ministry has come out of academia. While academics have tweaked around the edges of changes made at the grass roots of youth ministry, this has only been a fine tuning of what already existed. Youth ministry has always been a transaction between young people themselves or caring Christian adults and young people they perceive to be in need.

However, youth ministry has become serious, because the local church ministry has often separated the young people from the congregation. However, the youth ministry needs to be involved in building up the local church. Nel (2015:10) says:



Youth ministry is an inclusive congregational ministry and every differentiated part of it should be saturated with this relational attitude: I am because and only when we are. We therefore need to intentionally build relational structures in youth ministry that will be discipling in a truly biblical way.

Types of youth movements have appeared both in the church-oriented and the parachurch-oriented ministries. Youth ministry was historically divided into formal youth ministry and non-formal youth ministry. In the case of South Korea, the early youth ministry was mostly seen in parachurch-oriented ministries. Later, church-oriented youth ministries began to appear, such as Sunday School. Youth ministry in South Korea is mainly focused on teachers and youth leaders, through non-formal education at mission or Christian education institutions. The different types of youth ministries are listed in Figure 3.1:

Non-Formal Youth Ministry	Formal Youth Ministry	
		Church-oriented
		Parachurch-oriented

**Figure 3.1 Types of youth ministry**

In other words, youth ministry started in the context of the era. Later on youth ministry became more academically fixed in the form of practical theology.

### 3.2 Youth ministry in practical theology

There is a relationship between practical theology and youth ministry. First of all, practical theology entails prayerful reflection on Christian life and on those contexts where God’s action intersects with the church’s actions. Practical theology is concerned with how God reaches out to human beings through concrete situations, and the concrete ways in which humans reach back (Dean: 2010:115-117). With regard to youth ministry as a form of practical theology, Clark (2008:13) points out that:

Practical theology begins with who and where we are, is faithful to the Scriptures and the history of God's people, and provides a discernible and pragmatic course of faithful action

Root & Dean (2011:40) emphasise that ministry always precedes theology and becomes the fodder for constructive theological thought because of our claim that God is living and active in the world, which means that God is a Minister, which can be seen by looking at God's Ministry of creation, covenant, incarnation (including crucifixion and resurrection) and Pentecost. Therefore, Root's view of theology is the reflection on and articulation of God's Ministry. Youth ministry also reflects on God's action. It needs 'Experience', 'Reflection' and 'Action' to reflect on our experience of God's action (Root & Dean 2011:43-44).

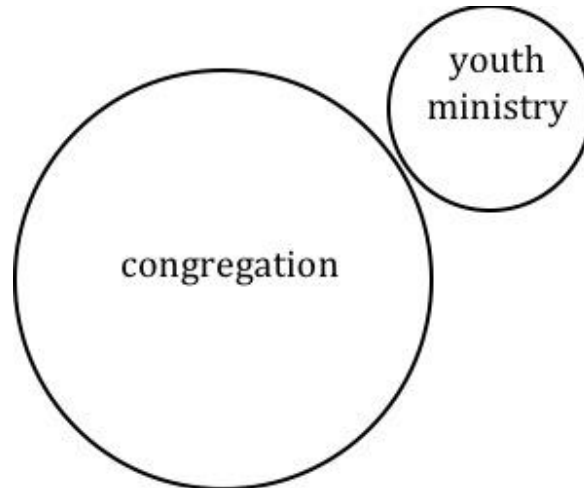
Root & Dean's (2011:41-43) opinion of youth ministry as a theological task is as follows: Firstly, youth ministry goes beyond utilitarianism and demands that we undertake real reflection on the practice of ministry and the young people to and with whom we minister. Secondly, youth ministry helps us move past much of the fragmentation of ministries within the church. Thirdly, youth ministry demands that we see the adolescent from a contextual perspective, as one who is affected by multiple forces. Finally, theory and practice are held together. Dean (2010: 115-117) sees youth ministry as a form of practical theology as follows: (1) theological, (2) interdisciplinary, (3) reflecting on God through Christian action, (4) assuming youth ministry is particular.

### **3.3 The relationship between youth ministry and the church**

The question: 'What is the church?' provides the purpose and direction of youth ministry. In the biblical understanding of the church, the word 'church' translates the word *ekklesia*, which is defined as 'an assembly' or the 'called-out ones' (Numbers 16:3; Deuteronomy 31:30; Acts 19:32, 39, 41). The root meaning of 'church' is not of a building but of people. Young people are also included as people of the Lord.

The church is the body of Jesus Christ, and He is the head of all of the church, as stated in Ephesians 1:22-23: 'And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head

over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.’ The local church can fully apply the ‘body’ principles of 1 Corinthians 12 (spiritual gifts) to build one another up in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, young people are also connected as part of the body of Jesus Christ.



**Figure 3.2: The One-eared Mickey Mouse model of youth ministry** (Adapted from Dean 2010:46)

Clark introduced the above (Figure 3.2) in an article in *Youth worker journal* (Fall 1989). A Presbyterian youth pastor, Stuart Bond, addressed the issue of fragmentation in the church by describing the relationship between the youth ministry programme as a ‘one-eared Mickey Mouse’ with the church as large as Mickey’s head. In *Youth worker journal* (Fall 1989), Bond pointed out that the youth ministry had become more and more separate from congregants (Clark 2000:47-48). Figure 3.2 shows that youth ministry as a semi-parachurch community has become only loosely connected to the local congregation (Clark 2000:48).

In other words, in this model young people and youth ministries have been separated from the church. But the relationship between the youth group and the church should not be like the one-eared Mickey Mouse model. In the picture above, the bigger circle represents the church and off to one side there is a smaller circle that represents the youth group, which does not overlap with the big circle. Dean (2010:46) explains the one-eared Mickey Mouse model as follows:

The congregation meets in the sanctuary, the youth meet in the youth room; the congregation worships, the youth group does devotions; the congregation has a budget, the youth group has a bake sale. Come graduation, young people who may have been active in youth ministry find nothing in the ‘adult’ church that looks remotely like the Christian community they experienced in youth ministry.

Therefore, Root understood that the purpose of youth ministry is to invite both young people and older generations to participate in God’s action (Root 2012a:38). Root (2012a:39) defines youth ministry as follows:

Youth ministry could be defined as the ministry of the church that seeks to participate in God’s action with and for a culturally identified group called adolescents. What this means in the end is that youth ministry is every bit as theological as every other form of ministry, because its core isn’t games and skits but the action of God. What makes it distinct from other ministries is its particular focus on the actions of God with and for young people.

However, most youth ministries still have some degree of significant autonomy apart from the whole ministry of a congregation. The youth ministry should be connected to the church as being a part of Christ’s body in the Holy Spirit. The youth ministry cannot to be a completely self-sustaining, segregated, holistic ministry apart from the ministry of a local congregation. Therefore, the purpose of youth ministry is to participate as part of the local church, to build up the local church (Nel 2000:66). Nel (2000:64) says: ‘God’s purpose with the congregation is also God’s purpose with the youth an essential part of the congregation. The purpose of youth ministry should be aligned with the purpose of God for and with his church.’

Nel (2000:64-66) emphasises that building up the local church is a ministry of growing and searching together. In order to grow together and search together, youth ministry needs to change ‘with, for, and to’ or ‘to, with and by’ to train youth to be part of the local church. Furthermore, the church (*ekklesia*) is a community of people of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God began through Jesus Christ (Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 4:17) but will not be

fully realised until Jesus' second coming (Matthew 8:29). The central message of Jesus Christ was the presence and coming of the kingdom of God (Matthew. 5:20; 6:10; 7:21). The kingdom of God has a future state and a present state, meaning that in the future the kingdom of God will be completed on earth with the second coming of Jesus and presently the kingdom of God is continually growing and extending through the church towards this end goal. The kingdom of God is extended through the church on this continuum (Matthew 5:14-16; Ephesians 5:8-9; Philippians 2:15; Colossians 1:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:5). The governance and sovereignty of God is to be displayed through the church in a continuous state. The word translated 'kingdom' in the New Testament is the Greek word *basileia*, which denotes sovereignty, royal power and dominion.

The church as the body of Jesus Christ has the mission to show the kingship of God and his Gospel to the world (1 Peter 3:15). The church is a community of people who are sent into the world to spread the Gospel. This also includes young people. Young people are a part of the called community who are to spread the Gospel throughout the world. For the extension of the kingship of God, youth ministry needs to place an emphasis on discipleship. The main emphasis of discipleship is to preach the Gospel. One needs to become spiritually mature in God through being taught and disciplined within the local church community. Colossians 1:28-29 says: 'We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.' Furthermore, the congregation as the incarnational community, which is a spiritual reality and being, should invite young people as a part of the body of Jesus Christ to grow into the fullness of our union with Jesus Christ through making disciples (Nel 2009:105).

However, adult members including the parents of the youth have lost track of how to be disciples who seek the kingdom of God; and of how, as we walk and talk, to make disciples of our own children, as well as those of 'the nations' (Nel 2009:104). The congregation as the missional people of God should lead young people into discipleship embracing all nations. Nel (2009:105) says:

The Holy Spirit makes known the Father and the Son, so that when he reigns and fills his people they participate fully in what he does. We, the congregation, are employed by God the Spirit to perform that for which we were created and for that which he came to do. For such reasons, Jesus became flesh, and lived among us. He now lives within us, enabling us continuously to be restored, so that we can represent God on Earth.

Confessing and accepting Jesus Christ is only part of the initial stages of a lifelong commitment to learning, and the congregation should embody the invitation to a life worth living, both in the here and now, and forever (Nel 2009:105).

Therefore, catechesis or Christian education in the church is central to the inviting and initiating of young people into a life of discipleship with Jesus (Nel 2009:105). Nel (2009:106) says: ‘Such an emphasis shows that discipleship is about obedience to the Lord’s Word and will. His words teach his disciples perpetually to improve their understanding and conduct under the guidance of the Spirit, and in communion with other disciples.’ Furthermore, Nel (2009:105) explains the community of disciples as follows:

For the children of disciples, such people are the members of the community of disciples: Parents, significant others, such as members of a discipleship peer group, teachers, leaders either in or outside the congregation, and any others who, under the guidance of the Spirit, are excited about Jesus the Christ and his spiritual body of followers.

In other words, in the congregation as a learning community, the congregation should invite the young people to find identity as the called through the discipleship of mentors. Celebrating rites of passage means the transfer from childhood to adolescence through the public confession of faith in the local church.

Discipleship builds up the local church as people become spiritually mature in Christ within the local church and in fellowship in the kingdom of God. Nel (2000:67) says: ‘The goal of youth ministry is to make the kingdom of God visible.’ Nel (2000:74) goes on to say that

‘youth ministry means that it makes a difference in the world as a part of the local church with the *shalom* of the Lord, the *koinonia*, and the *diakonia*’. The purpose of the youth ministry is to build up the local church as part of the church community. Nel (2000:75) explains the purpose of youth ministry as follows:

Determining the purpose of youth ministry boils down to the comprehensive building up of the local church as a servant within the kingdom of God that has come and is yet to come. Those who understand the fact that the coming of the Kingdom is also the glorification of God, are motivated by the highest purpose life can afford man on earth and in eternity: *Soli Deo Gloria!*

In conclusion, the congregation needs to understand the identity of young people in the local church to achieve the purpose of the youth ministry. It is necessary to understand young people in the ecclesiological perspective in order to find out the identity of the young people in the local church. This is best done by asking: ‘Who are the young people in the local church?’ The main reason for this is that the young people are the same as the congregation, as a part of Jesus Christ’s body in the local church. In other words, it is possible to find out the identity of young people in the relationship between the congregation and young people in the local church. In other words, it means that young people are God’s workers in the same way as the congregation. Eventually, the congregation should build up their young people as workers of God in order for the young people to fulfil God’s mission to build up the local church. Nel (2000:97) says the following regarding the process to build up young people as the workers of God through an inclusive congregation approach:

Youth ministry is a comprehensive and inclusive congregational ministry in which God comes, through all modes of ministry and with especial regard to parents (or their substitutes), with a differentiated focus, to youth (as an integral part of the local church) and also with and through the youth in the local church, to the world.

Yi (2012:263-265) emphasised that the youth ministry should be a ministry for, with, by and of young people with the same position as the other members of the congregation, in partnership with them.

### **3.4 Various theological approaches to youth ministry**

There are many theological approaches in youth ministries. The different theological approaches are just different ways to conduct and view youth ministries. Each different theological approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. Different approaches to youth ministry help youth ministers and volunteers serving the youth to understand the youth ministry. Senter III (Senter III et al. 2001: 71, 71) describes four views among a variety of theological perspectives on the youth ministry:

The Inclusive Congregational approach integrates youth into congregational life. Characterised by friendly relations between youth, children, and adults, this approach see youth as full partners in every aspect of God's coming to the faith community. The Missional approach views youth ministry as a mission. Using responsible evangelism to disciple young people into established churches, youth and youth ministers are considered to be missionaries. The Preparatory approach is a specialised ministry to adolescents that prepares them to participate in the life of existing churches as leaders, disciples or evangelists. The Strategic approach prepares the youth group to become a new church. Using continuity in discipleship between the youth minister and teens, potential leadership members are nurtured to assume responsibility for roles in evangelism and fellowship.

Each one of the four views of or approaches to youth ministry is linked to the nature of the church. Senter III explains the relationships between the four approaches to youth ministry concerning fellowship/mission and church of the present/church of the future in development (Senter III et al. 2001: 71, 71).

However, in his book titled *Youth Ministry: An Inclusive Congregational Ministry* Nel (2000:77-98) gives convincing answers to many questions with regard to understanding the



youth ministry in South Korea. Therefore, youth ministry and the model of youth ministry is explained and discussed, based on the inclusive congregational approach by Nel and three other theological approaches, including the preparatory approach, the missional approach, and the strategic approach.

### **3.4.1 The inclusive congregational approach to youth ministry**

Recently, youth ministry has been viewed as a ministry that is separate from the church community. However, youth ministry is not separate from the church community. Youth ministry is part of the congregation. Nel (in Senter III et al. 2001:4) says the following concerning youth ministry: ‘Youth ministry is part of the total congregational ministry and not a separate entity. It is an integral part of the congregational whole, in that the whole is never complete without youth ministry.’

This is the view of the inclusive congregational approach wherein the youth ministry is not a separate ministry, but is included in all aspects of church life. The congregation in the local church ministries should see young people as being a part of the congregation, because young people are a part of the ministering body of Jesus Christ.

In order to understand a comprehensive approach, Nel (in Senter III et al. 2001:5) says that God approaches people by means of people, which is the essence of ministry; and that the church started witnessing about Jesus Christ through the apostles. The first congregation in the book of Acts describes the early church’s ministry. In this way their witnessing continues to be the witnessing of the Lord Jesus (Nel 2000:80-81).

Nel (2000:81) explains eight different ways in which God approached people in the Book of Act as shown in Figure 3.3 below. These eight ways include serving God, serving one another as a community of the faithful, and serving the world. God approaches ministry to the youth in the same way as He did the early church community.



**Figure 3.3 The integration and coordination of ministries in building up the local church** (Adapted from Nel 2000:84)

The inclusive congregational approach is not separated and isolated from the entire adult congregation. The inclusive congregational approach is more about finding a place for adolescents to become a part of Jesus' body and to be included in every part of the ministry. Furthermore, every ministry in the church is relevant to its youth (Senter III et al. 2001:6-7).

‘Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.’ (1 Corinthians 12:27)

This means that young people are not only individual members of Jesus Christ, but also that together young people are part of his body. The word church (*ekklesia*) has various meanings: (1) the universal body of believers who belong to Jesus Christ through regeneration, and (2) any specific geographical representation of that body in any place at any time in the local church (Zuck & Benson 1978:38-39). God included young people in his people and God included young people in his work (cf. 2 Kings 5:2-3; 1 Samuel 1:4; Daniel 1:8; Matthew 18:1-14; 19:13-15; Acts 21:5-9). Nel (in Senter III et al. 2001:9) says the following concerning youth ministry as an inclusive congregational approach:

Youth ministry is at the very least the mediation of the coming of God to the youth as an integral and vital part of the congregation, through his Word and

through the service of people, by means of all modes of ministry, in a differentiated and focused way.

Nel (2000:97) emphasises youth ministry in the following way:

Youth ministry is the mediation of the coming of God through his Word and through people, by means of all modes of ministry, and in a differentiated and focused way, to, with and through youth as an integral part of the local church. Or Youth ministry is a comprehensive and inclusive congregational ministry in which God comes, through all modes of ministry and with especial regard to parents (or their substitutes), with a differentiated focus, to youth (as an integral part of the local church) and also with and through the youth in the local church, to the world. Or Youth ministry is a comprehensive congregational ministry: 1) through all modes of ministry 2) with special reference to parents (or their substitutes) 3) in a differentiated and focused way 4) under the guidance of the office bearers 4) to, with and through youth (as an integral part of the local church) 5) and also with and through the youth in the local church to the world.

### **3.4.2 Three other views on youth ministry**

#### **3.4.2.1 The preparatory approach to youth ministry**

This preparatory approach is an approach that was proposed by Black, who has been in youth ministry for more than three decades and has taught at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1983. In the preparatory approach to youth ministry, youth are viewed as disciples in training who will become leaders in the church. Black (in Senter III et al. 2001:40) defines the preparatory approach to youth ministry as a specialised ministry for adolescents that prepares them to participate in the life of existing churches as leaders, disciples, or evangelists.

According to Black (in Senter III et al. 2001:58), in the past young people were seen as the ‘church of tomorrow’, but today adolescents are hungry for challenges and opportunities. Black argued that youth ministry is not a separate programme but a clear purpose for every

activity including *the development of mature Christians in the church, both now and for the future*. Youth ministry must become ministry based, because the church is the primary unit of ministry as recorded in Matthew 16:16-19. Youth ministry grows out of the ministry of the church because the purposes of the church are the purposes of youth ministry (Senter III et al. 2001:54). Black (in Senter III et al. 2001:54) says:

In the New Testament the word *ekklesia*, translated church in most English - Language Bibles usually means a local body of believers gathered to worship, teach, fellowship, and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The word is never used to mean a building, and in most cases designates a local congregation of Christians. That is *ekklesia* is wherever two or three gather in God's name.

Black's (in Senter III et al. 2001:55) three church functions and six details, are taken from two passages of scripture, called the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39). The three church functions are ministry to God (worship), ministry to believers (nurture), and ministry to the world (evangelism). The six details are worship, evangelism, ministry, fellowship, discipleship and missions.

The church becomes a laboratory in which young people are invited to experiment, practise, learn and be educated as disciples in training with all sorts of gifts and talents. The youth ministry in these churches revolves around the youth minister and volunteer leaders who work with the young people as they develop from apprentices to disciples. The youth minister's responsibility is to train the volunteers to be teachers (Senter III et al. 2001:46).

In order to adopt the preparatory approach to youth ministry, certain changes or features are required in the church, which are as follows: 1) Youth ministry must become a shared ministry, 2) Youth ministry must become comprehensive, 3) Youth ministry must become purposeful, 4) Youth ministry must begin to bridge the gap between church and home. Young people's faith formation is not to be conducted apart from the home and should involve parents and family members who follow closely the *Shema* recorded in Deuteronomy 6: 4-9). Youth ministry must begin by including the pastor and the church (Senter III et al. 2001:55-57).

The strength of the preparatory approach to youth ministry is that it is aimed at faith and spiritual leadership, and development in training of all sorts of gifts and talents of young people within youth ministry. The weakness of the preparatory approach to youth ministry is that it focuses more on those who are a part of the church, but young people are usually separated from the life of the church community until they ‘graduate’ from the laboratory where young people prepare for ministry and work towards an activity field. This approach lacks a supporting community of people who worship together as a congregation. The preparatory approach to youth ministry seems to begin to leave mission work behind and depends heavily on programmes.

#### **3.4.2.2 The missional approach to youth ministry**

This is an approach formulated by a youth ministry veteran, Chap Clark, who is the Associate Professor of youth and family ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary. Before defining the missional approach to youth ministry, Clark points out three problems of contemporary youth ministry in the present church.

Firstly, there is a rift between the church youth culture and the secular youth culture, which is increasing. This cultural gap is not only true of the secular adolescent world, but also of the world of church-going young people. Many contemporary youth ministries have stayed the same for years (Senter III et al. 2001:79). All in the name of youth ministry, the great divide between the church and the secular adolescent world began to take shape (Senter III et al. 2001:83). In this regard, Clark (in Senter III et al. 2001:80) claimed that ‘The missional approach to youth ministry recognises that there are cultural barriers that separate adolescents from adults.’ Clark states that ‘youth ministry as mission is as the community of faith corporately committed to caring for and reaching out into the adolescent world in order to meaningfully assimilate them into their fellowship’ (Senter III et al. 2001:80). Youth ministers, pastors and leaders become critical bridges to the youth culture (Senter III et al. 2001:89). People called by God must create a bridge of love, trust, and support to encourage the disenfranchised adolescent to be welcomed as a member of the family of God (Senter III et al. 2001:82).

Secondly, Clark points out that the local church defines youth ministry as a programme of the church. Clark says that the flow of youth ministry has been changed to a state of parish youth ministry, a church-based youth ministry, and parachurch youth ministry movements, in this order. Clark (in Senter III et al. 2001:84) emphasises that ‘Historically the youth parachurch movements were far more concerned with the core of their mission than the delivery system or programmatic methodology.’ Youth ministry focuses on a missional approach in order to bring adolescents to the local church.

Thirdly, Clark points out that the church is called to influence and care for the secular culture and has forgotten its mission mandate. Clark emphasised that God sends his people into the world as light and salt as recorded in Acts 1:8 (Senter III et al. 2001:80). Here ‘send’ means ‘mission’. The missiological mandate of the Gospel is ‘Go’. That is, the church becomes ‘the instrument of God’s mission’ (Senter III et al. 2001:81): ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ (Acts 1:8)

According to Matthew 28:19, the church is to be the place where care, training, teaching, disciplining, and spiritual formation can flourish, with the mission and goal to go and make disciples of all nations and make them part of the body of Jesus Christ (Senter III et al. 2001:84).

Consequently, the local church must enter the culture in which adolescents live and reach adolescents with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in order for them to join the kingdom of God in their various cultures. The goal of youth ministry is to bring the Gospel and the kingdom to every adolescent. The goal of the missional youth ministry is to connect contemporary youth ministry methodology and models. For a church to be truly missional, the goal or target of youth ministry must be made clearer. Clark (in Senter III et al. 2001:86) explains a true youth ministry climate as follows: ‘Every youth ministry must constantly ask itself: Who are our targets? How do we reach out to them? Where do we want these students to end up when they leave our programme?’

### **3.4.2.3 The strategic approach to youth ministry**

The strategic approach is an approach developed by Mark H. Senter, who is the Associate Professor of educational ministries at the Deerfield, Illinois campus of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Senter points out two obstacles in youth ministry, which are the marginalisation of youth and discontinuity in spiritual nurturing. Senter describes those young people who are not valued in the church as being ‘young people living on the margins of the church’ (Senter III et al. 2001:115).

Moreover, Senter points out that youth ministry was built upon a flawed discipleship model, based on the twin assumptions of specialisation and discontinuity in favour of non-formal education. That discontinuity of relationships and specialisation of content in youth ministry became the normal way of imparting education. Discontinuity and specialisation produced a divide in fellowship between the youth and adults in the local church (Senter III et al. 2001:115-116).

Therefore, he provides a strategic approach to youth ministry in the form of the parachurch strategy to address these problems. Senter (Senter III et al. 2001:117) defines the strategic approach to youth ministry as follows:

The church must view youth ministry not so much as a means of turning out models of Christian living in order to perpetuate existing church ministries, but as the best opportunity to launch a vital Christian witness to shape the faith community for the next generation. We call it the Strategic approach to youth ministry.

The strategic approach to youth ministry aims to create leaders in the community and youthful Christians similar to the parachurch and church-based youth ministries. Thus the strategic approach to youth ministry calls upon the youth ministry to be and become a holistic inter-generational church that is relevant to both Christ and culture (Senter III et al.

2001:117). Senter (Senter III et al. 2001:118-127) justifies the strategic approach to youth ministry as follows:

Firstly, youth ministers stepped in to fill the gap caused by the confusion between the cultural complexity faced by Christian young people and the desire of Christian adults to be a redemptive force in the lives of the rising generation.

Secondly, youth ministry shows that the spiritual formation of youth has always found primary influence in the nurturing relationships between the family and a community of faithful believers.

Thirdly, the spiritual formation of youth has always been found primarily in the nurturing relationships of the family in the church in continuity. Scripture is filled with examples of continuity, family images (Matthew 12:49; 2 Corinthians 6:8; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; 1 John 3:14-15), farming images (Matthew 13:1-30; John 4:34-38; Romans 11:17-24; 1 Corinthians 3:6-9) the body of Christ analogy (1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Colossians 2: 15) the 'living stones' metaphor (1 Peter 2:5), etc.

Fourthly, youth pastors should become spiritual midwives and assist in birthing new churches in order to create continuity in discipleship relationships in terms of a new vision of youth ministries.

Fifthly, youth ministry is a response to changes in culture that must be judged by its compatibility with scripture, rather than by its specific mandate from the holy word of God.

In conclusion, the Bible says clearly that Jesus Christ is the head of the church and ownership flows from Jesus Christ. Senter's strategic approach to youth ministry tries to balance the sense of ownership that flows from the head to include the church. Youth ministry in the church should try to pass young people along to spiritual leaders with whom they have an affinity or good relationship, rather than fragmenting the church into age group enclaves of *koinonia*, as indicated by the words of Ephesians 4:3 (Senter III et al. 2001:133).

'Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.' (Ephesians 4: 3)



## 4. PASTORAL CARE WITHIN YOUTH MINISTRY

### 4.1 The image of God and the reconciliation community

God is a Trinity, which entails a close relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that work together throughout the Bible. God created man in His image (*Imago Dei*) (Genesis 1:26-28). Berkhof (1958:202) wrote of man as the image of God as follows: ‘According to Scripture man was created in the image of God, and is therefore God-related.’ Just as the Trinity is in relationship, so people need to be in relationship (Genesis 1 & 2). Human beings were made to live in relationship with God, other people and the world (Genesis 2:18).

However, man disobeyed the Word of God as a result of Satan's temptation. This led to the total depravity of man (Berkhof 1958: 246). This was the beginning of Original Sin and resulted in a break in relationship with God (Genesis 3:16; Genesis 3:19). This severance in relationship between God and people began an eternal death for people. Berkhof (1958:226) commented on the results of Original Sin as follows: ‘Not only spiritual death, but physical death as well resulted from the first sin of man. From a state of *posse non mori* he descended to a state of *non posse non mori*.’

However, Jesus came into this world as a sacrifice to atone for all mankind (Romans 3:25). Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the cross, human beings can not only obtain eternal life but also be restored and reconciled to God in a new relationship as a ‘new creation’ (Romans 5:12-18). Firstly, the vertical relationship between God and man has been restored. Secondly, the horizontal relationship between human beings has been restored. The church is a community of reconciliation, which acts as a medium for the reconciliation and recovery of relationship between people and God. The local church was built through the recovery of this relationship and the kingdom of God will be extended through the local church. Nel (2005:18) emphasises: ‘God wills his church to be renewed constantly and so to attain its objective.’

However, the local church that exists in this world is not perfect. Nevertheless, to build up the local church is God’s will and work of the Triune God (Nel 2005:22). In order to build up the

local church through fulfilling the mission of the church given by God, there is the need for pastoral care in the local church.

#### **4.2 Pastoral care in the local church**

The local church is not a building but a community of people who believe in Jesus Christ. The community of reconciliation that has been restored through Jesus Christ is connected through an organic relationship. This organic relationship refers to the relationship between the head and the living body in the same way that Jesus Christ is the head and the church is the body (Romans 12:4-5; Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22-23). Calvin (1960b:1016) said about the pastoral care in the church as mother of believers:

But because it is now our intention to discuss the visible church, let us learn even from the simple title ‘mother’ how useful, indeed how necessary, it is that we should know her. For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keeps us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels. (see also Matthew 22:30)

Here, the church, called ‘mother’, is the visible church. The maternal function of the church, bearing and nourishing believers, is necessary for salvation (Calvin 1960b:1016). In view of Calvinistic theology, the reformed church must take part in a pastoral care ministry (Luke 15:11-32).

