

**Father absence and Adolescents: A Youth Ministry  
approach**

**by**

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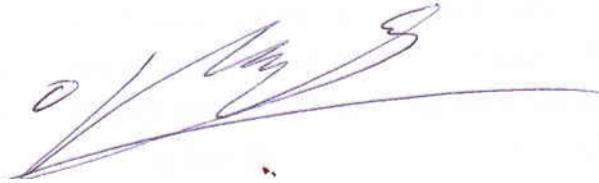
**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

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**April 2019**

## Declaration

I, Hyunok Yi, student number 29700656 hereby declares that this dissertation, "Father absence and Adolescents: A Youth Ministry approach," is my own work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hyunok Yi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

.....  
Hyunok Yi

April 2019

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this achievement to local pastors, youth workers and youths who do their best to build up the Kingdom of God. They are a source of inspiration to my life.

## **Acknowledgements**

To have achieved this milestone in my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

I My Heavenly Father, who provided me with the strength, knowledge and perseverance to complete this study. With all my heart, I thank my Heavenly Father God for calling me as a missionary to serve the people of God;

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To God be the glory.

## **Abstract**

In recent years father-absent children and adolescents have become a challenge within South African society. Statistics (Stats SA 2017) shows that the percentage is, surprisingly, even higher than expected with over 60% of fathers being absent. The local church must take an interest in the absence of a father and father-absent children and adolescents.

The guiding hypothesis to this study is that when local church leaders recognise the influence of fathers being absent from children and adolescents, they and the congregation can help father-absent children and adolescents as an extended family and can manage preventable problems with them. Church leaders should focus on re-education or retraining of fathers and men to build up their family and the local church.

This study has its focus on the youth ministry and specifically the topic of the absence of father and father-absent adolescents as challenges for the youth ministry in an attempt to address the concern for an effective youth ministry towards those father-absent youths with an inclusive and congregational approach, as well as addressing the concern of the role of the father from the Bible and role of pastor/congregation as an extended family. From a theological perspective, the responsibility of faith communities toward father-absent children and adolescents is unquestionable. However, it can be ascertained by answering questions: i) what is the message of the Bible about the father and his role in the family? ii) how can a local church help the children and adolescents who live with their biological father being absent in their home? iii) which factors are likely to influence increased father absence? iv) how does father absence affect a youth ministry? v) how do the father-absent children and adolescents feel about the absence of their biological fathers and about God as Father?

This study will endeavour to address the theological basis for the role of father and congregation, the various developments of youth, the concepts of youth ministry and family ministry, and the influence of the absence of a father.

The research focuses especially on an empirical study with two groups- father-absent adolescents and local pastors- in a qualitative survey. Twenty-one father-absent adolescents and twelve local pastors were approached to participate in qualitative interviewing.

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**Key Concepts:**

- Youth
- Child
- Adolescent
- Father
- Cognitive development
- Intelligence
- Family ministry
- Extended family
- Confirmation
- An inclusive congregational approach

## **List of abbreviations**

YMCA – Young Men’s Christian Association

YWCA – Young Women’s Christian Association

YFC – Youth for Christ

GP – Gauteng Province

LP – Limpopo Province

MP – Mpumalanga Province

AFM – Apostolic Faith Mission

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1. How did the researcher come to this theme?

Many children and adolescents in rural and urban areas in some of South Africa's provinces grow up without the everyday physical presence of their biological fathers due to death, separation, divorce, desertion, unwed motherhood, or labour migration.

Missionaries and social workers who work with black communities in South Africa have experienced problems with father-absent children and adolescents. This researcher works in a rural area where this study was conducted and has met many children and adolescents who live without their biological fathers. Most of them are unexpected children in the case of teen age mothers. After a sexual relationship, the male partner deserts his pregnant partner.

The father is responsible as the breadwinner and protector in his family. But due to father absence, the mother has to get a job away out of the home. It causes instability and insecurity for children and adolescents. They are easily exposed to violence, crime, substance abuse, sexual assault, full of hatred, rage and pain (Cf. The Guardian 2001. Apr.5). A shortage of income may motivate the child to leave school in the rural areas. This researcher has met several youths who have lived without a father. When they graduated from primary school, there was no way to go to a high school or college (Cf. [www.uj.ac.za](http://www.uj.ac.za) 2013). Due to their poor educational background, they could not find a job in town. Since leaving school, they are unemployed and a vicious circle of poverty is repeated throughout their lives.

According to the South African Institute of Race Relations ([www. sairr.org.za](http://www.sairr.org.za). 2011. March), there were 859 000 'double orphans' (children whose parents have both died), 2 468 000 paternal orphans, and 624 000 maternal orphans in 2008. Between 2005 and 2009, the number of children who received foster child grants, increased by 88% from 271 817 to 511 479. StatsSA (2010) indicated that only 27% of African

children were living with both their biological parents. 79% of African urban single parents were female, and unemployment rates among urban single parents were high (Ratele, Shefer, & Clowes 2012:553-554).

In spite of the important contribution of the father's role in child and adolescent's development, local churches are inclined to neglect the father's role. While the church focuses on mothers and women's annual conferences to retrain mothers and women, the church looks past the necessity of re-education the fathers and men to know how to act as a father and the meaning of masculinity. It includes their involvement in child-rearing, to take responsibility for the child's physical care, socialisation, the parents' decision making about their child, availability, etc. (Lamb & Sagi et al., 1983:140).

Several types of research showed that the absence of a biological father can have different effects on growing children and adolescents:

276 grade-12 students who completed courses in Biology, English, and Mathematics, in the Northern Province of South Africa, showed that the students who lived with their fathers' present scored significantly higher than did father-absent students on all subjects (Mboya & Nesengani 1999:763-765).

Boys in father-absent families have been found to be more likely to have lower IQs and to score lower than their classmates on achievement tests. They also tended to be more immature, submissive, dependent, and effeminate than other boys (Bronstein et al., 1988: 82). On the contrary, there were positive correlations between the degree of father involvement and the verbal intelligence scores for both boys and girls. Highly involved fathers also spent more time in efforts to stimulate their children's cognitive growth (Cf. Radin 1982; Lamb 1986: 42; White & Warfa 2011).

The effect of socioeconomic disadvantage on delinquent behaviour was stronger in father-absent families than in father-present families among African-American male adolescents (Paschall, Ringwalt & Flewelling 2003:15-31). Teenage sexual activity is much more widespread among children from divorced, separated, and single parent

houses (Cf. sairr, 2011, April).

Male migration to support the family leads to a weakening of the paternal sense of obligation, and the father's absence may become a risk factor to the healthy psychological development of his children in rural Mexico (Aguilera-Guzman, Salgado de Snyder, Romero & Medina-Mora 2004:711-721).

A study of the youth in the Eastern Cape also verified that undisclosed paternal identity caused adolescents significant emotional distress (Cf. sairr, 2011, April).

Custom probably led to the view that the father-children relationship is less important than the mother-children relationship. But the father has different functions than the mother. Much research has re-evaluated the father's role as follows: (1) the sex-role; the masculinity of the son and the femininity of the daughter are more developed when the father is nurturing and participates in childrearing (Lamb 1976:22-24) (2) Relationships between the child's morality and maternal behaviour are stronger than relationships between paternal behaviour and the child's morality. But a father who has a positive approach to childrearing usually has a son who identifies with him and displays an internalised morality (Hoffman 1970; William 2008; Ford, Nalbone, Wetchler & Sutton 2008; Freeks 2015) (3) The father encourages his children's curiosity and urges them to attempt to solve problems cognitively, but the mother inhibits the child's exploration more (Johnson & Ridley 2004: x v ; Vogel, Bradley, Raikes, Boller & Shears 2006; Cf. Biller 1974) (4) The father tends to play with his child more physically and with idiosyncratic types of play but the mother prefers more conventional and toy-mediated types (Lamb 1976:7; Freeks 2015; Cf. Berman & Pedersen 1987).

Fathers may advantageously affect their child's academic achievement, cognitive and moral development, sex-role and overall psychosocial competence and absence of psychopath.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

The research problem leading this study is as follow:

The lack of understanding of the various roles of fathers, and about a father-absent adolescent with the concept of the inclusive congregational youth ministry leads to an ineffective and inefficient youth ministry in the local church.

The father is called “a forgotten contributor to child development” (Cf. Lamb 1975:245-266). The absence of a father and the lack of a father role model negatively affects growing children and adolescents (Rudel & Hayes 1990:20-23). When children and adolescents are growing up in homes without the biological father being present, they are at a significant disadvantage in the area of cognitive development, intellectual functioning, school achievement and self-esteem (Cf. Peacock et al., 2008:33).

Fowler (1983:148) says that the goal of all Christian education, the purpose of formation in the community of Christian faith, is – by the grace and power of God’s lively presence in the Holy Spirit – to form men and women through whom God can afford to make his appeal in the world.

The absence of a father also negatively impacts in the area of youth ministry. Father-absent adolescents do not find it easy to understand the role of a father (Krohn & Bogan 2001) and may have a negative feeling about God the Father. For example, when they receive teaching from the Bible and when they hear someone’s prayer, which says ‘Heavenly Father’, ‘our Father God’, they may remember their father who deserted them and his family. If fathers are so emotionally far from their children, the children have difficulty in sensing the closeness and tenderness of God the Father. Abused children and adolescents have difficulty to experience the love of God. Religious fathers involved in religious traditions are in general more involved in the lives of their children and more affectionate in comparison to fathers who do not affiliate with a specific faith tradition (Meyer 2018).

Furthermore, the absence of fathers may also be at the root of anti-social behaviour,

juvenile delinquency, and in later life also of disrupted employment and of another dysfunctional family.

### **3. Extent of the problem**

The problem of the absence of the father is not limited to black families in South Africa. The black father's role has been changing from that of historical times. In the case of the U.S.A., some social scientists say that the black father has been hampered in his ability to nurture his family through the long-enduring effects of enslavement, and it has remained even though enslavement has ended. Since the enslavement law did not sanction slave marriages, black fathers were not expected to play their role in the socialisation of their children. But many plantation owners allowed the enslaved family to exist as a unit, and the enslaved father took care of his family. Those black fathers developed a deep and permanent attachment to their wives and an interest in their children. During the twentieth century, the black family structure experienced pressures, when the black fathers could not find jobs on account of discrimination. The black families were forced apart by public welfare laws that provided more economic support for the father-absent family. But the modern black fathers are taking a more nurturant role in childrearing and are becoming more child-centred (Bronfenbrenner 1961:73-84; Bronstein et al., 1988: 79-81).

There are statistics (Fathers for life 2013; Cf. Frazier 2015; Freeks 2017) on the following problems of father absence and fatherlessness:

- \* 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.
- \* 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.
- \* 85% of all children exhibiting behaviour disorders come from fatherless homes.
- \* 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes.
- \* 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.

\* 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes.

\* 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in fatherless homes.

Usually, father absence and poverty go together and result in maternal employment. Maternal employment affects unhealthily not only on the children but also on the mother and the family. The median and mean incomes for single mothers as head of households, are lower than the average income of any other group, and the economic stress experienced by single mothers is accompanied by the emotional stress occasioned by a degree of social isolation and disapproving attitudes of society that continues towards mothers and children who are from father-absent families (Lamb et al, 1986: 16). Father-absent children adjust less well than others, because, not only the father's absence but a complex network of noxious conditions cluster around father absence (Adams, Milner & Schrepf 1984: 140-141).

### **3.1 Youth ministry among father-absent children and adolescents**

Beyer (1978:7) says that youth ministry is part of the total congregational ministry, and without youth ministry, the whole is never complete. Even though the youth (including father-absent children and adolescents) is unique and has a discrete character, they are part of the congregation's service to God, and the responsibility of all the members which is inalienable and non-transferable (Nel 2000: 78-79).

Hastings (2007: 32) says that the members of the "one body of Christ" are called to commitment to and consciousness of (1) the *mission* of God within a situated Christian community; and (2) the *ecumene* of other Christian communities who equally share in the operation of divine grace across space, time, and sociocultural boundaries.

As Paul says in Romans 12:5, "so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (NKJV), in another version, "so in Christ we who

are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (NIV), local church leaders must recognise the father-absent children and adolescents as an integral and vital part of the congregation, and part of the Body of Christ (Nel 2000: 85-86).

Father-absent children and adolescents may find their own identity when they experience their acceptance as members of the local church and have personal relationships with one another in the local church. They must be led to become lifelong pupils of Christ through teaching, personal communication, and modelling in the local church (Nel 2005: 272-282).

### **3.2 Research gap**

Most studies about father-absent children and adolescents in black families’ research, centre on human science and social psychology. They focus on the father’s contribution to the wellbeing of children, and his responsibility to take on the fatherhood role (See Richter & Morrell 2006; Freeman & Rickels 1993; Mboya & Nesengani 1999; Paschall, Ringwalt & Flewelling 2003. etc.).

Little is said about father-absent children and adolescents, and about being a father as a spiritual leader in his home and in local churches. Almost nothing has been written on this topic in South Africa.

This study will focus on the father-absent adolescents and church leaders in local black churches. It is important for the church leaders to understand and share the situation of father-absent children and adolescents in their local church. Father-absent children and adolescents should be protected and raised as part of the Body of Christ. This study should be useful for the development of a youth ministry with father-absent youth in the local church.

#### **4. Purpose of this study**

There are four general aims: (1) to understand the father's role as a spiritual leader in the Bible, (2) to describe the role of the father in child and adolescent development, emphasising the unhealthy influence of fathers absence on the child and adolescent, (3) to review findings about the present situation of the local church with children and adolescents who live without a biological father, and (4) to examine the implications of the research findings for expanding a needs-oriented diaconal ministry in youth ministry.

#### **5. The hypothesis of this study**

When local church leaders recognise the influence of father absence on children and adolescents, they and the congregation can help father-absent children and adolescents as an extended family and can manage preventable problems with them. Church leaders should focus on re-education or retraining of fathers and men to build up their family and the local church.

#### **6. Research questions**

- a. What is the message of the Bible about the father and his role in the family?
- b. Which factors are likely to influence increased father absence?
- c. How does father absence affect youth ministry?
- d. How do the father-absent children and adolescents feel about the absence of their biological father fathers and about God as Father?
- e. How can the local church help children and adolescents who live with their biological father being absent in their home?

## **7. Practical theology and methodology**

Methodology refers to the study of methods that show how research questions are articulated to be asked in the field. The methodology provides the reasons for using a particular research 'recipe' (Clough & Nutbrown 2012:25; Bhattacharyya 2003:351). Browning (1991:92) says that the aim of the methodology is the development of theoretical models that attempt to account for the biological, psychological, sociological, or theological factors that influence human behaviour.

A trustworthy and accurate methodology is needed to develop effective principles for youth ministry, because in practical theology, theoretical aspects are very closely related to practical aspects.

### **7.1 The methodology of practical theology - a brief general view**

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) developed the area of practical theology, being instrumental in the formation of a Protestant chair in that discipline at the University of Berlin in 1821, as the first form of a 'theology of the subject'. He divided the disciplines of theology into philosophical (root), historical (body), and practical (crown) theology. Practical theology as one part of the faculty concerned the rules for the application of criteria, obtained from historical studies, to tasks of church leadership (Farley 1983:27-28). A disciple of Schleiermacher, C. I. Nitzsch (1787-1868) defined practical theology as the "theory of the church's practice of Christianity", as the second form of a "theology in the way in which the church functions" (Heitink 1999:49). After Schleiermacher and Nitzsch, Phillip Marheineke (1780-1846) offered a distinction between theoretical theology and practical theology as a third form of 'political theology' (Heitink 1999:63-65; Anderson 2001:24).

In the early twentieth century, a model of practical theology in the Protestant Reformation developed along the lines of pastoral theology that focused on the role of preaching as mediation of God's Word to humans for healing and hope. Seward Hiltner (1958:18-55) saw pastoral care as an act for the suffering individual among

the many other acts of ministry performed by the 'pastor' that must both be taken into account in a responsible pastoral theology.

In North America, after the pastoral counselling movement, the shift from pastoral theology to practical theology was developed by Don S. Browning in 1980s (Anderson 2001:25). Browning (1991:10) offers a compelling and critical model that is developed from what he calls practical reason:

I claim that practical reason has an overall dynamic, an outer envelope, and an inner core. Its overall dynamic is the reconstruction of experience. When inherited interpretations and practices seem to be breaking down, practical reason tries to reconstruct both its picture of the world and its more concrete practices.

He attempts to integrate theory and practice in an ongoing process of action and reflection (1991:10-12).

Practical theology has two aspects – (1) practical and (2) theoretic, in other words, human experience and theological reflection (Jacobson 2011:11). David Tracy sees the same line of interaction between practice and theory: "Practical theology is the mutually critical correlation of the interested theory and praxis of the Christian fact and the interpreted theory and praxis of the contemporary situation" (Tracy 1983:76).

*(1) Practical theology has a practical aspect.*

Thomas Aquinas (Van der Ven 1993:33) says that theology is practical through its extension to human activities. Calvin (Van der Ven 1993:34) says that practical theology is concerned with human activities which arise from faith and human feelings which are reflected in their activities.

Heitink (1999:6-7) says that "practical theology is divine action (*praxis*) through the ministry of human beings." More specifically, he defines practical theology as a theory of action that is "the empirically oriented theological theory about the

mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society.”

Gerkin (1986:61) says that:

Practical theology, as here conceived, is the critical and constructive reflection on the life and work of Christians in all the varied contexts in which that life takes place with the intention of facilitating transformation of life in all its dimensions in accordance with the Christian gospel.

According to Swinton (2000:11) praxis is reflective because of its action that not only seeks to achieve particular ends, but also reflects upon the means and the ends of such an action in order to assess the validity of both in the light of its guiding vision. Praxis is theory-laden because it contains theory as a vital constituent. It is a reflective action that is laden with belief.

Ogletree (1983:87-97) says the dimensions of practical theology are meaning, action, and self. The meaning dimension of theology concerns the mediation and appropriation of those traditions about the meaning of being and our placement in it. The action dimension concerns our ways of enacting Christian faith in the building up of the church and in the implementation of its mission to the world. The self dimension seeks to embody in our own being and to enable in the beings of others the fidelity which is the telos of Christian existence.

According to Muller (2011) contextuality is a key concept in the postfoundationalist approach. Experience is situated and experience is always interpreted. He (2005) suggests that to listen first to the stories of people struggling in real life situations is an important point with the postfoundationalist approach. He emphasises that “stories are always about people and people are our primary concern – living people in real contexts”, shifts from “what” questions to “who” questions. He (2017) illustrates the ‘Seven Movements’ as a research structure for practical theology as follows:

<b>The context and interpreted experience</b>
1. A specific context is described, not from a faked 'objective' position, but from a personal perspective and, therefore, with the inclusion of one's own story. 2. In-context experiences are listened to and described. 3. Interpretations of experiences are listened to and described and developed in collaboration with 'co-researchers'.
<b>Traditions of interpretation</b>
4. A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation.
<b>God's presence</b>
5. A reflection on God's presence/absence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation.
<b>Thickened through interdisciplinary investigation</b>
6. A description of experience, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation and based on the concept of transversal rationality.
<b>Point beyond the local community</b>
7. The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community.

Table 1. Postfoundationalist Practical Theology (Adapted from Muller 2005; 2017).

*(2) Practical theology also has a theoretical aspect.*

The word 'theoretical' is not in opposition to the 'practical'. The concept of a practical theological theory is a discussion, a consideration of existing and future ecclesiastical and religious praxis (Cf. Heyns & Pieterse 1990:26).

Heitink (1999:6) says that practical theology as a theory of action is an empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society. The word 'practical' deals with actual practice, and it shares in the development of theological theory in general like other sub-disciplines (Heitink 199:7). Heitink's (Heitink 1999:165) methodology for practical theology has three circles:

- (1) The hermeneutical circle - as the interpretation theory that is typical for the human sciences;
- (2) The empirical circle - as the testing circle that is typical for the natural sciences;
- (3) The strategic circle, which is typical for the methodology in practical thinking.

This methodology emphasises that practical theological theories are developed from praxis and continually tested in practice. Thus, the result interacts between theory and praxis (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:21-22).

As a summary, practical theology can be defined as a dynamic process of reflective, critical inquiry into the praxis of the church in the world and God's purposes for humanity, carried out in the light of Christian Scripture and tradition, and in critical dialogue with other sources of knowledge (Willows & Swinton 2000:13-14).

Youth pastors, as practical theologians, have to help adolescents mature from children to adults through real situations and theological reflection. Youth pastors must listen first to the stories of adolescents to know *what is going on in this situation, and why this incident happens*. Youth pastors have always to interpret their experiences as a response to the Christian community's life sharing.

## **7.2 Osmer's approach to and methodology for practical theology**

The present practical theology deals with the affairs of ministers, the life of the community, and its concerns as an academic contribution to theology through a variety of research programmes such as public policy, social transformation, human rights, family values etc...it is concerned with all spheres of life (Osmer 2008: iv - v).

For Osmer, practical theological interpretation is an important bridge concept because it creates a bridge between the sub-disciplines of academic practical theology and between the academy and the church. He (2008:12) says that: (1) practical theological interpretation takes place in all the specialised sub-disciplines of practical theology; (2) the same structure of practical theological interpretation in academic practical theology characterises the interpretive tasks of congregational leaders as well; (3) acknowledging the common structure of practical theological interpretation in both the academy and ministry can help congregational leaders

recognise the interconnectedness of ministry.

According to Osmer (2008:240), practical theology as an academic field has its own distinctive research programme that makes its own constructive contribution to the theological enterprise as a whole and to the ongoing conversation of humankind in its quest for intelligibility. At the same time, practical theology engages in a robust conversation with other disciplines, including other theological disciplines and the arts and sciences.

Osmer (2011) describes the way in which paradigms function at two levels in contemporary practical theology; (1) the level of pastoral and ecclesial practice, and (2) the metatheoretical level of research and theory-construction in practical theology. The paradigm of reflective practice is situated primarily at the level of pastoral and ecclesial leadership. The contemporary practical theology has four tasks along the lines of a hermeneutical circle or spiral namely the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretive task, the normative task, and the pragmatic task.

This study employs Osmer's methodology of practical theology with the purpose to find a solution to the stated research problem. The four core tasks will be mentioned and will be processed to direct this study.

### **7.2.1 The descriptive-empirical task: priestly listening**

The key question of the descriptive-empirical task is '*What is going on in this situation?*' To discern patterns and their dynamics, gathering information is necessary. It is important to study the quality of the attention congregational leaders give to people and events in their everyday lives (Osmer 2008:33); whether leaders understand 'what is going on' in particular episodes, situations, and contexts and whether it is a genuine expression of a spirituality of presence (Osmer 2008:39). Osmer (2008:35-36) named it 'priestly listening' and says:

Priestly listening is, first and foremost, an activity of the entire Christian community, not just its leaders. It reflects the nature of the congregation as

a fellowship in which people listen to one another as a form of mutual support, care, and edification. Within the priesthood of all believers, congregational leaders are set apart by the congregation to carry out ministries that will enable it to participate more fully in the priestly office of Christ. When leaders engage in priestly listening, they, therefore, do so on behalf of the congregation as a whole.