In addition, the necessity of pastoral biblical care in the church can be illustrated in the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep. In the Old Testament a shepherd spoke of God and the sheep were the people of Israel who were His covenant people (Ezekiel 34). In the New Testament, it is said that Jesus Christ, who came as the Messiah and whose coming was prophesied in the Old Testament, is the true shepherd (Matthew 2:6). The sheep are those people chosen to believe in Jesus (Matthew 18:12-14). Pastors of churches have all received the shepherd’s calling to take care of their congregations as a shepherd would his sheep. This is their primary ministry. It is the pastor’s calling to take care of the souls in his congregation

as part of the shepherding ministry (1 Peter 5:1-4). Whitehead and Reynolds (2011:88) write of the guardian of souls as follows: ‘The word ‘guardian’ means ‘defender’, ‘protector’ or ‘keeper’ or ‘a person’s legal responsibility for someone unable to manage their own affairs. The concept thus carries a sense of protection, defence, keeping, nurturing, but without undermining the autonomy of those being cared for.’

It is not only the pastors who follow Jesus Christ but also the church of Jesus Christ and therefore the congregation are also disciples. In other words, the congregation made up of the community of an organic living body must also engage in the pastoral care of church members. Pastoral care is modelled by the true shepherd, Jesus Christ. In addition, pastoral care is based on the Word of God in John 10:10, which reveals the purpose of Jesus’ coming into this world to be its shepherd:

‘The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.’ (John 10:10)

The salvation ministry, which allows people to obtain eternal life, and the pastoral care ministry, which cares for members of the church and facilitates the finding of healing, are essential ministries of the church (John 15:12-17). In other words, the relationship between pastoral ministry and pastoral care is an organic relationship and these aspects cannot be considered in isolation from each other.

Therefore, the caring of the youth in the church can best be understood through the image of a shepherd such as spoken of in Psalm 23. Witmer (2010:102-213) describes an effective shepherding ministry including four shepherding functions in shepherd-sheep relationship as follows: ‘the basic responsibilities of shepherds have been captured by the categories of knowing, feeding, leading, and protecting’. The shepherd is the basic undergirding model for pastoral care (Rowatt 1989:20). Rowatt (1989:21) defined pastoral care as follows: ‘Pastoral care is defined as a continuing relationship of support and/or confrontation between a minister and an individual or a group in times of developmental or emergency crisis.’ Pastoral care in youth ministry is most importantly a relationship.

Wright (1996:2) also quotes Alastair Campbell as follows: ‘Pastoral care is, in essence, surprisingly simple. It has one fundamental aim: to help people to know love, both as something to be received and as something to give.’

Additionally, Oden (1983:186) defined pastoral care as follows: ‘Soul care is one way of describing the pastor’s entire task, including the ministries of preaching and sacrament, teaching and administrative leadership. For the whole work of ministry has been called *cura animarum*, ‘the care of souls’.’

Pastoral care in youth ministry is described as taking on six interrelated primary dimensions of the shepherding task: healing, reconciling, sustaining, confronting, guiding and informing; by Hiltner (in Rowatt 1989:21-22). According to Hiltner, the six dimensions of shepherding are as follows (Rowatt 1989:22):

Healing is a process of assisting persons to move toward wholeness, especially in the light of the brokenness brought about by crisis. Reconciling is a process of assisting persons to move toward restoring wholeness in broken or strained relationships with those who constitute their social environment. Sustaining is a process of supporting persons by standing by them and bearing burdens with them while responding in response to the crisis. Confronting is a process of moving against the thoughts, feelings, assumptions, or behavioural patterns of persons in response to the crisis. Guiding is a process if assisting persons to make decisions by drawing from within them what was potentially available in their own decision-making. Informing is a process of clarifying alternatives for persons by providing specific new information and data.

### **4.3 Pastoral care of the youth ministry**

Today, youth in the church experience their own developmental issues and crises. They need care from the church. This means that the church should be a community of restoration by means of reconciliation, made possible by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:25; I John 2:2; 4:10). Firstly, pastoral care is found in the reconciliatory relationship between God

and youth through the cross of Jesus Christ. Secondly, pastoral care can be found in the reconciliatory relationship between the local church and youth community through the cross of Jesus Christ. The basic premise of Christian nurturing and caring is that Christianity is best communicated by relationships; according to John 13:35: 'By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' (Robbins 1990:37)

#### **4.3.1 Children of God**

Through the love shown through Jesus' death on the cross young people are able to find faith and their identity in Jesus Christ as a child of God. The parable of the prodigal son in the New Testament speaks of this relationship of care between God and His children (Luke 15:11-32).

#### **4.3.2 People of God**

According to 1 Peter 2:9 the church is defined as follows: the body of Christ, the family of faith, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people (Holderness 1981: 20). The church is the congregation of God's people. The most basic definition of the church as the *ecclesia* is the people of God in Jesus Christ. Israel became God's covenant people through the Sinai covenant. The fact that the community of God's people is the church appears clearly in the New Testament. Throughout the New Testament, the church is referred to as the same covenant people as in the Old Testament. The Church is referred to as a 'chosen people,' 'holy nation', 'truly circumcised', 'children of Abraham', 'remnant', 'part of David's line' and so on.

Therefore, Martinson (1988:107) emphasised that congregational youth ministries need to be led by both young people and adults in order to see citizenship as an arena in which to serve the Lord.

#### **4.3.3 Family of God**

In scripture, the church and the family are established by God. The church is a family community of God (Ephesians 2:19; Timothy 3:15). The church as the household of God is shown through the members in the local church by being a spiritual family. The Bible refers to the church as the house of God. There is no more intimate relationship between people

than that of the family. The nature of the Church as a spiritual family has far deeper importance than that of a fleshly family. In other words, all Christians are connected by a spiritual family relationship. This spiritual relationship forms a spiritual family and community, which goes beyond any race, age or gender. Biblically, it is clear that these extended kinships are regulated by God (Sell 1995:78). Holderness (1981:23) emphasises the importance of the family of God in youth ministry as follows:

Youth should be a part of a community which is sensitive to the needs and developmental tasks of their age group. The primary developmental task of youth is to find their identity formation ‘Who am I?’ and ‘What am I here for?’ The church can play a vital role in this task because we as Christians claim our identity as children of God. Our purpose for living is given a context. We are here to discover how we can be faithful to the God who first loved us.

#### **4.3.4 Body of Jesus Christ**

The church is a living organism. The essence of the church is referred to as an organic body and a body of life. Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the church is the body (Colossians 1: 18). Both the fact that God's people are the body of Christ and the fact that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church infers that the church will continuously grow and mature in Jesus Christ. In addition, by referring to the church as the body of Jesus Christ, the interdependence of mature church members is emphasised.

The youth belong to God as part of his congregation (Nel 2005:18). The youth in the church are members of the community of faith right now, and the congregation must not treat them as future members (Holderness 1981:20).

#### **4.4 Principles of pastoral care in youth ministry**

Jesus Christ's life is a model of pastoral care. Jesus Christ truly served, cared for and loved people to the point of death. Jesus Christ's incarnation, suffering, and death shows true care and love for people. Ward (2000:30) explained Jesus Christ's incarnation as follows: ‘The cross reveals the hidden passion of God for humanity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit include

their own fellowship to restore fellowship with humanity. The cross is a cosmic enacting of the desire God has for renewed relationship with his creation.’

To emphasise the incarnation of Jesus Christ as a Son of God is to affirm social life, the physical body and human culture (Ward 2000:28). Root (2007:88-89) has explained the meaning of incarnation as follows: ‘God through Christ encounters humanity together with creation through the humanity of God self.’ Root (2007:89-91) goes on to explain the meaning of incarnation in more detail with three points: Firstly, God has taken on bodily humanity in its fullness. Secondly, the divine being cannot be known otherwise than in human form. Thirdly, in Jesus Christ humanity is free to be really human before God.

Because of the characteristics of the youth and youth social culture, the pastoral care ministry of youth can be practised according to the principles of Christ’s incarnation. Through Jesus’ incarnation, he lowered himself to become a man to serve people (Philippians 2:5-8). It is also necessary for the people in youth ministry to lower themselves in order to meet young people eye to eye. In other words, a person in youth ministry needs to be a friend to young people, according to John 15:13-17. To shepherd a youth through a crisis, friendship is the starting point (Rowatt 1989:47). The principles of the pastoral care of youth ministry should be applied as discussed below.

#### **4.4.1 Start of friendship: the principle of unchanging love**

God loves the people of the world unconditionally. God loves the church and in the same way Jesus loves people unconditionally as stated in 1 John 4:7-21. Therefore, the congregation of a reconciliatory community must love young people with an unconditional love. The local church needs to patiently try to understand young people and show interest along with unconditional love. Actions of unconditional love do speak louder than words (Burns 1988:19).

#### **4.4.2 Fellowship and friendship: the principle of mutual care**

Burns (1988:27-28) emphasises the need for fellowship support groups in the church as follows: ‘Supportive fellowship is not an option; it is a necessity. If you are not in some form of a support group, I question how long you will last in youth ministry. We need the support

and accountability of peers who love us and encourage us but aren't afraid to question our motives.'

The Church is the Body of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). The Bible says that each local church should cooperatively take care of one another in Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). The church is interdependent as the Body of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12). Through mutual care, the members of the whole church will be perfected in Christ. There is a need for mutual care in the pastoral care youth ministry: mutual care refers to the care of each church member in the narrow sense and the care of the larger community and environment surrounding the church in the broader sense.

'Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.' (Romans 12:15)

'And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.' (Hebrews 10:24)

'Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.'  
(Galatians 6:2)

'Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.' (Philippians 2:4)

A feature of mutual care is based on voluntary participation. Mutual care includes and is involved with the Gospel, grace, baptism, Eucharist, etc. through voluntary participation. (Philippians 1:5-7; 2 Corinthians 1:5; Philippians 3:10). Secondly, mutual care is the sharing of spiritual blessings through the sharing of God's word (Romans 15:23). Mutual care is needed when conversing with God and with church members. Thirdly, mutual care is not only the resolving of conflicts through relationship and conversation (*Koinonia*) but also entails experiencing healing from one another (Corinthians 1:7; Hebrews 10:33; 1 John 1:3, 6). There is intimacy and mutual esteem among members in a mutual heavenly family. Mutual care is the catalyst for service and cooperation among members within the church. Mutual care is a means of connecting with both believers and non-believers. Keywords with regard to mutual care are 'supporting' and 'sustaining'. Thus, it can be said that mutual care is the shared praxis when sharing together.



#### **4.4.3 Build friendships: the principle of the gift**

The church needs to care for people through a variety of gifts (*charismata*). The congregation should internally build up the church through their own gifts (1 Corinthians 14:12). Through God's kingdom workers, co-workers and collaborators, the congregation must externally spread the mission of the kingdom of God further afield.

#### **4.4.4 Completion of friendship: the principles of service**

Jesus came to serve in this world and Jesus served the world. Therefore, serving is the essence of Jesus Christ. The pastoral care youth ministry must also serve both the inner and outer man of the youth as Jesus Christ continues to do.

‘For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’ (Mark 10:45)

### **4.5 The various reconciliatory relationships of a caring community**

Burns (1988:16-17) emphasises relationships in the youth ministry as follows: ‘If we are ever to have a positive influence on our young people, we must build relationships with them and live out our faith in front of them.’ Dean and Foster (1998:85) said that families, congregations, and significant relationships with other Christian adults are the holy ground for young people’s faith. In order to have mutual care in a congregation, the youth care ministry should be a relationship-centred ministry.

#### **4.5.1 Family-based youth ministry**

The church is called to be a family, a people of God, and a vital community (Clark 1997:31). The church as the family form a single community in Jesus Christ. Between the church and the home there is a solid bond and an enormous interplay, which resembles a symbiotic relationship, common in the world of nature (Sell 1995:14).

The church as a whole is a large family made up of smaller individual families. Those families that belong to the church have joined in a very close relationship in the body of Christ. The church members as a family share a dynamic mutual relationship and cannot be

separated from each other. When each family in the church stands firmly in the faith with maturity, the church will grow continually.

Clark (1997:14-19) presented three different family ministry perspectives in the form of the therapeutic/counselling perspective, the nuclear family perspective, and the church-as-a-family perspective. Firstly, the therapeutic/counselling perspective sees family ministry as primarily addressing the specific emotional and relational needs of a congregation (Clark 1997:14). Secondly, the nuclear family perspective tends to believe that the basic function of the family ministry is to equip and strengthen individual families in the church (Clark 1997:15). Thirdly, the church-as-a-family perspective looks at family ministry in a much broader sense than do supporters of the other perspectives (Clark 1997:17). Therefore, pastoral care in youth ministry must also be a family-based youth ministry.

#### **4.5.2 Small group ministry**

Jesus himself made use of small groups to teach and to heal, as is shown by his group of disciples. Veerman (1992:19) said the following concerning this small group of disciples:

In addition to instructing these men (e.g. Luke 8:9-15), Jesus worked through problems with them (e.g. Luke 8:22-25), allowed them to watch Him minister (e.g. Luke 8:40-56), gave them assignments (e.g. Luke 9:1-6), affirmed them (e.g. Matthew 16:13-20), corrected them (e.g. Matthew 16:21-23), and encouraged them (e.g. John 16:31-33). Christ's small group changed the world.

This small group is the essence of the church and the original form of the early church. Small groups are responsible for fulfilling and perfecting the church. The early church started and grew from the base of small groups. The apostle's letters show that the early church had four functions, which were the preaching of the Gospel, teaching, training, and fostering a healing community (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35). In particular, the small groups formed in the early church worked together, shared together and had an interest not only in each other in the church, but also in those that were outside of the church. Small groups enhance intimacy and allow for more interactive relationships between the members in the church. Through the interaction of members in the church, small groups allow for the restoration of broken

relationships between God and man and between man and man. Therefore, a small group can be called the most viable structure of pastoral care.

In youth ministry, effective communication can take place in a large group setting or one-on-one. The small group is very effective in both care and communication. The advantage of small groups is that they provide each group participant the opportunity to receive acceptance and encouragement from people who care and have a strong feeling of camaraderie, knowing that everyone is learning and growing together (Veerman 1992:18-19). Small groups in the youth care ministry are needed because youth are lost in the crowd, lonely in an impersonal world, afraid to admit problems and reveal their true selves as they learn how to live (Veerman 1992:19).

The purpose of each small group in youth ministry is to build up the church through close and caring relationships, thus demonstrating what the church should be and could be (Veerman 1992:124).

#### **4.5.3 Gifts-oriented team ministry**

The purpose of a youth ministry team approach is to involve all youth in the total life of the congregation (Holderness 1981:11). In order to build up the church and each other, God gives members of the church community the gifts required.

In addition, Sell (1995:177) said that in today's churches, the two models that are most like an extended family are 'support groups' and 'growth groups'. The nature of small groups is as strong as 'support groups' as both allow for in-depth relationships. On the other hand, gifts-oriented team ministry is also strong as it allows for 'growth groups' through the serving and sharing among individuals. Therefore, the gift-based youth team ministry members can care for one another through team relationships, as well as expand the kingdom of God.

## 5. PEOPLE INVOLVED IN YOUTH MINISTRY

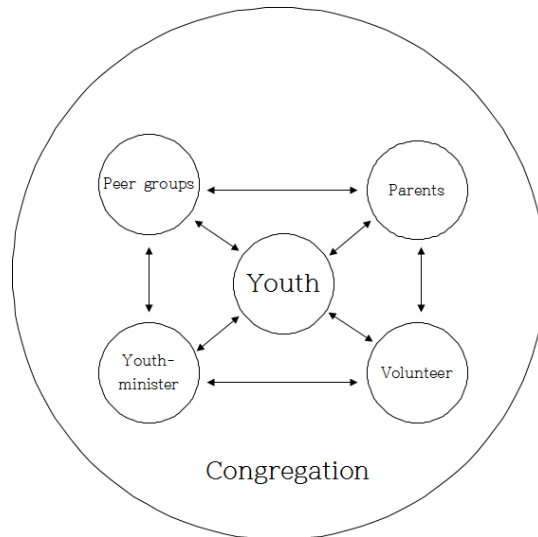
### 5.1 Holy Spirit and the youth ministry: reciprocity

Youth ministry is a ministry of the church together with God. In other words, the main worker in youth ministry is God and his assistants are those ministers and members of the church that belong to the youth ministry. The youth ministry also needs the working of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can be done in the youth ministry without the Holy Spirit. Nel (2000:103) emphasises that the Holy Spirit himself is involved in this work and the Holy Spirit himself is continuing the work of the Father and the Son.

To build up the church, those who belong to the youth ministry are connected to the youth ministry by Jesus Christ (John 15; John 14:20). The apostle Paul said that believers are in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is in believers (John 17:21-23; Philippians 2:1-11). Christian relationships and the continuing relationship recovery and love in Jesus Christ are carried out in the Holy Spirit. Christians are united with Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit unites all members of the church in the love of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit connects the community of members in the church to Christ (*Koinonia*). Therefore, the church as a body of Christ is not just a human body in its organisation. The church as a body of Christ is a faith community that connects God's people who have been reconciled to God. The work of God in the Bible involved the collaborative participation between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Shepherd (2011:35) says: 'Community is at the heart of mission because community is central to the very nature of God as Trinity. The community of persons in the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is the template for action and attitudes in the Church.'

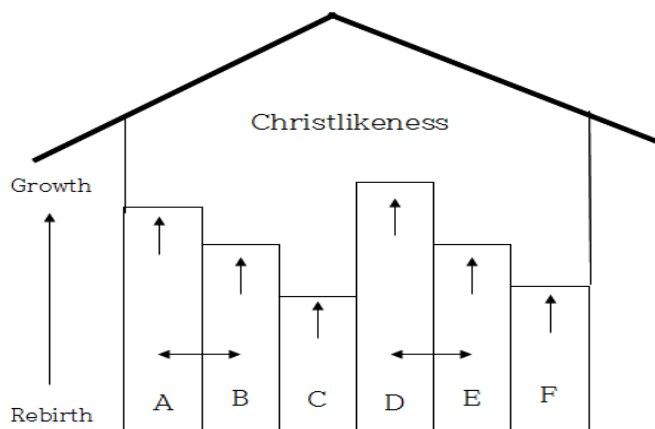
Thus, a youth worker cannot work alone in the youth ministry. The church is a vital living community, an organic body, which includes the youth ministry as part of this body. Therefore, in order to build up the church and the youth ministry, all members in the church must together support youth work in the church. All members of the church are united through the love of Jesus Christ on the cross, and all the people of the church are ministers and co-workers in some form in the youth ministry. The relationship network involved with

youth ministry in the church is shown in the Figure 3.4, which shows that all the members of the church are involved in youth ministry through being connected in Jesus Christ.



**Figure 3.4 Relationship network involved with youth ministry**

Rice (1986:21) says: ‘Quality relationships between adult youth workers and adolescents are the very core of authentic youth ministry.’ Therefore, Figure 3.5 shows that youth ministers, parents, church teachers, and peer groups among the youth should support the youth ministry. Young people in the congregation are able to give support to the youth ministry as well.



**Figure 3.5 The reciprocity of a connected congregation** (Adapted from Kim 2001:96)

Figure 3.5 shows how members of a congregation, connected in Jesus Christ, are affected by each other and thus grow in their faith. The letters A-F signify members of a congregation

continually growing and maturing in the church. The growing of faith in the church among church members extends the kingdom of God and builds up the church.

## **5.2 Relationship networks in youth ministry**

The congregation is an organic body in Jesus Christ and is connected to the youth ministry through the life of Jesus Christ. The congregation as a faith community has a lasting impact on youth ministry. Nel (2000:100) says: ‘At least three ‘groups’ are involved in the development of the youth: parents, the youth themselves, and other adults.’ Here, I choose to look mainly at those people who have a significant impact on youth ministry.

### **5.2.1 Youth ministers**

A professional adult worker with God’s special calling for youth ministry is called a Youth Minister and is needed in order to build up the church and youth ministry. Nel (2000:119) emphasises the importance of the calling of a youth minister as follows: ‘As in all ministries, calling is also central to this ministry. In the body of Jesus Christ one serves because one has been called to do so.’ A youth minister as a community builder has various roles: He is the pastor and shepherd in the youth ministry. It is his responsibility to take care of the youth and see that they are nourished by the word of God. Young people are also part of God’s flock that needs protection and nourishment (Psalm 23; John 21:15-17). According to Ephesians 4:11, the pastor or youth minister should teach the word of God professionally as a teacher of young people. A youth minister should be a role model for young people (Philippians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 11:1). The youth minister should resemble Jesus and be a bridge by means of which young people can see Jesus as well as meet him.

‘Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ’ (1 Corinthians 11:1)

‘Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the patterns we gave you’ (Philippians 3:17)

The youth minister is also a disciple of Jesus who builds up the youth as God’s workers through discipleship. ‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey

everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’ (Matthew 28:19-20)

Therefore, a youth minister has to find his identity. Nel (2000:121-122) states: ‘This demand on leaders relates to the fact that finding identity is one of the major developmental tasks in adolescence. One of the most important demands on personality in the context of finding one’s identity is what one would call *balance*.’

A youth minister plays a variety of roles in the youth ministry, such as a friend, counsellor, organiser, coach, educator, missionary, mentor, leader, specialist, coordinator and encourager to young people. Root (2007:202) says: ‘The youth pastor is to support, encourage and assist adult and adolescent relationships of place-sharing so these relationships will develop as organically as possible. Subsequently, for adult leaders, relationships should be built around shared interested or a common task.’ Through his variety of roles, the youth minister must lead young people to transfer their dependence from the youth minister to God, to rely on God.

### **5.2.2 Adult volunteers including Sunday School teachers**

Burns (1988:130) emphasises adult volunteers in the youth ministry: ‘The quality and quantity of any youth ministry programme directly depends on the adult involvement in the programme.’ Adult volunteers in the form of and including Sunday School teachers should care for the youth in a genuine, sincere way as a person who likes them, and is willing to be open to them.

Based on Ephesians 4:11, the teacher of young people should nurture the entrusted youth as their pastor. In other words, the teacher also takes on the role of a pastor. The teacher must have the gift of teaching (Ephesians 6:4). Adult volunteers, including Sunday School teachers, should be role models to the youth. The biblical image of a teacher is illustrated in 2 Timothy 2:15: ‘Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.’

The most important responsibility of adult volunteers, including Sunday School teachers, is to

build up young leaders who can work with each individual young person in the church.

### 5.2.3 Parents

Many youth ministers exclude parents from the youth ministry. However, the role of parents in youth ministry is important. Burns (1988:226) emphasises the importance of parents in the youth ministry as follows: ‘The family plays an important role in the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical development of young people.’

Parents have the most powerful influence on their children. The youth ministry needs the support of the parents because faith education of young people begins at home and is not only specifically carried out in the church. Therefore, the cooperation of and with parents in youth ministry is very important. According to the Bible, children are a special gift from God. Furthermore, God gives a special responsibility to parents for their children. Sell (1995:77) said:

Parents were commanded to teach children about God (Deuteronomy 6:7).  
Though the word ‘parents’ is not actually used, it seems clear that the teaching is to be done at home.

Parents should bring up their children in the nurturing and admonishment of God. Parents who bring up their children as special gifts of God reveal to their children that they belong to God. The *Shema* of Deuteronomy 6 emphasises the family education of children by their parents. The centre of a child's faith education is the family. The church and the family are closely related to each other in the organic body of the church. Parents of families in the church have a faith mission to educate their children.

‘Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road. When you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of



your houses and on your gates.’ (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

The parents in a Christian family have the responsibility to support their children with the word of the Lord. Christian parenting begins at home. In addition, this faith education should be passed from generation to generation.

‘What we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us, we will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.’ (Psalm 78:4-5)

Therefore, it is necessary to involve the parents of young people in the youth ministry (Holderness 1981:62). It is necessary to have cooperation between homes and the church in order to build up the youth ministry. Parents within a youth ministry should also form strong partnerships (Nel 2000:113). Parents are the essential agents of integrating the youth into congregational life and youth ministry (Root 2007:210).

#### **5.2.4 Peer groups**

Young people are mostly influenced by their friends of the same age. Due to the extreme influence of a teenager’s peers the young people themselves need to be co-workers in the youth ministry. Youth workers should therefore create positive peer support groups so as to build up the youth ministry in the local church.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Richards (1985:17-18) writes about the characteristics of adolescence as follows:

In early adolescence young people begin to develop the capacity to think abstractly, and they often experience emotional ups and downs. In middle adolescence, the character of friendships shift and deepen, and relationships become more important to the individual. In Late adolescence young people are facing and making the choices that will shape their entire future.

That means that youth is a time of change, from puberty to adult, in terms of physical, psychological, social and spiritual perspectives. In addition, the formation of identity in adolescence is important, between young people and among others in their society. It is important to know the effects any relationship has on the identity formation of young people. Therefore, young people as part of the body of Christ in the local church should find the identity of faith in their relationship between the congregation and other young people.

Youth ministry helps workers to discover their identity as workers of God, in their relationship with young people of the congregation; as well as to invite young people to participate in God's action. The goal of the youth ministry is that young people participate as part of the local church, to build up the local church. All the goals for growth in the local church must include and concern their youth group as an integral part of the body of the Christian community in Jesus Christ (Nel 2000:66). The congregation should support and take care of young people as part of the Christian body, in order to discover their identity as God's workers; as well as be friends of young people, as partners in expanding the kingdom of God. This research has adopted an inclusive congregational ministry approach, as presented by Nel, to support and care for young people that suffer from entrance examination stress in South Korea.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EMPIRICAL RESEARCH REPORT ON RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **1. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PROCESS: THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

Chapter 4 forms part of the descriptive-empirical and interpretive tasks of practical theology presented by Osmer (2008:31-78). Chapter 2 described the various lifestyles of young people suffering from entrance examination stress, as derived from the research sources, in order to understand the reality of Korean Society. However, these are not sufficient to fully understand the struggle of young people suffering from entrance examination stress within South Korean churches. For this reason, Chapter 4 will try concertedly to heed the voices of the young people in South Korean churches who are experiencing some sort of anxiety due to Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome, so as to determine precisely what is taking place. The researcher chose the method of focus interviews, which seemed suited to the research purpose and the special characteristics of the young participants.

Relationship formation is important in order to reach the hearts of South Korean youth. The researcher conducted focus group interviews to gain a wealth of information from the young participants, through interaction with the peer group. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the focus group interviews, which used the empirical research method, so as to better understand the experiences of young people in South Korean churches, as well as their thinking, feeling and motivation in terms of entrance examinations. In order to achieve the research object, all questions were created with analysis in mind. In other words, all questions were organised systematically and sequentially, so that participants could easily understand, and be understood by, the researcher.

## **1.1 Introduction: The background of the Focus Group Interviews research method**

As a form of qualitative research, the Focus Group Interviews research began to be used in the social sciences research in the late 1920s and its use continued for many years thereafter. During World War II, Focus Group Interviews research was used to investigate army training and morale by Robert Merton, who was commissioned by the U.S. Army Information and Education Division. On the other hand, Focus Group Interviews research was also used for marketing research by Paul Lazarsfeld, of the Office of Radio Research at Columbia University, beginning in 1941. Since then the Focus Group Interview research method has been used in the area of marketing and in the business sector as well as in health studies, education studies, and so on (Latess 2008:8). In particular, the Focus Group Interviews method was used in health studies for exploring what individuals believe or feel as well as why they behave in the way they do.

The focus group ties the group to specific criteria according to the subject of the research. The focus group interview discusses ways to evaluate the perception and thoughts of the interviewed members on a particular topic. Edmunds (1999:1) defines a focus group as follows: ‘A focus group typically brings together eight to ten qualified people for a face-to-face discussion of a particular topic.’ The purpose of conducting a focus group is, according to Krueger and Casey (2009:2): ‘... to listen and gather information. It is a way to better understand how people feel or think about an issue, product or service.’ First of all, the main aim of the focus group interview is to understand and explain the meanings and beliefs that influence the feelings, attitudes and behaviours of individuals through the use of in-depth group interviews focused on a given topic, for which participants are selected.

One advantage of focus groups is that they can generate large amounts of data in a relatively short time and are very flexible (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990:16). Another advantage of a focus group is its ability to generate data based on the synergy effect of group interaction (Morgan 1997:2). One of the distinct advantages of focus group interviews is their group dynamics, hence the type and range of data generated through the interaction of the group are often deeper and richer than those obtained from one-on-one interviews. Similarly, Morgan (1997:8) states the main advantage of focus groups as follows:

The main advantage of focus groups in comparison to participant observation is the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on a topic in a limited period of time based on the researcher's ability to assemble and direct the focus group sessions.

These advantages of focus group interviews were considered to be suitable for the purposes of this study. Therefore, as part of this research the method of Focus Group Interviews (FGI), which is a qualitative research method, was used in order to understand the lives of young people who have experienced or are experiencing some sort of pain due to Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome.

## **1.2 Focus Group Interviews research method**

### **1.2.1 Procedures for conducting focus group interviews**

To begin with, qualitative interviews require a great deal of planning (Mason 2002:67). This study made use of the Focus Group Interviews research method as presented by Morgan. Morgan's (1997:31) procedure consists of four phases of qualitative research: planning, observation, analysis, and reporting. Morgan (1997:31) emphasises planning because this is the area where focus groups depart the most from standard practices in other qualitative methods. Therefore, for this study, basing this research on the process as laid out by Morgan, the four phases of the Focus Group Interviews procedure are explained in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 The four basic phases of the Focus Group Interviews research method**

Phase	Content
1. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To think plan and decide about important matters regarding the study before the interview process begins</li> <li>- Determining the purpose of the study, securing research personnel, preparation of schedule</li> <li>- To determine the number of participants, participant recruitment plan</li> <li>- To determine the location of the interview as well as the date and time</li> <li>- Planning for the analysis and determining what form the report will take</li> </ul>
2. Participant Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To make a reliable recruitment plan in order to ensure the participants are suitable for the focus group interview</li> <li>- Determining participant focus, and how to configure focus group</li> <li>- Determining the participant selection criteria and exclusion criteria</li> <li>- Determine how to recruit participants and screening methods</li> <li>- Participant recruitment, further procedures established to ensure the reliable attendance of the participants</li> </ul>
3. Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be effective, groups should be ready to discuss good questions and must be preceded by successful participant recruitment</li> <li>- Determine the role of facilitator</li> <li>- Whether to appoint an experienced facilitator</li> <li>- Ensure that the hand-outs are effective and helpers are efficient in their duties</li> <li>- Check that all equipment is working correctly</li> </ul>
4. Analysis and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The process of classifying the recorded data summary, understanding, analysis and reporting</li> <li>- Field notes, debriefing notes, recordings, transcript clean up</li> <li>- Explore the data in order to obtain a conclusion</li> <li>- Data analysis and results summarised</li> </ul>

### 1.2.2 Selection of participants

According to Krueger and Casey (2009:66), the focus group is characterised by homogeneity. Krueger and Casey (2009:66-67) suggest that participants should share similar characteristics: gender group, age-range, ethnic and social background. In particular, participants in the youth groups are selected on the criteria that they would have something to say on the topic, within the age range of two years, while avoiding groups of close friends to encourage more honest

and spontaneous expression of views with a wider range of responses and more comfort when talking to the interviewer and each other (Krueger & Casey 2009:156). One of the challenges in a youth focus group relates to the concept of ‘applicability’, for which subjects are selected because of their knowledge of the study area (Krueger & Casey 2009:157). Therefore, the important thing in this focus group study is that participants must be members of the same group with common interests. Focus group participants were selected from high school second-year students (Grade 11 in South Africa) within Gyeonggi-do, all of whom are preparing for the university entrance examination.

In social science research, it is often undesirable to configure the focus group for people who do not know each other. This is because it is difficult to develop a rapport with or empathy for strangers, which often inhibits frank responses and causes a lack of openness. In psychological terms, rapport is an involuntary human interaction and a close relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other’s feelings or ideas and communicate well. Therefore, the configuration of the participants constituted focus groups of people from the same church and grade in school, allowing for a rapport within the groups. There was no restriction on gender or school, allowing for both male and female participants in the groups from various schools, as long as they were in the same churches. I tried to construct the groups in a way that allowed for an equal number of male and female participants for each group. If participants were not of the same grade they were of the same age or a similar age. The core criterion was that all participants were active practising Christians in their churches.

Therefore, churches in South Korea where the interviews could be conducted were selected. During the selection process of the churches, churches were randomly picked to improve validity and reliability. In South Korea, there are a number of denominations and churches. The researcher is a pastor belonging to the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in Korea (GAPCK) which is the largest denomination in South Korea. As of March 2015 the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in Korea consisted of 143 Presbyteries and 11 538 churches within South Korea ([www.gapck.org/sub\\_01/sub02\\_01.asp?menu=menu2](http://www.gapck.org/sub_01/sub02_01.asp?menu=menu2)). For the study samples the Seong Nam Presbytery, which belongs to the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in Korea (GAPCK), was selected to conduct the focus group interviews.

The Seong Nam Presbytery to which the researcher belongs is mainly composed of the churches of the Seong Nam and Bundang areas within Gyeonggi province. The Seong Nam Presbytery consisted of 98 churches as of March 2015 ([www.snnh.org/introduce3.html](http://www.snnh.org/introduce3.html)). These 98 churches were arranged in alphabetical order and three churches from these 98 churches were randomly selected. These three churches were contacted, and their agreement to allow the interviews in their churches from 15 March 2015 to 17 May 2015 was requested. These interviews were conducted in accordance with the focus group interview process. If any of these churches did not accept, a church or churches from the list of 98 was again randomly picked. This was done by picking the previous or next church on the selected alphabetical list.

However, there were difficulties in the selection process of participants when a church or churches were randomly picked from the list of 98. The main reason was that they did not have enough high school second-year students (Grade 11 in South Africa) from which to select participants, because half of the churches belonging to Seong Nam Presbytery were non-self-supporting churches or planting churches. A non-self-supporting church is a church with a small congregation as well as a church with a small budget, which means that these churches are unable to pay the pastor's living expenses as well as the costs for church management. Above all, the young people attending the non-self-supporting churches were decreasing rapidly as they advanced from middle school to high school. It was therefore not possible to interview in the non-self-supporting churches. Three churches were selected that had both a big congregation and were historically self-supporting and organised churches.

The Seong Nam First Presbyterian church (called the S church), the Kuemkwang church (called the K church) and the Young Do church (called the Y church) were founded in 1969, 1973 and 1970 respectively (<https://snji.org/xo/intro>, [www.kuemkwang.or.kr/](http://www.kuemkwang.or.kr/) & <http://www.odo.org/>). Furthermore, high school students of the S church, the K church and the Y church have an attendance of, on average, 50, 60 and 90-100 young people at high school youth group in worship every Sunday.

However, as a result the researcher living and studying in South Africa, the prospective churches in South Korea had to be contacted via email and telephone. The researcher could



not choose the participants from the selected churches. The assistance of current youth workers working within the selected churches was employed to choose the participants. The purpose of the study, the research process, recruited subjects and ethical considerations of the research were fully explained to these youth workers via email and telephone, emphasising to the youth ministers of each church the importance of gaining the informed consent of all participants in the research. They also received an agreement via email concerning the ethical considerations of the research. The consent form for parents and participants was translated from English into Korean, so as to prevent any confusion on the part of any individual, including the researcher.

The researcher requested the assistance of the church youth ministers in South Korea for the following purposes: to recruit participants from their congregations, to obtain informed written consent from the participants' parents and participants themselves, and to help to fully explain the ethical considerations. The youth ministers consulted with the participants to assist in setting up a date, time and place convenient for the participants to conduct the focus group interviews (Krueger & Casey 2009:75).

When this process was complete, the researcher travelled to South Korea to personally conduct the interviews from 6 May 2015 to 6 July 2015. A week before the scheduled interview, a copy of the questions was sent to the youth leaders, in order that the participants might be better prepared to answer the questions. Furthermore, this allowed participants sufficient time, not only to organise their own opinions, but also to fully understand and deeply consider the purpose of the research.

### **1.2.3 Configuration of the focus group**

The view of the configuration of a focus group varies among scholars. According to Morgan (1997:34), a focus group has 6 to 10 participants per group. On the other hand, according to Krueger and Casey (2009:6), focus groups are preferably composed of 5 to 10 people, but the size can range from as few as 4 to as many as 12. However, a larger group exceeding a dozen participants will not generally give the participants the best opportunity to describe all their thoughts and feelings during the discussion. In order to control the discussion, there is an inevitable need for researcher intervention. On the other hand, in the case of a small group

that is composed of 4 members or less, the number of participants is too small to allow for active discussion and interaction among the participants. According to Krueger and Casey (2009:21), the accepted rule of thumb is to plan three or four focus groups with each type or category of individuals because focus groups are analysed across groups. By conducting the study with more than 4 groups, it becomes difficult to observe any new discussion due to the repetition of the interview. The interview relies on empirical aspects.

Therefore, the focus groups were divided into three groups. The focus group interviews proceeded for two weeks during the month of May 2015. Focus Group A was interviewed in the Kuemkwang church (called the K church below) seminar room at 16:00 on Sunday 17 May 2015. Focus Group A was made up of 6 participants. Focus Group B's interview was conducted in the Seong Nam First Presbyterian church's (called the S church below) small room at 12:00 on Sunday 17 May 2015. Focus Group B was made up of 8 participants. Focus Group C's interview was conducted in the Young Do church (called the Y church below) seminar room at 18:30 on Saturday 9 May 2015. Focus Group C was made up of 6 participants.

During the analysis of the interviews each participant was given an individual code based on their gender, so as to protect their anonymity. The collection of information for each group member was conducted as follows:

**Table 4.2 Focus Group A participants' information (the K church)**

Number	Code	Gender	Korean Age	Faith of the Parent*		Grade	Kind of High School
				Father	Mother		
1	AF1	Female	18	X	O	Second	General high school
2	AF2	Female	18	X	X	Second	Vocational high school
3	AM3	Male	18	X	O	Second	General high school
4	AF4	Female	17	O	O	Second	Vocational high school
5	AM5	Male	18	X	X	Second	Vocational high school
6	AF6	Female	18	O	O	Second	General high school

**Table 4.3 Focus Group B participants' information (the S church)**

Number	Code	Gender	Korean Age	Faith of the Parent*		Grade	Kind of High School
				Father	Mother		
1	BF1	Female	18	X	X	Second	Vocational high school
2	BF2	Female	17	X	X	Second	General high school
3	BM3	Male	17	O	O	Second	Vocational high school
4	BM4	Male	18	O	O	Second	General high school
5	BF5	Female	18	X	O	Second	General high school
6	BF6	Female	18	O	O	Second	General high school
7	BF7	Female	18	O	O	Second	General high school
8	BF8	Female	18	X	O	Second	General high school

**Table 4.4 Focus Group C participants' information (the Y church)**

Number	Code	Gender	Korean Age	Faith of the Parent*		Grade	Kind of High School
				Father	Mother		
1	CM1	Male	18	O	O	Second	General high school
2	CM2	Male	18	O	O	Second	General high school
3	CM3	Male	18	X	X	Second	General high school
4	CM4	Male	18	O	O	Second	General high school
5	CF5	Female	18	O	O	Second	General high school
6	CF6	Female	18	O	O	Second	General high school

\* If the parent of the participant professes to adhere to Christian faith, this is displayed as O; if not, this is displayed as X.

#### 1.2.4 The location and the time required for the focus groups

Where possible, each focus group interview was conducted in a church seminar room or small room with no outside noise, in order to provide the least distractions, so as to aid in the recording and because it is easier to assemble in a venue like this. Each focus group interview usually lasts approximately 1-2 hours, although the time required needed to be varied due to the complexity of the topic under investigation, the number of questions and the number of

participants. Krueger and Casey (2009:158-159) discuss the time required for youth focus groups:

Youth focus groups are shorter and have fewer questions than focus groups with adults. Instead of the standard 10 to 12 questions in a two-hour focus group, you might have six to eight questions in a one-hour focus group. Young people repeatedly find themselves in environments where change or relocation takes place every 45-60 minutes. If the researcher has a two-hour focus group discussion, it is likely that there will be a bunch of bored kids for the second hour. Therefore, limit the questions and incorporate things to touch, do or respond to.

Therefore, the process of the interview was carried out based on the guidelines of the interview that the researcher had already prepared in advance for each focus group. Each session lasted for about one hour.

### **1.2.5 Incentives to participate**

According to Krueger and Casey (2009:77), incentives are needed because it takes effort to participate in a focus group. Therefore, after the interview process, as a token of gratitude for their cooperation, each participant was given a handmade soap worth ₪ 2 000 (about R17 in South Africa) and drinks were provided during the sessions to make the discussion more comfortable, relaxed and enjoyable (Krueger & Casey 2009:159).

### **1.2.6 Ethical considerations**

Mason (2002:41) outlines ethical guidelines in research as follows: ‘Qualitative researchers should be as concerned to produce a moral or ethical research design as we are to produce an intellectually coherent and compelling one. This means attempting not only to carry our data generation and analysis morally but also to plan our research and frame our questions in an ethical manner too.’

The researcher gained university ethical clearance for this study from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria’s Faculty of Humanities, by means of the Approval of Research Proposal, which was submitted at the end of 2013. Before proceeding with the

focus group interviews, the ethical aspects were considered. Before the interview process, the participants (who were all minors) and their parents were fully informed of the purpose of the research along with the interview process, in order that the research might be conducted ethically, and to protect the rights of the participants during the interviews. That the anonymity of participants was guaranteed and all information were used solely for research purposes was explained, and that participants were free to stop being a part of the research at any time. Written consent from both the participants and their parents or guardians was received. After receiving a signed consent form from both the participants and their parents or guardians, a convenient time, date and place was determined for the interviews to be conducted.

### **1.2.7 Selection of questions for interviews**

Before the interview the questions were prepared according to the categories of questions cited by Krueger and Casey (2009:38). There are five categories of questions, each with a distinctive function in the flow of a focus group interview: opening questions, introductory questions, transition questions, key questions, and ending questions (Krueger & Casey 2009:38). Expected questions were selected, along with open-ended questions to be used in the discussions, in order to answer key questions according to the principles of the focus group interview. Krueger and Casey (2009:37) explain: ‘Open-ended questions are a hallmark of focus group interviewing. These questions imply that a few words or a phrase are insufficient as an answer.’ In other words, open-ended questions are requested for explanations, descriptions or illustrations during the interview (Krueger & Casey 2009:37). The interview questions are constructed in such a way that they appeal to and are understood by those youth attending church, and refer to the Adolescent University Entrance Examination Stress Scale of Lee & Chung (1997:144-154). In this study, the questioning route, which is a list of sequenced questions in complete, conversational sentences, followed a previously planned order (Krueger & Casey 2009:38).

Therefore, in this study, a range of questions that is easily recognised by young people suffering from Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome was created so as to recognise those individuals who are affected by Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome; and to recognise the churches that are affected by Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome.

A questioning route was created by following the principles of Krueger & Casey (2009:38):

1. Begin with a question that is easy for everyone in the group to answer.
2. Sequence the conversation to flow naturally from one question to another.
3. Start with general questions and narrow it down to more specific and important questions.
4. Use the time available wisely.

In order to prevent any form of deviation from the research purpose, all questions were discussed with the supervisor, Professor Malan Nel, of The University of Pretoria. Thereafter the final questions were drafted.

### **1.3 The interview process**

The researcher arrived at the interview location about an hour before the participants arrived. The seats were placed in a circular pattern so that each participant, including the leader, could face the others to aid in interactive communication. In addition, the researcher fulfilled the role of the group facilitator or moderator and recorded any interaction in the discussions between members of the focus groups through analysis and observation. Two voice recorders were placed in the room in order that all participants might be recorded clearly.

The researcher introduced himself and explained the nature and purpose of the study, and informed the participants that the interview was being recorded. According to Krueger and Casey (2009:96), the moderator always informs participants at the beginning of the focus group that the discussion is being recorded. In addition, Krueger and Casey (2009:96) emphasise: ‘The first few moments in a focus group discussion are critical. In this brief time the moderator must give enough information so people feel comfortable with the topic, create a permissive atmosphere, provide the ground rules and set the tone of the discussion.’

Therefore, the ethical considerations were discussed, as well as the ground rules and an explanation of how the interview process would work and what the participants should be

aware of throughout the interview process. The researcher explained his role, which was simply to ask the questions and moderate the interview process, and that he would not be directly involved in the discussion.

### **1.3.1 Opening questions**

The opening questions were constructed in a simple easy to understand format, which allowed the participants to answer them easily and to feel comfortable and relaxed. According to Krueger and Casey (2009:98), the opening question is designed to get all participants to say something early in the conversation, as a form of ice-breaker.

‘Let’s begin. Let’s find out more about each other by going around the table one at a time. Tell us your name and introduce yourself.’

### **1.3.2 Introductory questions**

Introductory questions are used to introduce the subject to be discussed in the focus group. The purpose of the introductory questions is to gauge the members’ understanding of the subject and to steer the interview in the right direction. The introductory questions include open-ended questions and questions to determine the level of participants’ knowledge of entrance examination stress.

1. Have you heard about Entrance Exam Stress Syndrome?

### **1.3.3 Transition questions**

According to Krueger and Casey (2009:39), the role of transition questions is to move the conversation to the key issues that drive the study. Transition questions provide the logical links between the introductory questions and the key questions. Transition questions set the stage for productive key questions. Therefore, transition questions in the study were used to cover a wide range of topics to determine the participants’ views on the research subject and to determine the participants’ personal views on Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome. This helped the researcher to determine what the participants thought about the research subject and each other.

2. How many students in high school do you think experience entrance exam stress?
3. What comes to mind when you think of entrance exam stress?

### **1.3.4 Key questions**

Key questions are the questions that form the core of the research. Key questions are those questions which will be intensively considered when the analysis takes place. Krueger and Casey (2009:40) say that key questions drive the study. These are usually the first questions to be developed by the research team and the ones that require the greatest attention in the analysis. Therefore, these questions had to be carefully prepared in advance in the hope that the researcher might grasp the thoughts and feelings of all the participants involved. Enough time was allowed that all the participants might fully and freely share their thoughts and experiences. The specific questions were as follows:

4. What is your experience with regard to entrance exam stress?
5. Do you feel the test puts pressure on you?
6. How do you prepare for the entrance examination?
7. Does the stress and pressure you feel in any way affect your academic performance?
8. What emotions do you experience when you feel the stress and pressure caused by the entrance examination?
9. Which people in your life add to the stress you feel regarding the entrance examination?
10. Why do you think that you are experiencing this stress?
11. How do you cope with or eliminate this entrance exam stress?
12. Do the churches that you attend have a youth ministry programme to support you with regard to the entrance examination and the stress caused by the exam?
13. In what ways have or do your parents support you in dealing with this entrance examination stress?
14. Have you experienced and received support from a youth minister or Sunday School teacher to relieve your entrance exam stress?
15. Have you experience and received other support and care from the church to relieve your entrance exam stress?



16. What do you think youth ministry and your church can do to help you deal with the stress caused by the entrance examination?

### **1.3.5 Ending questions**

According to Krueger and Casey (2009:40), ending questions bring closure to the discussion, enable participants to reflect back on previous comments, and are critical to analysis. Three types of ending questions are valuable: the all things considered question, the summary question and the final question. Therefore, ending questions were used to confirm and check whether the answers that had been given were accurate. The contents were summarised and checked for any missing information, which might need to be added, as well as to allow for any suggestions from the participants.

‘Let's briefly summarise that which we have discussed up until now. We have focused on speaking about the entrance examination stress that you are experiencing.’

(After summary) ‘Is this a good summary? Do you have anything you would like to add or feel is missing from what we have discussed?’

### **1.3.6 Organisation**

The most important issues that the participants raised were checked and organised, in order to ascertain whether the researcher had correctly captured the most pertinent opinions expressed by the participants during the interviews. Once this process was completed, the interviewer concluded by thanking the participants for taking part in the discussion.

## **1.4 Data collection**

According to Krueger and Casey's (2009:93) suggestions, the discussion in the focus group must be captured in multiple ways, including memory, field notes, digital audio recording, and so on. However, the main source of data analysis will be the recorded spoken language derived from the interview. Nevertheless, the setting and capturing of the non-verbal communication expressed by the members of the groups will add a valuable dimension to the construction and analysis of data. Therefore, the collected data includes a transcribed copy of the recordings as well as field notes made by the researcher during the interview process,

along with the debriefing notes of the researcher, which were written immediately after the interviews were conducted. These field notes include notes on the participants' reactions and attitudes, as well as the observed interactions between participants and their general behaviour. The researcher's personal journal was used to record the researcher's personal experiences and feelings during the interview process. After the focus group interviews, debriefing notes were used to record the contents and theme of the discussion, and ideas gathered by the researcher.

### **1.5 Data analysis process**

Focus group interviews as a qualitative research generate large amounts of data. Therefore, to reduce data, Krueger and Casey (2009:114) suggest that the key principle of data analysis is as follows: 'Depth or intensity of analysis is determined by the purpose of the study.' In other words, effective analysis requires a clear focus on the purpose of the study. In order to minimise the potential for bias being introduced when analysing and interpreting focus group data, Krueger and Casey (2009:115-117) point out that the analysis should be systematic, verifiable, sequential, and continuous.

There are a number of approaches to the analysis of qualitative data. The analysis method utilised in this study is to analyse the framework of the Grounded Theory, which makes up part of the Analytic Framework of Krueger and Casey. The Analytic Framework of the Grounded Theory's objectives is to identify patterns in the data and discover relationships between ideas or concepts. Typical uses involve the development of theory and identification of patterns or trends. The key task of the Grounded Theory compares one segment of data with another to identify similarities and differences. The process of the Grounded Theory is as follows: (1) Data are grouped together on a similar dimension. (2) This dimension is given a name; it then becomes a category. (3) These patterns are arranged in relation to each other (Krueger & Casey 2009:125).

Therefore, research results passed through the three processes of the summary of the questions, the theme and the new concepts. The summary for each interview question briefly described the voices of the participants when talking about the experience of entrance

examination stress, after collecting all the data. In addition, each question was summarised in accordance with the context of the question in order to better to understand the feeling, behaviour, and motivation of young people who are under entrance examination stress. The second stage is to categorise the themes. The themes were consistently categorised through the open coding for each question according to theme. In other words, the formation of the theme is the process of finding categories using all the data that was collected.

Firstly, the researcher read through the data collected several times, which allowed him to perform an open coding while selecting meaningful and repeated words, sentences and paragraphs. Grasping the significance of the meaning of words from the context of the interviews, the researcher carefully read all the data literally, interpretatively and reflexively many times. Mason (2002:148-149) states that the implications of literal, interpretive and reflexive readings are as follows:

If you are intending to ‘read’ your data literally, you will be interested in their literal form, content, structure, style, layout, and so on. An interpretive reading will involve you in constructing or documenting a version of what you think the data mean or represent, or what you think you can infer from them. A reflective reading will locate you as part of the data you have generated, and will seek to explore your role and perspective in the process of generation and interpretation of data.

Secondly, questions that had a similar meaning in the context of young people that experience entrance examination stress were grouped. Sub-topics in the statements that had been classified by dividing the words, the sentences and paragraphs after open coding were then identified by the researcher. The questions used within the focus group interviews were largely divided into four types by the researcher. 1) Questions were asked to understand each participant’s experiences of entrance examination stress and to better understand the young people of the church who experience entrance exam stress. 2) Questions were asked to better understand how the participants recognised and viewed the entrance exam and entrance exam stress. 3) Questions were asked about how the participants coped with entrance examination stress. 4) Questions were asked to better understand how the churches supported and cared

for the young people in the church who were experiencing entrance examination stress. These questions were asked to understand how the church supports them now and their expectations for the future. Based on this, the questions were classified by theme into the four areas indicated in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 Meaningful questions within the interview context**

Meaning area	Question details
The young people's experience of entrance examination stress	1. Have you heard about Entrance Exam Stress Syndrome? 2. How many students in high school do you think experience entrance exam stress? 4. What is your experience with regard to entrance exam stress? 5. Do you feel the test puts pressure on you? 6. How do you prepare for the entrance examination? 8. What emotions do you experience when you feel the stress and pressure caused by the entrance examination?
Recognition of entrance examination stress by the youth	3. What comes to mind when you think of entrance exam stress? 7. Does the stress and pressure you feel in any way affect your academic performance? 9. Which people in your life add to the stress you feel regarding the entrance examination? 10. Why do you think that you are experiencing this stress?
How the youth deal with entrance examination stress	11. How do you cope with or eliminate this entrance exam stress?
Support and care by churches for young people undergoing entrance exam stress	12. Do the churches that you attend have a youth ministry programme to support you with regard to the entrance examination and the stress caused by the exam? 13. In what ways have or do your parents support you in dealing with this entrance examination stress? 14. Have you experienced and received support from a youth minister or Sunday School teacher to relieve your entrance exam stress? 15. Have you experienced and received other support and care from the church to relieve your entrance exam stress? 16. What do you think youth ministry and your church can do to help you deal with the stress caused by the entrance examination?

Thirdly, sub-categories were identified through the method of comparing the context of young people suffering continuously from entrance examination stress. In addition, the researcher found a theme that was evident through the words and sentences that were repeated within the interviews, while reading the contents of the classified answers repeatedly. Through this process, the researcher ultimately derived the subject and saw a relationship among the responses.

The third stage is the interpretative task focused on finding a new concept or theory. It was intended to build a theoretical concept to understand how entrance examination stress was acquired. ‘Why are young people in the churches still getting entrance examination stress?’ A new concept is a process of developing a new theory, in this case, about the process during which young people in the churches experience entrance examination stress. Therefore, the interpretative task was formulated by finding the pattern of the entrance examination stress in the categorised themes. The new concept was conceptualised theoretically after the researcher interpreted the pattern in the responses to questions about entrance examination stress.

In order to increase the validity and reliability of the data analysis, the researcher has sought out the opinion of his supervisor, Professor Malan Nel. Thus, the interpreting of the data or reporting of it, presented through open coding, was sorted according to subject; and the patterns of the experiences of the young people in the churches who experience entrance examination stress were analysed.

## **2. THE OUTCOME OF THE DATA ANALYSIS**

### **2.1 A brief summary of the interviews**

The researcher briefly summarised all the answers to the questions that were posed in the focus group interviews, focusing on the most relevant content. The researcher determined the most important information through an analysis of meaningful and repeated words, sentences and paragraphs that occurred in the various responses. This summary is provided below.

### **2.1.1 Have you heard about Entrance Exam Stress Syndrome?**

About half of the participants had heard of or were aware of entrance examination stress.

### **2.1.2 How many students in high school do you think experience entrance exam stress?**

Most of the participants agreed that entrance examination stress was natural and a normal process for those who will be applying to a university.

### **2.1.3 What comes to mind when you think of entrance exam stress?**

Almost all the participants had a negative perception of the concept of university entrance examination stress and a negative approach to the university entrance examination. They indicated negative emotions and a sense of suffering for those experiencing university entrance examination stress.

### **2.1.4 What is your experience with regard to entrance exam stress?**

Most of the participants were already feeling and experiencing entrance examination stress even though they were not 12th graders (high school seniors) but 11th graders (the second-graders in high school).

### **2.1.5 Do you feel the test puts pressure on you?**

The experience of pressure caused by school exams was seen in both the participants from general high school as well as vocational high school, for either university or employment.

### **2.1.6 How do you prepare for the entrance examination?**

The ways in which the participants prepared for the entrance examination were classified into self-study, private institutions, self-study at night at school, and watching EBS educational broadcasting. However, it was the private institutions that participants relied on the most to prepare for high school exams.

### **2.1.7 Does the stress and pressure you feel in any way affect your academic performance?**

Some of the participants attested to physical and psychological pain as a result of entrance examination stress, in terms of their academic grades and in line with the results of earlier psychological studies (Kim et al. 2012:168-169). On the other hand, some of the participants

said that the stress and pressure related to academic performance motivated them to study more and also gave them an incentive to improve their academic performance. However, participants said that there is a time to experience appropriate stress.

### **2.1.8 What emotions do you experience when you feel the stress and pressure caused by the entrance examination?**

Participants had been suffering from entrance examination stress, experiencing a number of negative emotions, which included fear and anxiety about the future, depression, irritability, nervousness and even nervous breakdowns. These negative emotions also resulted in physical symptoms such as headaches and indigestion.

### **2.1.9 Which people in your life add to the stress you feel regarding the entrance examination?**

Subjects causing stress for the participants were friends, parents, teachers, the older generation, the Korean education system authorities and their own selves.