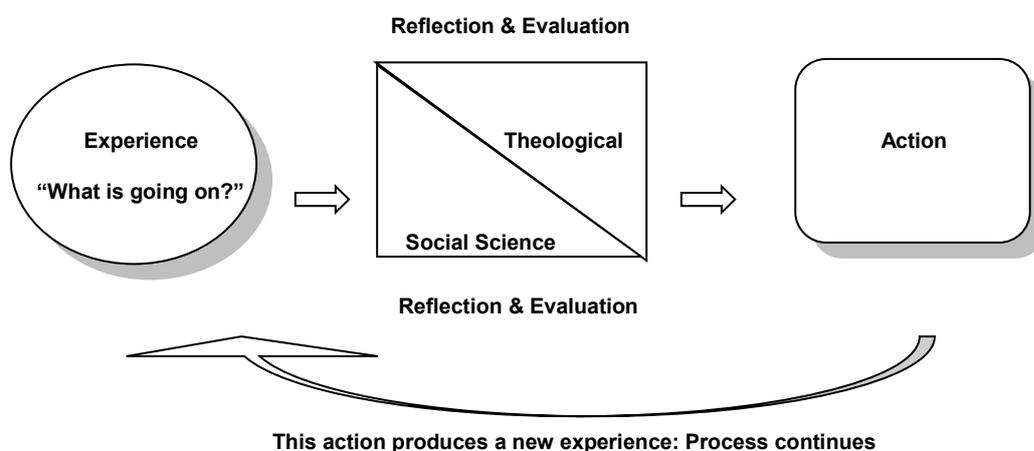


Figure 1. The process of practical theology (Adapted from Root & Dean 2011:45).

Priestly listening is needed in not only intercessory prayer and preaching, but also teaching, pastoral care, and other forms of ministry. *‘Being there’ (attending)* is important in every facet of youth ministry. Of a youth pastor is required priestly listening and ‘being there’ with the youth in personal relationships (Osmer 2008:37).

### 7.2.2 The interpretive task: sagely wisdom

The interpretive task asks: *‘Why did this incident happen? What sort of theories might help me better understand and explain the patterns and dynamics I had begun to discover?’* It describes theories of this sort to better understand and explain why certain events are occurring. Osmer (2008:82) says that learned congregations are members who are deeply grounded in Scripture, church tradition, and theology and are willing to grapple with the questions raised by contemporary science and public

life. These learned congregations need leaders who love God and are characterised by thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgment. Such leaders offer their communities the gift of sage wisdom.

Osmer (2008:82-85) explains the three qualities of the spirituality of sage wisdom: thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgment. *Thoughtfulness* means that he/she is considerate in the ways he/she treats others, or he/she is insightful about matters in everyday life. *Theoretical interpretation* is the ability to draw on theories of the arts and sciences to understand and respond to particular episodes, situations, or contexts. *Wise judgment* is the capacity to interpret episodes, situations, and contexts in three interrelated ways: (1) recognition of the relevant particulars of specific events and circumstances; (2) discernment of the moral ends at stake; (3) determination of the most effective means to achieve these ends in light of the constraints and possibilities of a particular time and place.

Youth need a guide or youth pastor or spiritual mentor who is thoughtful and knowledgeable and will lead them in the right direction like the role of the sage in the Scriptures.

### **7.2.3 The normative task: prophetic discernment**

Discernment is the activity of seeking God's guidance about the circumstances, events, and decisions of life. The normative task of practical theological interpretation thinks about '*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?*' (Osmer 2008:8).

Osmer (2008:133) explains that the prophetic office is grounded in the divine disclosure, draws on particular theological traditions in Israel and interprets specific social conditions, events, and decisions of their community at a given point in its history. The practices of discernment are important to serve as an interpretive guide, because they offer a disciplined way of seeking God's guidance and sorting out what

ought to be done in particular episodes, situations, and contexts (Osmer 2008:138).

There are three approaches to normativity. The first approach is 'theological interpretation'. It focuses on the interpretation of present episodes, situations, and contexts with theological concepts. The second approach is 'ethical interpretation' that uses ethical principles, rules, or guidelines to guide action toward moral ends. The third approach to the normative task of practical theological interpretation focuses on 'good practice'. It is 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 (Osmer 2008: 139-161).

#### **7.2.4 The pragmatic task: servant leadership**

*'How might we respond in ways that are faithful and effective?'* This question lies at the heart of the pragmatic task of practical theological interpretation, and he calls it 'servant leadership' (Osmer 2008:10).

The term 'servant leadership' was first coined in a 1970 essay by Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990). Servant leadership is viewed as a leadership style that is beneficial to organisations by waking, engaging, and developing employees, as well as beneficial to followers or employees by engaging people as whole individuals with heart, mind and spirit. The central meaning of a servant leader is first experienced as a servant to others, and that this simple fact is central to his/her greatness. True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others. (van Dierendonck & Patterson et al., 2010:5, 12-13; Cf. Frick 2004).

Osmer (2008:176-178) explains three forms of leadership;

- (1) good task competence - performing of leadership and its role in an organisation,
- (2) transactional leadership - influencing others through a process of trade-offs, and
- (3) transforming leadership - leading an organisation through a process of "deep change" in its identity, mission, culture, and operating procedures.

All three forms of leadership are needed in the congregation today but, Osmer (2008:178) suggests that in mainline congregations, transforming leadership is most needed to guide a congregation through a process of deep change. Following the example of Jesus who embodies God’s royal rule in the form of a servant, congregations are to change in ways that more fully embody the reversal of power and authority found in their servant Lord (Mark 10:42-45). Osmer (2008:192) concludes that the spirituality of servant leadership is leadership that influences the congregation to change in ways that more fully embody the servanthood of Christ.

Even though each task has an independent role, these four tasks have the characteristic of interaction, and they all need each other like a spiral. These four tasks of practical theological interpretation interpenetrate.

### 7.3 Methodology for practical research

According to Heyns and Pieterse (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:26), practical theology applies the inductive (qualitative) and the deductive (quantitative) approach. The inductive approach is applied in the case of empirical studies, on the basis of which new theories are formed. The deductive approach is used when the findings of other theological disciplines are considered in the present process of theory formation.

Quantitative versus qualitative approach	
Quantitative approach	Qualitative approach
<b>Measure objective facts</b>	Construct social reality, cultural meaning
<b>Focus on variable</b>	Focus on interactive processes, events
<b>Reliability the key factor</b>	Authenticity the key factor
<b>Value-free</b>	Values present and explicit
<b>Separate theory and data</b>	Theory and data fused
<b>Independent of context</b>	Situationally constrained
<b>Many cases, subjects</b>	Few cases, subjects
<b>Statistical analysis</b>	Thematic analysis
<b>Researcher detached</b>	Researcher involved

Table 2. Quantitative vs. Qualitative approach. (Adapted from Newman 2014:17)

This study will use inductive (qualitative) methods.

### 7.3.1 Qualitative research and quantitative research

(1) Qualitative research gathers information, and data to describe, and analyse the culture, the behaviour of humans, and groups from the point of view of those being studied (Bryman 1988:46). The issue of quality is addressed by dealing with issues of validity, practicality, and effectiveness (Maree et al., 2007:38). The qualitative research approach is a creative, scientific process that necessitates a great deal of time and critical thinking, as well as emotional and intellectual energy (Leedy 1993:140).

Empirical research is a disciplined way of attending to others in their particular episodes, situations, and context by using the methods of qualitative research. It will provide the opportunity to youth pastors and leaders to deepen their understanding of ‘what is going on’ in the everyday lives of father-absent adolescents. In this research, the researcher will interview father-absent adolescents and church leaders in chapter 6.

Structure in interviews	
<b>Unstructured</b>	<p>*Verbal observation: overhearing others’ conversations in everyday life.</p> <p>*Natural conversations: using informal, naturally occurring conversations to ask research questions.</p> <p>*Semistructured interviews: asking both open-ended and closed-ended questions in a planned sequence, which is adapted to the emerging flow of the conversation.</p>
<b>Structured</b>	*Verbal questionnaires: asking closed-ended questions in an invariant order.

Table 3. Structure in interviews. (Adapted from Osmer 2008:63).

A qualitative interview is an interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee which is based on a set of topics to be discussed in depth for a particular purpose

rather than the use of standardised questions (Babbies 2008:335-336). Osmer (2008:61-62) says that a good interviewer talks less and listen more and attends carefully to the verbal and nonverbal responses of the interviewee and guides the conversation without overcontrolling it.

The strengths and weaknesses of interviews are provided in Table 4;

Strengths and weaknesses of interviews
Strengths of interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Good for measuring attitudes and most other content of interest.</li> <li>* Allows probing and posing of follow-up questions by the interviewer.</li> <li>* Can provide in-depth information.</li> <li>* Can provide information about participants' subjective perspectives and ways of thinking.</li> <li>* Closed-end interviews provide exact information needed by the researcher.</li> <li>* Telephone and e-mail interviews usually provide very quick turnaround.</li> <li>* Moderately high measurement validity (i.e., high reliability and validity) for well-constructed and well-tested interview protocols.</li> <li>* Can use with probability samples.</li> <li>* Relatively high response rates are often attainable.</li> <li>* Useful for exploration as well as hypothesis-testing research.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses of interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* In-person interviews usually are expensive and time-consuming.</li> <li>* Reactive effects (e.g., interviewees might try to show only what is socially desirable).</li> <li>* Investigator effects might occur (e.g., untrained interviewers might distort data because of personal biases and poor interviewing skills).</li> <li>* Interviewees might not recall important information and might lack self-awareness.</li> <li>* Perceived anonymity by respondents might be low.</li> <li>* Data analysis can be time-consuming for open-ended items.</li> <li>* Measures need validation.</li> </ul>

Table 4. The strengths and weaknesses of interviews. (Adapted from Christensen, Johnson, & Turner 2015:73)

(2) Quantitative research is associated with a number of different approaches to data collection. The survey's capacity for generating quantifiable data from large numbers of people who are known to be representative of a wider population in order to test theories or hypotheses has been viewed by many practitioners as a means of

capturing many of the ingredients of a science (Bryman 1988:11). Quantification can make observation more explicitly, aggregately and summarising data easily (Babbies 2008:25).

The strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires are provided in Table 5;

<b>Strengths of questionnaires</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>*Good for measuring attitudes and eliciting other content from research participants.</b></li> <li><b>*Inexpensive</b></li> <li><b>*Can provide information about participants' subjective perspectives and ways of thinking.</b></li> <li><b>*Can administer to probability samples.</b></li> <li><b>*Quick turnaround for group-administered questionnaires.</b></li> <li><b>*Perceived anonymity by the respondent can be high if the situation is carefully controlled.</b></li> <li><b>*Moderately high measurement validity for well-constructed and validated questionnaires.</b></li> <li><b>*Closed-ended items can provide exact information needed by the researcher.</b></li> <li><b>*Open-ended items can provide detailed information in respondents' own words.</b></li> <li><b>*Easy of data analysis for closed-ended items.</b></li> <li><b>*Useful for exploration as well as hypothesis testing research.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses of questionnaires</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>*Usually must be kept short.</b></li> <li><b>*Reactive effects might occur (e.g., respondents might try to show only what is socially desirable).</b></li> <li><b>*Nonresponse to selective items.</b></li> <li><b>*People filling out questionnaires might not recall important information and might lack self-awareness.</b></li> <li><b>*Response rate may be low for mail and e-mail questionnaires.</b></li> <li><b>*Open-ended items may reflect differences in verbal ability, obscuring the issues of interest.</b></li> <li><b>*Data analysis can be time-consuming for open-ended items.</b></li> <li><b>*Measures need validation.</b></li> </ul>

Table 5. The strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires. (Adapted from Christensen, Johnson, & Turner 2015:72)

The questionnaire is one of the methods of data collection, designed for statistical analysis of the responses. The questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument that is filled out by research participants to measure their opinions, perceptions, and provide self-reported demographic information. Questionnaires include closed-ended items where respondents must select from the responses given by the researcher and open-ended items where respondents provide answers in their own words (Leedy & Ormrod 2013:191).

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a qualitative methodology will be applied.

The researcher will get the list of father-absent adolescents from 25 churches and select and random sampling of 21 father-absent adolescents. The 21 father-absent adolescents from late adolescence (eighteen years and over) will participate as interviewees, and the data will be collected through face to face interviews.

The researcher will also target pastors from 13 churches. There will be selected 12 pastors who are willing to participate as interviewees. The data will be collected through face to face interviews.

The selected and random sampling churches, based on convenience are listed below:

\*Kwaggafontein, KwaMhlanga, Moloto, Boekenhouthoek, and Moteti in Mpumalanga.

\* Mothwaneng in Limpopo.

\* Mamelodi, Centurion, and Bronkhorstspuit in Gauteng.

## **8 Structure of this study**

Chapter 1 defines the introductory matters: the theme and motivation, the statement of the problem, the extent of the problem, the purpose and hypothesis of this study, the research methodology, and an overview of this study.

In Chapter 2 relevant literature will be reviewed. Especially the concepts of a 'father' will be dealt with from biblical and theological perspectives of how the Bible speaks about God as the Father and the role of the Father as an example.

Chapter 3 will review the concepts of a 'father' with psychological and historical perspectives - such as becoming a father, the father's meaning to the child, and the role of the father in child and adolescent development.

Chapter 4 will deal with how apartheid affected South African fathers and patterns of fatherhood in a historical perspective – such as types of fatherlessness, father and family relationships, and about being a father in South Africa today.

Chapter 5 will focus on youth ministry and family. It will consider children and adolescents who live without their father and their relationship with their local church. In this chapter effective youth ministry with father absence adolescents in the local church will be dealt with according to its service to the shared life within the Body of Christ, its service of God's compassion, and its service of making disciples.

Chapter 6 will deal with the empirical perspective. The situation of local church leaders with father-absent adolescents will be explained. The practical problem of father-absent adolescents will also be interpreted with a view to their actual needs. The empirical research's results and findings from interviews will be reported and analysed.

Chapter 7 will deal with the pragmatic task according to Osmer's practical theological method. This chapter will focus on 'how may we respond in ways that are faithful and effective?' With transforming leadership, this chapter will attempt to develop a programme that can help local church leaders to effectively approach father-absent children and adolescents in their community. And the conclusion of this

study will be presented.

### **9 Delimitation of this study**

First, the scope of this study is confined to a black Christian community which the researcher works with.

Second, the period of father absence of adolescents who are interviewees will not be focused on empirically, and each interview will take approximately an hour and a half.

Third, the interview will be conducted in English, but if an interviewee wants to use his/her mother language, a local pastor who speaks both languages fluently will translate from the local language to English.

## Chapter 2

### The roles of father in the Bible

#### 1. Introduction

The family is one of the most important institutes in the world. The focus of this research is the issues caused by families with absent fathers and how these affect the development of children and adolescents.

Generally speaking, the family is the most basic structural unit of every society. White (1991:7) defined it as follows: “a family is an intergenerational social group organized and governed by social norms regarding descent and affinity, reproduction, and the socialization of the young”.

In the family there are names or designators, for example, father, mother, brother, and sister for familiar kinship statuses; infant, child, adolescent, adult for the age-determined statuses; and male and female for the sex-determined statuses.

Traditionally and historically, fathers have been expected to fulfil an instrumental role in the paid work force- to be the breadwinner- rather than fulfil an extended role within the family, however, modern society demands another label of a “new father” which is “child care expert” that encourages active participation in children’s lives, and a “new role of husband” such as the egalitarian form (Van Aarde 2001:120; Almeida, Wethington, & McDonald 2001; Cf. 5.3).

One of the most urgent social problems in South Africa is family breakdown. Millions of children and adolescents are growing up without their biological parents, and statistics showing the increasing number of children and adolescents living without their biological fathers, advanced as evidence of weakened families (Cf. South Africa Survey 2011, April). It is a consequence of poverty which is associated with migration in search of employment, a feature of the apartheid economy, HIV&AIDS, and low educational levels for instance. Those factors exacerbate father absence (Kane-Berman, Henderson, & de Souza et, al., 2001:38-39; Cf. Meyer 2013).

Children and adolescents lost a uniquely important person in their life. This has necessitated a redefinition of what it means to be a father. Even though they have no biological father, they can have ideas about father through Father God and men in the church that can be a model for the adolescents. The local church must look at God as the Father, as the model for addressing this contemporary issue to understand and care for the fatherless children and adolescents. The local church must think about how to teach God as the Father to the fatherless children and adolescents who have not experienced the character of a father and the role of the father in their life.

This chapter will discuss the fatherhood of God and filiation in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament to understand the relationship between Abba Father and his people. The Bible indicates the roles of a father using God as an example. The chapter will also review the relationship between God the Father and Jesus and will see how Paul describes God as Father in his oeuvre.

## **2. God the Father in the Old Testament**

The families in Genesis were generally regarded as “patriarchal,” which literally translated to the father (*pater*) as “beginning” or “first” (*arche*) and to the tracing of lineage through the male line (Miller 1989:24). One of the Latin words for father is ‘*fundus*’, which means “base” or “bottom”, where the word *foundation* came from (Munroe 2008:142).

The term “father” is used in different ways in the Old Testament. These different ways show the different roles of the father as beginning, first, base, or bottom. This section will review them to know the different roles of the term “father” in the Old Testament.

Kittel (1986) explains the term ‘*abbá* (father)’ as follow:

- A. In Judaism. This Aramaic word is a familiar term for ‘father’; it is also a title for rabbis and a proper name but is almost never used for God.

B. In Christianity. Jesus probably used *abbá* for God not only in Mk. 14:36 but also whenever the Gk. *pater* occurs. It denotes childlike intimacy and trust, not disrespect. In Paul (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) it may be a liturgical reminiscence, possibly of the opening of the Lord's Prayer. It undoubtedly expresses the new relationship with God proclaimed and lived out by Jesus and then experienced by believers in him.

According to Koop (1989: 49-53), the term "father" is used in the Old Testament as follows;

- for the first person who made or invented a particular thing first (Gen 4:20-21),
- for a priest who represents the Lord whose image and whose worship are the centre of his task at the sanctuary (Judge 17-18),
- for the prophet who is a man of God that is acknowledged to represent the Fatherhood of God (2 Kings 3:12; 13:14; 6:21),
- for a teacher (Rabbi) who acquires knowledge from tradition is called a "father" by his pupils (Prov. 3:12; Isa. 1:2).

The most obvious and common meaning of the Hebraic term "father" was not only for a father by birth or in rare cases by adoption or by guardianship. But also as stated above, it was used as a term of respect and honour for an individual in a position of leadership such as founder, prophets, priests, kings, rabbis, and master artificers in the Tanakh (Cf. Tanakh is the canon of the Hebrew Bible- an acronym for Torah (law), Nevi'im (prophets), and Ketuvim (writings)) (Koop 1989:54).

The symbol of the father's being and presence was the father of the family who was responsible for that family's worship and obedience to God. He had to belong to a family to share in God's blessings. The status of the father was divinely sanctioned, and the divine was involved in the history of the individual and society at the most intimate level, the level of the family. The history of the God concept says that earthly fatherhood was seen as the source of life and the guarantor of order in the family.

(de Boer 1974; Gosse 2009).

The narratives in Genesis tell us that God is known through a personal relationship and He is represented as the God of the fathers. When God met Moses at Horeb “the mountain of God,” while tending the flock of his father-in-law in Midian. Yahweh called to him in flames of fire from within a bush.

Then He said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God... “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt...I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt...Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob- has sent me to you’” (Exod. 3:1-15 NIV).

In this passage, the Lord Yahweh (The I am personal present) is bound up with “the fathers.” His self-identification is identified with the same God who called Israel’s fathers to whom he has bound himself. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The names are God’s self-definition in his bond with people. He remains true to this bond in heeding and seeing the plight in Egypt of the Israelites, whom He pointedly calls “my people”, and in his will to bring salvation by sending Moses to Pharaoh. This close relationship between God and the fathers in the patriarchal age suggests that the only way to be related to God is by membership in the family of the fathers (Feldmeier and Spieckermann 2011:25-28).

There are places in the Old Testament that designate God as “father”; Deut. 32:5; 2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13; 22:10; 28:6; Ps. 89:26; Jer. 3:4-5; 31:9; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Mal. 1:6. In Mosaic theology, the symbolisation began to shift the indirect mode of Yahweh as the God of the fathers to Yahweh as God the Father, in other words, the relationship between God and his people is that of father and an adopted son. God led the people of Israel from Egypt, and through the covenant, God established an independent and theocratic nation. God became the King and the Father of Israel as its founder. As the Father, God delivered Israel and provided guidance, protection,

compassion, and discipline for his people (Koop 1989:64).

Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my first-born son, and I told you,' "Let my son go, so he may worship me..." (Exod. 4:22-23 NIV).

"Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.'" (Exod. 6:6-8 NIV).

Hamerton-Kelly (1979:21) says that in an indirect mode God is spoken of in connection with human fathers: He is the "God of the fathers". His association with the fathers is his chief identifying feature. When we want to think or speak of God we think and speak of the fathers. In the direct mode, the Bible uses either a simile or a metaphor: God is like a father, God is our father. We shall, therefore, divide our treatment of the Old Testament evidence into two parts, dealing first with the indirect and then with the direct symbolisation (Cf. Goshen-Gottstein 2001; Soskice 2007: 69).

The Pentateuch is understood as an experience of Yahweh's parenthood that has been described as God's 'fatherhood.'

There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place (Deut. 1:31 NIV).

Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you (Deut. 8:5 NIV).

Miller (1989:50-52) states three characteristics of the God which are revealed in all the stories about Him; there is first of all the fact that He is “He (not “she”)” who is a divine father (Dt 32:6; Jer 3:19; Is 63:16), and “El,” the father of the gods (Gen 33:20; Jos 22:22). Second, He is the “Father” that those who serve Him shall serve Him exclusively and Him alone (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7). Several texts say that He is “the jealous one,” as paternal jealousy which is directed against a competing mother, son and daughter deities for the right to primacy in his own family (Ex 20:5; 43:14; Dt 5:9; 32:16). In his zeal (jealousy) He created his people among whom He lives as the sole guiding force. Third, in his goodness, the Father God who delivered his people from slavery (Ex 15), and his gracious covenant involves stipulations (Ex 20) for the well-being of the community (Ps 15:7-11).

God as the “Father” is the Divine Father of his people, and the symbol of salvation. Salvation comes to one who obeys the Father’s instruction. The “Father” symbolisation is his grace, the channel to call God the Father. He is a caring and redemptive father who parents for the emotional well-being of his people with tenderness and compassion.

## **2.1 Father in ancient Jewish society**

The father in Jewish society was responsible to reproduce, love, pity, nurture, protect, command, educate, rebuke, and discipline his children. Under Mosaic Law (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16) both parents were to be honoured and obeyed. As a house head, the father arranged their children’s marriages (Gen. 24:3-4; 28:1-2), circumcised his sons as the sign of the covenant (Gen. 17:10-11), and he had to protect his daughters from becoming prostitutes (Lev. 19:29). The father was called master and lord in the family (Gen. 18:12). In Num. 30:1-15, the father had a right to confirm or nullify the vow of his wife and single daughter (Koop 1989:59-63).

The most important biblical rituals - Passover, the redemption of the first-born, and circumcision emphasise the father’s particular roles. All of these father-family rituals had to do with the father’s role as caretaker and guardian of his children.

### **2.1.1 Passover**

Passover is one of the oldest festivals which have been observed by Jews for more than three thousand years. Whereas redemption of the first-born and circumcision was a ritual the father carried out once in a lifetime of a male child, the Passover ceremonies recurred annually in a festive family meal with the entire family.

The name "Passover" is derived from the usages in the Exodus which means "to pass (over)": (1) 12:13, "When I see the blood I will pass over you"; (2) 12:23, "The Lord will pass through...and the Lord will pass, over the door"; (3) 12:27, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover who passed over the houses of the children of Israel" (Ademiluka 2012:112).