### **2.1.10 Why do you think that you are experiencing this stress?**

The main reason for the participants' entrance examination stress was because they wanted to be successful in the future, which they equated to earning a lot of money. The following equation might be established through the interviews: prestigious university = good job = a lot of money = success = successful and happy life. This belief has caused overheated competition for prestigious universities with regard to the entrance examinations.

### **2.1.11 How do you cope with or eliminate this entrance exam stress?**

The different coping mechanisms were classified into passive coping, proactive coping, friend relationship-oriented coping and faith-oriented coping. However, only two students among all the participants were found to overcome entrance examination stress through their faith, by listening to sermons and participating in worship services. None of the participants asked for help from their senior pastors, youth ministers, Sunday School teachers or church members within their congregations.

**2.1.12 Do the churches that you attend have a youth ministry programme to support you with regard to the entrance examination and the stress caused by the exam?**

All three churches where the interviews were conducted offered no direct support or care programmes related to university entrance examination stress within the youth departments. The participants of two churches said their only help was in the form of an extracurricular work programme that helped with special academic subjects. On the other hand, participants said that the various relationship-oriented activity programmes in the churches would help to relieve entrance examination stress. However, participants said that they preferred their relationship with God through Jesus Christ restored in order to participate in the various relationship-oriented activity programmes. This is because those who needed a relationship restoration with God did not want to participate in the various relationship-oriented activity programmes.

**2.1.13 In what ways have or do your parents support you in dealing with this entrance examination stress?**

The parents did not give sufficient care and support to their children regarding university entrance stress. In addition, the experience of support and care from their parents differed in each church.

**2.1.14 Have you experienced and received support from a youth minister or Sunday School teacher to relieve your entrance exam stress?**

Youth ministers and Sunday School teachers do not give sufficient care and support to young people in their church who are suffering from university entrance exam stress. Only one of the 20 participants had experienced care and support from a youth minister with regard to the entrance examination and only four of the 20 participants experienced care and support from Sunday School teachers with regard to the university entrance examination. This reveals a serious communication problem in terms of understanding, interest and love in Jesus Christ among the youth ministers, Sunday School teachers and young people, for those young people suffering from university entrance examination stress.



### **2.1.15 Have you experienced and received other support and care from the church to relieve your entrance exam stress?**

Only three participants answered that support and care was received from the congregation members and this took the form of the prayer meeting and scholarship. In other words, it would appear that the local congregations are not interested in their young people suffering from entrance examination stress.

### **2.1.16 What do you think youth ministry and your church can do to help you deal with the stress caused by the entrance examination?**

The participants hope to receive heartfelt interest and understanding from the congregation through communication about their lives and their pain pertaining to entrance examination stress. Furthermore, the participants hope to have a variety of career experience programmes because the participants feel that they experience a conflict between their faith and the entrance examination at school.

## **2.2 The four themes**

The analysis of results of the focus group interviews with the young people in the church can be summarised as follows. Top themes were classified as 1) entrance examination stress experience, 2) recognition of entrance examination stress, 3) dealing with entrance examination stress, 4) care and support from the church for those experiencing entrance examination stress. Derived from these, 13 semantic categories and 54 sub-categories were formulated.

### **2.2.1 Entrance examination stress experience**

The experiences of entrance examination stress were separated as 1) presence or absence of entrance examination stress experience; 2) experience of the pressure caused by school tests; 3) emotional response to the entrance examination stress; 4) experience of the entrance examination and school exam preparation.

**Table 4.6 Analysis of content of the entrance examination stress experience**

Topic	Meaning category	Sub-category
Entrance examination stress experience	The presence or absence of entrance examination stress experience	The interview participants' personal experience
		Classmates' experience
	The experience of the pressure caused by the school tests	School grades
		Grading system
		Entrance examination counselling
		When receiving questions about going on to university
		Excessive expectations of the child
		When preparing for other entrance examination subjects
		Comparing the results of the exams with friends
	Emotional response to entrance examination stress	Fear and anxiety for the future
		Depression
		Irritability
		Nervousness
	Experience of the entrance examination and the school exam preparation	Breakdown
		Self-study
		Private institution
Self-study at night		
		Watching EBS educational broadcasting

### 2.2.1.1 The presence or absence of entrance examination stress experience

About half of the participants were aware of entrance examination stress, but such knowledge did not necessarily have any connection to the entrance examination experiences of the participants. The presence or absence of entrance examination stress was divided into two categories: the personal experience of the participants, and their classmates' experience.

#### (a) The interview participants' personal experience

The participants of this study were not 12th graders (high school seniors) but 11th graders. Of the 20 participants, 16 felt that they were currently experiencing entrance examination stress. One participant was not sure if they were experiencing entrance examination stress and only

three felt that they were not experiencing any form of examination stress. In other words, even though they are 11<sup>th</sup> graders the majority were already feeling and experiencing entrance examination stress.

Regarding the three participants who felt no entrance examination stress: they were all in a vocational high school, which meant that they would receive a job after leaving school. These schools are established for the purpose of employment and these participants would therefore feel stress with regard to gaining the right qualification, and the interview process. In other cases, where there was no experience of entrance examination stress, participants simply had a more positive outlook on life or had no interest in studying.

‘I have no interest in studying and I think that there is no guarantee that one will always only succeed through studying. So somehow I don’t get stress whatsoever in any way I think that I will be able to live and eat somehow or other. I have this in mind.’ (AM3)

‘I know studying is important, but I do not stress about studying.’ (CM3)

### **(b) Classmates’ experience**

Most of the participants thought that their friends in high school were under the same entrance exam stress that they felt.

‘I think that most young people have except 1 or 2.’ (AF1)

‘I guess one and all are stressed about the university entrance examination with the exception of the children who have a little given up on their life.’ (BF2)

‘I think whoever is living in the Republic of Korea will be under stress at least once time.’ (CM1)

‘I do not know yet because I am still in second-grade in high school. But, I think about 80-90 percent of students will be under the university entrance examination stress when they are seniors in high school.’ (CM2)

‘I think everyone. The children of physical education and art also have stress. There is not one child who is not under stress because of the entrance examination because the teachers give us pressure to study for the sake of grades.’ (BF5)

### **2.2.1.2 The experience of the pressure caused by school tests**

Five of the 20 participants involved in the focus groups attended vocational high schools. However, the experience of pressure caused by school exams was seen in both the participants from academic general high schools who wished to advance to university, as well as vocational high school participants who train and nurture their vocational ability for getting a job as mentioned in Chapter 2. The school exams for students of academic high schools are focused on university entrance preparation. The school exams for those students who attend a vocational high school are in preparation for either university or employment.

‘I think it is exactly the same between school studies and college entrance examination preparation. Things like Mathematics... Scholastic Ability Test would come out what is covered in Mathematics in high school until now.’ (AF1)

The pressure experienced due to school exams can be classified into seven categories. All the pressures were experienced as a result of one’s marks. Firstly, the participants experienced a feeling of pressure because their school grades were falling. School grades in South Korea are important because they are records of a student that remain valid for three years. Secondly, the pressure was felt as a result of the grading system, whereby students’ results determine what level of university they might be able to attend. In other words, participants had experienced pressure from the grading system because they can only go to a good university and get a good job if their school performance is good. In addition, the participants experienced a feeling of pressure when their grading or ability was not good enough for them to attend the university of their choice. Thirdly, participants experienced a feeling of pressure when they received admission counselling from a teacher based on their grade results. Fourthly, participants experienced pressure when they were asked: ‘Which university do you want to attend?’ by parents and teachers. Fifthly, participants experienced pressure regarding their school performance when their parents had excessive expectations. The participants were unable to meet their parents’ expectations. Sixthly, participants experienced the pressure

of school performance when they had to prepare for other entrance examination subjects such as art, music and physical training on top of their regular subjects. Finally, participants experienced a feeling of pressure when comparing the results of their exams with their friends' results.

**(a) School grades**

'Well, I also want to go to university. But if I did not study, my grades would have been up and down.' (AM5)

'I've finished a test and I felt very miserable because my grades did not come out well.' (CM4)

'I have done high school exams. But, I have heard that you have to be ready for exams from the very first exam, from the first graders in high school and from brothers and sisters [other students]. So, I have prepared well for the exams but on the other hand I feel like I am screwed somehow when I do not do well in an exam that I prepared for. So, I feel pressure on the test day. My hair also has begun to turn grey rapidly because of the stress. [Sigh] I still feel frustrated because I need to do the final exam which worries me. And I could be worried whether I can go to university or not.' (CM1)

'I took a mock exam once. I would decide to go to university through my school grades, but my grades are not very good. So, I try to do a lot of preparation for school grades and I try to study during the week. Then, there is temptation. There are a lot of temptations to play with friends. So I ended up studying nothing. And my school grades also do not come out well... Really... I don't know whether I will go to university on either an early entrance or regular entrance and I am worried about that because my school grades are not good.' (CM4)

**(b) Grading system**

'Occasional admission is supposed to be the entrance that depends on school grades... When I go to the university... I think that there will be a burden for it.' (AF1)

‘In any way, anyway... Whether employment or university. School grades in our country may be excessively the basic foundation [school grades are the most important]. So, unless the school grades are good, although we decide to go to university and we could apply for university, we would immediately get rejected on the entrance examination from the beginning. Of course, when we find a job... Because even with basic school grades, I think that they seem to determine who misbehave in school by their grades in South Korea. They think because a person’s school grades are low they will be a little short on ability in their company. In South Korea.’ (AF2)

‘I feel much stress. In fact, a lot of young people in my school are going to go to university as early entrances. But for the early entrance into university the university only looks at the school grades. University admission considers both the school grades and the College Scholastic Ability Test assessment... I feel a lot of pressure about it.’ (BM4)

‘In my case, I can go to the university that I can enrol in by looking at the rating cut. As ratings... I need to raise my rating grade at the cram school so that I can go for an interview at the university... By the way, because the cram school is managing my grades in school... I seem to have received stress about me raising it for that because I would have to raise it. Cram school is managing my grade in the high school.’ (CF6)

**(c) Entrance examination counselling**

‘We have to take the nationwide school mock exam. When the grading comes out... If you get a 3-4 grade level, you can go the university in the capitalised area and the Chungcheong Province area. If you get a high evaluation, you can go to university in Seoul. My homeroom teacher talked with me about my report card when my report card of my mock exam came out. I have been under a little of the entrance examination stress every time.’ (AF1)

‘I heard that we will fight a lot with the homeroom teacher concerning high and low quality universities when we are high school seniors.’ (BF5)

**(d) When they receive questions about going on to university**

‘Now I am a natural sciences student. So I reluctantly get entrance exam stress. All the time... at midterm examination after a mock exam, a mock exam after final examination... It goes on and on this way. The period to prepare for exams is short as well and even when I study hard my marks do not rise as I hoped. I’m so exhausted. Then, my homeroom teacher, my mom and my dad continuously speak to me about my grades which are not rising. ‘Will you go to any university?’ ‘Will you go to any university with these marks?’ I can do the other things better and I also can do other things apart from studying well. But...<Omitted>... It seems that I am a person who can’t do anything... I think such ideas.’(BF6)

**(e) Excessive expectations for the child**

‘My parents have expectations for me. So, my parents often tend to tell me to do well in my exams. My parents have to keep their mind on my exams and school grades as my grades aren’t bad, but my parents seem to expect more from me.’ (CM5)

‘Even when we want to get a job or take the study further, the people with grade 1, 2 [As and Bs] will get a better position or be able to enrolled in where they wanted for. Except these, we are pressured from parents and their expectation.’ (AF4)

‘I have to go to cram school as soon as school ends, all the time. I have other tutoring or supplemental study on weekends as I spend all my time studying and I think I must spend less time sleeping. I do not have time to study myself because I am so busy. So, there is no effect on my grades [there is no improvement in his grade]. The cram school gives me no review. I mean... my grades are continually falling. My mom angrily says. ‘Why are your grades not good enough?’ ‘Is it not a waste of money?’ (BF8)

**(f) When preparing for other entrance examination subjects**

‘I am not studying for a job but my goal is to go to university. But I am not now learning subjects such as Social Studies and Sciences in my high school. So I think I’m going to study them alone. I have been stressed because I must study alone and I am far behind because the other children have been learning all the subjects already. And I think I am more stressed because I also need exercise because I want to study physical education.’ (AM5)

**(g) Comparing results of exams with friends**

‘I am a natural sciences student but I do not have a mind to study... <Omitted> ... whenever I take an exam, I do not study. Low results would then come out because I have not studied and I am doing other work. When I try to do so, I feel pressure about it because the other children are studying well and I am not studying well. Always, I think I will not do the exams this time. There is a feeling of pressure when comparing to my friends.’ (BF7)

**2.2.1.3 Emotional response to entrance examination stress**

Participants experiencing entrance examination stress demonstrated a number of negative emotions, which included fear and anxiety for the future, depression, irritability, nervousness, and breakdown. These negative emotions also affected their bodies and behaviour. Physical symptoms included headaches and indigestion.

‘It is difficult for me because I do not sleep well before the exam period and I have a little headache and I also have a little stomach ache during break time before doing exams such as Mathematics and English which are the main subjects in the exams on the exam date.’ (BF6)

Feelings of frustration led to a change in behaviour, which was often to give up studying.

**(a) Fear and anxiety for the future**

‘There is a lot of anxiety and irritability. Even though I may go to a good university it is still difficult to get a job. I don’t know what to do with my life in the future as well as how to go to a good university with this studying.’ (AF1)

‘What can I do when I grow up? Even though I am eager to study for the exams, I get average grades and I think there is a big worry: what can I do when I grow up? And will I be able to live well?’ (AM5)

‘I feel: how will I live in future?’ (AF6)



‘I feel envious of those children studying well next to me. There are really a lot of children studying very well around me. How well will these children do who have been able to study? How can I do what they do to have an open future like them? I think this way.’ (BF5)

‘When I look at my report card, I think if I carry on like this I will be an M student [this is currently a slang term among young people in Korean society]. It means that life is destroyed... a fucked up life... a life which cannot be reversed... to ride a motorcycle outside... to deliver *jajangmyeon* [a Chinese cuisine adapted to fit the Korean taste] which is not a bad thing and will actually be a relatively good job for a M student. I think that if I do not study, I will have a job like this. I am not trying to speak badly about this job.’(CM1)

**(b) Depression**

‘I’ve been depressed.’(BF6)

**(c) Irritability**

‘I’d like to get a job but they want me to go to university. I am annoyed about this.’ (AF4)

‘When I am under stress, it is annoying [laugh together].’ (CM3)

‘It was so unfair. I’m suffering unfairness and annoyance. <Omitted> When studying together, some friends even play while studying and some friends study with great zeal but they receive the same results. It’s so frustrating for nothing. Some friends go to PC room [a type of LAN gaming centre, where patrons can play multiplayer computer games for an hourly fee: PC rooms remain popular as they provide a social meeting place for gamers (especially school-aged gamers) to play together with their peers] and I sit studying but we receive the same results. I don’t know why I get frustrated and angry for no good reason. Some friends have not studied and say that their family has a lot of money so they do not have to study. (‘We really hate them!’ Said by most participants in the focus group.) When I see some friends who do not need to study because their parents have a lot of money... (‘There are really many people like this!’, Said by the members in the focus group.) ...I stay and sit down to study until late evening because I am short of something...<Omitted>... I feel this is unfair and annoying.’ (CM1)

**(d) Nervousness**

‘I feel nervous. Once I thought there was time to study for the exam later because there were still left many days until the test period so I played. And then I felt nervous because I should have tried to start studying from before the exam week... I then have to cram for the examination.’ (CM4)

**(e) Break down**

‘I felt that I would really like to give up studying. I want to go toward the arts and physical education.’ (BF8)

‘I try to study but I hate it when I am under stress. I am a little out of sorts.’ (CF6)

**2.2.1.4 Experience of the entrance examination and school exam preparation**

The ways in which the participants prepared for the entrance examination were classified into: 1) self-study, 2) dependence on private institutions, 3) self-study at night at school, 4) watching EBS educational broadcasting. These four methods are also used to prepare for high school exams, which also form part of the entrance examination preparation. Universities in Korea consider the university entrance exam results along with the school exam results. Most participants prepared for their high school exams using a variety of methods. Firstly, they prepared on their own through self-study.

Secondly, they were dependent on cram schools, which are private institutes that help students prepare for their entrance examination, as well as for high school exams. Those participants attending academic high schools for the purpose of entering a university were mainly dependent on these cram schools or private institutions to prepare and improve in subjects such as Korean, English and Mathematics, as they are the major subjects required. Those participants who wished to go on to physical education and arts universities attended physical education and art academies. Those participants who attended vocational high schools established to prepare the students for work attended private institutions in order to prepare for their specific qualifications.

Thirdly, the participants made use of self-study at night, whereby a student will study late into the night by staying at the school after regular school hours. Fourthly, participants made use of an educational broadcasting channel named EBS, or Educational Broadcasting System. The Korean Educational Broadcasting System or EBS is the only educational television and radio network covering the South Korean territory and the only public South Korean radio and television network used exclusively to complement and support school education as well as lifelong education. In most cases, students prepare for tests from late at night until dawn.

**(a) Self-study**

‘I cannot go the cram school but I will prepare to study alone from two weeks before the exam period.’ (AF6)

‘I am studying self-directed learning and cramming for the exams.’ (AF4)

**(b) Dependence on private institutions**

‘I go to private institutions. I am going for English, Mathematics and Korean language private institutions but I cannot catch up with my friends. I am also learning at after-school programmes in the high school and when it comes to the exam period, private institutions only finish after 10 p.m. and I then have to study until 12 p.m. in the library. I studied at home until dawn 3 a.m. until a week ago but my grades did not go up as much as I studied hard... I think that my other friends study even harder. All the friend’s marks would come out good. [Laughs, a laugh behind sadness]. At least all my friends could do such a thing.’ (BF6)

‘I attend private institutions. I go to private institutions six times a week. I go there after school. Each private institution is different. In the case of Mathematics, I go to a Mathematics private institution after school and it finishes at 7 p.m. In the case of English, I go to an English private institution after taking a short rest after dinner. The English institution is from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. (‘Uh, pain’; some participants say).’ (CF5)

‘I’m not attending a cram school. I go to an art institute from Monday to Thursday, so I cannot attend regular private institutions. I have no time to go there. I only go to the art

institute. Immediately after school I go to the art institute and it finishes at 10 p.m. I go there four times a week.’(CF6)

‘I study at home the night before. I have also been exercising and trying to prepare for the Sport University. I am attending the gym.’ (AM5)

‘I go to the private institutions for certification. I am cramming to study for exams.’ (BF1)

‘I attend only an English private institution. The English private institution is from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. It is not on Tuesday and Thursday but Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I go there. I applied for Mathematics after school and I am being tutored in the church.’ (CM3)

### **(c) Self-study at night**

‘I do self-study at night three days a week. A day... I have a private English tutor one day per week. I have private math tutoring in our church on the weekend.’ [Self-study at night means that the compulsory self-study at night is done at school] (CM4)

### **(d) Watching EBS educational broadcasting**

‘My high school uses the national textbooks and we bought the EBS teaching materials separately to help us to prepare for the regular admissions...For each course... Also, the questions for the examination come from it.’ (BF4)

## **2.2.2 Recognition of entrance exam stress**

The recognition of entrance examination stress was largely classified into 1) the concept of university entrance examination stress, 2) the relationship between school grades and university entrance examination stress and pressure, 3) what causes university entrance examination stress, 4) who causes entrance examination stress. In other words, recognition of the entrance examination stress has been further divided into 18 sub-categories.



**Table 4.7 Analysis of the recognition of entrance exam stress**

Topic	Meaning category	Sub-category
Recognition of entrance exam stress	The concept of university entrance examination stress	Image of the university entrance examination
		Negative emotions
		Lives of suffering as a result of university entrance examination stress
	The relationship between school grades and university entrance examination stress and pressure	Positive effect
		Negative effect
	What causes university entrance examination stress	Grade-centred and academic clique-centred social structure
		Preference for the brand name universities
		Entrance examination competition to go on to a prestigious university
		In order to get a good job
		In order to earn a lot of money
		Future success and a happy life
		Establishment of prestigious high school status
	Who causes entrance examination stress	Friends
		Parents
		Teachers at the school
		The older generation
The Korean education system authorities		
One's own self		

**2.2.2.1 The concept of university entrance examination stress**

Almost all the participants had a negative perception of the concept of university entrance examination stress. Only one of the participants had a positive view of university entrance examination stress.

‘I think of myself being successful in the future as a result of studying hard.’ (BM4)

Those negative perceptions of the university entrance exam have been divided into: 1) the image of the university entrance examination, 2) negative emotions, 3) lives of suffering due to university entrance examination stress. This means that the participants recognised the stress that they felt as a result of the university entrance exam. In addition, the participants recognised that the stress caused by the entrance examination caused negative emotions as well as suffering.

**(a) Image of the university entrance examination**

‘The College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT)’ (BM4)

‘The mock report’ (BF5)

‘Cut-off Point’ (BM3)

‘Interview’ (CM2)

‘Study’ (CM3)

‘The school grades’ (CM4)

‘The university’ (CF5)

**(b) Negative emotions**

‘It is a little frustrating. So much.... I hate it that the numbers on a few pieces of paper can make or break my life.’ (AF4)

‘It leads to worries about the future.’ (BF4)

‘I get angry a little.’ (AF1)

‘It's annoying. I like to exercise but I'm too frustrated because I can't exercise because of the stress of studying.’ (AM5)

‘I think that my life is so depressing.’ (BF8)

**(c) Lives of suffering as a result of university entrance examination stress**

‘I am frustrated, confined and exhausted.’ (BF6)

‘I think it’s very tiring.’ (BF1)

‘I think poor of myself.’ (CF5)

‘I think I am tired and it seems to be very difficult.’ (CM1)

‘I think that I live the life that is not my own.’ (BF2)

‘I don't know how to make my life. I didn't know how to do well... I feel overburdened like something is a wall in my heart.’ (AF6)

‘It's a burden to me. It feels like too much pressure to do well in the exams.’ (AF2)

‘It is darkness.’ (BF6)

‘It is a prison.’ (BF2)

**2.2.2.2 The relationship between school grades and university entrance examination stress and pressure**

The effects of entrance examination stress and the pressure it places on school performance were classified as 1) positive effect and 2) negative effect. Firstly, concerning the positive effect of entrance examination stress on academic performance, participants said that not only did the stress cause them to study more, it also helped them to improve their academic performance. In addition, participants said that they could study harder as well as feel a sense of accomplishment as their academic performance improved. The only condition was that participants said it is good receiving the appropriate level of stress at the appropriate time, meaning that there is a time to receive the appropriate stress. In other words, appropriate

stress has a positive effect on the improvement of academic performance. Secondly, the negative impact of entrance examination stress on academic grades involved not being able to study well and loss of concentration due physical and psychological pain. Furthermore, some of the participants said that as a result of the stress, studying became more unpleasant and might eventually cause a person to give up on studying altogether.

**(a) Positive effect**

‘I’m a little easy-going. So, I think this is useful for studying and helps when getting such a feeling of pressure.’ (AF6)

‘When I see the exam results I think that I should study harder to get better marks next time and I must study more than now. So, if I get a low exam result it makes me study harder. The other way, if I get a higher exam result then, I think I ought to study like that from now on. And I think that I study more diligently.’ (BF6)

‘I think in some ways entrance examination stress helps a student to achieve good school grades. I think it is just a big problem not to study knowing that we must study hard.’ (BM4)

‘It is not too much pressure and I think it is helpful to study more when receiving a feeling of pressure and entrance examination stress.’ (BF1)

‘A little pressure seems fine. When this pressure ends and school grades come out well, somehow I have a sense of accomplishment. So, it seems to relieve the stress and pressure. If there is no pressure at all, we will not be tense about the exam.’ (CM1)

‘I think appropriate stress is good. I have a feeling of pressure before the exam. A feeling of pressure sometimes comes up or not. When I play, this feeling of pressure never comes up. When I just sit alone, a feeling of pressure comes up. So, I am fired up to study again... This is my style.’ (CM4)

‘I think there should be appropriate stress. But I study a lot because my mother seriously put a lot of pressure on me in middle school. I went to private institutions. When, I came to



attend high school, I stopped attending private institutions to study by myself, but I could not do well with my own will. And, I think that it is not bad to study while feeling pressure for the exam.’ (CM2)

**(b) Negative effect**

‘It is connected to the burden.’ (AF2)

‘There is anxiety. When I took the exam, my hand was shaking. I thought very strongly that if I do not get a good grade, I would be in really big trouble. So, I think that I was less focused on what I had to study.’ (AF1)

‘It feels bad.’ (AF4)

‘My hands trembles and I get yelled about studying even though I sit down and study all the time because of the pressure that I should study.’ (AM5)

‘When my test results came out and I calculated my school grades, my face was dark. I did not do well but I wouldn’t take the test. What kind of person am I? What will become of my life? I was screwed. I beat myself up in this way and I would look down on myself more and more. I thought that it was a high possibility that my school grades would become lower and not improve if I did the test again because of being under more stress.’ (BF7)

‘Sometimes, when I get stressed I have a headache and feel depressed. So, I think it might interfere with my study. Really... I was very tired.’ (BF2)

‘I would say that I don’t feel like studying a little when I feel pressure.’ (CM2)

**2.2.2.3 What causes university entrance examination stress**

The reasons for entrance examination stress have been divided into 1) grade-centred and academic clique-centred social structure, 2) preference for the brand name universities, 3) entrance examination competition to go on to prestigious universities, 4) in order to get a good job, 5) in order to earn a lot of money, 6) future success and a happy life, 7)

establishment of prestigious high school's status. Firstly, the grade-centred and academic clique-centred social structure refers to the social structure in which each individual's ability is evaluated by grades. Such a social structure ultimately resulted in university rankings. Secondly, the overheated competition to be accepted into a prestigious university led to pressure being placed on young people to be accepted into these prestigious universities. Thirdly, a student needed to be a graduate of one of these prestigious universities in order to get a good job. Fourthly, participants said that to get a good job meant to earn a lot of money. Fifthly, finally earning a lot of money would lead to a successful life and happy life. Sixthly, the prestigious university enrolment rate and the employment rate at large companies establishes the status of the prestigious high schools.

**(a) Grade-centred and academic clique-centred social structure**

‘Happiness comes in school grades in our country... Also, a good university may be in this order like Sky [Seoul National University, Korea University, Yonsei University, the most prestigious universities in South Korea]. In addition, society in South Korea only wants a student to be in first place which puts us under entrance examination stress because of it.’

(AF1)

‘Our country is recognised for its academic oriented record. Firstly, the goal is to get a job to live. But I think that our country has made the first goal to get into university. I think we only enter the university to be able to get a job... It seems that to get a job we only have to go to university... And I think this makes us study. I don't like it.’ (All participants agreed). (CM4)

**(b) Preference for the brand name universities**

‘I think the reason that I study is pressure given by other people beyond myself. This is why I study reluctantly following that you must go to the good universities and you must study well. I think stress is caused by this pressure because I suppose to do it by myself.’ (AF6)

**(c) Entrance examination competition to go on to a prestigious university**

‘When we go to university, we always think it is only good to go to a good university and to enter into the four-year universities in Seoul...Well...I think I am under stress because the

entrance examination score is likely to be very high when we apply for the four-year universities in Seoul.’ (CF5)

**(d) In order to get a good job**

‘When on the news ... <Omitted> ... Because we have heard from the news that it is difficult to land a job... I think I am so stressed out because parents tell their children this after hearing it in the news.’ (AM3)

‘I think it is normal to get entrance examination stress because firstly, you need to get a good degree in good university to get a good job which will able to make me get a good salary. If I get good salaries, I can live a better life than others with the money earned.’ (BF6)

**(e) In order to earn a lot of money**

‘I am concerned about the late future. I need to save lots of money so I can bring up my babies when I get married. Thinking about it, I think I will make a lot of money if I study well.’ (BF8)

‘I think it is money, because most people want to join a good company after graduating from a good university. If we join a good company, we can make a lot of money. I think we will be happy if we can make a lot of money. So, I think that it would probably be about the money.’ (BM4)

**(f) Future success and happy life**

‘Hmm .... There is the understanding like a mathematical equation where if people succeed they can be happy. But we are able to find success in happiness. I think after we find happiness, we will be able to find success in happiness. In my case, I'm happy now. Even if I do not study I have been living doing what I want to do. These friends are very poor too. They have not even decided on their future dream and they only think to join a good company to enter a good university unconditionally. Also, they think that they are able to earn a lot of money by working in a good company. In this way, they think they will have success because of this mathematical equation and it causes them a lot of stress. They think

that they will meet a good guy through joining a large-scale enterprise such as Samsung and LG unconditionally. They are under stress about it because they think this way.’ (BM3)

**(g) Establishment of prestigious high school status**

‘I think that school teachers at high school give us stress to continually raise our position and the high school status. They (teachers) think that students that are good at school grades in middle school will apply to our high school through we go to good universities.’ (All in the group empathised.) (AF2)

**2.2.2.4 Who causes entrance examination stress**

Subjects that cause entrance examination stress are 1) friends, 2) parents, 3) teachers at the school, 4) the older generation, 5) the Korean education system authorities and 6) one's own self. There was a case of one participant who was forced to enter a good university so as to achieve the dream that the parents themselves were unable to fulfil. There was also a case where children were forced to study for the sake of the parents’ status. Thirdly, there was a case where the teachers discriminated and ignored students’ grades. Fourthly, there was entrance examination stress that comes from values of the older generation and the social atmosphere. Fifthly, the education authorities primarily made the Korean education system focus on entrance examination education. Finally, entrance examination stress was due to their own negative thoughts.

**(a) Friends**

‘I think that it is friends.’ (AM3)

‘I think that it is friends.’ (AF6)

‘I think that teachers and parents are really giving me the most stress. But I think that friends around me also might be giving me stress. Because we are friends but we compete with each other. Because I have to go to a higher university and better university than my friends... If a friend is sitting next to me studying, I feel I must also study... In this way, I am under stress.’ (BF6)

‘I think that it is friends. ...<Omitted>... Some friends give preferential treatment to friends who are good at studying. And there are some friends who look down on friends who are not good at studying... Friends ... And there are some girlfriends who are going out with guys who are good at studying. It's a little something among my friends. Yeah.’ (BF8)

**(b) Parents**

‘There are many people like parents that are trying to achieve their dreams they have not achieved through their children. There are many such cases among my friends. The fathers of my friends are high-ranking public officials, lawyers, judges and doctors but their children are not studying very well, as much as their parents did. And, their parents say that they must study more if they want to continue to be pretty well off like them...’ (BF7)

‘Previously my parents used to give me too much stress... But nowadays my parents give me less stress because I am living freely.’ (CM3)

‘Parents naturally give me stress. My father didn’t study well long ago.... but then my father suddenly got his head screwed on and he studied very well. And then my father became a person who was good at studying and now he can’t understand children who are not good at studying. So, my father gives me a lot of stress at home... When I stay at home doing nothing, my mother also says what are you doing now? Is this your time that you are able to do nothing now?’ (CM2)

**(c) Teachers at the school**

‘Somehow what they tell us in high school I cannot always believe. Teachers anyway only take good care of friends who study well ...’ (CM1)

‘It is friends and teachers.’ (AF1)

‘It is teachers and parents and society as a whole which creates this atmosphere.’ (AF2)

**(d) The older generation**

‘I think that there is an emphasis on studying because since long ago there are no any resources being produced in South Korea. They only emphasise study and the companies also emphasise study... These days, it is any less... Korean society seems to go on a little in a strange way.’ (BM3)

‘I think that it is the thinking of the people. They think that we can get a good job by just going to a good university. And they think we must be a person who earns a lot of money by getting a good job. It seems nothing else is on their mind but studying. It is crazy only to study. They always say it is so hard to live by going into physical education and art. Adults always say that we must only study...’(BF8)

**(e) The Korean education system authorities**

‘I think that the people who made the Korean education system give us stress. This hierarchy has automatically been created in our Korea society by the Korean educational system. (Many participants agree to this by their word and expression).’ (CM1)

**(f) One's own self**

‘I think persons may be under stress because of themselves. When they take the same exam, some people will be under stress according to how they feel about the exam while others don't. So I think it differs depending on how they think about the exam.’(BF1)

**2.2.3 Dealing with entrance examination stress**

In order to look at how the participants dealt with entrance examination stress, the different ways of coping were classified into passive coping, proactive coping, friend relationship-oriented coping and faith-oriented coping.

Passive coping mainly refers to the passive attitude of trying to escape from entrance examination stress. This passive way of coping and trying to escape can take the form of sleeping, eating, spending time alone, or playing games. Mainly female participants fell into this category. Proactive coping refers to the attitude of trying to overcome entrance examination stress in a positive and active way. This can take the form of doing exercises,

group activities and positive thinking. There were more male students in this category than female students. The friend relationship-oriented way of coping refers to a tendency mainly to try and eliminate entrance examination stress through relationships with friends. This is done by eliminating entrance examination stress through conversation and activities with friends. Faith-oriented coping refers to the tendency to try to eliminate entrance examination stress through faith. This is done through attending worship services in church and listening to sermons. However, only two students were found to overcome entrance examination stress through faith. None of the participants asked for help from youth ministers, Sunday School teachers or church members in their congregations.

**Table 4.8 Analysis of content of dealing with entrance examination stress**

Topic	Meaning category	Sub-category
Dealing with entrance examination stress	Type of behaviour for coping with entrance exam stress	Passive coping
		Proactive coping
		Friend relationship-oriented coping
		Faith-oriented coping

### 2.2.3.1 Type of behaviour for coping with entrance exam stress

#### (a) Passive coping

‘It is easy to sleep a bit. When I sleep, it is comfortable and allows me to forget it easier because when I sleep I don’t think.’ (BF2)

‘I would daydream about other things while sitting at my desk... When I would daydream about other things sometimes I wouldn’t know that 2-3 hours have passed...’ (BF7)

‘I eat something.’ (CF5)

‘I think to go somewhere where I can be alone. I go to Karaoke (singing rooms) alone and I also take a bath alone... wherever I can relieve some of the heat. Where I can yell loudly...’ (BF6)

‘I just relieve stress by simply playing games.’ (CM3)

‘I think I will release stress a little when I enter into a good university.’ (AF1)

**(b) Proactive coping**

‘I lose stress through exercise, I like to exercise too.’ (AM5)

‘I have club activity as a hobby. Now in my school, I am part of a Gugak [Korean classical music] club. This allows me to go out and do performances and competitions and I also received money and awards. As a result of this the stress melts away.’ (BF1)

‘Comparing the grades... nagging from my mother... I exercise alone with the door closed when I get stressed.’ (BF7)

‘I like doing Taekwondo [Korean martial art]. So I compete for one or two hours and then wash my body which seems to eliminate the stress.’ (BM3)

‘When I get stressed, I mainly go out and play and jump around. I play soccer.’ (CM4)

‘Even though I am very stressed now and things are hard I imagine myself in the future having my achieved my dream and this makes me look forward to it which relaxes a lot of the stress.’ (BF5)

**(c) Friend relationship-oriented coping**

‘I go to play with my friends to release the stress.’ (AF4)3

‘Just laughing and talking about an interesting story with friends...I think that I solve accumulated stress this way.’ (AM3)

‘I keep one day aside when I can call my friends and get together and I even go to the PC room, I go to karaoke rooms, I also go to the billiards room and finally I go to the sauna. Then, after this it seems stress is eliminated.’ (BM4)



**(d) Faith-oriented coping**

‘I just think stress is eliminated by going to church for worship. I don’t try to eliminate the stress myself but I am happy in my mind and it helps me to not think about the stress.’ (AF2)

‘When I sometimes hear sermons at church, I feel better... comfortable...’ (AF6)

**2.2.4 Care and support from the church for entrance examination stress**

The different ways in which the church supports and cares for those suffering from entrance examination stress can be classified into 1) the support and care from parents, 2) the support and care of the youth department, 3) the support of congregation members, 4) future care and support offered by churches. These categories can then be divided into 14 sub-categories as follows:

**Table 4.9 Analysis of content of care and support from the church for entrance examination stress**

Topic	Meaning category	Sub-category
Care and support in church for entrance examination stress	The support and care from parents	Trust of parents in their children
		Parents listening closely to their children
		The parents’ attitude to the university entrance examination
		Words of encouragement and comfort by parents for their children
	The support and care of the youth department	Support and care of youth workers
		Support and care of Sunday School teachers
		Support through youth programmes
	The support of congregation members	Prayer meetings
		Scholarship
	Future care and support offered by churches	To empathise with and understand young people preparing for university entrance examinations
		To make an open dialogue time
		To prohibit discrimination and favouritism in the church
		To offer various career experience programme
		To equip studying facilities and extracurricular work programmes for various academic subjects

#### **2.2.4.1 The support and care from parents**

Only the parents of five participants out of the 20 did not attend church. At least one parent or both parents of the remaining 15 participants attended church. In other words, 75% of the participant's parents attended church. However, through the interviews, it was discovered that only eight participants felt that they had experienced care and support from their parents regarding entrance examination stress. In other words, only 40% of the participants felt that they received care and support from their parents. Using the results of this interview, the parents attending church might come to know that they are not giving sufficient care and support to their children regarding university entrance stress. The experience of support and care of the parents was different in each church. Of the eight participants who felt that they experienced care and support from their parents, one participant came from one church, three participants from another church and four participants from another church, which reveals a different level of support and care in different churches.

Support and care by parents regarding entrance examination stress has been classified into 1) trust of parents in their children, 2) parents listening closely to their children, 3) the parents' attitude to the university entrance examination, 4) words of encouragement and comfort by parents for their children. Firstly, the trust of parents in their children speaks of the trust that comes from being convinced of a successful future and having a future expectation for their children regardless of the child's current performance. Secondly, words of encouragement and comfort by parents for their children sees parents encouraging their children through words and understanding the lives of their children who are experiencing university entrance exam stress. Thirdly, parents listening closely to their children allows the parents to understand and know the source of the problems and suffering of their children. Fourthly, the attitude of the parents to the university entrance examination speaks of parents changing their viewpoint with regard to the university entrance examination by focusing more on the importance of the preparation process for the exam than on the results themselves. In the interviews, the participants' parents had the same views, placing more importance on the preparation process than on the results. It is also the parents' responsibility to help the child choose the best study field and department for that particular child's aptitudes and abilities, rather than focusing on simply being accepted into a prestigious university.

On the other hand, there is the case of parents offering and promising some form of compensation to their children if they perform well or improve in the test. In this case, it places more pressure on the child and gives some form of motivation to the child. Most participants had received care and support regarding university entrance examination stress from their mothers rather than from their fathers. This reveals that the mothers showed more interest in their children and the university entrance examination than the fathers.

**(a) Trust of parents in their children**

‘My mother has always trusted me whether my test results are good or not... ‘I will always trust you. Do what you want to do and I will not have any doubt on your decisions.’ She always trusts me. It is really a great comfort.’ (BM3)

‘Just let me relieve stress. They say ‘Do it on your own. I will not interrupt you if you do it or not. When you get older, you might do it well.’ They relieve stress in this way. They must always trust me.’ (AM3)

**(b) Parents listening closely to their children**

‘My parents listen to my troubles. My parents and I go on outings to the beach and then I relieve some of the stress. And I think my parents listen to my stories a lot. Then, I think stress is released a lot when I tell my worries to my parents.’ (AF4)

**(c) The parents’ attitude to the university entrance examination**

‘School grades...My mother doesn't argue about my grades. Looking at my report card, she says I am doing a good job to get the results of this scale so long as I am really working hard in the course. Thus, my mother would not see the result of my grades but the process of studying. I played outside and then came home ... I was just playing without studying for the test...When my grades are not good, my mother tells me to study harder...Because I studied hard, my mother does not tell me anything when my school grades come out and are not very good. It gives me great comfort.’ (BF4)

‘It is my mom ... When my school grades came out and were not very good my mom used to shout at me because my mom had a thirst for knowledge. These days my school grades are

not very good. That is.... What is ... I am left to study by myself. <Omitted> recently, my mom does not have a thirst for knowledge. And ... What is ... Studying... Even if my school grades do not come out very well, my mother after finishing her work, brings me food ... She does not ask me, 'What grades did you get?' She just says, 'Eat it!'...' (BF8)

'The mother gives me hope for the test period. It is a style like hope torture a little. She gives me something when the time of the test period is finished...Then, somehow it may be me a motivation to study. After the test period, I can take it... It is a little hope torture.' (CM1)

#### **(d) Words of encouragement and comfort by parents for their children**

'I always get some time where I really get tired because of constant exam days; I will even spend the whole night awake to study for the exam. Then they would tell me to go to bed. They said 'it is worse for you to get weak and then not studying.' <Omitted> It is helpful.' (BF6)

'My parents just particularly don't care and it is supporting something when my parents said you cheer up. I think also that it is burden a little something suitable. I think that is all right.' (CM4)

'My parents say that do all the things you want to do during the day...Everything...until the stress is released, Then, I do all the things I want to do with my friends. And I eat all the things I want to eat and then, there is no academic thinking and there is only thinking of playing with my friends. Some of the stress is released by such a thing.' (AM5)

#### **2.2.4.2 The support and care of the youth department**

The support and care of the youth department was divided into 1) support and care of youth workers (pastor, probationer, evangelist, and preacher), 2) support and care of Sunday School teachers (Bible study teachers and assistant teachers), 3) support through youth programmes.

Firstly, only one of the 20 participants had experienced care and support from a youth minister with regard to the entrance examination. As an indirect experience, one participant said that some of her brothers and sisters (in the Korean culture a brother or sister is someone

older than you) in the church had received help from the youth minister when their faith was challenged and things were difficult psychologically. This reveals a serious communication problem between the youth ministers and young people suffering from university entrance examination stress.

Secondly, the support and care offered by a teacher has been divided into 1) dialogue of love with advice, 2) career guidance by Sunday School teachers who have professional work experience in a variety of fields, 3) the career experience story of Sunday School teachers, 4) when teachers pray for us. The advice and love received by the participants from the Sunday School teachers was said to be a big help and helped to relieve university entrance examination stress; as well as the care given by Bible study teachers who talked with the young people in weekday meetings with interest and love. Career guidance teachers who specialised in certain fields were able to widen the career paths of the participants. Young people in the church have also received help within their school life, career choice method and so on through the career experience story of the teachers. It also brought great comfort when the Bible study teachers took prayer requests and prayed with the students. However, only four of the 20 participants experienced care and support from Bible study teachers regarding stress experienced as a result of the university entrance examination. These results also showed a great difference between the support and care offered by Sunday School teachers based on the interest and understanding of the individual Sunday School teachers.

Thirdly, the research looked at the support and care programmes related to university entrance examination stress within the different youth departments. Only one church has a programme for the entrance examination. However, all three churches where the interviews were conducted offered no direct support and care programmes related to university entrance examination stress. In addition, there was a notable difference between each church that the participants attended. All the participants of one church replied that there was no programme associated with the university entrance examination and stress. On the other hand, participants of two churches said that there was a programme to help those students preparing for the university entrance examinations. This help was in the form of an extracurricular work programme that helped with special academic subjects and an entrance examination counselling programme. On the other hand, participants said that various activity

programmes would help to relieve entrance examination stress. However, one participant said that all the programmes in the church actually added to the entrance exam stress being experienced by the young people attending the church. The participant believed that the reason for this was that these churchgoers had not truly met Jesus Christ as saviour. In other words, the various programmes offered by the churches do not hold the same meaning to their lives for those students who are preparing for the university entrance exam who do not know Jesus Christ. All the participants in the one church agreed with this view.

**(a) Support and care of youth workers**

‘I have never visited youth workers directly, but when we have troubles or are stressed out they can give us a lot of advice if we visit and speak to the pastor. I have never spoken about this personally to a pastor but I seldom follow my sisters and brothers [Grade 12 students] who I know in the church.’ (BF7)

**(b) Support and care of Sunday School teachers**

‘Our class in the youth department usually goes out to eat together. We go to eat with our Sunday school teacher at least once a month...Every time... we talk about how our school life is. Now ... just ... Isn’t it difficult for you? The Sunday school teacher asks us often and we also talk about studying each time. The Sunday school teacher says I did this. You should be studying like this... as well. The Sunday school teacher gives us advice about things a lot in this way.’ (BF5)

‘There are few teachers at church. When I tell the teacher my troubles and prayer requests, I feel relieved and I feel better to have been prayed for.’ (CM4)

**(c) Support through youth programmes**

‘There are mentors in the church...You know. There are some people who are school teachers and Sunday school teachers in the church some days. The church calls in such people and we go to them. <Omitted> So, there is a consultation... about what to prepare for the university entrance exams.... how to study.... which department to go to in the university... I also have had the programme that talks about this.... in the youth department.... several times ...’ (BF6)

‘The church has a programme for the entrance examination. There is a self-management class. We do Q.T [Quiet time] and make a plan with a planner every day...I write down things to do today on the planner and do Q.T while studying...’ (CM2)

‘The church gathers Sunday school teachers who can teach young people for free and they teach mathematics and Korean language divided into each grade...<Omitted> ... It is a programme where Sunday school teachers voluntarily help for the entrance examination.’ (CM4)

‘There is a programme in the senior department of the church. A youth pastor goes to McDonald’s and buys McMoming Extra Value Breakfast every morning. And in the morning, a youth pastor goes to a selected high school for that week and hands out the food. And the friends who could not have breakfast can have breakfast. It offers the opportunity to powerfully start a day... They are still doing this.’ (BM3)

‘When, there is a prayer meeting, there's time to ask for prayer requests at the end of the prayer meeting. This seems to comfort the body and mind.’ (CM4)

‘There are activities like football on Saturday mornings and then, stress seems to be released a little at this time.’ (CM4)

‘I like to participate in a Bible reading class. Then, the Manito is determined by ‘Manito’ as game in South Korea. [‘Manito’ has the meaning of ‘Secret Friend’ or ‘Guardian Angel’: Manito can become your guardian angel or secret friend in your surroundings whether you realise it or not.] The role of Manito is to advise what to read in the Bible and what to share from the Word of God in the Bible in the week... I do not necessarily have anyone to have a heart-to-heart talk to about my story. And then, when I talked with Manito about something and share the Word of God, I am comfortable in my mind and the stress seems to be released because of the church members.’ (CM1)

#### **2.2.4.3 The support of congregation members**

Only three participants answered regarding the support of congregation members. A long silence followed after asking the question but after a while most participants answered,

‘There is no support’ or ‘I can’t remember any’. All the participants of one church said that they had no memory of receiving any support from congregation members. Support received from the congregation members can be largely divided into 1) prayer meeting 2) scholarship.

Firstly, there was a prayer meeting at one church, which offered support and care for the church members. The prayer meeting was not for Grade 10 and 11 students preparing for the university entrance examination high school but solely for Grade 12 students in the church. It was a prayer meeting for Grade 12 students in the churches to pray that they would be able to do well on the College Scholastic Ability Test. As a result, the Grade 11 student participants had not experienced such a prayer meeting. In the same church there was also a mother’s prayer meeting. In this prayer meeting mothers are able to pray for their children once a week regarding their children’s academic results, universities and careers as well as for their future dreams. This prayer meeting is for those mothers who have children in Grades 10, 11 and 12. Both the mother’s prayer meeting and prayer meeting for Grade 12 students in high school are for the sole purpose of praying that the children will go to a good university and achieve good results in their tests. Their parents were also interested in being leaders used by God to assist their children to enter a good university.

Secondly, a scholarship was also offered by a church to support and care for the church members. The scholarship was given to some students attending high school, university and college. Those participants who had received the scholarship said that the scholarship from the church was of great help for their education.

Although there was a scholarship offered and prayer meetings, the overall support of the church members was found to be inadequate in taking care of Grade 10, 11 and 12 students who are living a painful life because of university entrance examination stress. In other words, it was found that many church members are indifferent to the lives of the Grade 10, 11 and 12 students who experience university entrance examination stress.



### **(a) Prayer Meeting**

‘Just before the CSAT, the church hangs up a banner with the names of the Grade 12 students written on it and the faculty they want to study in.... and the church asks for a lot of prayer for them... They do little things like that....’ (BF4)

‘There is no programme that is supporting us, and there is no programme that we have directly received help. <Omitted> I can only ask to Grade 12 students in high school.... for the church sisters and brothers who do the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT)...The church just asks church sisters and brothers: What do you want to do in the future? What is your dream?... The church puts up a large banner in the middle of the church with the dreams and future plans written on it. There is a mother’s prayer meeting at around 10 in the morning every Wednesday...to pray for the sons and daughters of the mothers and there is also a prayer meeting for the CSAT from two weeks ago. This is a prayer meeting praying for the students to get good marks. Because it is prayer meeting that all of the church members can participate in, we sometimes go the church and pray for our church sisters and brothers.’ (BF7)

### **(b) Scholarship**

‘The university tuition fees cause a lot of pressure...supporting a little scholarship from the church...<Omitted>.... I think that the scholarship institution only was helpful to me.’ (AF2)

#### **2.2.4.4 Future care and support offered by churches**

The future care and support that the participants would like to see offered by the churches was divided into 1) empathy and understanding for the young people preparing for the university entrance examination, 2) making a time for open dialogue, 3) prohibiting discrimination and favouritism in the church, 4) offering of various career experience programmes, 5) providing studying facilities and extracurricular work programmes in the church for various academic subjects.

Firstly, participants wanted to receive empathy and understanding from the church members because of the entrance examination stress they are experiencing, because the participants felt that they experience a conflict between their faith and the entrance examination at school.

The participants would like more comfort and understanding for the stress they are experiencing rather than the focus only being on the results of the examination and getting into a good university. The participants also wished that the congregation members would never ask questions related to the results of an examination and entering a university.

Secondly, participants wanted to talk about and express their feelings of suffering, trouble and stress through open dialogue or open-minded talks. Through this natural open dialogue, participants wanted to hear warm advice such as information about entering universities, career counselling, studying methods and so on. In conclusion, the participants hoped that they would be able to communicate with congregation members through natural open dialogue.

Thirdly, the participants said that they wished that there would be no discrimination and prejudice between congregation members in the church anymore, relating to the results of the university entrance examination and entering a university. In other words, the participants felt that there is still prejudice and discrimination in the church concerning the results of the examination and entering a university. They said that they could not understand why there is prejudice and discrimination in the church concerning the results of the examination and entering a university. The participants wanted the prejudice and discrimination in the church to disappear more than they wanted any care and support from the congregation members.

Fourthly, the participants want the church to offer a variety of career experience programmes. The participants believed that through a variety of career experience programmes the church might help them to see that life is not just about studying and help them to find their career. The participants' hope was that the church would become the hope for ending the entrance examination evil within Korean society through a variety of career experience programmes.

Fifthly, the participants wanted to receive direct support from the church through extracurricular work programmes covering a variety of academic subjects. Therefore, it is necessary that those congregation members with professional careers volunteer to help the young people in the church. The participants also desired facilities to be provided at the church for them to study.

**(a) Empathy and understanding for the young people preparing for the university entrance examination**

‘If I have many troubles, a lot of stress is released when I speak to and get counsel from other people regarding the stress and troubles. So, I think that it might be good to release such things through a little talking or discussion with a close teacher or friends.’ (AF4)

‘I have many difficulties and I am under stress. It seems it would be a great help if they could at least make a place where we can open up to someone about this.’(CM1)

**(b) Making a time for open dialogue**

‘I would usually want to let teachers say a lot personally through a discussion....Words of comfort ... Such words that would help ... There are Saturday meetings for each group.... but there are almost no words.... Anyways, teachers are our seniors in life and I hope they would say to us what can be a help in life.’ (BM4)

**(c) Prohibiting discrimination and favouritism in the church**

‘According to one’s university ranking, there were those people who play favourites secretly in the church. Those who live from the past and senior citizens who judge a person by the university they went to.... Such a thought has stuck deeply.... <Omitted>.....This must be completely broken up. There is no solution. It is a shame to have it in the church. Those who live in the past and senior citizens are only nice and friendly to people according to the university ranking and reason for going to that university. Also, just because of not going to a good university, some friends say that you are not my friends.... In this way. Not so good, not so bad... [laugh behind sadness].’ (BM3)

‘We do not want any help and support. When the deacons of adults meet us or look for the high school students in the church, they always ask which university are we going to? I would like it if they didn’t say such words. When they asked me which university are you going to? I would naturally answer if we can study very well as much as we can answer ...And we couldn’t choose to...Our school grades aren’t good enough. So we can’t go to the universities which we choose...There are many friends who are under stress because of

those words themselves. Also, there are many friends who get a lot of stress because of the question, what is your dream?’ (BF6)

‘It is good not to ask about our school grades and dreams.’ (BF1)

#### **(d) Offering of various career experience programmes**

‘... So, I think that the church needs to tell children that studying is not the whole world. I wish that the church would let children do a lot of things such as letting them learn through experience and give them hope. Children will be able to find their dreams through the learning experience. Oh! Not only through study ...I would go this way [through the learning experience] .... just be able to have some more ideas...something!... I hope that I would receive a lot of support to learn from the church. Not only in the church but everywhere...’ (AF2)

#### **(e) Providing studying facility and extracurricular work programmes in the church for various academic subjects.**

‘I...in the church...there are Korean language and mathematics subjects in the self-management class. But because I am in the science course, I have only applied mathematics subjects...<Omitted>...The science subject is more detailed and I have a lot of things to memorise and it is becoming more difficult.... Grades in my studies are getting even worse. So, I am sorry.....I feel sorry to the teachers but I would be thankful to the teachers if they could give us extra classes about other subjects.’ (CM4)

‘If you are stressed because of studying, you might as well study more... [Others laugh] Because even studying hard does not mean a good performance comes out.... So, we have to study more and more... It would be good if they made a place for us to study.’ (AF1)

### **2.3 Findings from the interviews**

#### **2.3.1 Understanding through social support**

Stress can be positive (eustress) or negative (distress). The function of stress can be to provide eustress, which gives a positive stimulus; and distress creates negative effects. Of

course some participants did say that appropriate entrance examination stress as eustress is helpful to improve their school grades. But the strength of entrance examination stress on the participants needed to be proportionally appropriate. Nevertheless, most of the participants had been being under entrance examination distress and suffered negative effects as a result. Of course, there were different degrees of entrance examination stress among the participants. However, most of the participants have felt fear and anxiety in terms of the future, depression, irritability, and nervousness to the point of breakdown, which are all negative emotions. These negative emotions have led to a painful life, as well as negative physical reactions.

The participants in the churches had been under entrance examination stress in the same way as other young people in the Korean Society. Hence, the question is: Why are young people in the churches experiencing entrance examination stress?

This researcher repeatedly read open coded themes and two patterns emerged. The key phrases pertaining to these patterns were ‘fear of the future’ and ‘indifference’. In other words, young people in the church have been experiencing entrance examination stress in the same way as other young people in Korean Society because of their fear regarding the future and the indifference of the congregation. Thus, the researcher has attempted to develop new concepts from the two patterns which emerged. Silverman (2000:78) explains the importance of theory in qualitative research as follows:

Theories arrange sets of concepts to define and explain some phenomenon. Without a theory, such phenomena as ‘death’, ‘tribes’ and ‘families’ cannot be understood. In this sense, without a theory there is nothing to research. So, theory provides a footing for considering the world, separate from, yet about, that world.

In addition, the researcher needed to understand the two patterns of stress theory before creating new concepts. Therefore, it is necessary to explain why young people suffer from entrance examination stress with the help of the idea of social support from various theories about stress. Thompson (1995:43) defines social support as follows:

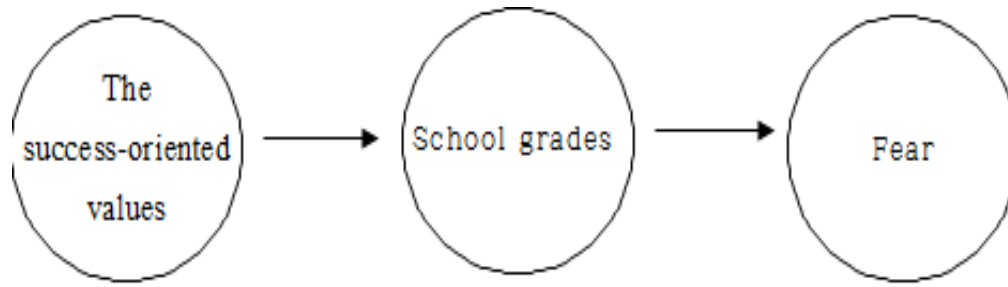
Social support consists of social relationships that provide (or can potentially provide) material and interpersonal resources that are of value to the recipient, such as counselling, access to information and services, sharing of tasks and responsibilities, and skill acquisition.