According to Exodus 12 and 13, four days before Passover evening, a sheep or goat one-year-old - that is male and without blemish, is to be selected. During the afternoon prior to the Passover, the fathers in the community are to gather and collectively kill the selected animals and roast them. All other offerings were generally slaughtered by the priests. But the lambs were slaughtered by Israelites, especially fathers. In Egypt, the blood from the slain animals was to be smeared on the doorposts and lintel of each of the houses where the Passover meal was to be eaten. That same evening, after sunset, the roasted animals are to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, within the confines and safety of the individual homes. This celebration was designed to keep fresh the memory of the momentous struggle against slavery and the revelation of God through Moses. On the Passover table, the father teaches who God is and how He delivered his people (Ademiluka 2012:112-113; Cf. Bloch 1978:101-104; Gaster 1949).

### **2.1.2 Redemption of the first-born**

When Israelites were delivered from Egypt, the Egyptian male first-born was slaughtered in the story of the tenth plague. God states this story again in Exodus and Numbers,

Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal. (Ex 13:1-2 NIV)

You are to give over to the LORD the first offspring of every womb. All the firstborn males of your livestock belong to the LORD. Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons. (Ex 13:12-13 NIV)

Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats. You must give me the firstborn of your sons. (Ex 22:29 NIV)

Redeem the firstborn donkey with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem all your firstborn sons. (Ex 34:20 NIV)

For all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether man or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD. (Num. 3:13 NIV)

Numbers 18:15-16 introduce this ritual that the redemption of a first-born son occurs on the child's thirty-first day of life, is brought by his father to the rabbi. Instead of animal sacrifice as a substitute for the son, a coin, minted specifically for this ritual, is brought as the redemption offer. The father approaches the rabbi with his son, the rabbi asks the father whether he wishes to redeem his son or leave him at the altar. The father says that it is his desire to redeem and keep his son, hand over the redemption money, and recites benedictions for the fulfilment of the commandment of redemption and a prayer of thanks. Then, the rabbi pronounces three times, "Your son is redeemed, your son is redeemed, and your son is redeemed." Through this ritual, the father faces up to the prospect of getting rid of his son and must make in public his decision to redeem and keep him instead. He pledges himself in the sight of God and his community to take ownership of his son - to keep and care for him - and gives voice to his gratitude for the privilege of being able to do so. This ritual is

linked to Yahweh's redemption of Israel and was an expression of religious faith and commitment (Matzner-Bekerman 1984:56-59; Loader 2012).

The story of Israel's liberation from Egypt, the tragic death of Egypt's first-born was ritually alluded to in the offspring of the first-born of the flocks, and the memory of the redemptive preservation of Israel's first-born during this same sequence of events was kept alive by the rite of the son's release. In this way Israel's God is a "redemptive father" whom Israelite fathers should emulate in their care of the children given to them (Miller 1989:73-74).

### **2.1.3 Circumcision**

Circumcision refers to the removal of the foreskin of the male child eight days after birth (*brit milah*) (Lev. 12:3), as the 'ineradicable mark' represents the eternity of the covenant bond between God and man. Circumcision reminds man of his spiritual relationship and obligations to work before God. On the divine command, in Genesis 17, Abraham immediately circumcised himself at 99 years and his whole household, including his thirteen-year-old eldest son, Ishmael (Gen. 17:24-25). One year later, the patriarch circumcised his new-born, Isaac, on the eighth day (Gen. 21:4).

Circumcision was an infancy ritual as something a father did for his own son while the son was still an infant. Through this circumcision ceremony the father declares his readiness to care for and nurture his infant son to the end so that he will study Torah, marry, and do good deeds. The father does not wait until his son enters adulthood rather pledges himself to be involved to this end almost from the day of his son's birth. Circumcision attains a significance that is both internal and external, as a defining mark of Jewish identity and a sign of the covenant between God and Israel. There was a father at the centre of this covenantal ceremony (Bernat 2009:132; Wyatt 2009:408-409).

Fathers in ancient Jewish society were involved with their families and children through the rituals of Passover, the redemption of the first-born, and circumcision.

They could be seen as teachers of their children on God's instruction, and their roles in the family were irreplaceable as caretakers and guardians of their children.

### **3. God the Father in the New Testament**

The era of the New Testament still followed the family structures of the Old Testament in the Greco-Roman world. The ancient Mediterranean family provided the dominant social model for many of the early Christian congregations. The early Christianity found its roots in the Jewish concept "father," and was influenced to some extent by the concept of father among the Greeks and the Romans (Hellerman 2001:25-30; Cf. Levin 2006). To understand God as the Father in the New Testament era, the concepts of a father in ancient Greek and Rome will be briefly considered, the relationship Father God and Jesus, and a view of Pauline literature will be also discussed in this chapter.

#### **3.1 The father in ancient Greek and Rome society**

To the Greeks and the Romans, the term "father (*pater*)" usually referred to the natural father of a child. The plural form for father was used to designate progenitors, forefathers, ancestors, and also for older men and priests. Sometimes it was used for the founder, a national hero, or an emperor (Koop 1989:76).

In ancient Sparta, the focus of education was on preparing children to support the military elite. Those unfit for this goal were identified at infancy and killed. In Athens, the raising of a male cultural elite was the goal, because slaves did all the mundane jobs of society. Free-born Greco-Roman males were free to devote their entire lives to music, aesthetics, philosophy, and athletics. Women were excluded from these activities and confined to their home to care for young children (Miller 1989:79-80).

The Roman *paterfamilias* of the late Republic and of the early Empire had almost unlimited power to define his own familial ties and loyalties. A father had the right of

life and death over his wife and children. After marriage he possessed his wife and her goods. The primary role of a woman in a patrilineal kinship group society is to provide male offspring for her husband's family. He could refuse to recognise his own biological offspring by either exposing or selling them, he could obtain offspring of his own desire through adoption. Whether he was present or absent, whether the son was a child or an adult, the father held authority and power as a ruler of the son until his death. One of his daily roles was to be his son's educator to teach gymnastics, equitation, grammar, and law. If he could not do this himself, he chose a tutor, either an uncle or an old friend. But he paid attention to his daughter when the time came to marry her off (Delaisi de Parseval & Hurstel 1987:61-62; Hellerman 2001:32; Levin 2006:425).

Barclay (1959:155) quoted Plutarch's description of a certain first-century Roman senator named Cato:

A man who struck his wife or his child was laying hands on the most holy of sacred things; that it was a greater honour to be a good husband than a distinguished senator, and that nothing was more admirable in old Socrates than that he lived in peace and quiet with a difficult wife and half-witted children. When Cato's son was born ...no duty (save perhaps some public function) was so pressing as to prevent him from being present when his wife bathed the child and wrapped it in its swaddling clothes... As soon as the boy was able to learn, Cato took him personally in charge and taught him his letters, even though he owned an accomplished slave who gave lessons to many boys. But Cato, to use his own words, would not have the slave abuse his son, nor perhaps pull his ears for being slow at lessons; nor would he have his boy owe a slave so precious a gift as learning. So he made himself the boy's school master, just as he taught him the laws of Rome and bodily exercises; nor merely to throw the javelin, to fight in armour or to ride, but also to use his fists in boxing, to bear heat and cold, and to swim against the currents and eddies of a river. And he tells us himself that he wrote books of history with his own hand and in large

characters, so his son might be able even at home to become acquainted with his country's past.

It shows how important is a father's role in Rome as a teacher to a son. It seems that a Roman father would be involved in the education of his own children. However, their educational ideal proved to be a difficult one to implement due to the influx of slaves, the disintegration of family life and the demands of the expanding Roman Empire. From that time onward, parents began hiring tutors for their children, or sending them to schools modelled on the Greek schools (Carcopino 1940:107).

### **3.2 God the Father and Jesus**

The early Christians understood the term "father" as a natural or an adopted father. The plural form meant parents, progenitors, forefathers, and ancestors. The singular form was used in different ways such as the founder of a race, a faith, a rite, a dynasty, or as a title of respect for a person in positions of honour and leadership (Koop 1989:79-80).

Under ancient Jewish law, the father was the absolute head of the household. The position of the Jewish man was regulated by texts such as Gen. 3:16 "...he (her husband) will rule over you (woman)." A man had authority over his wife and children. The position of women, in general, was inferior to men, classed with minor children, slaves and Gentiles. They were not taught the Torah, the first five books of Moses (Hamerton-Kelly 1979:55).

All first-century Jewish sects regarded the laws and traditions enshrined in the Torah as divinely revealed truth that required zealous study and application in daily life. The Mishnah and Talmud became sacred to the Jews. The Talmudic tractate Kiddushun states five responsibilities of fathers, with respect to a son; to circumcise him, to redeem him (if the eldest son), to teach him Torah, to teach him a trade, and to find him a wife. The Kiddushun tractate emphasised the most important roles of the father were teaching Torah and a trade for the son's future well-being. For the

daughter, the father's important roles were his attention and help, especially in finding a husband. Father-involved family continued to occupy a central place in Jewish life. Even though synagogue schools had begun, these did not replace the father's role (Weber 1979:39-40).

Jesus lived and grew to maturity in a patriarchal social system which designated the father/husband as the head of the family. While the man whose gender made him whole and complete, the women were brought up with a sense of shame which made her as dependent on the male for her own completeness as she was dependent on him for children, support, and honour (Jacobs-Malina 1993:1).

As an example, the criteria of classification into groups of the Jewish community at the time of Jesus shows the position of the fatherless and foundlings in the tripartite division of Jewish society.

According to Jeremias (1969:271), M. Kiddushin divided society into three groups:

- (a) families of legitimate descent: Priests, Levites, and full Israelites who had the right to marry into priestly families,
- (b) families of illegitimate descent with only a very slight blemish who could not marry into priestly families, but could marry Levites or legitimate Israelites,
- (c) families with grave blemishes of ancestry who were on no account to marry into legitimate families, or if they did marry it was illegitimate, merely concubinage.

### M. Kiddushin. vi. I

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| (a) | 1. Priests<br>2. Levites<br>3. Israelites (full)                    |
| (b) | 4. Illegitimate children of priests<br>5. Proselytes<br>6. Freedmen |
| (c) | 7. Bastards<br>8. Temple slaves<br>9. Fatherless<br>10. Foundlings  |

Table 6. M. Kiddushin's society. (Adapted from Jeremias. J. 1969:272)

The fatherless and the foundlings were forbidden to marry with both Israelites of pure descent or with illegitimate children of priests, because their father was unknown (Jeremias 1969:343).

Jesus broke these forms of the patriarchal family structures in the name of God the Father. He set the natural right of women to equal humanity with men. He taught them (Cf. Mt 14:21; 27:55; Lk 8:1-3) while women were not taught the Torah in the time of Jesus (Cf. "The words of the Torah should rather be burnt than taught to women"- R. Eliezer, A.D. 90, Jer. Sota 19a 8, quoted from Hamerton-Kelly 1979:55). Jesus paid special attention to mothers and children (Mk 10:14). He entrusted to women the initial witness to his resurrection. His message was that God is a father who frees us from oppression. These Jesus' interactions and respect for women and children influenced to advance their treatment and even social status (Koop 1989:81).

Interestingly, according to statistics, the Gospel of Mark which is the oldest Gospel, has four references of God as Father, the second oldest Gospel, the Gospel of Luke has referred to God as Father, seventeen times, Matthew contains forty-five, and the youngest, the Gospel of John, has one hundred fifteen. The designation of God as

Father occurs approximately 260 times in the New Testament, not including father metaphors. Jesus alone refers to God as “my Father” or as “the Father”, in relationship to “the Son” (Juel 1993:59-60; Feldmeier & Spieckermann 2011:50, 53).

“Father” has become God’s name as Jesus called God his Father:

...His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” “Why were you searching for me?” He asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:48-49 NIV).

To call God the “our Father” brings a new family into being whose father is God and whose ties are the free adherence of faith, and even though not blood related but doing God’s will make one a member of God’s family. Jesus, as “the Son”, reveals God as ‘the Father’. Jesus describes God with the symbol “father” not only religious tradition, but also on his own eternal experience. Following Jesus means to enter into the new family of God which is restored on the basis of free choice and obedience (McKee 1993:95-96; Haight 1999:115-118; Mk. 3:33-34).

Jesus not only refers to God in familial terms but in the Lord’s Prayer, He directs his disciples to call on the Lord with the same level of intimacy.

The Lord’s Prayer shows “Our Father, who art in heaven...”, as a special appellation for God (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). It reveals Jesus to be the Son of God. This term is the Aramaic “*Abba*,” comes from a babble-word (German: *Lallform*) used by small children of their fathers. “*Abba*” was a word from everyday speech of the family, and while a Jew never addressed God as “*Abba*,” Jesus always calls God, “*Abba*- Father” (Hamerton-Kelly 1979:72; Wilson-Kastner 1993: 113-114; Wright 1996:14-15).

Jesus’ life begins and ends with “*Abba*”. When He prayed in Gethsemane, He spoke the typical words used at the Passover meal when the eldest son asked his father if the cup could be handed to someone (Van Aarde 2001:195).

This *Abba* is the God of Israel, the God of the Old Testament, but is now

experienced in a fresh, intimate, fatherly way. The Lord's Prayer reveals God the Father to be the one who controls the history of humanity, gives us forgiveness and reconciliation, and in sustenance in temptation. Most of all, "*Abba*" is an address of deepest intimacy which only the son could use. Jesus admitted his disciples and people to the privilege of divine sonship and daughterhood, the right to call God "*Abba*" in giving this prayer (Ayo 1992:21-22; Haight 1999:111).

As is well known, there are petitions to the Father in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9-14). With this prayer, Jesus invites his followers to discover that God is "our Father" and they belong to God.

-When Jesus called God, "*Abba- Father*", recalls God's goodness toward his children, which was the Promised Land and posterity to the fathers, and liberated their offspring from the Egypt. For Israel to call God was to hold on to the hope of liberty, and the hope of the coming of the Kingdom of God (Wright 1996:14-16).

- Children rely upon their parents for the supply of their wants. "Give us this day our daily bread" means that our 'Father' will give us all that we need, not least healing, forgiveness, support, and courage, in every other department of our lives. But it means not only physical bread but also the food of the Messianic banquet to the renewed children of God, and the marriage feast of the lamb which the children of God shall celebrate when the kingdom of God comes (Isa. 25:6-8). It is asking God to sustain our hope for the future (McKee 1993:100-101; Wright 1996:38).

- "Forgive us our trespasses" reminds of the parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32), that can be called the parable of the running father. 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us' this clause tells that God's forgiveness of us is connected with our forgiveness and reconciliation of each other. Jesus says that "heavenly Father" would not forgive us unless you each forgive your brother from your hearts. Prayer and the lives of children of God are locked indissolubly together (Matt 6:14-15; 18:35; McKee 1993:103;

Wright 1996:50).

- Lead us not into temptation means to be sustained in the midst of the temptation, rather than a request to be rid from temptation altogether. Jesus intends the children of God to recognise not only the reality of evil but the reality of his victory over it in Gethsemane and on Calvary. (Hamerton-Kelly 1979:75-76; Wright 1996:72).

The images that Jesus uses to explain “God as Father,” subverted the image of God in the Old Testaments. Jesus does so almost immediately in the last section of the trilogy of the parable of the lost son to give his people understanding the image of God. In the story of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32), God was the overjoyed father who welcomed his wayward son with no reservations, no desire for revenge and no need to punish the penitent son but rather gave a banquet. The first-born son who refused to join the banquet listened to the father who had been as generous with the obedient son, “...everything I have is yours...” At the centre of this parable, stands not the lost son but the loving father. When Jesus told this parable (Lk 15:3) to his disciples, He had in mind, not ‘Be holy, as the LORD your God is holy’, but ‘Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate’ (Lk 6:36) (Jacobs-Malina 1993:45-47). Borg (1984:123-134) referred to this prodigal son’s story as “the Mercy Code” and believes Jesus was quite deliberate in formulating it in contrast to “the Holiness Code.”

The Gospel of John presents the relationship between the Father and the Son as a relationship of love. In the Old Testament, the proper name of God was YHWH. But in the New Testament, the name “Father” *πατηρ* who implies the child is employed for God, and definitively becomes the new proper name of God through Jesus, the Son of God, for all who are united to the Son of God in faith (Feldmeier & Spieckermann 2011:49).

Jesus at this time of his life was, in fact, both alienated from his parental family and had no alternative biological family of his own. In fact, the mission He was on, and the people who were gathering around him were his true family and were

replacing his biological family. He functioned as a spiritual “father” in the midst of a growing spiritual family (Mk 3:31-35; Miller 1989:94-95).

For in him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ (Act. 17:28 NIV)

In Jesus’ era people, under laws of Rome, tended to believe in a punitive and irascible God. The wrathful God and the powerful paterfamilias were compatible concepts reinforcing them and may well provide a historical background to concepts of the father’s role in current culture (Nash 1976:69-70; Levin 2006).

In contrast, Jesus was called the Son of God who revealed the Father God to his disciples. He reveals God as Father, his graciousness of God, his forgiveness and salvation through faith as stated in the New Testament on every page. He also emphasised the love of God. Through Jesus, believers were able to come to God as Father, and through faith in the Son of God they could become the sons and daughters of God Father (Jn 3:36; Rom 8:14-17; Hellerman 2001: 64-68).

### **3.3 God as Father in the Pauline literature**

The first writer of the New Testament, the apostle Paul attributed thirteen books of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Paul considered Gentile converts using the metaphor of adoption to justify their status as Abraham’s children (Gal. 4:1-7; Cf. Wright 2013; Marshall 2008; Levin 2006). Adoption was a common Roman practice. Augustus Caesar, the adopted grandnephew of Julius, in turn adopted his two stepsons, Tiberius and Drusus. Adoption was intended for the adoptive father, as a means of ensuring the continuity of the family’s name, wealth and rites through an appropriate heir (Jensen 2012: 60).

In his letters to the Galatians and to the Romans contain the most explicit statements of the Christian life as membership by adoption in the family of God. In

Galatians 3:13-16; 3:26-29; 4:6-7, God promised Abraham a “seed” with only one descendant in mind, namely Jesus:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal 3:26-29 NIV).

Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba*, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir (Gal 4:6-7 NIV; Cf. Rom 8:12-17).

In both Galatians and Romans, the sonship of God is introduced as that status which marks a clear break with the old slavery and destiny of death, which points directly to eternal life - to the inheritance. Paul assumed the Aramaic form of address ‘*Abba*’ as evidence of the status of a child of God enabled through Christ Jesus not only in the Galatian congregations, but also in the unfamiliar Roman congregations. These scriptures say that those who believe in Christ Jesus have the inheritance as the offspring of Abraham with God’s promises. To him, therefore, Christians have identified themselves with the heir of the blessings not only promised to Abraham, but also to the children of God (Ayo 1992:23-24; White 1999:207-210; Feldmeier & Spieckermann 2011:51).

Wright (2013:238) says that:

The soteriology of Romans and the ecclesiology of Galatians, and behind both of them the vision of God’s faithfulness and truth, hinges for Paul on his belief that in the crucified and risen Messiah God had done what he told Abraham he would do. Abraham is therefore the father of all believers, not ‘according to the flesh’, but according to grace. The ungodly have been justified. That, according to Paul, is the patriarch’s reward.

Paul used the metaphor of adoption, where blood relationships between a father and his children were not of the utmost importance. Paul's expression "children of God" means not necessarily biological children of Abraham rather the conviction that believers are not by nature children of God, but on the basis of their being bound to Jesus, the Son of God. Therefore, Gentiles could become part of God's household through Jesus, "Son of God" (van Aarde 2001:155, 196; Feldmeier & Spieckermann 2011:51).

Paul shows the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ, and God deals with Jews and Gentiles in the same way - all believers are sons of God, all are the seed of Abraham. Christ is the connecting link between Gentiles and the fulfilment of God's promise that Abraham would father many nations. The New Testament can no longer speak about God without reference to the Son and the adopted children through the "Spirit of the Son" (Gal 4:5-6; Rom. 3:29-30) (White 1999:223-236).

In the teaching of Paul there is a certain tension between the home and church, between the biological family and the spiritual family. After Jesus who functioned as a spiritual father, Paul led a movement to make circumcision optional as a family ritual among Gentile converts. The biological father-ritual shifted to spiritual family-ritual (congregation). In addition, in the Christian tradition, more emphasis was placed on the qualities of men as spiritual fathers (or leaders) of congregations or churches than on their role as biological fathers in their own families (Matzner-Bekerman 1984:44; Hellerman 2001:21-15).

The term "Father" is a relational concept about the relationship between a father and his children. When God's proper name became "Father", He remains the God of mercy, goodness, and love. As used by Jesus, "Father" became a significant term which not only expressed the unique paternal relationship of God to Jesus, but also the paternal relationship of God to the disciples (Mt 19:17; 23:9). The love of the Father is revealed in the suffering of the Son. Through the death and resurrection of the Son, all the believers (Jews and Gentiles) call God as "Father" and He became the head of the spiritual family (Eph 1:22-23).

To understand the father and his role in the family, sections 2.1 and 2.2 have looked at the fatherhood of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament on the relationship between God the Father and his people. God the Father delivered his people from Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. He became their Father through his covenant and protected them as his children. But even his people turned against their Father, He provided the way of salvation through his suffering Son Jesus not only for Jews but also for all nations.

Next, it is important to ask how the father is described in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Practical theology implies that youth ministry is interdisciplinary because youth ministry utilises both sociology and psychology. It is, therefore, necessary to review the concept of a father from psychoanalytical, psychological, and historical perspectives to deal with father and family relationships, and the role the father has in child and adolescent development. Through these humanities and social science, the importance of the father's role of South African fathers in their history will be handled and evaluated.

## Chapter 3

### Father and adolescent

#### 1. Introduction

As generally known, adolescents are in a period of transition and change with their rapid physical growth and sexual maturation. Adolescents move from childhood to adulthood, not only their bodies but also their minds, emotions and even their faith.

The father has an enormous influence on the development of his children when they are searching for models during adolescence. In all societies, adolescence from the Latin word "*adolescere*", meaning to grow up or to grow into maturity, is a time for a change both psychosocial and biological to cease to be seen as children and to be given the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of adults (Macmillan Dictionary 1981).

Koteskey (1991:42-43) defines adolescence as the time between puberty and adulthood; the period includes the transformation to biological and social adulthood. Puberty is the age of sexual maturity; in other words, it is the age at which people become capable of having children.

Kirgiss (2015:36) uses the term 'adolescence' to indicate the stage of life that includes the latter part of middle school and all of high school, and an unspecified amount of college.

Adolescents today differ from the adolescents of the previous generation. So sometimes adults cynically regard adolescence as a "disease" that only time can cure, suggesting that parents would do well to leave them alone. One of the new words in South Korea is 'Grade 8/9 disease' which means that the way of talking and the behaviour of the age of Gr.8 or Gr. 9 who are rebellious and discontented with their parents and society. For example, in 2012, a survey questioned 8,745 youths, from primary school to high school: 2,043 (23.4%) respondents have thought about suicide, and 875 among them were gr. 8's and 9's. (Cf. www. Joongang. co.kr. 2012.

Dec. 25).

As stated above, adolescence is the period of rapid growth between childhood and adulthood. Specific aspects of adolescent development, for example, puberty development, cognitive development and psychosocial development, have been found to be influenced by fathers even though the relationships of the father and the adolescent changes during adolescence where it can become a strained relationship (Collins & Laursen 2004:331; Santrock 2007:17).

Pickhardt (2007:19-20) says that there are three problems why fathers disconnect from their adolescents; the problem of grief from loss, the problem of performance failure, and the problem of increased conflict. Although fathers have such problems with their adolescents it is clear that they are hidden contributors to their teenagers' psychological development.