The social support of the congregation includes the support of the local church and the organisation of a social network by applicable network members such as the youth minister, Sunday School teachers, parents, peer groups and so on. A plan to address entrance examination stress by drawing on these patterns is hereby proposed.

### **2.3.2 Fear of the future**

Young people in the churches fear the future due to a longing for a successful life. Therefore, the results of school grades are important to young people in the churches. The first step towards success in the world is to enter a prestigious university while taking promising subjects which are chosen based on school grades. Furthermore, school grades during the application phase account for a large portion of the university entrance examination. As a result, the scholastic rank of a student eventually decides which university the student can attend. In addition, most participants were mainly dependent on private institutions to prepare well for the entrance examination and school tests. Participants prepare for tests until late at night or early in the morning in order to raise their school grades for the test period.

In addition, it must be remembered that the background and context of entrance examination stress is the success-oriented values of Korean society. Figure 4.1 is a process description of entrance examination stress. It can be said that young people in the churches are under entrance examination stress because they fear that their school grades stand between them and a successful life.



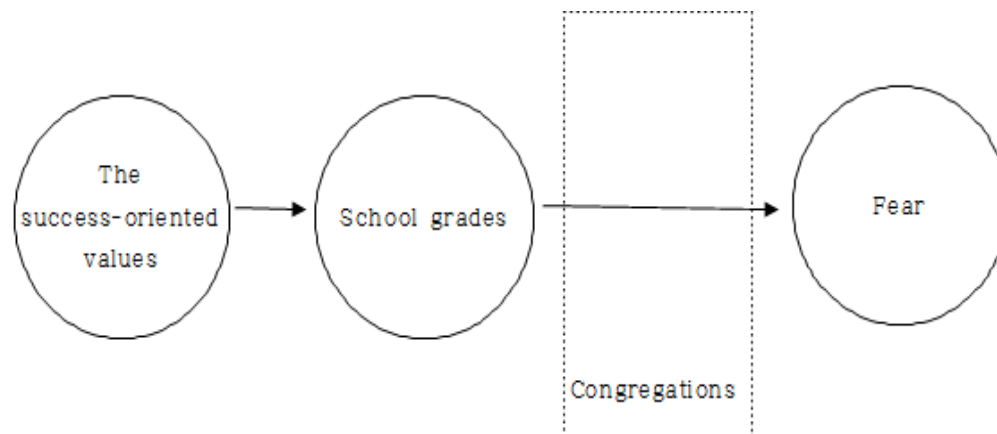
**Figure 4.1 A process path of the entrance examination stress**

Therefore, the participants mainly wanted to eliminate entrance examination stress and admission stress through activities such as sleeping, eating, exercise, group activities, talking with friends, worship and preaching.

### **2.3.3 Indifference of congregations**

Unfortunately, it appears that congregations are indifferent to the young people who suffer under entrance examination stress. Participants said that the support and care of parents, youth ministers, Sunday School teachers and a variety of youth programmes helped to relieve entrance examination stress. However, the participants believed that they were not receiving adequate support and care from parents, youth ministers, Sunday School teachers and the various programmes. Moreover, the participant's congregations did not carry out any direct support and care for the young people in the churches experiencing entrance examination stress.

On the contrary, young people have been suffering entrance examination stress due to their parents, friends, and congregations. The participants said that there were a number of factors that added to entrance examination stress, such as parents, friends, teachers, the older generation, Korean education system authorities, the members of the church and so on. Furthermore, many of these factors overlapped, resulting in many factors contributing to the entrance examination stress suffered by the participants. South Korean churches have not offered any support or care to the young people who are suffering from entrance examination stress due to the pressure to succeed in the Korean society and culture. Figure 4.2 shows that young people in the churches are still suffering from entrance examination stress due to the weakening of care and support from their congregations.



**Figure 4.2 The congregations as moderator**

The interviews revealed that there was no active and concrete support and care for the young people who are suffering entrance examination stress by the congregations as their moderator.

### **3. INTERPRETATION**

The researcher dealt with entrance examination stress by following Osmer's interpretative task course, and by approaching the issue from a Reformed worldview perspective (Wolters 2005:1-12). The Reformed worldview refers to the framework of recognition or judgement that sees the world as the most central place with the absolute authority being the Bible (2 Peter 1:20-21). It interprets human knowledge as analogical of divine knowledge in the Bible (Van Til 2008:62). Van Til (2008:55) refers to the role and position of the Bible in a Christian theory of knowledge (epistemology) as follows:

We have felt ourselves compelled to take our notions with respect to the nature of reality from the Bible. It will readily be conceded that such a notion of reality as we have presented could be received upon authority only. Such a notion of being as we have presented is to be found nowhere except in the Bible. The Bible is taken so seriously that we have not even left any area of known reality by which the revelation that comes to us in the Bible may be compared, or to which it may be referred as to a standard. We have taken the final standard of truth to be the Bible itself.



In other words, from the perspective of the Reformed worldview, the Bible has the authority and position as the highest norm of faith and life (Matthew 5:17-18). The Reformed worldview therefore is a biblical worldview. Walters (2005:7) says: ‘As Christians we confess that the Scriptures have the authority of God, which is supreme over everything else – over public opinion, over education, over child-rearing, over the media, and in short over all the powerful agencies in our culture by which our worldview is constantly being shaped.’

The basic biblical framework of the Reformed worldview created by Walters is Creation-Fall-Redemption (Walters 2005:12). In other words, it is a framework from the redemptive perspective. In order to understand the Reformed worldview concerning entrance examination stress within Korean society, one needs to begin by asking whether God, who created human beings, is at work or not. God is actively at work in His creation. Almighty God is the Alpha and the Omega and He is the Creator (Genesis 1:1; Revelation 1:8). He is eternal, having existed before the creation of the world. God created the universe out of and from nothing (Genesis 1). Stevens (2000:113) says: ‘The Bible opens with God working – speaking, fashioning, designing, crafting, sculpting. God makes light, matter, space, time, sea and land, and most beautiful of all – human beings.’ God’s work did not end after the creation of the world. According to the Bible, God is still working (Psalms 121:4; John 5:17; John 14:2-3). Features of God’s work are as follows:

Firstly, the purpose of God’s work is for His own glory (Isaiah 43: 1-7; 1 Corinthians 10: 31). In other words, God’s work is done in order to please God Himself (Revelation 4:11).

Secondly, God's work is sovereign. The Bible speaks of God's sovereignty. In other words, God is the absolute supreme ruler of the universe. God works sovereignty in creation, providence, salvation and in the decrees of God (Psalm 103:19; Ecclesiastes 7:13; Acts 17:28; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 11:36). God is sovereign and governs the entire universe. God's sovereign work can be largely divided into two parts. God reins over the whole world with the general revelation and the special revelation.

Thirdly, God's will and plan concerning His work is good. The Bible says that only God is good (Matthew 19: 16-17) and that God’s work is good. Vos (2002:23) says:

“Goodness is a more general term than “grace” or “mercy”. God’s goodness, which is sometimes called “benevolence” is that attribute of God which leads him to provide for the general welfare of all his creatures except those who have been judicially condemned on account of sin. God’s goodness, therefore, includes not only angels and men, but also the animal creation. God’s goodness is exemplified not only by the plan of salvation, but also by God’s works of creation and providence in general. For instance, the fact that millions of tons of coal exist underground, available for the use of mankind, making human life possible in cold climates, shows the goodness of God.”

Therefore, the whole world God has created is good (Genesis 1:31). The creator God also rules and reins over all things according to His good plan. Stevens (2000:114) says: ‘Work is good – good for creation, good for our neighbour and good for us.’

Fourthly, God's good work is related to life. The direction of God’s good work is connected to life. God creates life and cares for life. God sent Jesus Christ to this earth to give his life for that of sinful human beings.

Fifthly, God is working with a community. The way of God's work is a partnership. The triune God in the form of the trinity worked together in the creation of the world and continue to work together in God’s salvation work.

### **3.1 The Reformed worldview and the entrance examination**

When looking at Genesis, after God created heaven and earth, God made man from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7). The Westminster Larger Catechism (Vos 2002:36) says: ‘The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.’ God made woman from one of Adam's ribs (Genesis 2:21-22) and people’s work started with the history of God's creation (Genesis 3:17; Luke 19:17; Exodus 34:21; Matthew 10:10).

The work of human beings already existed before the fall through the introduction of sin into the world. Genesis shows that God made Adam and God tells him to protect and govern the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). God also allowed him to cultivate the land (Genesis 2:5). God allowed and called people to work (Genesis 2:5, 15). God's original purpose for human work was good. God made mankind as part of His sovereign will and God commanded people to work. The sovereign will of God has a good purpose and plan. 'For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do' (Ephesians 2:10). Therefore, work is not a curse. Rather, work is a blessing from God (Genesis 1:28). Features of human work are as follows:

Firstly, man was created in the image of God. Man being created in the image of God does not only refer to a similarity and resemblance of intellect, emotion and volition but also a similarity in the ability to work. (Genesis 1:26-27).

Secondly, God entrusted His work to man as stewardship. God created all things in the heavens and on the earth through His word. The God who created all things in heaven and earth is the master of all things (Hebrews 3:4). Everything belongs to God. In other words, the master of everything is God (Psalm 19:1; Psalm 8:3; Psalm 24:1). However, God entrusted His work to man. Looking at Genesis Chapter 1 verse 26-28, the mission of stewardship, a cultural command has been extended from the Garden of Eden to the world.

Thirdly, God wanted to and still wants to work with people. God works through His people. The relationship between God and his people is one which is characterized as a father and son relationship. In other words, people who are created in the image of God are also children of God (Matthew 6: 9; Genesis 1:26; Genesis 5:2-3; Luke 3:34-38). People work in partnership with God through their sonship of God (Psalm 127:1; Psalms 90:16-17). Therefore, it is necessary to recognize that people need to cooperate with God in everything they do, and as children of God are made to rely on God in all things. In other words as children of God we have no true ability to operate independently of God and therefore must obey the word of God.

Fourthly, work and rest is in the order of creation. The Bible presents creation as the creative work of God which created order and a natural law. In addition, people work in the order of creation and natural law. Therefore work is a legal natural duty and right granted to all of mankind. Work is a natural law for humanity, which is a part of the order of creation (Psalm 104). So, human beings must work hard to fulfil their role in the order of creation. ‘Six days you shall labour and do all your work’ (Exodus 20:9). When people work in good faith, God gives them pleasure and joy as a blessing (Ecclesiastes 2:24; Ecclesiastes 3:22). God also gives reward for work as part of the natural law (2 Chronicles 15: 7). Rest is also given to man as a part of the order of creation. God rested after Creation. God also commanded people to work for six days and rest one day. This rest is also an instruction given by God (Exodus 23:12; Leviticus 25:2-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10).

Therefore work and rest is a repeated pattern and cycle. Work and rest is the natural law God created for mankind (Psalm 104:23). However, the order of work and rest is different between God and man. God rested after creation. However, mankind was created on the sixth days and God rested on the seventh day while man rested on God’s seventh day and then worked for six days. The Sabbath then should be the first day for people and their work after the Sabbath. In other words, all things exist for the glory of God who is Lord of the Sabbath. ‘So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God’ (1 Corinthians 10:31).

An important thing to consider in the relationship between work and the entrance examination is the answer to the following question: Is the entrance examination work or not? Of course the entrance examination is not a job. A job refers to the daily activities of adults that include an economic income, stability and a social status. Those words associated with a job are occupation, profession, business and vocation. The meaning of the word ‘job’ is diverse, but when referring to an occupation three elements are necessary. Firstly, there is usually some form of economic compensation. Secondly a decision to accept the work is needed. Thirdly it is work or activity that is ongoing. It can be said then that an occupation should satisfy these three major conditions.

Table 4.10 refers to the established conditions of an occupation. Preparation for the entrance examination through attending school and various institutions and studying at home cannot

be considered a job because it does not satisfy these conditions. A job is a principle daily activity for adults to worship God and receiving an income. Students and minors studying in schools do not earn an income.

**Table 4.10 The established conditions of occupation**

Type \ Aspects	Occupation	Volunteer work	Part-time job	Entrance examination
Economic compensation	O	X	O	X
Spontaneity	O	O	O	O
Sustainability	O	-	X	O

The entrance examination is not a job, but it does involve work. Therefore, preparing for the entrance examination as a student is considered as work. It is therefore also good for students to prepare for the entrance examinations, because God made work itself good. The entrance examination therefore can also be seen as one of the blessings of the work that God has given. The entrance examination as a created work based on the Five Ws and One H (5W 1H):

Firstly, the entrance examination is related to the ‘Who?’. Young people as well as Adults resemble the image of God. Therefore young people are the participants of entrance examination including participants of the work that God has commanded.

Secondly, the entrance examination is related to the ‘What?’. After discovering what the real purpose and plan of the entrance examination is according to the sovereign goodness of God, young people will prepare for the entrance examination as to the glory of God.

Thirdly, the entrance examination is related to the ‘Why?’. Young people are tasked with the mission of stewardship for the entrance examination. Young people are called to be good stewards of the talents, knowledge and gifts that God has given them and which belong to God when preparing for the entrance examination (Psalm 24:1). This mission of stewardship

for the entrance examination should be altruistic. In other words, the entrance examination is a preparatory course for the future to serve God and others better.

Fourthly and fifthly, the entrance examination is related to the ‘When?’ and ‘Where?’. The young people spend most of their time at school. Therefore, the school which the young person is attending now is the workplace where the young person works.

Lastly, the entrance examination is related to the ‘How?’. Preparation for the entrance examination should be a partnership between young people, God and the faith community. Young people need to rely on God for the entrance examination as a partner. Furthermore young people need to help and cooperate with each other in order to achieve the purpose of the entrance examination along with the support of the faith community.

However, work created by God was part of God's good purpose and plan, but it was distorted by fallen man. The entrance examination cannot be an exception. The entrance examination is not a means for bringing glory to God; but in itself has become simply a means for attaining a successful, satisfying life. The entrance examination has also been distorted by human depravity, from a God-centred direction to a human-centred direction (Genesis 3:5-6). This direction has resulted in various problems.

### **3.2 Fear for the future: Success-oriented values in Korean society**

The participants experienced fear regarding the future because of the success-oriented values of Korean society. By analysing the results of the interviews the success culture of Korean society formed by the success-oriented values can be largely interpreted in five categories: 1) the social structure of academic elitism, 2) a competition education system for the entrance examination, 3) materialism, 4) individualism of children, and 5) humanism and secularism cultures in the church. These five success-oriented cultures have incessantly influenced young people within Korean society.

Firstly, there is the social structure of academic elitism. There is an opportunity for upward mobility of class in Korean society if one is willing to study hard. According to the

interviews, the foundation of Korean society is a social climate of academic elitism. Korean society emphasises school grades and an educational background more than many other countries. The Korean society has a social structure in which social status is generated by one's academic abilities and educational background. In other words, education has become the main factor in determining status levels in society (Nahm 2011:114). Education in Korean society has been a pathway for upward mobility in one's class and it has been used politically (Lee 2007:137-143). For these reasons, the number of people wanting to go to university has increased.

However, because the number of those who can attend certain universities is limited, the competition around the entrance examination could only intensify. This social structure eventually resulted in a university ranking. In addition, the social structure was formed to evaluate an individual's ability based on their school grades and their attendance at a prestigious university. As a result, based on one's school grades and academic level, a social structure was formed that discriminates against certain people. This is evident in the discrimination in the wage gap between a high school graduate and a university graduate (Jeong 2011:108). Moreover, in general, in Korean society it is only possible to obtain professional and stable work if a person has graduated from a prestigious university or is highly educated. In the same way, with regard to university graduates, those who graduate from a so-called prestigious university have better job and promotion opportunities than those who graduate from a less prestigious university. This has created an ever increasing desire to enter into a prestigious university. However, the over-supply of university graduates in the labour market in Korean society has produced a high level of highly educated unemployed young people. This social structure formation has also been affected by rapid political changes, political policy and the centralised political and administrative system.

Secondly, due to the success culture within Korean society, there is an ever increasing and heated competition for entrance into universities. This competition is causing entrance examination stress for young people in South Korea. This is a result of South Korea's obsession with education, to become the first and the best. The South Korean education system has formed a competitive entrance examination educational system due to the demands of the social and political atmosphere in South Korean society (Lee 2007:139). As a

result of this entrance examination-oriented education, it has unilaterally evaluated the comparative merits of the school grades of young people. The influence on the education system and admissions centres was further aggravated by the grading of and competition between universities and university rankings. Students in high school are creating a bleak education culture as students compete among each other for grades. Furthermore, those teachers who are able to raise the school grades of students form a school culture of excellence in education.

Thirdly, there is the issue of materialism (or a money-oriented society). People within Korean society perceive money as a tool for advancement. Most participants said that to be successful one must make a lot of money. In addition, the participants said that they should get a good job in order to make a lot of money; and in order to get a good job in Korean society, one must have graduated from a prestigious university. If a person gets a good job, it is possible for them to make a lot of money and then it is supposedly possible to live a happy life. In other words, the following equation might be established: prestigious university = good job = money = future success = happy life (Kim et al. 2002:14-15). Because of the establishment of just such an equation, admission competition for prestigious universities is forever increasing.

Fourthly, there is the issue of individualism of our children. Parents in South Korea have an overly zealous enthusiasm for educating their children, believing that it will lead to their success. Today, we believe that going to a prestigious university is the only route to success, and therefore competition for university entrance is overheating. The cultural background of family selfishness has affected the values of parents and the older generation through this Confucian tradition (Park et al. 2008:30-31). Careers are evaluated and ranked according to the status they accord, and there is a fever of excessive education, which was obtained from the colonisation of Korea by Japan and the influence of Japanese culture.

Due to these influences, parents think that for their children to have a happy life they must be successful. In addition, parents tend to desire that their children will achieve the tasks and dreams that they could not fulfil. Through the achievements of their children, parents experience a strong sense of satisfaction. This forms an individualistic culture where it



becomes extremely necessary for children to enter a prestigious university. The young people of South Korea find themselves in an environment in which study has become the most important thing in life due to the success-oriented values.

Fifthly, there are humanism and secularism cultures in the church. The biggest challenge that threatens the contemporary Christian in South Korea is humanism and secularism in pursuit of success-oriented values (Kim & Kim 2011:175). This distorted humanism and secularism has resulted in a university signboard culture, tutoring culture and an educational background culture. Congregations in South Korean churches are under the influence of success-oriented values within Korean society. Through the results of the interviews it can be seen that young people in the churches are experiencing entrance exam stress directly or indirectly as a result of the influence of a success culture. Therefore, the entrance examination stress of young people in South Korean churches is the problem of young people as well as a problem affecting the congregations, including the senior pastor, youth ministers, parents, Sunday School teachers and so on.

The senior pastors are mainly concerned with adult ministries that help with the operating and finances of the church for pastoral success and church growth. In other words, the priority for senior pastors is adult ministry rather than youth ministry. The priority of the congregations and parents in the South Korean churches is a more successful life rather than the faith of their children. Themes of the prayers of the congregation and parents in the Korean churches are mainly associated with a successful life. Parents of children who are preparing for the entrance examination are no exception.

Parents within the South Korean church display a wish fulfilment type of faith in hoping that their children will make a good fortune. Most parents in Korean society wish for blessings and well-being for their children. This results in parents' prayer lives mainly centring on their children and their children's success. In other words, parents within South Korean churches display a child obsession syndrome, as in Matthew 20:21, regarding their children's success.

There is no continuity of faith because of a dualism with regard to entrance examination preparation. In South Korea there is the phenomenon of living a dual life, which

compromises Christian faith in the church. This dual life is seen in a distinction between the Christian faith and life. Discrimination based on the ranking of the university an individual attended is also found in the church. Their priority is academic prestige above the Christian faith because of the pressure of being accepted into a prestigious university. During a test period, there are young people who do not attend church on a Sunday because of exam preparation. University entrance, examinations and the workplace have become more important to parents and young people in the church than their faith, and parents themselves go to church and encourage their children to go to cram schools instead of to church.

As a result of exhaustion, which often causes a student to oversleep, some students do not go to church on Sundays. Even within Christian homes some students are told by their parents to put off their Christian faith for a while in order to study, because the parents in South Korean churches place more emphasis on their child's admission to a prestigious university and success in life, to the detriment of their child's faith. Parents see faith as being limited to worship in a church on a Sunday, and parents often completely separate the entrance examination and the life of faith. The church in South Korea focuses on human resource development in Christian high schools, believing that through diligent study in order to enter a prestigious university, an individual can be better used by God. This is seen as a barometer measuring to what extent a person can be used by God. This has caused South Korean churches to focus on human resources development and as a result, there is a distinction between faith and life. The stewardship of God's mission is related to life. The direction of the stewardship of the mission is related to bearing, protection, and care for others and nature. However, the orientation of the fallen man's work is oriented towards the destruction of life. 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy' (John 10:10).

As a result, entrance examination stress for young people in the church is becoming a vicious cycle regarding the causes of entrance examination stress, through the success-oriented values of Korean Society. This distorted view of the entrance examination has resulted in lives that are moving in a destructive direction (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Within the Korean society there are young people who commit suicide and a variety of crimes due to the pressure and stress caused by the distorted perception of entrance examinations. This has robbed the lives of many young people within Korean society and has robbed the vision of

the plans and guidance of God's will for many young people. According to statistics, the number one cause of death among the young people of Korea is suicide, and the main cause of these teenage suicides is the pressure and stress caused by their school grades and 'entrance problems'.

Due to these success-oriented values, young people who prepare for the entrance examination have lost their identity of faith in Jesus Christ. They are unable to govern or control the entrance examination stress and the success-oriented values that dominate their lives. The interview process revealed that it is difficult for the young people in the church to find their own faith identity due to such a focus on the entrance examination.

Who am I as a Christian? How do I live in the world as a believer in Jesus Christ as the only one true saviour? How should I choose my career as a believer? According to which values should I live in the world as a person of God? Schoolwork, study and examination stress has brought about a confusion of the faith identity of many young people. As a result, many young people have found themselves wandering in the faith, or lost.

### **3.3 Indifference of the congregations**

The pattern of entrance examination stress, as discovered through the interviews, revealed that the indifference of the congregation was a significant factor. The congregation did not help young people to prepare for the entrance examination or to find their identity outside the entrance examination. The congregation has not equipped young people to take control of the entrance examination.

Firstly, the interviews revealed that, with regard to entrance examination stress, there is a lack of communication between youth ministers and young people. The young people were not receiving sufficient care and support from youth ministers and Sunday School teachers in terms of their entrance examination stress. There appeared to be an invisible wall between the Sunday School teachers, youth ministers and the young people. The participants did not receive any help or support from their friends in the church either.

There was also a lack of communication between the congregation and their young people that suffer entrance exam stress. This often results in a breakdown in the relationship between the congregation and the young people in a church. According to this research analysis, the congregations have been fairly indifferent to the young people that suffer entrance examination stress. The congregation does not seem to fully understand the young people in the church. The congregation does not listen to the stories of suffering of the young people who are preparing for their entrance examinations, and there is not enough dialogue with the young people in the church regarding their faith. This phenomenon is due to the churches only being interested in the adult believers who help the church to operate and grow. This is a result of the influence of the secular culture.

Secondly, the interviews revealed that there is a breakdown in the relationship between the youth department, Sunday School and the congregation. The congregation as a faith community has the responsibility to properly educate and to lead the youth in the church to faith in Christ. However, due to this breakdown, the congregation does not have any kind of influence on the events, programmes and worship services of the youth department. There is no worship, fun activities, events or programmes organised where there is interaction between the congregation and young people that suffer entrance exam stress. There is no constant care and support to nurture the young people who are suffering as a result of entrance examination stress.

Thirdly, a weakening of the sense of belonging within the church community has brought about issues involving the faith education of young people. Faith education of young people in South Korean churches is mainly delegated to a youth minister. The congregation does not have any interest in the faith education of young people. Because of the congregation's indifference, the youth ministry has remained a Sunday ministry. Due to the interruption of communication with the congregation, the youth minister and the Sunday School teachers have been entrusted with the responsibility of the youth ministry. As a result, community education along with the relationship with the congregation has been weakened. Therefore, a cramming system of Bible education has been formed by Sunday School teachers due to the short Bible study time allocated after the youth department worship.

Fourthly, there is generation gap in the South Korean churches because of the indifference of the congregations. More than anything, this generation gap has created an individualistic faith in the church culture as a result of the influence of the more vertical structure of the traditional Korean society.

Finally, a maladaptive phenomenon in young people and young adults has appeared in South Korean churches. Due to the absence of communication in the congregation, there are underprivileged young people in the church. There is also the self-isolated person who does not belong to the church community. Many young people do not find the true meaning of life in the church. The reliability and trustworthiness of the church has been compromised by social controversies regarding pastors in certain South Korean churches. As a result, many young people are leaving the churches because they feel that they are unable to find the meaning of life in the church and have become disappointed and disillusioned with the church. Young people have become immersed in their friends, studies and the world culture, and this has resulted in many young people leaving the churches.

A weakening of the relationships and communication in the congregations has led to identity confusion in young people who suffer from entrance examination stress while being members of congregations. Young people have lost their faith identity and their role and function in the congregation. The congregation does not recognise young people as part of the body of Jesus Christ because young people who prepare for the entrance examinations are not connected with the congregation, but are separated from it. As a result, congregations do not really comprehend how young people are suffering due to entrance examination stress. They do not recognise the aspirations of their young people or how to support and care for them. Because of this lack of connection and communication, congregations are unable to play a buffering role to alleviate the impact of entrance examination stress on young people in the church.

### **3.4 New identity for the entrance examination**

The redemptive work of Jesus Christ restored relationships with, and gave life to believers. Jesus on the cross was God's work of reconciliation (John 1:29). Firstly, the relationship with God was restored. Jesus' death on the cross pulled down the barrier between God and man

(Ephesians 2:13-14). Secondly, the redemptive work of Jesus restored relationships between people. Restored relationships through Jesus' redemptive work create a new identity for individuals (2 Corinthians 5:17). This change in identity causes a change in status as well, from sinner to righteous person, and the individual becomes a child of God and believers become the people of God. As a result, this restoration of the relationship with God brings about an identity as a child of God and the restoration of relationships with one's neighbours through being identified as members of the people of God. Thirdly, the redemptive work of Jesus restored relationships between mankind and God's work (John 5:17).

'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.'

Therefore, young people who believe in Jesus Christ also receive God's calling to extend the kingdom of God (1 Peter 2:5; 1 Corinthians 7:17; 1 Corinthians 1:12). Stevens (2000:85) says: 'In the Gospels, Jesus used 'call' to describe his invitation to repent, turn to him, and live for the kingdom of God: 'For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners' (Matthew 9:13). Specifically, 'call' is used for the summons Jesus issued to the Twelve to be with him and to be sent out' (Mark 3:14; Matthew 4:21; 10: 1).

### **3.4.1 New identity formation process**

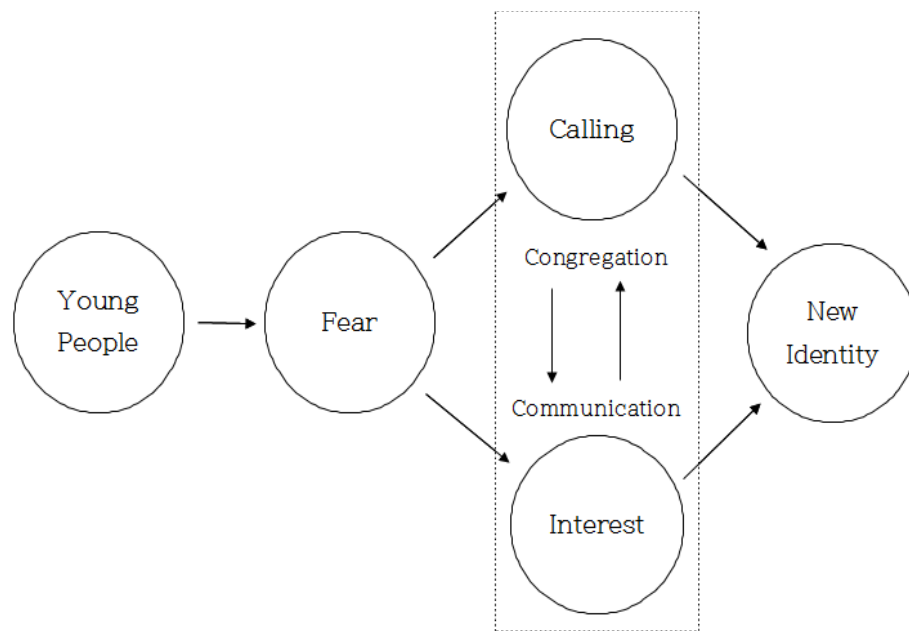
There is a need for care and the support of congregations as moderators in order to eliminate entrance examination stress for young people in the churches. Above all, support and care of the congregation should include two elements, as indicated by the pattern analysis.