Chapter 2 reviewed the concepts of a 'father' and the role of the father from biblical perspectives. With these in mind, this chapter will deal with the father's role with the theories of cognitive, moral, psychological, gender, and faith development.

Youth pastors and youth workers are expected to be knowledgeable on all matters relating to adolescent culture and adolescent developmental processes in order to be able for shepherding and pastoring of youth.

Thus, the theory of Piaget, Kohlberg, Freud, Erikson, and Bandura will be reviewed as it relates to the topic. With James Fowler's Stage of Faith, this study will focus on the relationship between adolescents and their parents and significant adults because parents and significant adults play an important role in the faith development of adolescents.

## **2. Father and the theories of child and adolescent development**

Psychological development is complicated, and potential influences are multifarious. Many psychologists have studied children and adolescents in their psychological development. They have also researched the influence the role of the father has on a child and an adolescent in moral development such as sex-role development, cognitive and intellectual development. The findings of nurturing fathers contribute greatly to the psychological adjustment of their children. The father's role is as important in children and adolescent development as the mother's influence. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the theories of moral development such as psychoanalytic view, social learning theory, cognitive and intellectual development, and sex-role development.

### **2.1 The theories of moral development**

Moral development is based at any age on the conceptual capabilities of the child, self-understanding, and the networks of social relationships that guide moral conduct. All cultures have general guidelines for social behaviour, and a child has to learn these standards as a member of the society, such as helping, volunteering, morality, fairness and everyday treatment of others with kindness (Thompson 2009:163; Jacobson 2011:63).

#### **2.1.1 Piaget's theory**

Psychologists approach the study of moral development from various perspectives. Cognitive development is one of the major theories of moral development. Cognition refers to the processes or faculties by which knowledge is acquired and manipulated. Development means changes in structure or function over time (Bjorklund 1995:3-4).

Jean Piaget (1896-1980), a Swiss psychologist, has had a greater influence on how cognitive development is viewed and studied than any other theorist. In his

theory cognition begins with reflexes, then moves through a sensorimotor stage, the end of which is marked by the emergence of symbolic thought (Piaget 1977:25). There then follows a preoperational stage, a concrete operational stage, and a formal operational stage. Children’s thinking at any given age reflects a unique way of interpreting the world. Children are seekers of stimulation who act upon their environment as much as their environment acts upon them. Each stage is characterised by a particular type of cognitive structure which plays a key role in Piaget’s theory. (McShane 1991:5; Gupta & Richardson 1995:7; Bjorklund 1995:55). Table 5 gives a brief overview of Piaget’s theory.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Approximate age</b>
<b>Sensorimotor</b>	Physically exploring the environment resulting in behavioural schemata	Birth to 2 years
<b>Preoperational</b>	Constructing mental symbols to understand reality	2 years to 7 years
<b>Concrete Operations</b>	Using mental schemata to understand and act on reality	7 years to 12 years
<b>Formal Operations</b>	Using more abstract, flexible mental schemata to understand and act on reality	12 or 13 years and beyond

Table 7. Piaget's stages of cognitive development. (Adapted from Balk 1995:109).

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:39) say that cognitive development is the continuous and cumulative development of the intellect, and it proceeds at the individual’s own tempo, including perception, conceptualisation, insight, knowledge, imagination and intuition.

Cognitive abilities and learning have a close relationship. Achievement in the academic domain is a function of the standard used for the assessment of

performance. Adolescents who are capable of formal-operational thought are ready to use sophisticated mnemonic techniques, with the result that they are able to accomplish intellectual tasks more rapidly and effectively (Gouws & Kruger 1994:54).

Supportive parenting practices convey the broader construct of parental responsiveness and warmth to children and include behaviour related to acceptance, affection, nurturance, and companionship. Parental support can be conveyed through verbal expressions of love and caring, as well as nonverbal behaviour including physical affection in the form of hugs and kisses (Rohner 2004). Supportive parental behaviour facilitates positive relationship outcomes such as secure attachment, and positive child outcomes such as academic achievement, self-concept development (Kerns, Tomich, Aspelmeier, & Contreras 2000; Karavasilis, Doyle, & Markiewicz 2003; Bush, Peterson, Cobas, & Supple 2002; Bean, Bush, McKenry, & Wilson 2003).

Paternal involvement, particularly the nurturing that fathers provide for infants, has implications for children's intellectual outcomes. For example, the resident fathers' involvement is significantly related to children's performance on verbal IQ and cognitive ability (Radin 1981:379-428; Osborn & Morris 1982; Bronte-Tinker, Carrano, Horowitz, & Kinukawa 2008). Father-child talk uniquely influences language outcomes in young children because men tend to use more imperative language, a more complex vocabulary, and more attention-getting phrases than do women (Lewis 1997:121-142).

Many researchers found that in the academic realm fathers influence their children by providing direct instruction or explicit training which is seen most frequently.

Blanchard & Biller (1971:301-305) found that third-grade boys whose fathers interacted frequently with them (more than 2 hours per day) received higher grades than boys whose fathers infrequently (less than 6 hours per week) interacted with them. The interaction between father and son is positively correlated with measures of the son's cognitive functioning. Fathers affect their adult daughters' (up to 18 years old) academic and career achievements (Chhin, Bleeker, & Jacobs 2008).

Piaget (1972:1-12) states that adolescents experience changes at the cognitive level from concrete to formal operations. The concept of formal operations to define the adolescent stage is characterised by the development of abstract thinking and hypothetical reasoning.

As the adolescent develops the capacity for abstract thinking, effective responses toward ideas (such as justice, liberty, freedom) and the various dimensions of social reality (poverty, capitalism, social issues etc...) also unfold (Shelton 1989:37).

The formal operational stage marks a movement from an ability to think and reason about concrete visible events to an ability to think hypothetically; to entertain what-if possibilities about the world. The cognitive structures of this stage can be characterised by four rules for manipulating the content of thought: identity, negation, reciprocity, and correlativity. The core of adolescent cognitive development can be identified- cognitive as reasoning, cognitive as processing, and cognitive as expertise (McShane 1995:23-24; Keating 2004:55-67).

Shaw and White (1965:10-13) investigated high school students with above-average or better. They perceived themselves as more similar to their fathers than boys with a below B average. Father and son self-ratings were correlated in the high-achieving group but not in the low-achieving group (Cf. Silbereisen & Todt et al., 1994).

The correlation between paternal nurturance and the child's intellectual functioning was higher for boys than for girls. Boys who underachieved have inadequate relationships with their fathers with the feeling of rejection or hostility. In contrast, high achieving boys want to be with their fathers more than low achieving boys and perceive themselves as more like their fathers. It seems that paternal encouragement of intellectual performance is correlated with achievement. Paternal warmth is correlated with a child's feeling of self-esteem (Jordan, Radin, & Epstein 1975:407-408; Cf. Hurley 1967, Solomon 1969; Flouri & Buchanan 2004).

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description of a child's thinking</b>	<b>Age</b>
<b>Preconceptual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• imitative language, only partially understood</li> <li>• objects seem stable, not able to grasp changing shapes due to perspective</li> <li>• beginning to distinguish between past, present, and future</li> <li>• the reasoning is by analogy to experiences</li> </ul>	1 – 7
<b>Intuitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language and thought still tied to phenomenal experience: words represent the child's own experiences and perceptions (a bottle is "where you put water")</li> <li>• comprehends and can respond to complex adult language, but does not understand such processes as conservation (the transfer of a principle or characteristic across situations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• objects now maintain identity despite changes in position perspective</li> <li>• number sense develops with the ability to measure the quantity</li> <li>• can compensate fully for perspective changes caused by a change in position</li> <li>• time sense is still personalised, and interactions between time, distance, speed, etc. not grasped</li> <li>• great interest in explaining causes of what is observed, understanding of causes still highly intuitive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	4 – 7
<b>Concrete Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can trace the change in states through complex series rather than rely on the impression of a particular observed state</li> <li>• can take others' points of view and integrate their perspective with his own</li> <li>• can begin to distinguish variables that cause change and mentally predict changes</li> <li>• capacities to perceive objects, numbers, time, space all significantly developed</li> <li>• mechanical explanations of cause are given priority (clouds move because the winds push)</li> </ul>	7 - 10
<b>Formal Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only now does the ability to think about thought – to explore relations between the real and the possible development, "adult" kinds of thinking becomes possible</li> </ul>	10- 15

Table 8. Piaget's structural stages (Piaget 2001:131-170; Cf. Bjorklund1995:91-92). (Adapted from Richards 1983:100).

Wojtkiewicz (1993:701-716) found that the effects of the parental structure during childhood and adolescence on educational attainment have grown more complex over time. Adolescents who have lived with both parents from birth to age 15, their high school graduation rates were 91%. Those who lived with mother-stepfather for a long duration had a low high school graduation rate. The lowest rates were for those who lived with mother only. Income was an important factor for education. Much of the negative effect of living in mother-only families is due to low income.

As a consequence, with data Radin (1988:140-141) conjectures that high father involvement in child care will have beneficial effects on a child's cognitive growth, and intellectual functioning, particularly with mathematical ability.

### **2.1.2 Kohlberg's theory**

Kohlberg (1927-1987) was an American psychologist best known for his theory of stages of moral development. Kohlberg (1976:31-53) described six stages of moral development based on Piaget's stage sequence. Kohlberg believed that an individual's level of moral reasoning is based on his/her level of cognitive development.

Most children under the age of 9 operate at a pre-conventional level of moral reasoning. This level of moral reasoning applies to some adolescents and to many criminal offenders. At the *preconventional level* are stage 1, defined by punishment and obedience orientation, and stage 2, marked by instrumental relativist orientation. Conventional moral reasoning is the level at which most adolescents and adults operate. At the *conventional level* are stage 3, the interpersonal concordance or good-boy orientation, and stage 4, the authority and social order orientation. *Post conventional* moral reasoning – considered to involve a minority of adult-based moral behaviour on a personal formulation of and commitment to the principles upon which societal rules are grounded. At this principled level are stage 5, social contract orientation, and stage 6, the individual principles orientation (Kohlberg 1981, 1984; Lehalle 2006:119-120; See Table 9).

Levels and stages	
<p><b>Level I.</b> <b>Pre-conventional level (ages 4-10)</b></p>	<p>Concepts of right and wrong are based on external punishment and reward. Level 1 is characteristic of children functioning at a concrete operational level.</p>
<p><b>Stage 1</b> Punishment and obedience orientation</p>	<p>“Good” or “bad” is determined by obedience to rules and authority. There is unquestioning deference to authority figures.</p>
<p><b>Stage 2</b> Naïve instrumental hedonism</p>	<p>Behaviour which satisfies oneself (and occasionally others) is defined as “right”. There is evidence of a kind of reciprocity, but it takes the form of “you help me and I’ll help you” rather than being based on any idea of justice.</p>
<p><b>Level II.</b> <b>Conventional level (ages 10-13)</b></p>	<p>Concern for maintaining the accepted social order and living up to the expectations of others; characteristic of older children and younger adolescents functioning at a formal operational level.</p>
<p><b>Stage 3</b> Morality of maintaining good relations</p>	<p>Goodness is based on pleasing and helping others. The intentions of others (“meaning well”) are considered in making moral judgments.</p>
<p><b>Stage 4</b> Authority and social order orientation</p>	<p>“Rightness” is defined as doing one’s duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the social order for its own sake (“law and order” viewpoint). Individuals can see that others have legitimate rights and expectations.</p>
<p><b>Level III.</b> <b>Post conventional level (ages 13+ )</b></p>	<p>Morality is defined as conformity to shared standards; but only insofar as they serve human ends; it is acknowledged that conflicts can exist between two socially accepted standards; Level III is reached by very few, although theoretically is attainable by adolescents at a formal operational level.</p>
<p><b>Stage 5</b> Contractual legalistic orientation</p>	<p>Right and wrong are defined in terms of mutually agreed upon rules or laws (contracts). Such rules are acknowledged to be arbitrary and sometimes unjust but are generally accepted as the ultimate criterion of what is right.</p>
<p><b>Stage 6</b> Conscience or principle orientation</p>	<p>Right is defined in terms of universal principles of justice, equality, and human rights which go beyond laws, agreed upon rules, or social standards. Actions are based on these principles of conscience, regardless of the reactions of others, in order to avoid self-condemnation and guilt. Unjust civil laws may be broken when a higher morality than the existing law is recognised.</p>

Table 9. Kohlberg’s stages of moral development. (Adapted from Lawrence Kohlberg & Richard Kramer 1969; Cf. Balk 1995:187; Shelton 1989:43-45).

Kohlberg does not view the family as particularly essential for moral development and does not deal separately with the father's role. Kohlberg (1969:399) states that:

Family participation is not unique or critically necessary for moral development, and the dimensions on which it stimulates moral development are primarily general dimensions by which other primary groups stimulate moral development.

He sees the father's role as not unique in children's moral development and no difference between boys and girls in moral development.

On the contrary, several studies (Greif 1976:225-229; Walker & Hennig 1999; Hoffman 2000; Eisenberg & Morris 2004:163-165) have been conducted on the relation of the father to a child's moral development with several aspects such as aggression, dependency, generosity, honesty, and delinquency. They found that a father's interactions with his child influence the child's moral development;

- generous boys perceived their fathers as warmer and more nurturing,
- fathers of aggressive males caused aggression in their son,
- the child who did not violate the prohibition against cheating perceived his father more positively than a child who violated the prohibition, and
- lax or overstrict paternal discipline is related to juvenile delinquency.

They suggest that the nurturing style of father provides the child with a good model and motivates him to adopt his father's behaviour.

In the case of Juvenile delinquency, many reasons are advanced for delinquency. Especially, psychopathic delinquents have a distinctive personality that may be caused by the following factors:

- rejection in childhood

- aggressive behaviour as a reaction to rejection and to observing aggressive models
- lack of support for social achievement in school (Gouws & Kruger 1994:135).

Duncan (1978:11-114) found that parents encourage their adolescents' use of drugs by their own use of psychoactive drugs, and in their attitude towards their adolescents. Drug abuse is often related to family stress such as arguments with parents, change in financial status, and increased arguments between parents (Cf. Costello, Erkanli, Federman, & Angold 1999; Hill, Shen, Lowers, & Locke 2000; Chassin, Pitts, & Prost 2002; Chassin, Nussong, Barrera, Molina, Trim, & Ritter 2004: 671-672).

Herold & Marshall (1996:80) found that aggressive male adolescents who have aggressive fathers, especially sexually, are more likely to be hostile to female adolescents, use alcohol frequently, and be part of peer groups that view women primarily as sex objects (Cf. Muehlenhard 1995).

Collins & Laursen (2004:331-354) examined several different moral character types among adolescents and found that different family interaction styles were related to moral character types. Adolescents' characters appear to be predominantly shaped by the intimate, emotionally powerful relationship between child and parents, within the family (Cf. Peck & Havighurst 1960:175; Steinberg 2001; Steinberg & Silk 2002:103-134). There is a lack of clarity between the father's role and the mother's role, but it seems that the father is important as a background figure for the child to develop his or her moral character.

In the same context, Weisbroth (1970: 396-402) described the relationship between Kohlberg's moral reasoning stages and parental identification for male and female adults. As a result, for males, identification with both parents was related to high moral judgments, and for females, identification with the father was related to high moral judgment. He suggests that the father plays an important role in moral development.

Several researchers (Biller & Bahm 1971:178-181; Eisenberg & Morris 2004:163-165) found that fathers have a significant impact on their children's moral development. Father-child relationships have different effects on boys and girls, fathering having a larger impact on boys. Fatherless boys are more likely to suffer from emotional and social problems than other boys. A positive relationship between the father and adolescent reduces the "flight to deviant peers," which is often observed among adolescents with troubled, disrupted, or conflicted family lives (Oetting & Donnermeyer 1998:995-1026).

When fathers have close and warm relationships with their children and a positive approach towards involvement in childrearing, the children are advantageous in their moral development.

### **2.1.3 Freud's theory**

Psychoanalysis is a system of psychological theory and therapy which aims to treat mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind by techniques such as dream interpretation, free association. Psychoanalysis is constitutive of three things primarily: 1. A method of investigating the mind and especially the unconscious mind; 2. A therapy of neurosis inspired by the above method; 3. A new self-standing discipline based on the knowledge gained from the application of the investigative method and clinical experiments (Ellenberger 1994:510-546; Cf. Hobdell 1995).

The psychoanalytic view of moral development is established by Freud (1856-1939) in 1923 and is concerned with internal aspects of moral development. He had used a topographical model that was based on the seemingly simple opposition between the mind's conscious and unconscious part. Deigh (1996:65) explains the mind's conscious and unconscious:

The conscious part he located at and near the surface of the mind, where via sensory stimulation it came into contact with its environment and where deliberation and decision making about how best to adapt to the environment occurred. The unconscious he located in the mind's interior, where inherited drives, which is to say, instincts, had their source and where many thoughts and ideas the awareness of which would produce distress were buried.

Freud emphasised the importance of the unconscious mind which governs behaviour to a greater degree than people suspect. Due to his theory's influence in psychology it is necessary to give concern to his study (Balk 1995:11-12).

According to Freud moral development occurs during the early years of life, with parents as the major influence (Greif 1976:221). When the phallic stage begins (around age 3 or 4), development for boys and girls diverges. What is a figure of a father to Freud? What understanding of paternity and the role of fatherhood is necessary in order for the Oedipus complex to occur?

The Oedipus story in Greek mythology explains the war between a father and a son. In that story, Oedipus is a king who unwittingly kills his father and married his mother. The discovery of the Oedipus complex in Freud's self-analysis has no other significance: desire is structured as human desire in a triangular relation, a prohibition, a death wish, a lost object. Freud discovered how essential fathers were to the formation of the conscience in young children during their oedipal years from three to six. While boys experience the oedipal complex, girls undergo the Electra complex. Girls derive a great deal of self-confidence from their fathers so-called Electra complex (Cf. Electra who killed her mother Clytemnestra, because her mother killed her father Agamemnon). The fathers are not just strong, but warm and supportive towards their daughters. In contrast to boys, girls must eventually desexualise the paternal tie and let go of their competitive posture toward the mother if they are to recover an identity more in line with hers and marry someone in their age group (Balk 1995:14-15; Leonard 1966:325-334).

Freud focused on boys to identify with their father during the oedipal years. For example, Socarides (1982:512) reported that two-thirds of four hundred adult homosexual men suffered from a blurring of the boundaries between themselves and their mothers and an acute gender confusion. He wrote that this was due to an experience with “crushing mothers” and “abdicating fathers” already during the very earliest pre-oedipal years of their lives. He suggested that the father’s libidinal and aggressive availability is a major requirement for the development of gender identity in his children.

Ricoeur (1970:447) says that:

The father complex has indeed a double valency; on the one hand it forces one to abandon the position of infancy and thus it functions as a law; but at the same time, it holds any subsequent formation of ideals within the network of dependence, fear, prevention of punishment, desire for consolation. It is against the background of the archaism of a figure irremediably attached to our infancy that we must overcome, each in his own turn, the archaism of our desire.

In Freud’s concept of the Oedipus complex explains how to structure the relationship between the real subject of sexuality, the narcissistic relation with the image of the (m)other, and the symbolic intervention of the father (Samuels 1993:59-74). The Oedipal child is in love with his mother and that the father represents a threat to this imaginary love relation. And the renunciation of aggression against the father brings the child to genuine guilt. The child accomplishes the renunciation by identifying with the authority, the loved and hated father (Cavell 1993:215). Thus, while the father may be the locus of a prohibition, this prohibition also applies to the “law-giver” himself, turning him into a symbolic father (Weber 1991:147).

Freud also turned to anthropological studies of totemism and argued that totemism reflected a ritualised enactment of a tribal Oedipal conflict.

Freud (1913:216) said that taboos (prohibitions) concerned actions for which there existed a strong desire, and maintained themselves from generation to generation,

perhaps only as the result of a tradition set up by paternal and social authority. In the Oedipus and castration complex the father plays the same role as the feared opponent to the infantile sexual interests. Castration and its substitute through blinding is the punishment he threatens. Ricoeur (2012:55) said that what the theory will articulate as a symbolic castration is the initial relation of desire that includes an agency of prohibition, which imposes ideals, experienced by the child at the level of fantasy as a paternal threat directed against his sexual activities.

This Oedipal desire is overcome through the internalisation of the superego which represents identification with the symbolic law of the father. The Oedipus complex has a resolution in that the subject no longer desires the mother but identifies with what the father desires (Samuels 1993:28).

According to Ricoeur (1970:192), Freud concludes that:

The story of Oedipus is the reaction of the imagination to these two typical dreams (of possessing one's mother and of the death of one's father). And just as these dreams, when dreamt by adults, are accompanied by feelings of repulsion, so too the legend must include horror and self-punishment.

As for religion, Freud (Ricoeur 1970:242-243) defines as the series of attempts to resolve the emotional problem posed by the murder and the guilt and to bring about reconciliation with the offended father. Religion is not only repentance, but also the disguised remembrance of the triumph over the father, the son's efforts to put himself in the place of the father-god. Christ is the son who sacrificed himself and so redeemed the company of brothers from original sin. In this sacrifice the guilt from the killing of the father is avowed and expiated, and the son becomes the god, replacing the father religion by a son religion. A clear expression of this ambivalence is the revival of the totem meal in the Eucharist: its meaning is both the reconciliation with the father and the substitution of the son for the father, with the faithful consuming the son's flesh and blood. The old God, the Father, took second place; Christ, the Son, stood in his stead, just as in those dark times every son had longed

to do (Freud 1939:141).

Freud recognised the role of the father to differ, depending on the age of the child, the developmental phase under consideration, and the nature and quality of the relationship between the father and the child. The father was seen as the loved and hated protector or as a punishing, inhibiting, and castrating figure (Freud 1939: 158-159).

### 2.1.4 Erikson's theory

Erik H. Erikson (1902-1994) was born in Germany. He was raised by his mother and stepfather who were Jewish. He was a Gentile in his stepfather's synagogue because he resembled his natural father, Dane. To his classmates, he was a Jew. "Who am I?" was a question in his early years. As a youth, he faced another issue of self-identity that Erikson would later label as an identity crisis (Newman & Newman 1997:60-61).

Erikson, a neo-Freudian psychoanalyst, expended Freud's five development stages to eight in order to include the developing concerns of the various seasons of adulthood (See Table 10).

Erikson's stages	Age	Freud's stages
<b>Basic Trust vs. Mistrust</b>	Infancy	Oral
<b>Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt</b>	Early childhood	Anal
<b>Initiative vs. Guilt</b>	Play age	Phallic
<b>Industry vs. Inferiority</b>	School-age	Latency
<b>Identity vs. Role confusion</b>	Adolescence	Genital
<b>Intimacy vs. Isolation</b>	Young adulthood	No corresponding stage
<b>Generativity vs. Self-absorption</b>	Middle adulthood	No corresponding stage
<b>Integrity vs. Despair</b>	Later adulthood	No corresponding stage

Table 10. Erikson's eight stages of man and Freud's corresponding psychosexual stages (Adapted from Lloyd 1985:18).

He described the stages of human life and has influenced people's understanding of the human psyche. For example, the first stage of psychosocial development is labelled the stage of trust versus mistrust because of two possible major outcomes: (1) a warm, loving relationship with the mother during infancy may lead to a basic sense of trust in people and the world, (2) a cold, non-gratifying relationship with significant others may lead to a pervasive sense of mistrust. If the conflict is resolved successfully, a positive quality (for example, identity achievement for adolescents) is built into the personality and further development takes place. If the conflict persists or is resolved unsatisfactorily, the ego is damaged because a negative quality (Role confusion) is incorporated into it (Rice & Dolgin 2005:28). Each stage builds on those which have proceeded. Sometimes that which was resolved at a prior life stage must be reworked during the crisis of a later stage. It is possible for a person to stop maturing and even regress (Harris 1981:48; Martinson 1988:35; Balk 1995:20-24). Erikson's eight stages are outlined in Table 11.