Firstly, the congregations must impress biblical values about calling for the kingdom of God on young people preparing for the entrance examination. Young people in the church who are suffering from entrance examination stress have a fear of the entrance examination because of the success-oriented values prevalent in Korean society. Therefore, there is a need to emphasise the calling to discipleship and education based on God's word, the Bible, to change the success-oriented values into a sense of calling about the entrance examination. Through the love and teaching of the congregation, young people in the local church preparing for the entrance examination should discover that their biblical self-identity is part of their entrance examination. The congregation should encourage the young people

preparing for entrance examination to find their new identity and enter the examination as a new person.

Secondly, the congregation needs to create an atmosphere of interest for young people, and this should come from the senior pastor, youth ministers, parents, Sunday School teachers and church members. Young people should feel called to the entrance examination. This requires mentoring in the practice of life as called by God, and to be taught how to live in the world and in the church. The congregation needs to support and care for young people and help them to live as the called: for the entrance examination, in the church, and in the world.

Figure 4.3 shows the relationship between the elements of support and care of the congregation as mentor to eliminate the entrance examination stress of young people, as well as to live as called by God.



**Figure 4.3 The support and care of the congregation as a mentor**

### 3.4.2 The new identity as God’s called to the entrance examination

Christians are being increasingly transformed by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) and the congregation is always called to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ (Nel 2005:363, 365). In other words, this calling is not a job or choice but a way of life. The calling refers to how to live as a Christian in the world. Christians are

called to be God's workers and to work in the world in union with Jesus Christ. Therefore, young people should find a new identity of being and doing as those who are called to the entrance examination with the congregation as their partner to extend the kingdom of God through building up the local church. Nel (2005:367) says: 'Building up the local church is to lead a congregation to understanding and finding identity.'

Stevens (2000:88) says that the call of God is threefold: 'belonging', 'being' and 'doing'. However, the calling of young people is twofold: 'being' and 'doing'. Therefore, this calling is 'status' and 'service' based. These two aspects work concurrently and the process is one of continuing in a life of sanctification between 'being' and 'doing'. The purpose of this sanctification is to become perfected in Jesus Christ, in order to build up the local church (Colossians 1:28-29). Therefore, young people who are called must live the life of a disciple following Jesus Christ in a congregation.

A major characteristic of being and doing in an adolescent is that of imitating one's friends. Therefore, a good role model is important during this time. Young people must live the life of the called with their eternal friend, Jesus Christ, as their role model in being and doing, even when considering the entrance examination. 'To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps' (1 Peter 2:21). The called life of the youth is to participate in the work of the kingdom of God. The research views the attitude of being and doing as called to life in the kingdom of God as applicable to the entrance examination, based on the Five Ws and One H (5W 1H).

#### **3.4.2.1 Lordship and the entrance examination: Who?**

Who is the master of our lives? The Bible says that it is not possible to serve both God and the world. In other words, people will not be able to serve two masters in life (Matthew 6:24). As one who is called by God, one is under the lordship of God who is the master of their life. In fact, the lordship of Jesus Christ is to admit that Jesus Christ is the master of one's life. This lordship then allows one to receive God's guidance, protection, and governance (Matthew 6:25). Lordship is extended to all areas of life and therefore one must acknowledge that even participation in the entrance examination is under the lordship of God. As a result, it is necessary to order one's priorities correctly in life. The order of the world's priorities is:



entrance examination, self, God. However, by acknowledging the lordship of God over the entrance examination this order should be: God, others, the entrance examination. This view of God's lordship is completely opposite to the world's view. Nel (2005:266) says: 'The congregation is a community of believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is of central importance that Christ is the Head of the congregation.'

God should be the first priority in the entrance examination. In order to define God as the first priority of the entrance examination, one must first seek the will of the sovereign God through the word of God. One must entrust the entrance examination to God in order to receive the guidance of God (Proverbs 16:9; Psalm 119:105; Psalm 37:5; Proverbs 16:3; Proverbs 3:6; Proverbs 16:1,9; Philippians 2:13; Exodus 13:20-22). One must also distinguish the will of God in prayer in order to receive the guidance of God for or against the entrance examination (John 5:17; Luke 6:12; Mark 1:35). Jesus began and did the work of God by firstly starting with prayer to God (John 6:38). Therefore, Sunday worship and a life of faith should come first and be a priority above tests, oversleeping, academic institutes and studies.

A priority should also be one's neighbours (Matthew 22:39; 1 Thessalonians 4:9). The entrance examination should be people-oriented. The entrance examination should be used as a way of serving others and sharing love with others, in service to others (Leviticus 25:25, 39-40; Ephesians 4:28; Titus 3:8, 14; Colossians 4:1). In other words, one should prepare for the entrance examination in order to serve others better. Priority should also be placed on the entrance examination but God should always be first, then people, and then the entrance examination. Ultimately, the entrance examination should be a tool to serve both God and one's neighbour in love.

#### **3.4.2.2 Vision and the entrance examination: Why?**

Why do we prepare for the entrance examination? According to the shorter catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith, people exist to bring glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31). The Westminster Larger Catechism (Vos 2002:3) says: 'Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him for ever.' The entrance examination is also included in 'whatever you do'. In other words, one should prepare for the entrance examination in order to bring Glory to God. Tripp (2001:35) says: 'It is so easy to lose sight of the fact that these

are God's children. They do not belong to us. They are given not to bring us glory, but him. Our teenagers are from him, they exist through him, and the glory of their lives points to him. We are but agents to accomplish his plan. We are but instruments in his hands. Our identity is rooted in him and his call to us, not in our children and their performance.'

This vision indicates and gives purpose and direction as to how someone should live (1 Corinthians 1:9, 24, 26). Therefore, God's vision must be the vision of young people preparing for the entrance examination (Proverbs 29:18; Acts 2:17). Young people should not see the entrance examination as their vision but as God's vision. God's vision must lead the lives of young people preparing for the entrance examination. Young people must be governed by their self-identity as stewards of God's vision even concerning the entrance examination. When young people rule over the entrance examination through God's vision they themselves are no longer ruled by the entrance examination and thereby bring glory to God. The purpose of this vision for the entrance examination is the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33; John 6:40). Through the entrance examination, Christian young people must be kingdom builders extending the kingship of God in the world.

The direction of this specific vision is to save and care for life. God commands us to a two-fold mission (Genesis 1:28; Matthew 28:18-20). The common point of both is life. However, the object and the method differ. God's mission is focused on the purpose of saving lost lives through the sharing of the Gospel. The Bible explains what God's work is through what Jesus summarises as missional living in John 6:28-29.

Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.'

God's mission also involves caring for all creation, including all life forms created by God, as creative cultural producers. Therefore, the direction of God's vision is to work as a Christian steward dedicated to caring for and saving the lives of people along with all life forms created by God.

The vision of the entrance examination must be to work with a life-oriented focus for a creative culture to extend the kingdom of God. This vision of the entrance examination can be applied to called young people when doing entrance examination preparation, entering university, choosing a faculty to study in, as well as when making career choices. The entrance examination should be beneficial to human life and human vitality for the expansion of the kingdom of God. Called young people need to understand that they have the mission of building up the kingdom of God through their academic studies. Unbelieving friends in the school are the subject of evangelism and it is the responsibility of young people to show and give the life of God to these unbelievers. Furthermore, the vision of young people who are preparing for the entrance examination is to be dedicated as servants so that homes, school, society, the country and the world can become communities sharing life in God (John 12:24-26). Called young people have the responsibility to take up the role of the salt and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Timothy 5:8). In terms of the kingdom of God, the entrance examination is a tool for saving and caring for life in the world. When called young people have a vision of the kingship of God that rules over the entrance examination, participation in the entrance examination can bring glory to God.

#### **3.4.2.3 The presence of the kingdom of God and the entrance examination: When?**

When do young people live a life of the called? The kingdom of God has ‘already’ come but His kingdom has ‘not yet’ been completed. However, there is a continuity in the meantime (Luke 17:20-21). Stevens (2000:181) says: ‘There is priestly ministry in daily life. Romans 12:1-2 describes the continuous priestly ministry of ordinary Christians as they offer up their everyday life to God as a spiritual ministry and live transformed lives in this world, conforming to the will of God rather than to the pressures of society (1 Peter 2:1-3, 11-12). Worship, praise and sacrifice are not now matters of sacred actions, sacred words in sacred places. Ordinary life is infused with God’s presence and can be given back to God as ‘spiritual worship’ (Romans 12:1).’

The Bible does not dictate any form of dualism within the Christian life. The Bible does not separate pious work and secular work (1 Corinthians 9:3-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9). The values of the six-day work week in the world as well as the Lord’s day are all equal. God is present in the six work days as well as at worship on the Lord’s Day. It is through faith that

there is a current relationship between God and man. So, faith in Christ is the link that connects the kingdom of God to all life continuously. In other words, faith in life has continuity. Faith as the fruit of the Holy Spirit is through a continuous relationship with God (John 15:4; Galatians 5:22-23).

There is also continuity between the kingdom of God and the entrance examination through faith. This faith leads to the view of entrance examination preparation as a process of God's holy work. Christian young people are able to experience the kingdom of God in the process of preparing for the entrance examination through faith. However, young people, their parents and church members in the South Korean society have a dualistic thinking when it comes to entrance exam preparation. They see the Lord's Day's worship and studying in school as two separate entities. This makes it almost impossible to find continuity between entrance examination preparation and the life of the youth.

Therefore, the lives of young people must be lives of worship through faith in order to create continuity between the kingdom of God and entrance examination preparation. The relationship of worship and life is the same as having faith in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24). 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship' (Romans 12:1). The whole process of preparing for the entrance examination must be done through life as a worshipper. Life as a worshipper does not mean separation from the world; rather it means to live a distinguished holy life in the world (1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Leviticus 11:45). The life of worship means saying 'no' to living a life of compromise with the world; rather living a holy life distinguished from the world (Romans 12:2; 1 Timothy 4:5). The entrance examination preparation process should be a continuous life of worship to extend the kingdom of God (Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:23-24). Finally, one's position and attitude when preparing for the entrance examination is more important than the actual results of the entrance examination.

#### **3.4.2.4 The scope of the kingship of God and the entrance examination: Where?**

Where do young people live the life of the called? God calls the Christian one who is called by Jesus Christ in all areas of life (Luke 9:23). In other words, the scope of the called life

involves all areas of life. God's sovereignty is absolute and therefore there is no area of human work or life that is outside God's reign. The entrance examination also falls under God's absolute sovereignty. Therefore, all the areas of a young person's life fall under God's governance. For Christian young people the school is a ministry opportunity, to extend the kingdom of God even through entrance examination preparation. Young people have to attend school with a faithful attitude of 'Coram Deo', meaning 'in front of God' in all areas of their lives (1 Corinthians 7:20). A student must study diligently and cheerfully with a sincere attitude as though God is watching them (Matthew 25:21, 23; Galatians 6:7). Students should work happily for the Lord throughout the whole process of preparing for the entrance examination (Colossians 3:23).

#### **3.4.2.5 Gifts and the entrance examination: What?**

What tools do the called extend the kingdom of God with? God gave talents as a gift to everyone. It is essential to know that there are gifts that God gave to each one of us. The called young people need to find out what those gifts are as they prepare for the entrance examination. God gives every person a variety of gifts and talents (1 Corinthians 7:7; 1 Peter 4:10) in order to build up the church (Ephesians 4:16). Nel (2005:269) says:

The gifts the Spirit grants are especially meaningful in the context of the building up of the congregation – people with gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as people as gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To build up the church, God gives the called, His people, a variety of gifts according to the office and need in the church (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-12; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30). Therefore, various gifts are given by God to His people to serve the church community and church members. Through the gifts of God, the called should have a positive influence on and serve the society in order to expand the kingdom of God. The various gifts which are given to us by God create a social responsibility and a sense of mission in the church. This diversity of gifts is given to serve the unity of the church and the expansion of the kingdom of God.

In conjunction with the entrance examination, the called young people should acknowledge that there are various gifts given from God. Among the young people called by God, God has given different aptitudes, interests and talents. The called young people should also acknowledge that these various gifts are given by God in order to build up the church and to expand the kingdom of God through a life lived as the salt and the light of the world. The called young people should work inside and outside the church with this variety of gifts that are given by God. Therefore, called young people should serve the world with this variety of gifts, even through the entrance examination (1 Peter 4:10; John 13:34-35). Young people as the called and servants should serve the church and society with love (1 Corinthians 13).

There is no gift more superior or inferior among all the gifts. The gifts vary but are all equal. God does not place any superiority on the different gifts and talents. People should be satisfied with the gifts given to each of them by God (1 Timothy 6:6). However, God evaluates whether one is faithful in the use of his gifts. When one faithfully use the gifts given by God, God promotes the gifts as necessary and one bears fruit for God (Exodus 31:2-5; Luke 16:10). God provides the fruits of one's efforts concerning studying for the entrance examination (Psalm 126:6; Galatians 6:7-9; James 5:4). God also gives satisfaction and pleasure through the results of these efforts when studying for the entrance examination. Therefore, it is immediate success and success in God's eyes when the called, His people, faithfully make use of the gifts of God to serve other people and God's creation.

However, even if God gives young people a variety of gifts, Korean society in general evaluates everything according to school grades. As a result of the Korean education system, with a focus on school grades, the variety of gifts given by God has been ignored. Often when it comes to selecting a future profession within Korean society, young people do not choose an occupation that matches those gifts given to them by God. Young people within Korean society prepare for the entrance examination with the hope of getting a stable job and making a lot of money. In other words, a person's salary determines the value of his/her gifts. Therefore, the Korean society discriminates against the gifts given by God.

Finally, called young people need to discard any thinking which compares or discriminates according to this variety of gifts. Called young people should rather faithfully and content use

those gifts given to them by God in a creative consciousness of calling (1 Thessalonians 4:11; Titus 3:1).

### **3.4.2.6 Partnership and the entrance examination: How?**

How should called young people work? Jesus trained his 12 disciples for three years through a relationship of friendship. After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, Jesus entrusted his ministry to his disciples, who were called the friends of Jesus. In other words, Jesus entrusted the 12 disciples with the work of God through a partnership (John 15:15).

A person in relationship with God is not an independent being but a dependent being. Although Jesus entrusted his disciples with God's ministry, his disciples could not do anything apart from him (John 15:5). It is just vanity to do the work of life without God. So, people are called to union with God. People perform a cooperative ministry, together, as partners in union with the Lord (Acts 11:21; Philippians 2:25; Isaiah 43:2; Joshua 1:9). Young people are called to work together to fulfil God's work as partners and co-workers with the Lord. God works together with young people who are called when they pray to Him in faith. When young people are called obey the word of God in faith, God works in them and through them (Nehemiah 6:16). Therefore, the work of the called in preparing for the entrance examination should be done in mutual partnership and together with the Lord.

God also works through the church community (Ecclesiastes 4:9; Mark 1:16-17). As a spiritual family and community that have received the calling, the church has the mission to extend the kingdom of God throughout the world with one vision. Every Christian is a servant working for the kingdom of God (Ephesians 4:12). God accomplishes His rule through cooperation in the Church, the called community, in the work of extending the kingdom of God (Romans 8:28). Therefore, church members are in the Lord's service in a relationship of interdependence with one another. To be in an interdependent relationship in service, sharing and fellowship between church members, there must be communication to extend the kingdom of God. After all, the church community is a community of life working cooperatively for God's kingship. Young people were called to do the good Lord's work as members of the community of faith (2 Timothy 2:21). Church members and young people in the church must be in partnership in the Christian faith through fellowship, serving and

sharing for the expansion of the kingdom of God even through the entrance examination. The attitude and the direction of life among young people concerning the entrance examination seen in the identity of the youth as the called is shown in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11 Identity of the called for the entrance examination**

	Question contents	Keyword	Direction of life	Attitude of life
1	Who is the master of the entrance examination?	Priority	God – others – the entrance examination	Lordship
2	Why do we prepare for the entrance examination?	Kingdom of God	Salvation, caring, serving in life	Stewardship
3	When do young people live a life of the called concerning the entrance examination?	Now	Continuity	The lives of worshippers
4	Where do young people live the life of the called concerning the entrance examination?	All areas of life	Ministry field	Coram Deo
5	What tool do the called extend the kingdom of God with concerning the entrance examination?	Gifts	Love of God	Sincerity and faithfulness
6	How should called young people work concerning the entrance examination?	Partner	With	Partnership



## **4. A NEW THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT: SOLVING THE LACK OF COMMUNICATION WITHIN CONGREGATIONS**

### **4.1 Congregation separated from the youth care ministry**

Loving communication is an essential attribute of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 4:16) for the restoration of the relationship between God and humanity. In other words, the church was built for the restoration of the relationship between God and human beings through the death on the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In order to build up the body of Christ, God communicates with His people in the church through His word and the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 12:3). The church forms a unity to build up the body of Christ with communication between the congregation and the word and the spirit of God. Communication between God and the congregation is the essence of the church. Thus, the youth care ministry should be a unity ministry through the communication of the congregation to build up the local church as the body of Christ.

However, the South Korean church has been facing an era of communication absence in terms of the congregation toward the youth. The South Korean church has been increasing the cocoon of faith, and believers without membership of a church through the absence of communication with the congregation are called 'Canaan Believers'. Chong (2015:85-86) argues that 'Canaan Believers' refers to those who maintain Christian identity but currently do not attend church. The absence of communication in these congregations is also present in youth care ministry. Youth care ministry is separated from the congregation and it has been cut off from communication with the congregation in the various things such as worship, programmes, ministry systems and festivities. Youth ministry is limited not to the weekday ministry only but also to the Lord's Day ministry. In other words, young people usually meet with the youth minister, the Sunday School teachers, friends and congregation at one time on the Lord's Day. Communications between the youth minister and the young people is mainly on Sundays. After the worship, Sunday School teachers and young people have a Bible study of about 30-40 minutes in a small space. The congregation is uninformed of the troubles of young people suffering from entrance examination stress because young people cannot communicate with the congregation in the short time available. In this way the congregation

have become indifferent to the young people who are suffering from entrance examination stress. The research shows that a lack of communication between the congregation and young people has resulted in the indifference of the young people. As a result, participants in the interviews had no person in the church to talk to about the entrance examination stress that they experienced. This lack of communication resulted in the lack of a relationship between the congregation and the young people in the youth ministry.

However, participants wanted to talk about and express their feelings of suffering, trouble and stress with the church members. The participants hoped that they would be able to communicate with congregation members about their entrance examination stress and academic pressure. This phenomenon is the same for many young people within Korean society. The Korea Health Promotion Foundation conducted a survey on the status and perception of adolescent health, targeting males and females 14-19 years old, middle and high school students: in total, 1 000 people throughout the country from 20-27 January 2014. According to the results of the survey, 21.3% of young people said that ‘there are no people to communicate with in very troubled times.’ The Secretary-General of the Korea Health Promotion Foundation, Huh, said that ‘most of the youth’s mental health problems are deeply related to the lack of communication.’ ([http://www.khealth.or.kr/BoardType08.do?bid=27&mid=374&cmd=\\_view&dept=&idx=7817#](http://www.khealth.or.kr/BoardType08.do?bid=27&mid=374&cmd=_view&dept=&idx=7817#)). According to a number of research results, parent-adolescent communication had a mediating effect in eliminating academic stress for young people in Korean society.

Therefore, it can be predicted that in order to relieve the entrance examination stress and academic stress of young people, communication with the congregation as the people of God is needed. All the participants in the one focus group said that their academic stress was lessened through the process of the interview by the researcher.

‘I think that I am backed enough now. Even though I wouldn’t talk openly to get me out of stress everywhere I go. I can’t say it enough. I am backed up now. (Laughing at each other and somehow we would know what you say). I also am backed up. Oh! I would know...I also... We also are backed up ...<Omitted> ...That isn’t... Because everyone says openly

why we are stressed.... Why work at school is suffering...There is not at school...I think that it seems to be release academic stress through interviewing process itself...’ (CM4)

In addition, through interviews, the participants said that positive communication with parents is a great help regarding entrance examination stress and academic stress. In other words, the research found that without communication, the academic stress of young people in the church is not resolved.

The Korean Youth Ministry, through the absence of communication with the congregation, is facing a crisis. The absence of communication within the congregation has led to results that do not build up the local church. Therefore, the congregation should be included in the youth care ministry.

#### **4.2 Lack of communication in terms of relationship formation with the congregation**

Through interviews, the researcher was able to find that participants had a great need of the members of the congregation as friends who can sympathise and listen to their academic stress.

‘Maybe... I talk to other people about my troubles and stress or I go for counselling when am worried about something then I get relaxed a lot. So I think that I would be a little solved if we talked and discussed a little together with Sunday School teachers and friends.’ (AF4)

‘It seems to be a big help if the church makes an opportunity where we have a heart-to-heart talk when I have difficulties and have a lot of stress...’(CM1)

Unfortunately, as the united body of Christ, the congregation failed to become friends of young people suffering from entrance examination stress. The congregation did not understand or have sympathy for the pain and suffering of young people who are under academic stress. Eventually, the congregation became indifferent to the young people who are under the entrance examination stress and academic stress. Because of the indifference of the congregation, the relationship was severed between young people and congregation

within the Korean youth ministry. Because of the disconnected the relationship between the congregation and young people who are under academic stress, there is no longer talk with the congregation about their worries and stress. The hearts of the young people became closed because of the severance of relationship with the congregation.

The researcher has been serving in the youth ministry of the Korean church for more than 10 years in South Korea and in South Africa. However, one of the most difficult ministries in the Korean church is the youth ministry because of the poor relationship between the congregation and the young people. Members of the old generation of the church felt the burden to serve as a Sunday School teacher of young people in the youth ministry. The reason is because conversation between young people and Sunday School teachers of the old generation is not focussed on relationship formation. Young people said that adults and young people did not understand each other very well. Young people in the church, like the younger Sunday School teachers, make relationship formation easy. The researcher saw that young people talked freely about their worries and problems with the young Sunday School teachers, just as they talk to friends.

Young people do not listen to what the congregation say because there is not an intimate relationship between the young people and the congregation. In spite of good care programmes in the local church, young people have no interest or participation because no intimate relationship exists between young people and the congregation. For the congregation to communicate with young people, it is necessary to form an intimate relationship between the congregation and their young people. In order to form an intimate relationship between the congregation and the young people, the congregation must sympathise with and understand them as friends. The door of the minds of young people suffering from entrance examination stress must be opened through companionship and fellowship with the congregation. The congregation should communicate support and care for young people after an intimate relationship is formed between the congregation and the young people based on sympathy and understanding. Young people should be led to connect in an intimate relationship with God through the congregation.

The congregation should help young people to prepare for the university entrance examination by discovering of their identity as people called by God to the entrance examination. The congregation should lead young people that suffer from the entrance examination to receive the care of God and guidance for the right career through their relationship with God.

Relationship formation with the congregation is important to a youth care ministry through communication with the congregation. Thus, the congregation is required to communicate through an intimate relationship as friends of the young people through identification with the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The communication system in the South Korean church must also change from the closed communication system of the past to an open communication system along with the congregation.

#### **4.3 Lack of communication about identity with the congregation**

Young people in the church experienced confusion about their identity in terms of the entrance examination. Young people in the church simply knew that they should serve in the church ministry. Young people in the church also knew that they should study for the entrance exam due to the influence of success-oriented values. In other words, young people in the church received conflicting messages, between the church ministries and preparing for the entrance examination. However, young people in the church were under more stress through the wrong communication with the congregation. As a result, young people were not able to actively participate in the church ministry.

‘The church always says... If there is a church ministry... I am a director in ministry... By the way, they would still say... Student staffs in the ministry should be coming to church when there is an event programme in the church.... I said to them I can’t go the church because of the private institution. And teachers told me that you can’t go the Seoul University even if you go to a private institution. But... we always would want to put a priority in God and the Church... But... We obviously have to put a priority on God as our mind set but we all have a personal conflict. I can’t skip a private institution... also I have to go to church...I have a lot of stress between this. I get stressed a lot... When it is time to go to the church, I wish that

the church would have understood such stresses... The church is pecking us as the church and the private institution is pecking us as the private institution. They want to get involved in my life... I hope that the church would have solved it. I hope they understand us.’ (BF6)

The congregation, including the youth ministry, did not help the young people to prepare for the entrance examination with the identity as God’s called, based on the Christian worldview. The researcher interpreted that the congregation and the youth ministry also hold the success-oriented values and a dualistic view of the world regarding the entrance examination. Although there is communication between the congregation and its young people, the congregation did not teach them the identity as God’s called in the entrance examination.

The congregation should support young people to find their identity as God’s called in the entrance examination through communication and cooperation based on the Christian worldview. Nel (2005:368) says: ‘The concept building up the local church wants to be understood as a concept of understanding and finding identity.’ Young people preparing for the entrance examination will voluntarily participate in church ministries when they find their identity as God’s called through communication and cooperation with the congregation.

#### **4.4 Lack of communication between Korean society and the congregation**

The Korean church has not spoken out within society about the social problems caused by the entrance examination system. On the contrary, the Korean church has been distorting the entrance examination under the influence of the values of secularism and humanism.

However, the congregation as a holy people must communicate to the world about the entrance examination because of their identity as God’s holy people (1 Peter 2:7-9). The congregation in the role of prophet should communicate what the voice of God and the Bible is saying with regard to the entrance examination system and the social problems in Korean society.

There are a lot of young people suffering from academic stress and entrance examination stress in Korean society. The congregation should communicate with the world so that they

can recover and heal the pain of the young people through the mercy and love of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the South Korean church must communicate to Korean society through its union ministry. The local church should be in union with protestant denominations and Christian institutions in order to improve the entrance examination system based on the goal of extending the kingdom of God. Through the union ministry the congregation should produce a movement of sharing and service to young people suffering from entrance examination stress in order to be the salt and the light in Korean society. Finally, the congregation should be united so that young people can create an independent creative entrance examination culture within Korean society.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Until now the youth ministry in South Korea has been separated from the congregation. Therefore, the congregation did not care for or support young people to help them to discover their identity as God's called. Instead they appeared to be indifferent to young people. As a result, the absence of the ability to communicate between the congregation and young people has created a crisis in the youth ministry in South Korea.

The researcher has confirmed that there is limited care for young people experiencing entrance examination stress. The research has confirmed the importance of the role of the congregation, in its youth ministry and youth care ministry, for young people with entrance examination stress. Communication and union is an important element in the care ministry of the congregation to build up the local church as well as the youth ministry through the formation of relationships, cooperation and the unity of the congregation.

## CHAPTER 5

### A STRATEGY FOR A RELATIONSHIP-ORIENTED CARE MINISTRY

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the pragmatic task, which is the last of the four tasks of practical theology presented by Osmer (2008:175). The researcher proposes strategies, based on the relationship-oriented care ministry, to support students facing the entrance examination. These strategies are based on the concept of youth identity as involving being called by God, and the inclusive congregational approach presented by Nel (2000:77-98).

Chapter 4 has shown that the congregation should provide social support and mentoring to ease the entrance examination stress of young people, and to establish their identity as those called by God. The researcher has found that communication and the unity of the congregation are the theological concepts that assist with building up young people. Therefore, a strategy is proposed to relieve entrance examination stress and to provide help for young people who seek to find their identity as those called by God to write the entrance examination.

In order to develop such a strategy within the relationship-oriented care ministry of the South Korean church, four questions have been asked:

- How can a relationship-oriented care ministry be nurtured within local congregations?
- How should the congregation be prepared to launch a relationship-oriented care ministry?
- How can the relationship-oriented care ministry succeed in congregations of the South Korean church, so as to actively support and care for young people suffering from entrance examination stress?
- How can the relationship-oriented care ministry sustain the youth ministry in the local churches within Korean society?