<b>Stage of development</b>	<b>Crisis</b>	<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Significant person</b>
<b>Infancy (Birth – 1 year)</b>	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope or withdrawal	Mother
<b>Early childhood (1 – 3 years)</b>	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Will or compulsion	Parents
<b>Play age (3 – 6 years)</b>	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose or inhibition	Family
<b>School ages (6 – 12 years)</b>	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competence or inertia	Neighbourhood, teacher, school
<b>Adolescence (12 – 17 years)</b>	Identity vs. Role confusion	Fidelity or repudiation	Peer group, heroes
<b>Young adulthood</b>	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love or exclusivity	Friends, opposite sex
<b>Adulthood</b>	Generativity vs. Self-absorption	Care or rejection	Spouse, children
<b>Old age</b>	Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom or disdain	Relationships with others

Table 11. Erikson's stages of development. (Adapted from Erikson 1963:273; Richards 1983:94).

Erikson's eight ages of man presented the core of Erikson's view of psychosocial development. In Erikson's view, crisis refers to a critical point in development, an opportunity for growth or a refusal to grow. Each crisis is a turning point in development (Balk 1995:22).

The stage of Identity vs. role confusion is the adolescent stage, and Erikson (1963:262) states that:

In most instances, however, it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which disturbs individual young people. To keep themselves together they temporarily over identify, to the point of apparent complete loss of identity, with the heroes of cliques and crowds...To a considerable extent, adolescent love is an attempt to arrive at a definition of one's identity by projecting one's diffused ego image on another and by seeing it thus reflected and gradually clarified.

Erikson presented that the unsound adolescence brings to the fore of personality the psychological problem of establishing an identity. In his theory of psychosocial development, identity means a special arrangement of the self. The arrangement functions to integrate disparate roles, goals, needs, fears, skills, and inclinations into a coherent pattern, a pattern that specifies how the emerging adult will live, love, work, and believe in a complex and changing world (McAdams 2009:18; Jacobson 2011:55-56). The successful resolution of the crisis of Identity versus role confusion depends on how the individual has resolved the previous crises of childhood. Without a healthy sense of trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry, it is difficult to establish a coherent sense of identity. The way in which the adolescent resolves the crisis of identity will have an impact on his/her struggle with the crises of adulthood. Young adult must have resolved the conflict of adolescence successfully to develop a sense of identity (Steinberg 1985:253).

Pratt, Arnold, and Lawford (2009:298-312) said that Erikson considered identity and the moral self to be closely intertwined, nothing for example that "identity and fidelity are necessary for ethical strength", but also that a moral or ethical sense is the "true

criterion of identity”. The notion of identity as the key element in Erikson’s view of adolescence, moral identity can be seen as a core motivational element in the emerging self of youth. Identity formation is a lifelong process, and one’s identity is held not solely within the individual but also in who the individual is within his/her community (Cf. Jacober 2011:59)

Excessive, arbitrary, and coercive parental behaviour inhibits the development of psychological autonomy among children. Psychological control can manifest through the suppression of children’s development of psychological autonomy or through inducing guilt in children as an expression of over protectiveness as well as authoritarian control. Psychological control and particularly its power assertive quality is a negative predictor of self-esteem and academic achievement (Aunola & Nurmi 2004; Bean et al., 2003; Bush et al., 2002).

Eras and Ages	Erikson	Piaget	Kohlberg
Infancy (0-1 1/2)	Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust (Hope)	Sensorimotor	–
Early Childhood (2-6)	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (Will)	Preoperational or Intuitive	
Childhood (7-12)	Initiative vs. Guilt (Purpose)		Pre-conventional Level 1. Heteronomous Morality
	Industry vs. Inferiority (Competence)	Concrete Operational	2. Instrumental Exchange
Adolescence (13-21)	Identity vs. Role Confusion (Fidelity)	Formal Operational	Conventional Level 3. Mutual Interpersonal Relations
Young Adulthood (21-35)	Intimacy vs. Isolation (Love)	–	4. Social System and Conscience
Adulthood (35-60)	Generativity vs. Stagnation (Care)	–	Post-conventional Principled Level
Maturity (60- )	Integrity vs. Despair (Wisdom)	–	5. Social Contract, Individual Right
			6. Universal Ethical Principles

Table 12. Stages of human development: optimal parallels. (Adapted from Fowler 1981:52).

Parents who grant psychological autonomy to their children as part of their parenting behaviour provides opportunities and encouragement to the children to express their growing independence within supportive parent-child relationships. Parental psychological autonomy granting fosters positive self-worth, academic achievement, and secure attachment in children (Karavasilis et al., 2003; Bush et al., 2002; Cf. Gray & Steinberg 1999:235-265).

### **2.1.5 Bandura's theory**

Albert Bandura (1925- ) is best known for his development in social learning theory. Moral development occurs when the child imitates the actions of responsible adults and is reinforced by socially acceptable behaviour but punished for socially unacceptable behaviour (Clouse 1991:178). The most obvious social learning theory – rewarding good behaviour makes children good – was not the focus, but some attention was given to prohibitions and punishments, for example, if a child tells the truth about tearing his father's favourite book, and he is reinforced for being honest (e.g., his father thanks him for telling the truth), then he will continue to be honest. Conversely, a child will exclude from his repertoire behaviour for which he is punished. Thus, social learning theorists are concerned mainly with the behavioural aspects of morality such as lying, cheating, and stealing, rather than with emotions or moral judgments (Hoffman 2000:126-128).

Social learning theory highlights (1) the ability of humans to use symbols and to analyse their own behaviour, (2) the influence of various cognitive operations, such as self-regulatory processes, in psychological functioning, and (3) the self-initiated actions of humans to act on their environments, rather than remain passive responders to their environment (Bandura 1986:18-22; Balk 1995:26).

Social learning theorists propose that children pay great attention to some models than others and that a number of factors influence what they will do on the basis of what they learn. In many studies, parents are listed as the most significant adults in the lives of adolescent and hence the persons most likely to be modelled (Blyth, Hill,

& Thiel 1982; Galbo 1983). Adolescents discussed with their parents particularly topics that related to adolescents' social and economic functioning in adulthood such as academic, vocational, and social-ethical issues. By contrast, they discussed with their friends particularly issues concerning interpersonal relations. Adolescents who perceived high parental strictness and little opportunity for decision making were higher in extreme peer orientation (Nurmi 2004:96-97).

Feature	Psychoanalytic	Social Learning	Structural
Assumptions	Growth involves a series of personal adjustments by human beings to their social environment	The growing person is shaped by relationships with others through learning from social models	Growth is prepatterned by cognitive abilities that develop in invariant sequence
The concept of personality development	Crisis resolutions shaping the human organism	Learning a pattern of responses that make up personality	The growth of cognitive structures enabling new adaptations to social and physical environments
Primary factors in the development	Passage through a series of developmental tasks	Relationships with others	Maturing of cognitive structures
Mechanism in development	Interactions with significant persons	Socialisation, modelling, Identification, imitation reinforcement	Interaction with the physical and social environment
Impact of personal relationships	Support or inhibit successful completion of developmental tasks necessary for healthy maturity	The critical factors as development are essentially learning through social relationships how to be a human being	Vital factors stimulating growth from a lower stage of cognition to a higher stage when mental structures make such progress possible

Table 13. Comparison of theories of development. (Adapted from Richards 1983:103).

Within parent-adolescent relationships, conflict is common. The conflict has the potential to be a source of positive change and a signal that change is needed. Conflict management depends on the quality of parent-adolescent communication

and the degree of relationship closeness- such as supportiveness or attachment quality (Bush & Peterson et al., 2013:292-293). During the passage through adolescence to adulthood, they have to manage major biological, educational, and social role transitions concurrently. Social learning theory explains delinquency as a result of copying behaviour of role models who are held in high esteem and who provide rewards. The key role models in a youth's life are parents, religious leaders and peers. Parents of delinquent youths provide inconsistent discipline, show little if any regard for how their children act, and frequently behave in antisocial ways themselves. A positive bond between parent and adolescent is important (Durkin 1995:21-25; Bandura 1997:177-178).

## **2.2 Gender role development**

Sex and gender generally defined as: *sex* indicates the biological status of male or female, whereas *gender* is a label used to indicate characteristics that are believed to be learned and acquired by males or females as a result of social experience. The term 'gender role' refers to share cultural expectations about appropriate behaviour for the sexes. 'Gender typing' means the process by which individuals develop the attributes that are consistent with their gender roles (Galambos 2004:233-234). Gender role development of children has been found to be influenced directly and indirectly by their parents' behaviour and attitudes and to be modelled or imitated by their children. Parents may provide gender-typed toys or assign gender-typed chores. Parents are providing prototypes of male and female behaviour for their children. From puberty, the pressure is exerted on adolescents to display more gender-typical behaviour (McHale, Crouter & Whiteman 2003).

Freud tends to neglect the adolescent phase, but his classical psychoanalytical theories continue to exert an influence on views pertaining to adolescent personality. He divides the human life cycle into the stages of psychosexual development:

- the pregenital stage: the oral stage, the anal stage, the phallic stage

- the latent stage

- the genital stage

During adolescence, the physical changes that the adolescent experiences are coupled with the sudden awareness of their sexuality. Adolescents are passing on the genital stage which Freud describes as a period of sexual excitement, anxiety and sometimes personality disruption (Gouws & Kruger 1994:77).

Gender identity defines as the extent to which individuals see themselves as masculine and feminine (Cf. Spence & Hall 1996). Parents and other family members play a primary role in influencing children's ideas about gender and behaviour. What parents say to adolescents about gender and sexual behaviour, and how they say it influences the adolescent's sexual behaviour even though the mass media confront adolescents from all cultures with attitudes and values about sex which are completely different from their parents' value (Dilorio, Kelly, & Hockenberry-Eaton 1999:181-189; Powlishta et al., 2001:116-132; Lefkowitz & Stoppa 2006). For example, lesbian and gay parents are more likely than heterosexual parents to raise children who identify as lesbian or gay themselves. Although the vast majority of youths with lesbian/gay parents identify themselves as heterosexual and are similar to the youths of heterosexual parents in regard to same-sex attraction (Bailey, Bobrow, Wolfe, & Mikach 1995; Wainright, Russell, & Patterson 2004; Cf. Tasker & Golombok 1997).

According to Biller (1976:90-92), the quality of the father-son relationship is a more important influence on the son's masculine development than the amount of time the father spends at home. A decisive factor is the degree to which his father exhibits masculine behaviour in family interactions, and imitation of the father enhances the son's masculine development only if the father displays masculine behaviour in the presence of his son. The son's behaviour shows to be determined by his particular perception of family interactions, and his perception of his father can be influenced by father-mother interactions (Cf. Biller 1968, 1971; Steinberg 1985; Galambos:2004). For example, Lamb, Pleck, & Levine (1987:110) say that changes

in levels of paternal participation are likely to produce major changes in the experiences and responsibilities of all family members, and since changes in the psychological status of any family member may affect his or her behaviour toward the others, indirect effects on child development and adjustment may result. Similarly, Lamb (Lamb et al., 1987:13) said that as far as paternal influences on gender role development are concerned, the characteristics of the father (such as his masculinity) were much less important than his warmth and the closeness and nature of his relationship with his son.

A number of studies are on boy's attitudes to family relationships. For example, young men described their mothers as being more sensitive and emotionally closer to them than their fathers. They preferred speaking to girls about their problems more than boys. Despite this closeness to their mothers, boys tended to identify more with their fathers, while expressing a desire for a closer relationship with them. This feeling of paternal absence is described as part of 'a broader sense of something missing emotionally in the lives of boys and young men - perhaps of men in general' (Frosh, Phoenix, & Pattman 2002:34, 259).

In the gender role development of girls, the father's responding to his daughter as an interested male responds to a female appears to have a greater impact. Especially by playing the male role, fathers teach daughters the female role, the female sex-typed behaviour. According to PARTheory (Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory), rejected adolescents are at an increased risk of engaging in unhealthy relationship patterns and sexual behaviour as a way to enhance their self-esteem and cope with the pain of parental rejection. This might explain why girls who feel emotionally rejected and unsupported by fathers are at an increased risk for participating in unprotected sexual intercourse, engaging in sexual intercourse with multiple partners, and participating in sexually risky behaviour (Lopez & Corona 2012: Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer 2009; Morgan & Wilcoxon 1998). On the contrary, the quality of fathering appears to be a factor in the romantic lives of young heterosexual women. The perception of a loving father who is not rejecting and father's pressure for the daughter to achieve (interpreted as a sign of his interest and

involvement in her life) were significant factors in adult women being able to depend on their husbands (Russell & Radin 1983:195; Johnson 1977; Shaver, Belsky, & Brennan 2000).

Pickhardt (2007:178) suggests five major roles of the father on his adolescent daughter's life;

- He defines how men should be expected to treat her, and how she should be expected to treat men.
- His relationship with the other parent provides the primary model of a man's partner role.
- His respect and esteem for her will teach her about respecting and valuing herself.
- His authoritative communication about what is wise, appropriate, and right, and what is not, provide her with a reference for personal conduct.
- His consistent guardianship gives her a sense of appropriate security (Cf. Krampe & Newton 2012).

Conversely, Lamb and colleagues (Lamb, Frodi, Hwang, Frodi, & Steinberg 1982:215-221) found that in the short-term view, gender role orientation was unrelated to father involvement in child-care. Two groups of Swedish fathers participated in this research who took paid paternity leave, and a matched control group of fathers who did not. It is speculated that the performance of caregiving tasks may be relatively more modifiable and more closely related to the role rather than to gender (Yogman 1987:178).

As noted, research psychology emphasises that the father's role in the life of his children does not finish in the oedipal years (three to six). The father continues to be needed during latency (seven to twelve) as caretaker and guide. During adolescence, a father's love and support will serve his children as a mentor and friend with

significant ways until his children become adults (Calarusso & Nemiroff 1982:315-327).

### **2.3 Fowler's stages of faith**

Faith development has been introduced by the work of James W. Fowler (1940-2015), whose faith development theory has become one of the most widely known and influential theories of human development that have to do with faith and the religious life.

Fowler (1983:163) suggests four constituent elements of practical theology to shape Christian lives/formation. They are:

1. A theory of the sovereign love of God as the pattern of action underlying and giving character to the cosmic process.
2. A theory of development in faith.
3. A theory of the virtues and affections of the Christian life.
4. A theory of methodological principles and strategies for formation in faith (Cf. Fowler 1983:148-165).

In this study, the theory of faith development will be reviewed focusing on how persons compose their experience of knowing and loving God or approach the discernment of God's presence in different eras of their lives.

Fowler (1981:14) says that faith, rather than belief or religion, is the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence, and an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one's hope and strivings, thoughts and actions.

Faith is a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our own way of finding coherence and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing himself/herself in relation to

others against a background of shared meaning and purpose. (Dykstra & Parks et al., 1986:45-46).

Dykstra (1986:49) summarises Fowler's central features of faith:

(1) Faith is a human activity (not a thing people have, but a way of knowing and being that they are engaged in)

(2) Faith is an activity that takes place through relationships

(3) The most significant aspects of these relationships are the aspects of trust and loyalty

(4) Faith involves an object(s). In faith, we trust *in* and are loyal *to* something

(5) In faith, we are related in trust and loyalty, not only to persons and groups but also to the "supra-ordinate centres of value and power" to which the people and groups whom we trust and are loyal to are also related

(6) Through these relationships of trust and loyalty, our "world" (both proximate and ultimate) is shaped, the meaning is made, and our own selves are constituted

(7) This activity of world-shaping, meaning-making, or "constitutive knowing" is the core activity which defines faith.

Fowler (1981) identified the seven stages of faith- Primal Faith, Intuitive-Projective Faith, Mythic-Literal Faith, Synthetic-Conventional Faith, Individuative-Reflective Faith, Conjunctive Faith, and Universalising Faith.

#### *Stage 1. Primal Faith (Infancy)*

As a baby comes into the world, faith begins with a pre-language disposition of trust formed by the mutuality with the mother, father, and other primal caring persons. One can readily see how important families are in the nurturing and incubation of this first Primal stage of faith. This stage relates to Erikson's theory of basic trust versus

a sense of basic mistrust. Piaget also explained infant development as a succession of cognitive and emotional separations toward individuation from those who provide initial care. (Fowler 1981:120-121; Fowler 1984:52-53; Fowler 1989:57-59; Fowler 1991:103).

### *Stage 2. Intuitive-Projective Faith (Early childhood)*

The next stage of faith emerges in early childhood with the acquisition of language. At about the time a child awakes to the mystery of death, the world of reality beyond, around, and penetrating the everyday. The preschool child who has access to the symbols, stories, and shared liturgical life of a religious tradition awakens to an expanded horizon of meanings. Representation of God takes conscious form in this period and draws, for good or ill, on children's experiences of their parents or other adults to whom they are emotionally attached in the first years of life (Fowler 1984:54-55; Fowler 1989:59-60; Fowler 1991:103). At this stage, children believe what their parents believe because their parents believe it (Burns & DeVries 2001:60). The dangers in this stage arise from the possible "possession" of the child's imagination by unrestrained images of terror and destructiveness, as well as from the witting or unwitting exploitation of the child's imagination in the reinforcement of taboos and moral or doctrinal expectations (Fowler 1984:134).

### *Stage 3. Mythic-Literal Faith (Childhood and beyond)*

Children in this stage take the perspectives of others on matters of mutual interest and recognise other's perspectives as different from their own. For the child authorities include not only the family but also teachers and religious leaders, customs and traditions (Shelton 1989:69). They think about right and wrong, good and evil. The child gradually comes to bring his/her attention to rest on the world and to distinguish the real from the unreal. This stage relates to the development of what Piaget called "concrete operational thinking". The children think logically with categories of causality, space, time, and number (Fowler 1984:56; Fowler 1989:61-63; Fowler 1991:105).

### *Stage 4. Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Adolescence and beyond)*

The next stage begins characteristically to take form in early adolescence. Generally, in adolescence, a new capacity for synthesis of meanings and of images of self-arises, making possible (and necessary) a new quality of personal relationship with God and others (Fowler 1983:159).

'Synthesis' means pulling together and drawing disparate elements into a unity. An adolescent now has available a variety of reflections or mirroring's of the self. At the same time, concerns about one's personal future, one's identity, one's vocation, and one's personal relationships become important. In every significant relation, he/she has access to someone's construction of the self he/she is becoming. In friendship or the first intimacy of "puppy love" young persons begin to be aware of the mirroring of self-provision through the responses of the persons whose feeling about them matter (Fowler 1984:59; Fowler 1989:63-66; Fowler 1991:107).

The term 'conventional' is used for two important reasons; (1) It is a synthesis of belief and value elements that are derived from one's significant others. The elements themselves are conventional, although they may be formed into a novel, individual configuration. (2) It is a synthesis of belief and value that has a largely 'tactic' (as opposed to 'explicit') character. The belief, values, and stories that compose a person's faith outlook and support his/her emerging identity are not yet objectified for critical reflection by that person (Fowler 1984:60).

The deficiencies at this stage are that the expectations and evaluations of others can be so compellingly internalised and sacralised that later autonomy of judgement and action can be jeopardised; or interpersonal betrayals can give rise either to nihilistic despair about a personal principle of ultimate being or to a compensatory intimacy with God unrelated to mundane relations (Fowler 1981:173).

Erikson (1968:128) labelled this stage identity versus identity diffusion and said;

They are sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the ideal prototypes of the day.

Cognitive functioning has reached the formal operational level. The adolescent engages in abstraction, hypothetical thinking, and deeper reflection. Now thinking begins to construct all sorts of ideal possibilities and hypothetical considerations. They are now focusing on his/her own thoughts (Shelton 1989:37).

#### *Stage 5. Individuative-Reflective Faith (Young adulthood and beyond)*

There are two fundamental movements at this stage. First, there must be a shift in the sense of the grounding and orientation of the self. From a definition of self-derived from one's relations and roles and the network of expectations that go with them, the self must now begin to be an act from a new quality of self-authorisation (Fowler 1984:62-63; Fowler 1989:68-70; Cf. Burns & DeVries 2001:61). Late adolescents who have reached this stage are challenged to critically reflect on their own life and its meaning. Fowler states that it is in this transition from stage 4 to stage 5 "that the late adolescent or young adult must begin to take seriously the burden of responsibility for his/her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes" (Fowler 1981:182). They become explicit rather than unconsidered, unexamined, and uncritically approved commitments. 'Explicit' means consciously chosen and critically supported commitments (Fowler 1991:109). Its dangers are excessive confidence in the conscious mind and in critical thought and a kind of second narcissism in which the now clearly bounded, reflective self overassimilate "reality" and the perspectives of others into its own world view (Fowler 1981:182-183).

#### *Stage 6. Conjunctive Faith (Mid-life and beyond)*

The name Conjunctive stage of faith means a re-joining or a union of that which previously has been separated. Fowler (1984:65) says that Conjunctive faith includes the following: (1) An awareness of the need to face and hold together several unmistakable polar tensions in one's life- the polarities of being, both old and young, and of both masculine and feminine. (2) Conjunctive faith brings a felt sense

that truth is more multiform and more complex than most of the clear, either-or categories of the Individuative stage can grasp properly. (3) Conjunctive faith moves beyond the reductive strategy by which the Individuative stage interprets symbol, myth, and liturgy into conceptual meanings. (4) Conjunctive faith exhibits a combination of committed belief in and through the particularities of a tradition, while insisting upon the humility that knows that the grasp on ultimate truth that any of our traditions can offer needs continual correction and challenge (Fowler 1984:64-66; Fowler 1989:71-74). Fowler describes that the danger of this stage lies in the direction of a paralyzing passivity or inaction, giving rise to complacency or cynical withdrawal, due to its paradoxical understanding of truth (Fowler 1981:198).

#### *Stage 7. Universalising Faith (Mid-life and beyond)*

In this stage, a person moves beyond the paradoxical awareness and the embrace of polar tensions of the conjunctive stage. Persons are drawn toward an identification with God in which the bases of identity, knowing (epistemology), and valuing (axiology) are transformed (Fowler 1984:67-71; Fowler 1989:74-77). According to Fowler (1991:113), their visions and commitments seem to free them for passionate yet detached spending of the self in love. They are devoted to overcoming division, oppression, and violence, and live in effective anticipatory response to an in breaking commonwealth of love and justice, the reality of an in breaking kingdom of God. Their faith impacts the way they see the world and others and how they live their daily lives (Burns & DeVries 2001:61).

Benson & Elkins (1990:66) state that the local church must:

equip mothers and fathers to play a more active role in the religious education of the children, by means of conversation, family devotions, and family helping projects. This will probably require special efforts to strengthen the spiritual life of parents as well as to devise practical

strategies for promoting the faith development of children.

Parents play a very significant and essential role in shaping the values and faith of children and adolescents. Children and adolescents whose parents were separated or divorced were found to be more influenced in their faith development than were those with married parents. Family climate, religious father and mother, and spiritual life are the important keys of faith development in children and adolescents. When they describe their family life as happy, their relationships with their parents as good, and when they receive spiritual help and support from their parents, their own faith develops (Schulze 2012:292-293).