To answer these questions, a strategy is provided to support and care for young people suffering from entrance examination stress, through various pastoral and ministerial methods that should be implemented within the congregation, and by means of prevention and protection, as mentioned in Chapter 3.

## **2. CARING AND SUPPORT AS FRIENDSHIP**

The congregation is connected as members of the body through focusing on their head, Jesus Christ. They are connected in an organic relationship with one another as members of the body.

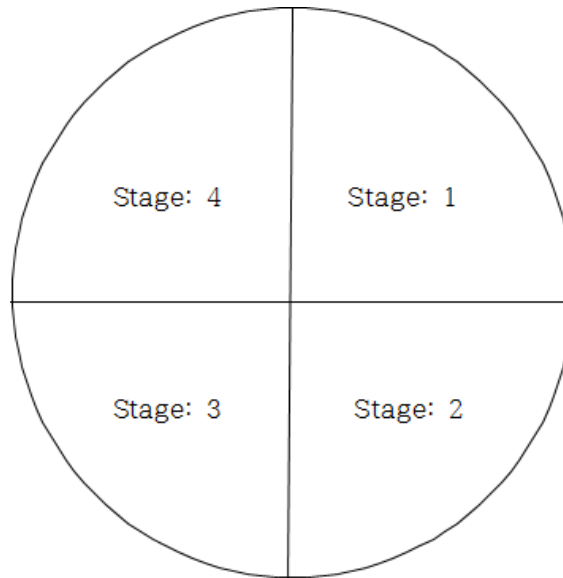
‘...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.’ (John 17:21-23)

Being a body centred on Jesus Christ means that every member in the church is a part of the network of each other (1 Corinthians 12:12-20; 1 Corinthians 12:27). Because the church is composed as an organic network, there is no choice but to cooperate in the work of God with each other in a friendly and caring relationship in communion with Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

The congregation should play the role of supporter, friend and carer in order to communicate with young people. Holderness and Hay (1997:24) explain the importance of the relationship between young people and the congregation in youth ministry as follows: ‘Taking the time to work on relationships with the young people is essential, as we firmly believe that relationships are more important than programme.’

All the members in church should take care of young people suffering from entrance examination stress through the ministry network in the local church (Ecclesiastes 4:10;

Ephesians 4:3). The principle of mutual care in friendship is extended to all ministries in the church (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 9:35). In Chapter 3, the form of the care and support community was described as a friendship role in a small group ministry, family-based youth ministry and gifts-oriented team ministry. A friendship relationship is based on Jesus' care ministry (John 15:15). The process of building up friendships is based on Jesus' incarnation and life. Therefore, the friendship process should be set at the young people's level and be relevant to young people (Philippians 2:5). All the members in the church should stand in the shoes of young people, like Jesus did, in order to understand the needs of young people who suffer from entrance examination stress. The congregation should make networks to support and care for young people (Mathew 4:19). This friendship process is depicted in Figure 5.1 below.



**Figure 5.1 Caring and support process as friendship**

### **2.1 Stage 1: Approaching a friend with real understanding**

The congregation should not simply expect young people who are suffering from entrance examination stress to attend church. The congregation really has to understand young people under the entrance examination stress, both inside and outside the local church. Through the life and incarnation of Jesus, we know that Jesus drew closer first as a friend of the sinners (Matthew 9:13; John 10:10). In other words, Jesus communicated with friends and had a

relationship with sinners. The congregation, youth ministers, Sunday School teachers and peer groups involved in youth ministry should approach those young people suffering from entrance examination stress with sympathy and interest based on understanding (Matthew 4:19).

## **2.2 Stage 2: The beginning of a friendship through mutual care**

Mutual care happens in the fellowship of a loving community such as in a small group ministry, family-based youth ministry and gifts-oriented team ministry in the congregation, through the dynamics of the Holy Spirit (Psalm 133:1-3; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Young people should participate in a friendship community as a spiritual family. Young people under entrance examination stress can be restored and encouraged through retreats, camps and programmes within a voluntary, experiential, and active network community.

‘Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.’ (Ecclesiastes 4:12)

‘Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.’ (1 Thessalonians 5:13)

All the ministry communities in the Holy Spirit for mutual care should be maintained in intimate relationships of love (Colossians 3:14; Romans 8:35-39). ‘And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.’ (Colossians 3:14)

Mutual care by the congregation should be connected with the gifts of young people in order to explore interests, and aptitudes to decide on a career (Ephesians 4:15-16). The congregation can serve and help young people under entrance examination stress through the different gift networks of the congregation. Young people are able to find their gifts, management abilities as well as capabilities through the support and empowerment of the congregation.

### **2.3 Stage 3: Building friendship through calling**

Young people are members of the church of today and young people are God's called workers of today. Therefore, the church should build up the young people as the called through discipleship. As mentors to the young people, the congregation members should be role models who influence the worshipping life of young people through mentoring in order to build up young people as the called, and also for their entrance examination (2 Timothy 2:1-2). Kopp (2010:66) emphasises the importance of a mentor in youth ministry as follows: 'Mentors: significant relationships with leaders whose faith is a vital part of their own lives. (Generally, they have three or more of such faith-filled leaders).' Above all, discipleship also requires the patience of the congregation to find out the identity of the called through the word of God, in the Bible. Nel (2005:374) gives the following reasons:

Church discipline is no short cut to get rid of those 'who do not see yet what I see'. Especially not in congregations where identity-truths may have been neglected for many years.

Therefore, young people need a 'calling education' in the local church to find their identity as the called of God, and this education should be provided by the congregation. Christian education within the Korean church involves the cramming education method based on a Korean school-style education. There is a limit to this Sunday school education because it often has no relation to the lives of young people preparing for the entrance examination. Therefore, the calling education by Sunday School teachers must link to home and high school to be a sustainable calling education that can be practised for life (Ephesians 4:13-16). The calling education of the congregation should be relevant to the lives of young people who are preparing for the entrance examination. Young people who find their gifts should build up the local church with the congregation through the calling education.

### **2.4 Stage 4: Sharing friendship as the called**

The next generation of young people to be found to be the called of God in the entrance examination should be the subject of youth ministry. The congregation should fulfil their role

to pass their faith and calling on to the next generation of young people (Acts 1:8). Young people as the called for the entrance examination should live a life of serving young people suffering from the entrance examination stress in the Korean Society through a gift-centred youth ministry, with those gifts being given them by God. Young people trained through discipleship should serve and be built up as leaders of small groups and team ministries in the youth ministry. This ministry by young people as the called should serve other young people suffering from entrance examination stress in the Korean society to glorify God (Ephesians 4:12; John 10:10).

Youth ministry by young people should be the field of ministry that extends from Sunday services to daily life to expand the kingdom of God. High schools preparing for entrance examinations and the Korean society as a whole are a mission field. Young people preparing for entrance examinations in the local church should share with other young people outside the local church in order to influence their lives and create a creative entrance examination culture through lives as the called of God. The congregation should lead young people to find their identity as the called and live life as the called to witness to the Gospel by living along with the world, in the world, for the world. Root (2012b:110) explains the life of the called to discipleship as follows:

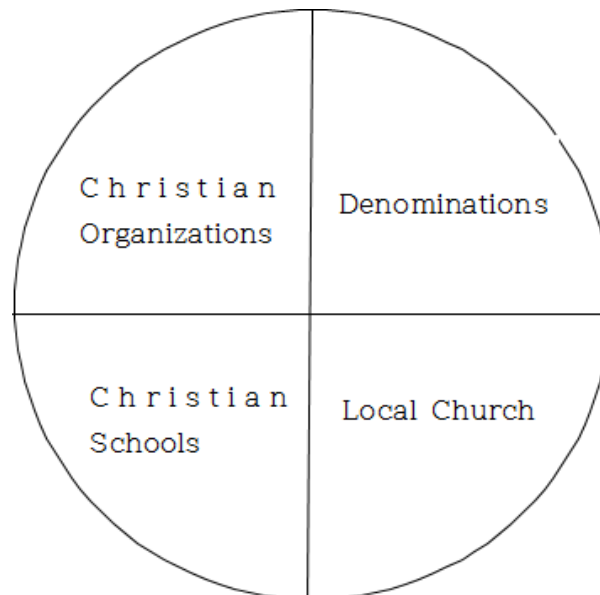
Discipleship is active. To be a disciple is to follow. And to follow assumes motion and action. So you become a disciple by seeking to participate in the action of God - by placing your actions in line with God's action. And God's action is bringing forth God's future. The disciple is the person who yearns for God's coming future, who participates in the suffering of the world, witnessing to God's action within it.

### **3. CARING AND SUPPORT AS A MINISTRY OF UNITY**

The local church needs its own union or unity to care for young people in Korean society through the use of good communication. It is beyond a local church's power to take care of the young people under entrance examination stress and academic stress in Korean society. The local church as private education provider should use its unity to transform the Korean

social consciousness, Korea's competitive university system, and so on. The local and broader church should change the atmosphere in Korea pertaining to the entrance examination through its united ministry.

Therefore, the congregation should build up the Christian village community through communication with Korean Society through a united ministry network of denominations, Christian (mission, alternative) schools, Christian organisations and other local churches. As Figure 5.2 shows, the unity ministry of the church through the network is a macro support community. Pelt & Hancock (2005:103) say: 'Effective crisis prevention engages a network of friends and caring adults who look out for each other and know each other well enough to sense when something is going wrong.'



**Figure 5.2 A ministry for network in unity**

The local church should form a caring network for young people in and out of the church through its united ministry. Care networks must understand the dimensions of prevention and protection. Care in the protection dimension means to create a network environment to heal and restore young people with entrance examination stress and academic stress. Protective care is aimed at building up a safety net through the formation of a supportive Christian community. Care in the prevention dimension means that the local church provides various youth activities to young people and establishes their identity as the called by God in the

entrance examination in order to create a new creative Christian entrance examination culture in Korean society. The congregation should cooperate with care networks such as other denominations, Christian (mission, alternative) schools, Christian organisations and local church in order to create a new Christian entrance examination culture movement in the Korean Society through the young people. The local church needs to improve the entrance examination system so as to be based on the biblical Christian worldview perspective through the union movement (Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). Nel (2005:366) says:

Building up the local church is about the real life of the church - a movement of and in life. The church is being built and at the same time is building itself up. And all of this is the work of God through his Spirit, his Word and the service of people.

Ultimately, the congregation should cooperate with the four members of the care network to support and take care of young people in the Korean Society.

Firstly, the unity ministry network should develop and share their variety of activity programmes that can help young people who suffer from entrance examination stress and academic stress through high school CA (Club Activities). In order to change the consciousness of parents, the unity ministry network should develop and share training programmes that can give biblical guidelines to the entrance examination in the local churches. It should develop and share educational materials for senior pastors, youth ministers and Sunday School teachers to equip them to be able to support and take care of young people preparing for the entrance examination.

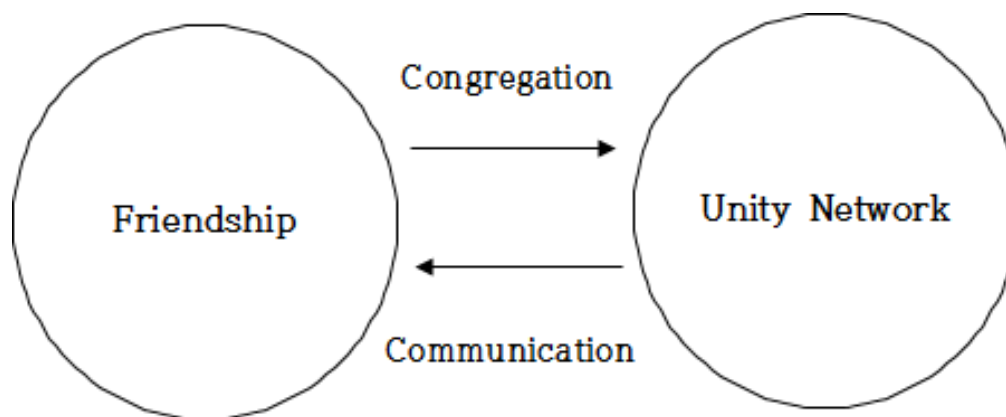
Secondly, the unity ministry network needs to create a space or place as the cultural point of contact where young people can communicate with other young people who have established their identity as the called in the local church and young people in Korean society. In addition, it should share the space so that young people can create a new creative Christian entrance examination culture through gift-centred club activities. Nel (2005:363) says: ‘God cares for those who are already a part of the local church and God adds those who are not yet in the ‘wall’, those who not yet confess that Jesus is the Messiah.’

Thirdly, the unity ministry network needs human resources. Planting and unorganised churches have a lack of human resources to serve young people. The unity ministry network needs a network of human resources serving young people in planting and in unorganised churches.

Fourthly, the unity ministry network needs professional care. It should construct partnership networks with professional carers of young people and their parents who need physical, mental, and spiritual care and treatment. Pelt & Hancock (2005:102-103) say: ‘The how of prevention is much like the how of intervention: It is relational, and it springs from partnerships with students, parents, schools, and sometimes law enforcement.’

#### 4. THE CONGREGATION AS A BRIDGE

The congregation should play the role of a bridge in order to have a sustainable youth ministry. The congregation has to connect with the young people in the local church and the young people in Korean society through communication. Firstly, the congregation should build up the identity of the called to the entrance examination as their friends through communication with the young people. Secondly, the congregation should provide an atmosphere where young people can live the life of the called to the entrance examination within their field through the unity ministry network. Eventually, as shown in Figure 5.3, the congregation should play the role of a bridge between the world and the young people through communication with them as their partner in the youth ministry.



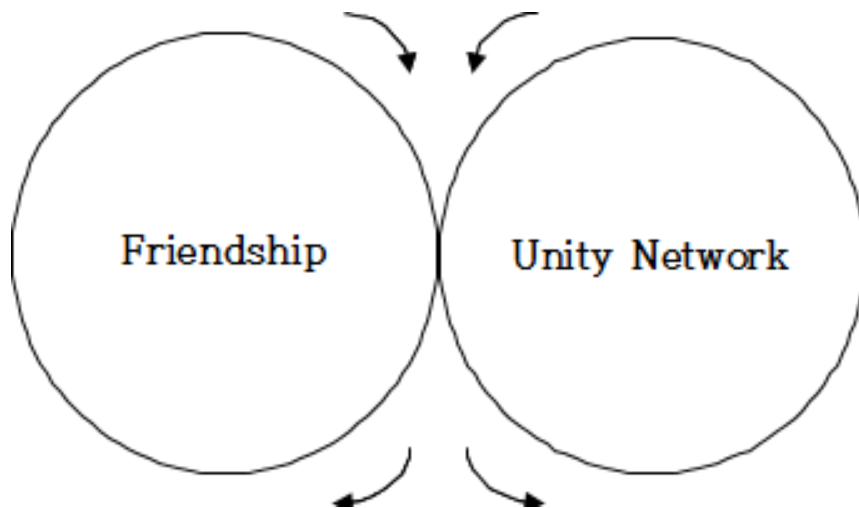
**Figure 5.3 The role of congregation as a bridge**



The congregation should also play the role of a bridge through their communication in the unity ministry to build up an active strategy for young people in and out of the local church to establish their identity as God's called to the entrance examination and to live a life worthy of the called in the world, in its prevention and protection dimensions. The relationship-oriented care ministry should be sustainable in Korean society. To be a sustainable youth ministry in the South Korean church, young people in the church should be built up for leadership as the called by God to the outside world. Devries (2008:53) speaks of a sustainable youth ministry as follows:

Every church can build a sustainable youth ministry by attending first to the two key components of systems thinking in youth ministry: 1. Architecture: the structures of sustainability 2. Atmosphere: the culture, climate and ethos that sustain the health of an organisation.

In other words, a sustainable ministry structure and culture for young people under entrance examination stress is required in order to be a sustainable youth ministry.



**Figure 5.4 A sustainable relationship-oriented ministry**

A sustainable ministry structure is necessary for a sustainable relationship-oriented friendship structure in the congregation. Thus far, the youth ministry in the Korean Church has been separated from the congregation. For example, since the Sunday School movement was

established within the South Korean Church, young people have been separated according to age or grade within the Korean church. The young people are separated from the main Sunday morning worship service in the church. As a result, generational worship arose. One of the many side effects is the congregation's indifference to young people suffering from entrance examination stress.

However, one of the features of a youth ministry is its need of relationships. The structure can be composed from the community at worship, and can be a team ministry and small group ministry within the congregation. A congregation should ensure that young people preparing for the entrance examination have a relationship-oriented friendship structure and a new leadership structure. The congregation should be connected in an intimate relationship with young people through a variety of fellowship communities. This is the horizontal relationship, which is the relationship between one's neighbours and oneself. A young person cannot be a mature Christian believer in isolation from the congregation.

The congregation should not only want to improve the relationship between the congregation and the young people through a variety of fellowship communities with young people. The congregation should also lead young people preparing for the entrance examinations so that they can find their calling through the personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The congregation should serve as a bridge for young people to connect through an intimate relationship with God and the congregation. This is the vertical relationship, which is the relationship between God and the individual. Witmer (2010:108) says: 'The most fundamental relationship of all and the foundation for all others is our relationship with the Lord.'

The congregation as a bridge should build a relationship between God and the young people through faith in Christ. In relationship with God and the young people, the congregation should lead young people to discover that they are called by God to the entrance examination. In other words, the congregation should lead young people into the place of worship. The researcher would like to propose an intergenerational corporate worship, which should include a sermon and union prayer for young people preparing for the entrance examination. Integrated worship creates an environment that leads to family worship with young people

preparing for the entrance examination. Young people can be empowered to care for themselves by finding their identity as the called in their relationship with God (Colossians 3:23-24). Young people, the people of God who are called, should govern the entrance examination through self-care.

In other words, the congregation should lead young people to care for themselves in an intimate relationship with God through their own spiritual care, through prayer, visiting, Bible study and worship (Hebrews 4:12; Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 1:22-23). The congregation should play the role of a bridge to lead young people to be independent through self-care in their relationship with God. The structure of administration and financial aspects of the church should be consistent with the direction of the relationship-oriented friendship between God and young people.

The congregation should create an atmosphere in the local church and Korean society in which young people can create a Christian culture for the entrance examination. The church is an organised life network of congregation and relationships with young people connected to the life of Jesus Christ of the Gospel (Leviticus 17:11). Congregations as a life network should create a culture, atmosphere and support structure to sustain the spiritual health of the organism and its young people.

The congregation should be a bridge to help young people to create an alternate Christian culture for the entrance examination within Korean society. The relationship-oriented care ministry must constantly communicate with the world through the Gospel of life. The area of the relationship-oriented network care ministry should be extended to the life of all young people. A relationship-oriented network care ministry should also have an interest in young people outside of the church suffering from entrance examination stress. The church must communicate with these young people through God's unchanging love. Therefore, the local church should be integrated with the Christian community of other local churches, denominations, Christian (mission) Schools and Christian organizations. The local church should serve Korean society as a bridge through the unity ministry of the Gospel, so that young people can communicate with Korean society. Congregations should form a community that young people can voluntarily participate in and should be a gift-centred

community. Through the Holy Spirit, they should be a community that uses its unity with others to move dynamically in society.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In spite of the fact that the Gospel only reached Korea about 130 years ago, South Korea is a country which stands out as having people with a passion for evangelism and missionary work. South Korea is second only to the United States in sending missionaries to the rest of the world.

However, a large number of young people in South Korea are currently leaving the church. To make matters worse and in spite of young people in the churches suffering from entrance examination stress, many churches are not taking any measures to counter this trend. Many members of the church are not actively interested in young people suffering from entrance examination stress. Moreover, many senior pastors of the Korean church are interested only in the growth of the church. Many South Korean senior pastors are interested simply in a quantitative growth of the Church through a market-driven ministry in accordance with the management principles for quantitative growth of the church. The future looks bleak for South Korean churches if they do not take a positive and active interest in young people suffering from entrance examination stress. Beautiful church buildings are simply going to be empty.

The researcher is convinced that entrance examination stress and separation of congregation from youth ministry are two of the main factors blocking the dynamism of the youth ministry in Korean society. Parents and the congregation have been indifferent to the youth ministry for their children's success in the test and score-oriented competitive structure for the entrance examination. The congregation does not support and take care of young people suffering from entrance examination stress because of the separation of the congregation from its youth ministry. As a result, young people preparing for the entrance examination have broken off communication with the congregation in the local church and in Korean society. They are becoming maladjusted to the local church and the youth ministry is depressed.

Before it is too late, a paradigm shift is needed in the Korean youth ministry: shift towards caring, a transition in youth ministry from a programme-centred youth ministry to a people-centred youth ministry. The youth ministry should also include the congregation. It is important to have communication between the congregation and the youth ministry. To communicate with the congregation, the youth ministry should have a friendship structure in the worship service, the team ministry and small groups combined in the inclusive congregation. Congregations should lead young people suffering from entrance examination stress to be the called of God through self-care in the friendship between God and the young people. Congregations should lead young people to be able to create a Christian culture for the entrance examination through the church's unity ministry, to communicate with Korean society. However, this process of building up the relationship-oriented care ministry is not a short-term process, but one that requires patience through the work of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, dedication to this task is required by the congregations of the local church.

This thesis developed a strategy for the relationship-oriented care ministry to take care of young people suffering from entrance examination stress within Korean society. Proposals for further study direction are as follows.

Firstly, there is a need for the development of a specific calling curriculum for the local church to be able to execute a strategy for a relationship-oriented care ministry. Youth is the time to prepare for a future job. The South Korean churches have been carrying out vocational education for Christian adults and showed an active interest in the professional lives of Christian adults. However, many churches are indifferent and passive towards young people as well as to the need for a 'calling education' of young people who need identity formation as the called of God. There is a need for a calling education for young people to see that they are called to the entrance examination. There is also a need for training youth workers through formal and informal education curricula and policies in order to be better equipped to counsel and bring healing to those young people suffering from entrance exam stress.

Secondly, there is a need for research to develop the online infrastructure within cyberspace to allow churches to communicate, through a relationship-oriented care ministry, with young

people suffering from entrance examination stress. Modern Korean society has become a rapidly computerised society through one of the best internet networks in the world. As a result, communication by young people through the internet has also rapidly increased to the extent that virtual communities of young people in cyberspace are formed voluntarily. There is a need for an infrastructure to be developed that will aid in taking care of the young people within these virtual cyberspace communities.

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## Appendix 1: Informed Consent form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. My name is ByoungJae Jeon. I am currently a graduate student studying a Ph.D. course at the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. This form details the purpose of this study, a description of the involvement required, your rights and ethical considerations as a participant.

1. **Title:** ‘School Entrance Test Stress Syndrome’ in South Korean society: A Challenge to Youth Ministry

2. **Purpose of the study:** The purpose of this study is to actively find strategic support systems in which the Korean church can support and care for the youth with regard to Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome through a relationship-oriented care ministry.

3. **Participant recruitment:** Focus groups are conducted for high school second-year students (Grade 11 in South Africa) who are preparing for the university entrance examinations within the Seong Nam Presbytery, which belongs to the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Korea. The Seong Nam Presbytery comprises the churches of the Seong Nam and Bundang area within Gyeonggi province. The Seong Nam Presbytery consists of 98 churches as at March 2015. I arranged these 98 churches into alphabetical order. I then randomly selected three churches from out of these 98 churches. If a selected church did not accept, I picked the previous or next church on the alphabetical list.

4. **Research procedures:** The focus groups are divided into three groups made up of six to eight participants. The process of the interview will be carried out based on the guidelines of the interview that the researcher has already prepared in advance for each focus group. Each focus group is expected to last for a duration of 80 minutes. The focus group interviews will proceed for one month (May 2015).

5. **Risks and discomforts:** There are no risks directly related to participating in this research. If you feel uncomfortable with the recorder, you may ask that it be turned off at any time. You may choose not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

5. **Benefits:** There will be no financial gain for participating in this research. However, your participation will contribute to the formulation of a caring ministry strategy, in order to help other youth to cope with Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome.

6. **Participants' rights:** Your participation in this research study is voluntary. At any time, you may notify the researcher that you would like to stop the interview and your participation in the study.

7. **Confidentiality:** Though direct quotes from you may be used in the paper, your name and other identifying information will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not share your individual responses with anyone other than the research supervisor. All of your information and interview responses will be kept confidential. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation. If a participant decides to withdraw all data pertaining to that participant will be destroyed.

8. **The subject's right of access to the researcher:** If the subjects are under 18, or mentally or legally incompetent, permission will be gained from parents and guardians once they (the parents/guardians and participants) understand the purpose and nature of the study, using whatever is deemed necessary in order for them to understand, before the interview process begins. You are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time about the nature of the study or the methods I am using.

**Please contact me at any time at the email address or telephone number listed overleaf. By signing below, you agree that you have read and understood the above information, and would be interested in participating in this study.**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Questions about the study

If you have any questions or concerns during this study, or after its completion, or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

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## Appendix 2: Parent/Guardian Informed Consent form

Thank you for considering the participation of your child in my research study. I am currently a graduate student studying a Ph.D. course at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to let your child participate in this research study. I will describe the study to you and answer all your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to give permission for your child to take part. If you decide to have your child be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

**1. Title:** ‘School Entrance Test Stress Syndrome’ in South Korean society: A Challenge to Youth Ministry

**2. Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to actively find strategic support systems in which the Korean church can support and care for the youth with regard to Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome through a relationship-oriented care ministry.

**3. Research procedures:** If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form granting me permission to interview your child and to gather information concerning the difficulties your child is experiencing as a result of Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome. This study consists of a focus group interviews that will be conducted in a church. The focus group interviews will proceed for one month (May 2015). There will be about 18 people participating in the interview process.

**Note:** Your child’s responses will be audio recorded.

**4. Time required:** Participation in this study will require about 80 minutes of your child’s time.

**5. Risks:** The investigator does not perceive any foreseeable risks in terms of participating in this study.

**6. Benefits:** Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study.

However, your child will contribute in helping the youth ministry in South Korea to help young people cope with Entrance Examination Stress Syndrome.

**7. Confidentiality:** The results of this research will be presented in a Ph.D. thesis. Though direct quotes from your child may be used in the paper, your child's name and other identifying information will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not share your child's individual responses with anyone other than the research supervisor. All of your child's information and interview responses will be kept confidential. Your child's privacy and the confidentiality of your child's data will be protected and your child's research records will not be released without your consent, unless required by law or a court order.

The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. However, if a participant decides to withdraw, all data pertaining to that participant will be destroyed

Any audio recordings will be stored securely. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up to individual respondents and their answers will be destroyed.

**8. Participation and withdrawal:** Your child's participation is entirely voluntary. Your child is free to choose not to participate. Your child may withdraw from participation at any time. If your child does not want to participate, there will be no penalty. You can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

**9. Questions about the study:** If you have any questions or concerns during the time of your child's participation in this study, or after its completion, or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

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### **Giving of consent**

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of my child as a participant in this study. I freely consent for my child to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions.

I, (Name of Parent/Guardian) \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give my consent to have my child participate in the research study entitled 'School Entrance Test Stress Syndrome' in South Korean society: A Challenge to Youth Ministry. I fully understand the details which have been provided to me above, including anticipated benefits, risks and so on.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

1. Have you heard about Entrance Exam Stress Syndrome?
2. How many students in high school do you think experience entrance exam stress?
3. What comes to mind when you think of entrance exam stress?
4. What is your experience with regard to entrance exam stress?
5. Do you feel the test puts pressure on you?
6. How do you prepare for the entrance examination?
7. Does the stress and pressure you feel in any way affect your academic performance?
8. What emotions do you experience when you feel the stress and pressure caused by the entrance examination?
9. Which people in your life add to the stress you feel regarding the entrance examination?
10. Why do you think that you are experiencing this stress?
11. How do you cope with or eliminate this entrance exam stress?
12. Do the churches that you attend have a youth ministry programme to support you with regard to the entrance examination and the stress caused by the exam?
13. In what ways have or do your parents support you in dealing with this entrance examination stress?
14. Have you experienced and received support from a youth minister or Sunday School teacher to relieve your entrance exam stress?
15. Have you experience and received other support and care from the church to relieve your entrance exam stress?
16. What do you think youth ministry and your church can do to help you deal with the stress caused by the entrance examination?