Chapter 2 began with the figures of God the Father in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The figures of God as Father represent the roles of father, moreover, Pauline literature gives the metaphor of adoption and the resulting unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ.

Chapter 3 provided the roles of the father in various theories of adolescent developments. Those theories reviewed the characters of adolescence and proved the important roles of father/mother and significant adults.

The next chapter will deal with the changes in the father's role in cross-cultural history. And as a main subject, black South African fathers' roles in their families will be described to understand specific black South African fatherhood as a result of the system of migrant labour and the policy of apartheid. Last, this chapter will consider the fatherhood crisis in South Africa today.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Father figure in South Africa**

#### **1. Introduction**

Many researchers adopted psychological and anthropological approaches in their studies of the role of the father. As society and culture are changing the father's role, figure, and paternal involvement are also changing. The main questions in this section are 'What does the South African father's role look like today compared with the past?' and 'How is South African fathers' fatherhood changing?'

This chapter will review the father's role through the lens of cross-cultural history in order to gain a better understanding of the changes in the role and responsibilities of the father. As the main subject of this chapter it will describe how black South African fathers have become hampered in their role as husbands and fathers in their families, how the migrant worker system and the apartheid policy affected the black community in South Africa. It will also observe the black South African fatherhood crisis today.

#### **2. Fathers in cross-cultural history**

It is not easy to speak about fathering or fatherhood in historical times but a brief description of the changing role of men and their involvement in the family are described to compare it with the father's role today.

During the Middle Ages, peasants worked for the lord of the manor, the wives worked the fields with their husbands and children. When cities developed, the same pattern continued. A husband worked with his family and his wife was his business partner. In North America the early colonists (16th) faced hardships when trying to establish their new land and houses. To perform his duty no domestic matters were expected of a husband and he would absent himself from the house. A father interacted with his sons when they were old enough to join the father in his labours

(Nash 1976:74). During this period, the fathers were primarily responsible to ensure that their children grew up with an appropriate sense of values, acquired primarily from the study of religious materials like the Bible. A 'good father' meant that as a man he provided models of good Christian living and versed their children well in the Scriptures (Lamb et al., 1987:5). During Puritan times (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) the father's role was perceived as being dominated by his responsibility for moral oversight and moral teaching (Lamb 1986:5).

In traditional Chinese society, the paternal role was primarily that of an educator, disciplinarian and a provider, as they say, 'rearing without education is the fault of the father; teaching without strictness is the negligence of the teacher.' The maternal role was primarily that of a protective, nurturant agent (Ho 1987:228-230).

With the Industrial Revolution, the Western family gradually changed from the extended family to the nuclear family. Later during the Industrial Revolution change came from cottage industries to the factory. Men left home for the workplace, leaving their family alone for a large part of the day (Sell 1995:54-55). Fathers have a limited role in the family to provide a solid economic base and to assist their children. This was an integral part of male socialisation in most Western, Asian and even African societies. The majority of men defined their father role in terms of their breadwinner responsibilities with minimal direct involvement in child rearing. It might be that fathers would not feel comfortable to participate in child care and household tasks because their own fathers were not highly involved in rearing their children (Russell & Radin 1983:151; Lamb 1986:5).

Veroff & Feld (1970:180) state about this situation:

...at this point in the life cycle, work represents their attempt to solidify their career for the sake of their family's security. They are torn between their desire to establish a close relationship with their children and their desire to establish financial security for the family.

The ethnologists Frykman & Löfgren (1979:97-98) describe the middle-class father's role in Sweden, which was industrialised relatively late, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the following way:

The father is respected and honoured at a distance, while the mother represented light, warmth and love. Love of the father largely built on respect and distance, but the view of the father was also divided and ambiguous. In many descriptions of childhood during this period, the father was portrayed as a person to be respected, admired, and feared. Behind this double image of the father lay the duplicity of the male role in a middle-class environment. In contrast to the mother, the housewife, he moves freely between his home and the outside world. Every morning he disappears into the world of production and of his career, pressed by feelings of duty and diligence as a provider. There was an element of mystery and of the unknown in this double life. Children had only vague ideas about their father's "other life." If he worked at home, he shut himself into his office where no one was permitted without good reason.

West African fathers, who had an extended family structure, were not involved in the childrearing process. Their customs made fathers remain only peripheral figures in the lives of their children, in spite of the high esteem accorded the father in West African cultures. Fathers wanted their children to work hard in order to escape poverty and the humiliation of being unable to read and write in a world where these skills have become almost the minimum requirement for active and successful citizenship (Cf. Okedara 1980). Most fathers did not have intimate relationships with their babies until they could talk when they could sit around the fireplace in the evening and tell their children folktales. They rarely showed tenderness and nurturance toward their children and did not involve in the routine care of children. It emphasises his paternalistic, material, spiritual, emotional, and social support of the family (Nsamenang 1987:287).

In contrast, there were fathers who were involved in childcare by environment. Hewlett (1987:295-327) has found that the Aka pygmies, the hunter-gatherers of the Central African Republic, are one of the last remaining hunting and gathering populations whose lifestyle was more consistent with the past. The Aka were patrilineal, having shallow patrilines, and were generally patrilocal except for a few years after marriage when the male provided bride service in the camp of his wife's family. Aka fathers were more directly involved by being available for their infants than any band or tribal population is known in literature. And due to the father frequently holding and availability, they knew their infants intimately. Aka fathers were much more likely to be holding their infants while in the forest camp than on the net hunt or out in the village fields to provide psychological comfort as well as protection from environmental factors such as predators, snakes, temperature changes, intraspecific aggression, and accidents. They favour holding firstborns and infants under 12 months. In their household mother, father, and infant were co-residents. They hold their infants while sitting down to camp talking with other males. Generally, child care skills were transmitted from parent-to-child; boys acquired childcare skills from their father or mother, while girls acquired the skills from their mother.

According to Lamb (Lamb et al., 1982:3-4) there are four axioms or beliefs in the traditional families, (1) children need two parents (one of each gender); (2) family responsibilities should be divided between the parents, with fathers as economic providers and mothers as homemakers and caretakers, because this distribution of responsibilities mirrors the gender roles prevalent in the society at large; (3) mothers are better suited for child rearing and caretaking than fathers are; (4) primary caretaking for young children should be provided by family members.

Even though the traditional fathers had a limited role in the family, they valued assisting in their children's cognitive development and acquisition of social skills, encouraged moral values, and demonstrated socially acceptable behaviour (Gilbert, Hanson, & Davis 1982:262-268).

However, some men were uncomfortable with restricting their parenting activities to providing income for the family. It may be that more fathers would try to create a

balance between their breadwinner role and their own need to be involved with their children. These androgynous fathers are more involved in child-care and try to protect their children from the influence of gender role stereotyping. They encourage their children to pursue their interests without regard to role appropriateness (Robinson & Barret 1986:13; See the androgyny theory in Bem 1975).

In France in the 1980s there emerged the term “new fathers” which means that today’s fathers differ from fathers of the past. They changed their baby’s nappies, gave the child a bottle, took him/her for walks, and looked after their babies while their wives went out to work (Delaisi de Parseval & Hurstel 1987:72).

In the German family sociology, the father’s role has been discussed for several years in the context of the changing functions of family members, the “Role of the Father in the Development of the Child” was one of the main subjects of the 1985 conference of the German Society of Child and Juvenile Psychiatry (Cf. Mitterauer & Sieder 1980). Fathers contribute to the rearing and emotional health of their children. The father’s role as a source of emotional support involved in the direct care of children and paternal involvement in housework also provides a good model for children (Lamb. 1986:7; Pleck 1983).

As mentioned in chapter 1, In U.S.A. African-American fathers have some important demographic characteristics. Black fathers have been disadvantageous in nurturing his family by the long-enduring effects of enslavement. But some black fathers had generally developed a deep and permanent attachment to their wives and an interest in their children. While post enslavement began 70-90% black fathers stayed with their family to carry out traditional roles. Because of discrimination black fathers could not find jobs to maintain their home. Black families were forced apart by public welfare laws that provided more economic support for the father-absent family. High unemployment, job insecurity and poverty of black fathers meant that they cannot fulfil a provider’s role for their children, and it may lead some black fathers to withdraw from the family. These factors contributed to a rising number of single-parent, female-headed black families (Broman 2001; Causey, Livingston and High 2015; McDougal & George 2016).

According to Lopez and Corona (2012), approximately 36% of school-age children did not live with biological fathers; 69% of black children did not live with their fathers compared with 28% of white and 39% of Latino children in U.S.A. (Cf. DeBell 2008).

A number of studies (McAdoo 1988:82-85; Cf. Bartz & Levine 1979) have found that black fathers and white fathers' child-rearing attitudes have more similarities than differences in disciplinary methods, particularly in the use of physical punishment, withdrawal of privileges, isolation of children and explanation of the reasons for disciplining them. And also, these fathers perceived themselves as mediators between their sons' inner selves and the outside world.

Garland (1999:32) states that:

Today it is right for parents to be involved in their children's lives, even if it occasionally compromises their work performance. This is especially true for fathers, who had for several decades been seen as peripheral to their children's well-being but are being rediscovered as necessary ingredients in the lives of healthy, well-adjusted children.

Fatherhood today seems to be a role in transition, from an older, traditional model of the hardworking but unavailable figure responsible for the family's welfare, to a father who is personally and emotionally involved in the day-to-day rearing of his children. Fathers have become able and willing to take on more domestic duties, including child care, which accelerated women's entry into the labour force. The women's movement, which began in the 1960s and took hold in the 1970s, has been the most powerful force for family change in the world. Between 1970 and 1980, this radical change in the traditional family structure led to an increase of divorce and separation rates, and the relationships between fathers and their children have different alternatives. There are a number of different kinds of fathering roles outside the traditional intact family structure such as maternal custody and paternal visiting right, co-parenting relationship with the ex-spouse, remarriage, step fathering...etc. (Bronstein & Cowan 1988:348; Cf. Bronstein & Cowan 1988; Glick 1980, 1984).

One of the current issues in fathering in Japan is stress and suicide. According to Asahi Shinbun, a daily paper in Japan (May 12, 1985), fathers undergo a great deal of stress at the workplace. In the year 1983-1984, the number of deaths by suicide (two-thirds of which were men) was the highest since World War II. The largest increases were among men in their 40s and 50s, with a threefold increase in suicides, because of worries concerning their jobs, sacrificing of their family life, a sense of hopelessness...etc. were reported between 1974 and 1984 (Cf. Asahi Shinbun, June 12, 1984; Shwalb, Imaizumi & Nakazawa 1987).

Similarly, Holtman, Shelmerdine, Lodon and Flisher (2011) researched suicide in a poor rural community in the Western Cape, in South Africa. They found the following reasons why farm workers who have families attempted suicide; poor-economic conditions since childhood, growing up in a dysfunctional family, using alcohol from a young age, living in a context of interpersonal conflict and physical violence and enduring chronic illness.

Approximately 80% of completed suicides in South Africa are male although the majority of suicide attempts are female, and unemployed individuals are more likely to engage in suicide behaviour (Bantjes & van Ommen 2008).

Paternal involvement is related to family income. Professional responsibilities are often at their maximum at precisely the time that family workloads are heaviest, which maximises the cost of increased paternal involvement to career-committed men (Gershuny 2001:198; O'Brien & Shemilt 2003). Fathers in their families have new challenges and choices. His salary is no longer the sole family income. The new law is concerned with the rights of individuals - men, women, and children - not the rights of fathers alone, it is not merely in favour of the father. Fathers are forced to redefine their paternal identities (Roy 2006; Bannen & Nilsen 2006; Jayakody & Phuong 2013).

During the 1990s a particular social trend produced a new title for a father in South Korea - a goose dad, a penguin dad, and an eagle dad. A goose dad means a father

who lives on his own due to a new trend, namely early education. His wife and children go abroad to study, even while his children are young because it is the narrow gate to an upper school in South Korea. Usually, the father stays in South Korea to make money and to support his family abroad. He flies to meet his family only for a holiday. His life is similar to a migratory bird. So, he is called a goose dad. A penguin dad is, if there is not enough finance, he has to send his wife and children only abroad to study. He cannot visit his family during the holidays because of his limited financial situation. So, he has to wait until his children finish their education. He is so-called a penguin dad because he cannot fly. Last, the father who flies whenever he wants is called an eagle dad compared to the king of birds. He is in the same situation of living alone, but he can visit his family whenever he needs.

As long as they are separate from their family, this kind of fathers feel a sense of shame. According to South Korean data of 2013, around 300,000 fathers live alone due to their children’s early study abroad. They think of themselves as a money machine. Separating from family problems often leads to divorce, suicide, and cultural conflict with his children, or even a collapsed family. (Chosun 2005.Jan. 26; The Korea Herald 2013. Feb. 03; Seoul New 2013.May.11).

Up to now, this chapter looked at the change of the fatherhood in various cultural histories. Next, the change of the South African fatherhood will be dealing with the migrant labour system and the policy of segregation. It will also review the fatherhood crisis.

### 3. The fatherhood in South Africa

Among 11 official languages spoken in South Africa, the appellations for the term “father” in some of the black communities are;

Zulu	Xhosa	Tswana	Sesotho	N Sotho
Baba/ Ubaba	Utata	Rra	Ntate	Tata

Table 14. The term ‘father’ in SA. (Adapted from The Reader’s Digest, fifth printing 1996)

Usually, they use '*baba*', which comes from isiZulu, a polite form of address for a "father", or "an older African man" with the connotation of respect attached to a highly valued social role and age. This term is widely used in South Africa to establish or confirm a relationship with an older man (Richter and Morrell et al., 2006:1).

According to Lesejane (2006:176), the father as patriarch has long been a respected figure in South Africa. The father was:

The custodian of moral authority within his family and with other patriarchs in the broader community; A leader who had final responsibility in the affairs of the family; A primary provider of the material needs of the family, from shelter to food; A protector of the family against threatening forces of whatever nature, and; A role model to young men in particular.

In a patriarchal system 'father' was the symbol and custodian of ultimate power and responsibility in the family and in the community. Over the years, socio-cultural, and political changes have undermined the authority of African men and their status within the family. 'African patriarchy' has become distorted and new patriarchy without obligations or reciprocity has emerged (Lesejane 2006:179).

The family has undergone tremendous change with rising rates of divorce, single parenthood, and maternal employment. Fatherhood patterns are also changing as the country and its economic situation changes in South Africa. The major transformations in African history in the last hundred years profoundly affected the male status and opportunities as well as relationships between men and women. The gender issues have affected African men and how the understanding and practices of masculinity have been contested and transformed during colonial and postcolonial eras (Lindsay & Miescher et al., 2003:1-2).

### **3.1 Black South African fatherhood**

South Africa had the unique circumstance of apartheid and a migrant labour system where fathers had to leave their families to work in mines and cities only to return home over Christmas. To understand South African men and fatherhood, this historical background must be considered, and the specific issues of South Africa have to be reviewed before dealing with the problem of father absence.

#### **3.1.1 Migrant fathers in the mining era**

The African continent's known mineral wealth was an attraction for European colonial occupation in the late nineteenth century. There was a mass movement of African men to the cities to find poorly paid unskilled workers. Most of the colonial economies of Southern Africa were controlled by large-scale mining. The South African government needed cheap labour to work on the mines (Baker 1995:51). The government needed people to come to the towns, and for this reason they introduced taxes that needed to be paid. It meant that black men left their families for the cities to earn money, and this money was given over to the chief to pay taxes. This is well known as a system called migrant labour where people left their families and moved across the country to get a job in South Africa ([www.sahistory.org.za/article/land-labour-and-apartheid](http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/land-labour-and-apartheid)).

They were housed in mining compounds and could return to their home when they completed their work contracts. The contract stated how long the job would take, what the job would be, and the worker's wage for the job. If the worker broke his contract, he could be arrested and fined or sent to jail. Labour migrancy, single-sex compound housing, and the policing of labour movement became the familiar phenomena of mining and the everyday burden of African workers (James et al., 1987:75-76; Callinicos 1981:36; Mkhize 2006:192).

In South Africa, black migrants could not settle with their families because it is impossible for the father to be available to care for and nurture their children, while

white migrants were able to settle in the town with their families (Bozalek 2010). There were a number of reasons for this: first, black migrants' wages were too low. They were paid just to support a single man in town and not a family. Second, the Pass Laws would not allow migrant workers to settle with their families in the towns (Cf. Elder 2003). Third, they stayed in compounds due to no houses for black migrant families. Compounds were designed to impose strict control over the private, social and leisure time of migrants and to minimise contact with the surrounding urban world. Life in the compounds was terrible. Living conditions were mostly overcrowded, dirty and unhealthy. They had little money, and pleasures were hard to find. Many workers spent their money on heavy drink or dagga to forget their hard life and homesickness. If they got a pass to leave the compound, they would spend their money on women which turn in transmitted diseases (Macheke & Campbell 1998). It was hard to save money in these conditions, and hard to remember his family in the harsh life of compounds (Callinicos 1981:28-46; Morrell & Richter 2006:4-5). Later, this uprooted system was to be followed by the emergence of *utsotsi* (a street-wise petty criminal), *indlavini* (a man who is violent and reckless) and the gangster who faced by the harsh realities of life in the cities but had no option then resorted to violence to assert their masculinity (Steinberg 2004; Mkhize 2006:193).

The system of migrant labour wounded black communities and led to some serious problems that developed in black societies ([www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za)):

- \* Young men sometimes could not marry until they had done a certain amount of labour for the chief.
- \* Families were disrupted.
- \* Farms were left in the hands of women and young children.
- \* Men in the cities became used to the western way of life and did not want to settle on the farms again.
- \* The tribal and traditional society was broken up.

The work was physically hard and the environment brutal. It produced men who were injured to pain, hardship and violence. Migrant fathers (or workers) also experienced appalling safety conditions, for example between 1983 and 1987, a staggering 50,000 sustained permanent disabilities, and during the course of the twentieth century, about 46,000 mine workers lost their lives underground (Cf. Table 8). With these multiple hardships, they would engage in struggles to improve their conditions. (Nieftagodien 2014:231).

The separation of fathers from their wives and children had deleterious effects on home life. This migrant labour system was one of the reasons for the disruption of black family life. The conjugal unit amongst African fathers was unstable under the migrancy labour system. Many fathers ended up with two families: a work place woman to satisfy immediate sexual needs, and a home town wife to keep the home stable. Given low wages fathers were trapped into neglecting their home town families (Ramphela & Richter 2006:73). If fathers leave their female partners and children, there was no certainty that they will be providing financial support to them. So often mothers had to separate from their children to earn money, and the children were left in insecure conditions. Most of the young children and adolescents grew up with little knowledge of their fathers as important figures in their lives. Even young single women who had sexual relationships with male migrants were deserted once they give birth to children. Conjugal relationships became extremely casual and it was unthinkable for a woman to formally divorce and seek alimony for herself and her deserted children from their father (Bryceson & Fisher 2014:179-201; Cf. Department of Labour in Pretoria 1996).

Ngobeni (2006:151) argued radically that the South African family has never been a stable social unit because it was invariably a fluid structure, affected by colonial and apartheid labour processes, by urbanisation and industrialisation. A new trend has emerged with the rise in single-parent households headed by women.

Barker (1970:55) who was a medical doctor living and working in a rural area of

KwaZulu-Natal said of the impact of the migratory labour system and warned of its long-term consequences;

Economic or even social analysis of migratory labour will fail to reveal the full picture of its cost in terms of human misery. To learn this, you must listen to the lonely wife, the anxious mother. The insecure child...It is at family level that the most pain is felt, and we cannot forget that the African cultural heritage enshrines a broader, more noble concept of family than that of the west...His care, his love, his family loyalty cannot reach out to his wife nor caress his children, nor extend to the grandmother who brought him up...Deprived of their natural guides, children of migrants grown through an insecure, uncertain childhood to an adult life whose sole preoccupation may be to escape the system. There must be a harvest of aggression, with the weeds of violence growing rank within it.

Even when rural recruiting slowed in the 1980s and the explosive growth of platinum provided new opportunities, there were still a number of workers migrating to the gold mines. By 2012, platinum mines employed 180,000 workers. The platinum mines were not particularly concerned about houses for their workers in compounds. They rather offered small living-out allowances, which allowed them to establish a basic household in residential areas surrounding the mines and increased the cash income of migrants which seemed to have been attractive to them. Though different from those prior to the past, the problems and hardships of migrant fathers are still discernible (Beinart 2014:71-72).

### Mining industry injuries and fatalities by sector, 2015

<i>Mining sector</i>	<i>Injuries</i>	<i>Deaths</i>
Chrome	N/A	N/A
Coal	207	5
Copper	N/A	N/A
Diamonds	N/A	N/A
Gold	1 228	33
Iron ore	N/A	N/A
Manganese	N/A	N/A
Platinum	1 331	22
Other	350	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 116</b>	<b>77</b>

Source: Department of Mineral Resources, Media statement by the minister of mineral resources on the 28 January 2016; *Annual Report 2013/14*, 6 November 2014, pp27 and 28  
N/A – Not available

### Mining industry fatalities, 1911-2015

<i>Year</i>	<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Deaths</i>
1911	906	1940	709	1969	629
1912	859	1941	692	1970	524
1913	733	1942	607	1971	546
1914	637	1943	541	1972	511
1915	705	1944	508	1973	539
1916	726	1945	523	1974	489
1917	560	1946	559	1975	498
1918	522	1947	481	1976	557
1919	489	1948	492	1977	594
1920	494	1949	537	1978	654
1921	445	1950	554	1979	563
1922 <sup>a</sup>	344	1951	561	1980	633
1923	522	1952	605	1981	608
1924	539	1953	593	1982	606
1925	483	1954	631	1983	632
1926	475	1955	581	1984	600
1927	608	1956	661	2000	282
1928	517	1957	599	2001	288
1929	588	1958	615	2003	270
1930	584	1959	663	2008	171
1931	566	1960	665	2009	168
1932	576	1961	628	2010	127
1933	619	1962	613	2011	123
1934	610	1963	628	2012	112
1935	707	1964	557	2013	93
1936	760	1965	639	2014	84
1937	772	1966	595	2015	77
1938	730	1967	614		
1939	686	1968	509		

Source: Department of Mineral Resources, Media statement by the minister of mineral resources on the 28 January 2016; Briefing held on 30 January 2015; *Annual Report 2013/14*, October 2013, p18; *Annual Report 2011/12*, September 2012, p54; www.dmr.gov.za, accessed 22 October 2014; Eisner H S & Leger J P, 'Safety in South African Mines', *Journal of the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy*, July 1988, p234

Table 15. Mining industry injuries and fatalities.

### **3.1.2 South African fathers under apartheid**

Regrettably, South Africa has a long history of race-based oppression and discrimination. Before apartheid the South Africa government passed the Land Act in 1913 that prevented black and white people from mixing. This policy is known as the policy of segregation and would later be replaced with the policy of apartheid in 1948 ([www.sahistory.org.za/article/land-labour-and-apartheid](http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/land-labour-and-apartheid)).

The term 'apartheid' was translated from the Afrikaans word meaning 'apartness' and was introduced in South Africa by the National Party (NP) government in 1948. World War II highlighted the problem of racism, and the world turned away from such policies and encouraged demands for decolonisation. The more rigid racial policy of apartheid was introduced in a period when other countries were moving away from racist policies ([www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-apartheid-south-africa](http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-apartheid-south-africa)).

Horowitz (2001: 231-233) explains that under apartheid, there was strict and complete separation of the four main "racial" classifications: white, coloured, Indian and black. Black people were not allowed to live in white areas and could not own land in these areas. They had separate living areas as well, as schools, universities, public restrooms, hospitals, newspapers and radio stations etc... If a white woman married a black man there was no legal place for their family to live (Cf. Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 1949). She feared to be in a car accident with her husband and children (who would be classified as 'coloured') because they would be taken to three different hospitals based on their racial classification.

Mokwena (in Everatt & Sisulu et al., 1992:30-49) states that the family as the basic unit in black communities had been under stress even prior to the beginning of apartheid. The practice of migrant labour led to the further disruption of black families. Many men came to the cities without their families and that led to the deterioration of the family system and unfaithfulness in marriages. Women increasingly came to the towns to get work as domestic workers, leaving their children behind to be looked after by other family members.

The apartheid government declared the homeland policy that black people would all become citizens of independent black homelands and should settle in their own homeland. Blacks had to live in often barren tribal homelands or townships near cities, often in polluted industrial areas. Many black people who were born in urban areas where overcrowding, poverty and instability characterised the average black family in the townships while whites got the best agricultural areas, and the choicest city addresses. Under apartheid, black men struggled and fought for better living conditions, but the government enforced the laws to protect white people such as reserved certain jobs for white people only, that normally paid better, and menial jobs were kept for black people only (Sullivan & Stevens 2010; [www.sahistory.org.za/article/land-labour-and-apartheid](http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/land-labour-and-apartheid); <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/06/world/africa/mandela-life-under-apartheid/index.html>).

The families and schools weakened their hold over members of society and simply collapsed. During the apartheid around three-and-a-half million people were forcibly removed and resettled from squatter settlements and freehold townships to the major cities, 10 people lived in each matchbox-like house, while many others had to make do with backyard shacks or any other form of shelter that could be found (Shaw 2002:4).

In 1952, the African National Congress organised the Defiance Campaign to prompt thousands of black Africans to flout the laws in the hope that their arrests would overwhelm the country's prison system and bring attention and eventual change (<https://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/06/world/africa/mandela-life-under-apartheid/index.html>).

Sullivan and Stevens (in Stevens, Duncan, and Hook et al., 2013:217) referred to the narrative of a black woman who was in her twenties, under apartheid. It shows the conflict between white and black people.

I lost my father in 1988 and brother the following year to political violence that ruled townships then. My father was shot because his brother was a die-hard IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) supporter, and my brother was shot

because he was an ANC (African National Congress) supporter.

Apartheid education denied black children and adolescents the necessary tools to enter and participate fully in society. One of the key contradictions of Bantu Education was that it extended education far more broadly than the selective mission schools had been able to do, while constantly reminding pupils of their inferiority.

The term 'Bantu' used to describe a family of languages spoken mainly in Southern and Eastern Africa. It comes from the stem for the noun- 'ntu (person; pl. abantu, meaning people)'. During apartheid, the term 'Bantu' was used as a derogatory term for black Africans (quoted from <http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/terms.php#65-253-41>).

Bantu Education Act (1953) which was designed to provide black people with skills to work in manual labour jobs under white control was one of apartheid's most offensively racist laws. Its major provision was to enforce racially separated educational facilities ([www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news](http://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news) 2016).

The Deputy Minister, Punt Janson said,

A black man may be trained to work on a farm or in a factory. He may work for an employer who is either English-speaking or Afrikaans-speaking and the man who has to give him instructions may be either English-speaking or Afrikaans-speaking. Why should we now start quarrelling about the medium of instruction among the black people as well?... No, I have not consulted them, and I am not going to consult them. I have consulted the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa...

(quoted from The Digital Journal, Jun 16, 2013,  
[www.digitaljournal.com/article/352398](http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/352398); Cf. Ndlovu 2015:317-368)

Baard & Schreine (1986, part 2) described the Bantu Education as follows:

In 1953 the government passed the Bantu Education Act, which the people

didn't want. We didn't want this bad education for our children. This Bantu Education Act was to make sure that our children only learnt things that would make them good for what the government wanted: to work in the factories and so on; they must not learn properly at school like the white children. Our children were to go to school only three hours a day, two shifts of children every day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon so that more children could get a little bit of learning without government having to spend more money. Hawu! It was a terrible thing that act.

(quoted from <http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/sidebar.php?id=65-258-2>; Cf. [www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za))

A black boy's life as described under the Bantu Education Act was as follow ([www.theinitialjourney.com/life-issues/life-in-apartheid-africa/](http://www.theinitialjourney.com/life-issues/life-in-apartheid-africa/)):

...If he had been fortunate enough to attend school, he would have been given an English name on his first day, which would be the only name he was permitted to use at school. If the school was British, he would be taught British idea and culture. No part of the curriculum would cover African culture...At the age of 16 this black boy would be given a passbook. The passbook included data on the boy's racial classification (black, white or coloured), his name, sex, date of birth, residence, photo, marital status, driver's license, place of work or study, and fingerprints...Failure to produce the passbook when challenged, or being in an unauthorised area without the proper endorsement was punishable by detention without trial for months at a time.

Black school enrolment in secondary schools increased massively in the two decades after the introduction of Bantu education, from 46,000 in 1960 to just under 320,000 in 1975. In the decade leading up to 1976, there was nearly a fivefold increase in Africans in secondary schools. This rising brought growing frustration amongst high school students: more and more ill-educated students were entering a

contracting job market, which placed a premium on skills that entrants were unable to satisfy (Dubow 2014: 184). In the 1970s, the capital governmental spending on black education was one-tenth of the spending on white education. No new high schools were built in Soweto between 1962 and 1970, and pupils were meant to move to their relevant homeland to attend the newly built schools there. It led to large-scale resistance to Bantu Education, and the most notable example being the Soweto Revolt on 16 June 1976. At least 250 000 people in Soweto were involved in the resistance of the Bantu Education Act ([www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news](http://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news) 2016; Ndlove 2015: 327-328; Cf. Findley & Ogbu 2011).

Kane-Berman (1979:110) referred to young black students' anger in Soweto:

No teacher or principal dares order the students around any more. One principal started telling the kids off. They heard him out and then told him, 'You know, we've always known you were a sell-out.' They beat him up and kicked him around and then put him in his car and told him he must not come back.

The failure and the inability of families and schools to minister to the material and emotional needs of adolescents explains the ease with which youth slide into a life of the streets. It is here that many receive their orientation into a life of violence and crime. The adolescents who were brutalised by the legacy of apartheid were themselves brutalising others. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (1977:94), one in four Soweto households had experienced a robbery, assault, rape or theft between February 1974 and January 1975. Just under 80 per cent of all crimes were reported to have been committed during weekends. Especially Young women were targeted by angry, frustrated men. One of the reasons that high levels of crime in Soweto, noted broken families and breakdown of traditional parental control. They were further disadvantaged by unwanted pregnancies and even an ever-increasing rate of HIV and AIDS. (Freed 1963:121; [www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com).2015; [www.news24.com](http://www.news24.com). 2012).

### 3.1.3. Black South African father's fatherhood crisis today

The notion of fatherhood has undergone fundamental changes over the years. With the transition to democracy, struggle masculinity no longer had a place and traditional gender roles were challenged by the new Constitution which contained gender equality. The representation of fatherhood is invariably masculine, and the form of this masculinity plays a big part in many of the problems faced by families and the societies in South Africa. Although there are many changes it is helpful to see the changes in men's experiences as opportunities and to develop a psychology of masculinity (Festus & Gennrich 2013).

Usually, a boy is raised and learns what acceptable and unacceptable social behaviour is, based on the dominant understanding of masculinity in society. The concept of fatherhood and masculinity is linked with historical as well as current political, social, cultural and economic factors (Makusha, Richter & Chikovore 2013:71). An article (Hadebe 2013) on *Men and masculinities in South Africa* edited by Gennrich, included interviews with fifteen Zulu men, ranging in age from 21 to 50 years in KwaZulu-Natal. One participant said that a man is not taken seriously if he is not married, and is regarded as a boy in the Zulu cultural context:

A man should have cattle, work, wife and money. If you do not have all these things you are not regarded as a man. Society does not take you seriously. Married men will not discuss issues with you.

Another participant added more detail about that:

To have a traditional wife gives me respect and dignity. It marks the stage of manhood. You become a household head. You learn from other men, that is, they shape you to become a man so that in turn you can be proud of them.

A father is a highly visible and respected member of society as a head and central authority of his family in South Africa. Fatherhood goes beyond men's biological

contribution to conception. It includes the responsibility to provide, to be involved and to protect both the child and the child's mother.

### 3.1.3.1 Not being there

However, many children and adolescents never knew their biological fathers. Recent research (www.uj.ac.za 2013) says that South Africa has an exceptionally high number of absent fathers with approximately half of the children in the country living without daily contact with their fathers. It estimates that around 54% of men aged 15-49 years are fathers, but nearly 50% of these fathers do not have daily contact with their children (Richter & Morrell et al., 2006; See Table 16, 17, 18).

<b>Children 15 years and younger</b>	<b>1993 Project for Statistics on Living standards &amp; development</b>	<b>1996 October Household survey</b>	<b>2002 General Household survey</b>	<b>2007 Community survey</b>
<b>Whose fathers are deceased</b>	<b>7,5%</b>	<b>9,2%</b>	<b>11,5%</b>	<b>14,1%</b>
<b>Whose fathers are alive but absent from the household</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>41,6%</b>	<b>45,8%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total father absence</b>	<b>43,5%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>-</b>

Table 16. Fathers deceased or absent, 1993-2007. (Adapted from the Statistics South Africa 2007).

As table 17 shows most children (84%) had a father, who was alive, but only 43% live with their fathers, and only 40% of these fathers supported their children. Father-absent adolescents recognise that they lack experience and guidance regarding fathering roles and responsibilities. They do not have a positive male role model to learn from. Widespread fatherlessness has been a growing trend. It is amongst other

things seen to be contributing to the generation's social ills and degeneration (Cf. Leopeng & Langa 2017; www.uj.ac.za 2013).

2008	Father is alive (%)	Father is resident (%)	Father supports the child (%)
African	82	37	39
Coloured	90	60	37
Indian	94	87	62
White	98	78	59
Total	84	43	40
N	9,408	4,967	4,966
2010	Father is alive (%)	Father is resident (%)	Father supports the child (%)
African	82	37	41
Coloured	92	59	41
Indian	97	95	56
White	96	83	55
N	9,847	8,020	5,248

Table 17. Percentages of fathers who were alive, resident with, and supporting their children (Source: NIDS 2008; 2010 (waves 1 and 2)).

2008	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Total (%)
Everyday	3	9	5
Several times a week	10	14	11
Several times a month	28	20	25
Several times a year	27	23	26
Never	28	29	29
N	3,221	1,746	4,969
2010	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Total (%)
Everyday	5	12	8
Several times a week	11	15	13
Several times a month	30	22	26
Several times a year	26	18	22
Never	26	31	28
N	3,252	1,899	5,151

Table 18. Differences in frequency of visits between fathers in urban and rural areas (Sources NIDS. 2008; 2010).

Table 18 shows that the differences between urban and rural children who never saw their fathers were not statistically significant. But more importantly Table 19 indicates that there was a very strong and statistically significant relationship between fathers seeing and supporting them financially. Fathers who had regular contact with their children were more likely to contribute to the financial support of their children. Generally, father absence is associated with negative outcomes for children and women.

	Everyday (%)	Several times a week (%)	Several times a month (%)	Several times a year (%)	Never (%)	Total (%)
<b>Supports the child</b>	74	71	63	44	5	43
<b>Does not support the child</b>	26	29	37	56	95	57
<b>N</b>	365	617	1,319	1,219	1,459	4,979

Table 19. Relationship between seeing and supporting a child (Sources NIDS wave 2).

### 3.1.3.2 HIV and AIDS epidemic

The current notions of masculinity drive high death rates which negatively impact not only men but also women and children in families and communities. Multiple and concurrent partners, sexual violence, low levels of condom use, and low levels of male circumcision are key drivers of the HIV epidemic. These directly affect men's partners and their children (Makusha, Richter & Chikovore 2013:74-75).

According to the Global Report on the HIV and AIDS Epidemic (Joint United Nations Programme 2008), more than 5,7 million people in South Africa are living with HIV and AIDS, including 300 000 children. There are about 3.7 million orphans – close to half of them have lost their parents due to AIDS. 150,000 children are to be

living in child-headed households. Familial and financial structures are destroyed (Meyer 2013; UNICEF South Africa; [www.childrenofthedawn.org.za](http://www.childrenofthedawn.org.za)).

South African statistics show the number of births, deaths and AIDS-related deaths for the period 2002-2016 (Table 20).

Year	Number of Births	Number of deaths	Number of AIDS related deaths	Percentage of AIDS deaths
2002	1 065 149	587 001	232 581	39.6
2003	1 089 307	623 061	268 496	43.1
2004	1 112 009	654 512	299 504	45.8
2005	1 133 578	675 642	320 473	47.4
2006	1 157 720	681 434	325 241	47.7
2007	1 186 149	675 287	315 059	46.7
2008	1 231 007	649 556	284 312	43.8
2009	1 221 737	636 926	266 591	49.1
2010	1 216 150	628 915	256 625	40.8
2011	1 207 511	600 085	225 901	37.6
2012	1 210 987	562 184	185 558	33.0
2013	1 212 947	541 413	161 986	29.9
2014	1 213 213	537 579	155 063	28.8
2015	1 212 055	537 313	151 748	28.2
2016	1 198 861	539 714	150 759	27.9

Table 20. Births and deaths for the period 2002-2016. (Adapted from [statssa.org.za](http://statssa.org.za) 2017).

The estimated overall HIV prevalence rate is approximately 12, 7% of the total South African population. The total number of people living with HIV is estimated at approximately 7, 03 million in 2016. For adults aged 15-49 years, an estimated 18, 9% of the population is HIV positive ([www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za). 2017). South Africa needs a national campaign to encourage men to seek health services.

### 3.1.3.3 Unemployment

Fatherhood in South Africa faces the context of high levels of unemployment and economic constraints to take up fatherhood roles and responsibilities. Many poor fathers are not living with their children and are not capable of making provision for children. Many men become fathers biologically but never see their children again (Makusha, Richter & Chikovore 2013:72).

Wilson (2006:28) says that in 1995, 61% of the black population was classified as poor while only 1% of the white population fell into the same category. In 2002 some 3.8 million Child Support Grants were being distributed nationally, the overwhelming proportion (94%) of them to black households. Three-quarters (71%) of the grants went to single-parent homes.

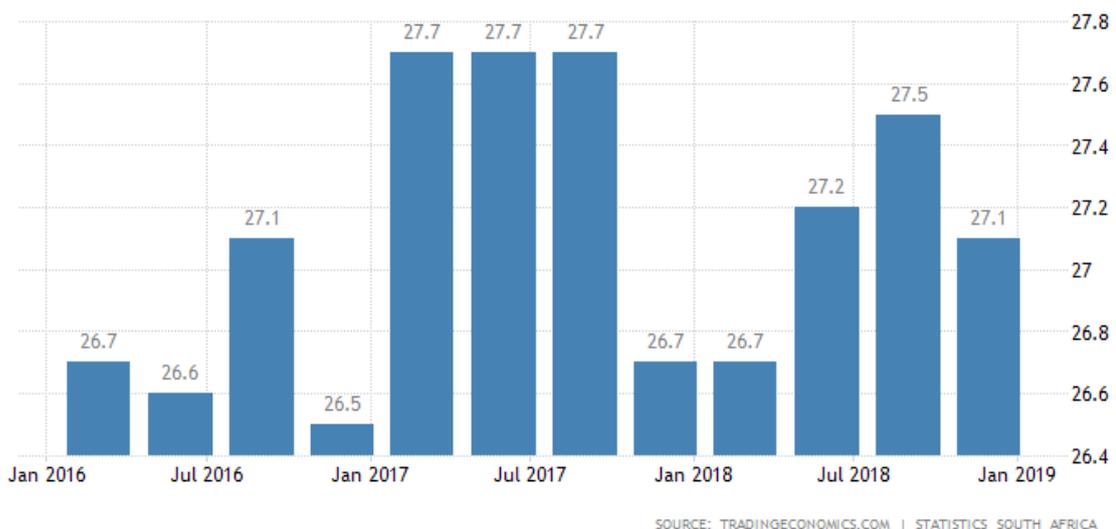


Chart 1. South Africa unemployment rate 2016-2019. (Source: [www.tradingeconomic.com/](http://www.tradingeconomic.com/) Statistic SA)

According to StatsSA (<https://twitter.com/StatsSA>. 15. May. 2018), South Africa's unemployment rate came in at 26.7% in the first quarter of 2018. The total number of people still unemployed remains at 5.98 million. 67% of unemployed people have been looking for work for a year or more.

Ramphela (2002:72,154) says that due to financial problems, most of the children

and adolescents experienced ongoing family disruption. Their families moved from one place to another because the children were sent to stay with relatives, and they frequently changed schools. Many children called their granny 'mother' and their mother, 'sister.' Many young people could not have survived, were it not for the care they received from grandparents and the way on which 'old-age pensions' were distributed through families to feed children and pay school fees. Most of the young people grew up with little knowledge of their fathers as important figures in their lives.

### 3.1.3.4 Divorce

Year	Numbers						%					
	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed
2003	31 566	7 657	3 911	1 508	12 639	532	100,0	24,3	12,4	4,8	40,0	1,7
2004	31 768	8 965	3 300	1 648	12 437	594	100,0	28,2	10,4	5,2	39,1	1,9
2005	32 484	8 672	3 568	1 635	11 582	538	100,0	26,7	11,0	5,0	35,7	1,7
2006	31 270	9 113	3 451	1 676	11 079	613	100,0	29,1	11,0	5,4	35,4	2,0
2007	29 639	9 055	3 558	1 715	9 935	865	100,0	30,6	12,0	5,8	33,5	2,9
2008	28 924	10 110	3 057	1 802	9 481	902	100,0	35,0	10,6	6,2	32,8	3,1
2009	30 763	10 528	4 016	1 610	9 981	2 912	100,0	34,2	13,1	5,2	32,4	9,5
2010	22 936	8 169	3 189	1 294	6 995	31	100,0	35,6	13,9	5,6	30,5	0,1
2011	20 980	7 517	3 473	1 359	6 730	—	100,0	35,8	16,6	6,5	32,1	0,0
2012	21 998	7 311	3 967	1 036	7 238	22	100,0	33,2	18,0	4,7	32,9	0,1
2013	23 885	8 656	3 888	1 425	7 561	24	100,0	36,2	16,3	6,0	31,7	0,1
2014	24 689	9 167	4 994	1 522	6 970	842	100,0	37,1	20,2	6,2	28,2	3,4
2015	25 260	10 841	4 213	1 566	6 588	837	100,0	42,9	16,7	6,2	26,1	3,3

Table 21. Number of published divorces in SA by population group, 2003-2015. (Adapted from Statistics South Africa, Marriages and divorces, 2015).

According to Stats SA white couples were the most prone to divorce, with 40% of failed marriages, while black couples were 24.3% in 2003. In 2008, black couples were ahead of white couples and in 2015 blacks accounted for 42.9% and whites for 26.1% compared with 24.3% and 40%, a decade earlier (See Table 21).

Reasons for divorce stand out as adultery, abuse, alcohol and financial problems. Today many people are no longer prepared to take the time to try to sort their problems out (Thomas 2017).

Population Group	Total number of children involved	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 966</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<b>Black African</b>	10 468	45,6
<b>Coloured</b>	4 609	20,1
<b>Indian/Asian</b>	1 366	5,9
<b>White</b>	4 970	21,6
<b>Mixed</b>	649	2,8
<b>Unspecified</b>	904	3,9

Table 22. Number & percentage distribution of children (aged below 18 years) affected by divorce, 2015. (Adapted from Statistics South Africa, Marriages and divorces, 2015).

### 3.1.3.5 Cultural factor

Lobola (or lobolo) was codified in customary law by Natal's settlers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a payment of 11 cattle and was upheld by traditional institutions. 'Lobola' means the property in cash or in kind, whether known as lobolo, bogadi, bohali, xuma, lumalo, thaka, ikhazi, magadi, emabheka or by any other name, which a prospective husband or the head of his family undertakes to give to the head of the prospective wife's family in consideration of a customary marriage. Lobola is seen by some rural South Africa woman as a sign of respect in that it symbolises their worth

and reinforces their dignity. Today, when paid in cash, 'lobola' often amounts to "several ten thousand Rand". After 'lobola' is paid, the couple would go to be legalised (Junod 1962:226-282; Mosotho, Louw, Jacobus and Calitz 2011; [www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1998-120](http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1998-120)).

If a child is born out-of-wedlock, a man's access to the child may be limited or denied until he pays 'lobola'. The man is also required to pay damages or intlawulo (the isi Xhosa term for 'fines') as reparation for having offended and disrespected the female partner's family by impregnating her out-of-wedlock. As they represent significant amounts of money the unemployed and poor young men who are unable to pay damages or intlawulo (fines) will be excluded from being involved in their child's life. A man who is the father of the child is dismissed by the woman's family as irresponsible and useless (Makusha, Richter, & Chikovore 2013:72).

This is related to the high levels of unemployment and poverty in this county. Given the challenges of unemployment and poverty mentioned earlier, it is no surprise that many men are unable or unwilling to conform to this cultural regulation. Lobola may cause unintended negative effects.

According to the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998) South African statute in terms of which marriages are performed under African customary law, has the following prerequisites to qualify a marriage under customary law ([www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1998-120](http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1998-120); <https://en.wikipedia>):

- \*Consensus – historically, consensus was sought between the families of the prospective bride and groom's families. Since 2008, the RCMA states that consensus is required only between the individuals, and not their families.
- \*Age Requirements – according to customary law, no specific age requirement exists however, the RCMA includes a minimum age requirement of 18.
- \*Lobola – a customary marriage, under RCMA, is valid on the agreement to pay lobola and does not require the payment of lobola.

\*Transfer of the Bride – the transfer of a bride is another requirement for the validity of a customary marriage. The RCMA does not specifically regulate this custom and is dealt with on an ad-hoc basis.

\*Absence of Common Law Marriage – two parties in a monogamous customary marriage can enter into a common law marriage, but not vice versa.

\*Prohibited Degrees of Relationship – in the past, each community had its own rules about prohibited relationships. These rules have evolved over the year. The RCMA states that these prohibited relationships are regulated by customary rules.

However, despite intentions of the RCMA, it brought along with-it subsequent issues that placed uncertainty on the interpretation and application of several of its provisions ([www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za). 2017).

Adegboyega (1994, quoted from Amoateng & Heaton et al., 2007:14) draws the following assumptions of the family institution:

- \* The dominance of men in a family situation - men are the heads of families.
- \* It is the duty of the head to ensure the welfare of the members through the organisation of production and through the equitable distribution of resources among family members.
- \* Fathers, with mothers, have joint responsibilities for their children's maintenance and upbringing.
- \* Parents support all of their children to some or other extent.
- \* When children are economically able, they will, in the absence of a formal social security system and even in conjunction with social security, provide for the economic welfare of parents.
- \* Family members reside together in the same household and function within a

unified household economy.

Whereas Adegboyega shows the outline of the family ideologically and empirically, unfortunately, today many children do not live with their biological parents in South Africa. According to the *1995 October Household Survey* ([www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za)), half the children in South Africa were not living with both parents. Over 42% were living with their mothers only and 1% with their fathers only. The numbers show that large proportions of fathers evade full-time parental responsibility and visit opportunistically between his children's mothers.

According to the South African Institute of Race Relations, by 2009, 56% of divorces with children were published, 48% proportion of these children had absent, living fathers, 52% of which represents black fathers and a total number of orphans of 3.95 million (SIRR 2009).

Recent data shows that a father disengages from the child after the death of the child's mother. Only 41% of maternal orphans lived with their fathers in comparison to nearly 80% of paternal orphans living with their mother. The absent living fathers increased from the end of apartheid to the present day (Holborn & Eddy 2011).

A traditional family needs a father who is a provider, protector and decision-maker. The 'fathering' is normally connected with insemination and biological intimacy. But under apartheid the reality of the father was compromised because he lacked education and skills, compounded by high levels of unemployment and demoralisation, powerless with low self-esteem. Under these conditions, a father could not fulfil his responsibility and role in his family. Many children and adolescents were abandoned by their fathers and left home to find their own path into adulthood (Adonis 2014). For example, fathers who were ex-combatants nationally, abused alcohol regularly, and the combat experience had a negative impact on their lives such as reported nightmares, poor concentration, and feelings of anger, violent behaviour, aggression, paranoia, vengeful thoughts, blaming, and difficulty in taking on social roles such as father or breadwinner (Lamb 2006; Abraham 2006).

South African Time Use Survey by Budlender, Chobokoane, & Mpetsheni (2001)

shows that South African fathers spend less than a tenth of the time, compared to mothers, performing childcare tasks for children under seven years of age. Mothers spend an average of 87 minutes a day in active childcare such as washing, dressing and so on, compared to seven minutes a day spend by the father doing the same category of tasks. By proposing the simple hour spent approach to looking at men's involvement and care of children can be refined in the following categories of fathering behaviour: engagement (interaction between father and child), accessibility or availability and responsibility for the child's care (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov & Levine 1985). Recent researches also show the role of fathers as 'being there/ there for me' which relates to a quality of time and relationship between child and father (Richter & Smith 2006:161; Ratele, Shefer & Clowes 2012).

Gorvine (2010) researched father involvement and fathers' responsibility with three groups- residential biological fathers, residential stepfathers, and non-residential biological fathers. He revealed that residential biological fathers and residential stepfathers reported higher levels of interaction than for non-residential biological fathers, and residential stepfathers have higher levels of responsibility than for non-residential biological fathers.

Recent researches on fatherhood have focused on a range of issues, including symbolic representations of fatherhood, men's perceptions of their fatherhood roles, and nature and extent of father involvement with their children. Biological fathers are not the only men important to children. Grandfather, uncles and older brothers are important father-figures. While some children live with their biological fathers, many children have 'other men' who fulfil a father role. The concept of 'social fatherhood' includes all the child-rearing roles, activities, duties and responsibilities that fathers are expected to perform and fulfil (Bachrach & Sonenstein 1998 in Sullivan 2000; Richter & Smith 2006:156; Krampe 2009).

The positive child and adolescent outcomes are associated with paternal relationships characterised by closeness, mutuality and support (Lewis & Lamb 2004; Baltes & Silverberg 1994). Hope, Fidelity and care must be achieved to become a healthy and functional person through childhood, adolescence and adulthood

(Erikson 1963). South African fathers must recognise the disturbances and disruptions of their families and understand how this affects the children, adolescents and family. A father must be a role model for adolescents in his house and community. Shozi (2013) suggests that men/fathers should be encouraged to be involved in reproductive health issues, domestic and child-care responsibilities in the home, and mentoring and assisting young girls to take up previously male-dominated professions.

Richter (2006:74) states that positive father involvement is also beneficial to fathers themselves, and says that:

The concept needs to be fostered that increasing men's exposure to children, and encouraging their involvement in the care of children, may facilitate their own growth, bring them happiness and gratification, and foster a more nurturing orientation in general.

The South African Men's Forum (SAMF) was born in 1997 by Dr Bongani Khumalo to challenge all men in South Africa to 'restore the soul of the nation'. He said, 'the prevailing negative trends in our society, the status of men as a common denominator in crime and violence, and the moral slide away which is threatening the soul of our nation makes it imperative for all of us to get involved as men to be agents of change'. The purpose of the SAMF has been to mobilise and galvanise men and boys to change their mindset about gender roles and to work to bring about equality. The SAMF has a number of programmes focused on redefining men's roles in the family and in broader society. With an affirmative viewpoint, the growing numbers of men attending men's marches, celebrations of responsible fatherhood, and playing more involved roles in the lives of their families and children (Peacock & Botha 2006:290-291).

Justice men's forum was established to change men's attitudes toward human rights of women and children, sensitising men in the Justice Family, towards gender and children's issues. Justice men's forum collaborates with the Human Sciences

Research Council in order to organise 'The justice fatherhood project' which forms part of the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign. The project aims to promote men's care and the protection of children, both by fathers and beyond biological fatherhood ([www.hsrc.ac.za](http://www.hsrc.ac.za)).

It is necessary to take into account the ways men define themselves and learn to be men.

#### **4. Summary**

The purpose of chapter 2 and 3 have been the examination of the characters used for God in the Old Testament and the New Testament and reviewed the figure of father and the role of father from psychological and faith developmental approaches. Chapter 4 reviewed the specific situations of fatherhood in South Africa.

The Bible shows the relationships between God and his people as examples of father-children relationships. The concept of God as Father is expressed in delivering his people from Egypt and in protecting and guiding them with paternal care in the desert in the Old Testament. The role of Father God is seen as a prophet who leads his people in the right way, as a priest who feeds his people with spiritual food, and as a patriarch who cares for his people with justice and mercy.

The New Testament viewed God as the Father of believers who do God's will. Through his suffering Son, Jesus, all believers could call God, Abba Father, and could have that specific relationship which Jesus had with his Abba Father. The term 'Abba Father' became formalised in the writings of the Pauline literature, and all believers (including Gentiles) have been made children of God even though they are uncircumcised.

Many types of research show that when the relationships between fathers and their sons are good, boys are more masculine (see 2.2). Especially paternal warmth and closeness are more important than the father's masculinity (Lamb et al., 1986:13). The children who have close and warm relationships with their fathers are

advantageous in their development - at least when the fathers concerned opted for increased involvement when they wanted it and circumstances made it possible.

Father's attitudes toward the paternal role and toward his children are affected. Father presence contributes to cognitive development, intellectual functioning, school achievement, and emotional well-being. He also conveys social norms through his behaviour which is closely observed by his children. His high and low levels of involvement can be either beneficial or harmful to their children and adolescents development depending on the attitudes and values of the fathers concerned. Therefore, men have to be prepared for fatherhood because fatherhood is performed by anyone available to guide and counsel young boys as they grow into manhood (Mkhize 2006:195; Gorvine 2010). Especially the roles of the father as a prophet, priest and patriarch must not fail to notice to father-absent adolescents in local churches.

The figure of the father, the role of the father and the relationship between fathers and child issues; however, father absence is also a problem in South Africa. The complexity of contemporary issues lead to a number of questions: what are the special considerations in relation to adolescents with absent fathers? What are the experiences of adolescents with absent fathers? How do adolescents with an absent father feel about the concepts of "a father" and "fathering" and how do they feel about God the Father when they receive teaching from the Bible in church?

Jesus ministered to the needs people experienced to demonstrate the love of God: when people were hungry, He fed them; if they were sick, He healed them. When they were like sheep without a shepherd, He led them.

These contemporary family problems are forcing local churches to reconsider which biblical tradition might contribute to the recovery of the crisis of fathering. Osmer (2008:4) suggested the pragmatic task, "how might we respond?" Heitink (1999:152) also said that the theory needs to be constantly verified through praxis, and praxis should be transcended by theory with the relationship between theory and praxis as a spiral. The local church must think about those messages from the Bible and the

context of the fathers who live in this complex and diversified world. In particular, this thesis focuses on father-absent adolescents in South Africa. It is necessary to know the context of fathers in South Africa to understand the real situation of father-absent adolescents.

Similarly, the youth ministry must attempt to meet the needs of adolescents with absent fathers. Youth ministry should determine what the disparities are between what occurs during Youth Meetings and what happens in the everyday lives of the adolescents. Youth ministry must be a part of local churches, which includes helping adolescents with absent fathers and their families. It is therefore important that church leaders and congregations build the concepts of youth ministry and family ministry.

## Chapter 5

### Youth ministry and family ministry

#### 1. Introduction

God is the Father of all believers. Father-absent children and adolescents cannot be neglected in the local church, because they are children of God (Nel 2000:11). Father-absent children and adolescents need the congregation as an extended family.

As mentioned in chapter one, this chapter will focus on the inclusive congregational theory of youth ministry as developed by Nel, as well as various other approaches to youth ministry. Confirmation will be dealt with because it is an important family event in the local church. The concept of a family ministry and an extended family will be reviewed to help local church leaders understand the concept of a family-oriented youth ministry.

Subsequently, a brief history of the youth ministry is provided. In 1780 the Newspaper-man Robert Raikes developed a 'Sunday school' for children who worked in industrial factories. The children attended Sunday school when they were not working in factories. They taught children skills in reading and writing the Bible as well as basic manners and morals. Yet as the population became more urbanised, Sunday school was not enough. Large populations of young people were free from the safety of village life and a single-family focus. To provide protective outlets of activity for these youths, youth parachurch organisations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA; was founded in London, England in 1844), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA; was founded in London, 1855) (Nel 2000:51-52).

The American church adopted Raikes' programme in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the Sunday school became the first distinct ministry to the youth in America. This early youth ministry was to reinforce Christian commitment and to

protect young people from the threats of menacing city life. Youth with a Mission (YWAM), Christian Endeavor, denominational youth societies, and Youth for Christ (YFC) were formed (Nel 2000:51-55; Nel 2018b:178-185; Root 2007a:30-31; Cf. Senter III 2014; Bergler 2002).

In the modernised world young people spend most of their meaningful hours with their peers, away from the work of parents and other adults. They feel the pressure to conform to the standards of the group. At times they are preoccupied with their own peer world and seem to be completely uninterested in the real world. At other times, they seem overwhelmed by the fear and stress of being kept out, and so enter into a complex society. In earlier decades of the twentieth century, new scientific progress, coupled with cultural pluralisation of urban centres, shattered the once dominant evangelical Protestant hold on American culture. The purpose, approach and system of youth ministry in society, culture and education had changed as the youth changed their attitude on their religion, and their identity as Christians. For example, three out of four American teenagers reply that they are Christians but say that their parents' religious beliefs and practices are old and meaningless and that they want to have little to do with any of it. Teenagers say 'faith' is 'somewhat important' but it means that 'faith doesn't matter much', and only a few practice their faith as a regular part of their lives (Smith & Denton 2005:31-45).

Dean (2010:16) points to the unawareness of religion's effect on teenagers that:

Most religious traditions set out to impress human beings at precisely these points: identity and practice...we met young people who called themselves Christians, who grew up with Christian parents, who were regular participants in Christian congregations, yet who had no readily accessible faith vocabulary, few recognisable faith practices, and little ability to reflect on their lives religiously.

Youth ministry needed new approaches toward the youth who live in new cultures with its new scientific theories, progress, pluralism, etc. (Root 2007a:32-35).

In recent years the discussion on the 'theological turn' in youth ministry has been brought to the fore by Andrew Root and Kenda C. Dean (2011). Youth ministers are challenges regarding the theological depth of their practice, as lenses to help them understand that what they do is essentially about navigating the sacred connection between God and young people in the church (Root & Dean 2011:16).

Dean (2010:115-117) stated that practical theology is concerned with how God reaches human beings through concrete situations, and the concrete ways in which humans reach back.

It is described with both thinking and action according to God's purpose in all aspects of daily life by carefully considering the Bible and resources springing from it, while keeping an eye on what is happening in our daily world (Shrier & Oropeza 2005:143).

Practical theology sees youth ministry as (1) theological, (2) interdisciplinary, (3) reflects on God through Christian action, and (4) assumes that youth ministry is a particular ministry (Cf. Root 2007a:19; 2012a: 55-56; Osmer 2011):

*1. Practical theology implies that youth ministry is theological.*

Practical theology reflects on both youth action within the church and society and God's movement (divine action) in their individual lives. Youth ministry is theological because its very purpose is to participate in the action of God. Youth ministry that works with children and adolescents, significant adults, and their families has pastoral and theological significance (Cf. Root 2012a:53-73; Nel 2018a:13-14).

*2. Practical theology implies that youth ministry is interdisciplinary.*

Theology must engage in conversations with those in other disciplines of the social sciences because theology gives attention to different kinds of subjects. Youth ministry communicates with sociology, psychology, anthropology and their sub-disciplines. Youth ministry leads to relating social sciences and theology to one another through the representative humanity of Christ on the cross (Cf. Jacober 2011:19-20). Root presents two classic theological methods of interdisciplinary work,

Paul Tillich's correlational method and the Barthian Chalcedonian method, and as a third option, a Representative method (Cf. Root 2007b).

*3. Practical theology implies that youth ministry reflects on God through Christian action.*

Clark (2008) says 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 discernable and pragmatic course of faithful action."

Youth ministry is about participating in God's action and its purpose is to invite both young and old to participate in God's action. That's why a youth pastor is requested to learn how to discover and then internally incorporate a theologically-driven discernment process so that the youth may be somewhat confident to know what it means to first live day-to-day as a follower of Jesus Christ, and then teach and lead others in their communities (Clark 2008).

*4. Practical theology assumes that youth ministry is particular.*

Fowler (1987:17) defines practical theology as 'theological reflection and construction arising out of and giving guidance to a community of faith in the *praxis* of its mission'. Youth ministry starts with the contexts in young people's lives and focuses on the youth. God cares for youth in specific ways. There is an age-specific and need-oriented nature in the care of God. He is at the same time inclusively and specifically involved. His care is simultaneously holistic and differentiated in nature (Nel 2005b). Youth ministry helps the youth not only to learn stuff about the Bible but also to learn how to use it as a lens to interpret their lives in light of the act of God in Christ crucified (Root 2012b:43; Jacober 2011:18-19).

Youth ministry should always be undertaken in response to young people in the church. An effective youth ministry to father-absent children and adolescents in the local church will be considered to be a service to the shared life in the Body of Christ, a service of God's compassion, and a service to make disciples of Christ.

Youth ministers should always reflect and ask themselves: "What is youth ministry?"

What is the purpose of youth ministry? How does youth ministry practice theology?” The answers can be found in the various approaches to youth ministry and utilised to understand the lives of adolescents with absent fathers in context.

## **2. Four representative views on youth ministry**

Mark H. Senter III, from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; Southwestern Baptist's Wesley Black; Chap Clark, from Fuller Theological Seminary; and a youth specialist Malan Nel, from the University of Pretoria in South Africa introduced four different and unique concepts about youth ministry. These different theological approaches present various views on youth ministry to help youth ministers and youth workers to understand what youth ministry is.

This section presents various views to youth ministry focusing on the four views. Local pastors, youth ministers and congregations will find the advantages or applicable ways of these views to their youth ministries. They will benefit from thinking through the theological basis of their approach to youth ministry.

### **2.1 The strategic approach to youth ministry of Mark H. Senter III**

According to Mark Senter, the heart of the problem is the marginalisation of youths and the discontinuity in the spiritual nurture within the church. He (2001:115) writes that “while the church wanted young people to mature in their Christian faith, maturity was defined in terms that the older generation understood and to which the younger crowd was expected to conform.”

Discontinuity of relationships and specialisation of content became the normal school system of education. When a child enters primary school, he/she spends a year with one teacher, and for the next year, he/she is handed over to a new teacher. As the child approaches adolescence, the various educational disciplines are isolated into speciality areas. Churches adopted the school system of discipleship, separated

young people from adults, and divided youths in age-graded classes (Senter III 2001:115).

To solve this problem Senter presents a strategic approach to youth ministry in the form of a parachurch or church-based youth ministry to establish a new church to maintain a theological continuity.

Senter (2001:117) defines the strategic approach 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 views youth ministry as the best opportunity to launch a vital Christian witness to prepare the faith community of the next generation. The strategic approach calls upon the youth ministry to become a holistic intergenerational church of Christ that is relevant to the world. The strategy for the youth group genesis church may be one of the best disciplines for a local church to retain a commitment to local evangelism and church growth from generation to generation (Senter III 2001:115-117).

The strategic approach to youth ministry is to be embraced by the local church if they are willing to have the following four specific changes in adult leadership perspectives (Senter III 2001: 132-133):

(1) Young people must be seen as people who are shaping the church and being shaped by it - changes in worship forms and fellowship activities will drive the tastes of collective and age groups into a healthy tension.

(2) Youth pastors must be viewed as pastors - youth pastors who are chosen on spiritual leadership skills, gifts, and knowledge of biblical and theological contents will lead to strategically established new churches.

(3) Young people must lead in mission efforts - both local and cross-cultural efforts

will find young people at the forefront of vision casting and personal witness.

(4) Adult congregations, like parents, must prefer to sacrifice their own lives so that the next generation might live and grow - the spiritual growth, development, and multiplication of the faith community take precedence over maintenance of facilities and traditions.

Nel (2001:137) argues that the youth group genesis church becomes yet another alternative community that draws youth away from the primary community of the congregation because the metaphor about the church does not show any biblical reasons for arguing the need for specialisation. The fact that we are called “children of God” emphasises the fact that we belong together. Cosby (2015:51) mentions the deficiencies of parachurch ministries. The youth need multigenerational discipleship and service. It is the privilege and responsibility of the children of God to be church members as the Body of Christ. Youth growth happens within the context of a believing community.

Clark (2015:80) says the term “church” describes a relationship of one another as the Lord’s community (*kuriake*, the Lord’s), two primary metaphors are used: we are the “body of Christ” and we are the “family of God.” (Cf. 1 Cor. 12).

A local church as a diverse group of members from the old generation and the new generation learns many things from one another. The church is a community of disciples who stay together because they had been called together as a family to be a member of the body of Christ (Nel 2001:138).

## **2.2 The preparatory approach to youth ministry of Wesley Black**

The preparatory approach of Black (2001:44-55) defines youth ministry as a specialised ministry to adolescents that prepares them to participate in the life of existing churches as leaders, disciples, or evangelists with opportunities for service both in the present and the future. The youth are viewed as disciples or evangelists.

Through the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20) the church is able to reach all people and to teach them.

The emphasis of this model is on training for their present and future ministry. Through training Christian youths to be witnesses of Jesus, they can reach other young people with their same language, and common interest by spending time together (Zuck & Benson et al., 1978: 189-192).

The youth searches for something and someone to whom they can pledge their truth, the object of this devotion must be worthy of their lives, nothing less. Young people are naturally passionate because they are open to love, and willing to suffer for a cause (Dean 2004: 65-67).

The preparatory approach has a clear purpose for every activity, strategy, funding, and leadership growth in youth ministry for the development of mature Christians in the church, both now and for the future. Youth ministry is everything a local church does with, to, and for the youth. By participating the youth will accept ownership and the leadership in the congregation and its youth ministry. They will feel safe and at home in the congregation by being involved in the youth ministry and even afterwards graduate in the youth ministry (Black 2001:42-43).

Churches are required to make five changes to embrace a vital ministry with youths (Black 2001:55-57):

(1) The youth ministry must become a shared ministry - As youths participate in church-wide events (such as worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and missions), they experience the purpose and functions on a large scale. They build images and memories of role models for many aspects of life.

(2) The youth ministry must become comprehensive - The most effective youth ministers use parents and teachers in all ministries of the church to guide youths to know God and his love, to have a personal relationship with Christ through faith in Him, and to grow through a lifetime of discipleship as followers of Jesus.

(3) The youth ministry must become purposeful – The church must think about the questions of what we would like to see happen in the lives of teens before they graduate from high school? How can we best guide them through the teen years and into adulthood? What will we do each year to build on prior experiences, while always providing for those who just entered the youth division? How can we relate to youths at several levels of spiritual maturity through our programming and organisation?

(4) The youth ministry must begin to bridge the gap between the church and the home – The youth ministry includes the ministry to and with parents of teenagers because the youth ministry cannot ignore the influence and modelling that goes on in the home and in the church and the powerful effect it has on adolescents.

(5) The youth ministry must begin by including the senior pastor and the church - The preparatory approach to youth ministry needs to have the support of the church, and the senior pastor to have a thriving youth ministry with budgeted funds, a designated meeting place, hired youth workers, etc.

Senter (2001: 69) questioned whether the most important question we can ask the church's primary means of preparing young people for full participation in the faith community is: *what is of value to the faith community?* The essential functions of the church are a ministry to God, ministry to believers, and ministry to the world. If the church places the highest value on these functions and demonstrates them in the life of the church, then young people will assume leadership in promoting the same values.

Arguing with some point of the preparatory approach to youth ministry, Nel (2001: 62)

says that young people need to be nurtured before they change into fully functioning human beings. If adolescents want to be involved in the process of becoming what they have been created to be, then they need a caring pastoral relationship and teaching for their individual lives.

### **2.3 The missional approach to youth ministry of Chap Clark**

The missional approach of Clark (2001:80) regards youth ministry as a mission, and states that the community of faith is corporately committed to caring for and reaching out to the adolescent world (of both church and unchurched young people) in order to meaningfully assimilate them into their fellowship. Christian adults are viewed as missionaries, called to reach out to the youth, evangelise them, and make them part of the Body of Christ.

The word 'mission', from the Latin *missio*, means 'to send'. God sent us into the world as missionaries to preach the gospel (Mt 28:19-20). In other words, making disciples is part of the congregation's missionary duty. Jesus is desperately searching to rescue the lost. He taught and trained his disciples to reach out to the lost. Youth ministry should aim and pray that the Holy Spirit transform the youth to be like Jesus cultivating in them a driving passion to live and give the gospel to their community (2 Col. 3:18). Disciples of Jesus learn to make disciples and train people who have become disciples to influence other people to become disciples. If the youth advanced the gospel externally into their community, the gospel will also advance internally, deeper into their hearts (Nel 2005a: 109-110; Stier 2015:5-7).

A missional youth ministry is to bring the gospel and the kingdom to every adolescent. Effective youth ministers must become critical bridges to the youth culture to reach them, and to welcome them as members of the family of God (Clark 2001: 81-82; Dean et al., 2010:66).

The youth ministry that successfully recruits and equips lay people to bear the

primary responsibility for reaching young people will have the greatest impact. The key to ministries to the young people is the equipping of volunteers in local churches (Senter III 1992: 184-185). Congregations must recognise that the youth are likely better positioned than many of the other members to fulfil the mandate of the Great Commission because of the relationships and connections they have with non-Christian youths in their schools and communities. The missional approach to youth ministry asks itself '*Who are our targets?*' '*How do we best reach out to them?*' '*Where do we want these students to end up when they leave our programme?*' (Clark 2001: 86-87).

To employ a missional approach in the youth ministry, the following specific changes have to be made by the youth ministry leadership team, the youth minister/youth pastor, the senior pastor, and the lay leadership of the church (Clark 2001: 90-92):

(1) The youth ministry leadership team should:

- \* Respect, honour, and seek to understand the culture where secularised adolescents live;
- \* Seek, along with committed students, to be relationally connected with students in the context of their clusters on their own turf;
- \* View programmes as incidental tools that facilitate relational trust and confidence, as opposed to being the end goal of the ministry; and
- \* Make certain that every programme, every event, and every methodology employed is centred on the end goal of full assimilation into the larger body of the church upon graduation from the youth ministry programme.

(2) The youth minister/youth pastor should:

- \* Resist typical youth ministry mentalities that divide the church staff, such as being a

Lone Ranger or having a “we are the only ones doing it right” attitude.

- \* Submit personally and in ministry to being primarily a member of the overall church’s leadership team.
- \* Seek to connect students with other people and programmes in the church.
- \* Become a partner with parents and other adults in the church in the ministry to students.
- \* Strategically commit to and plan for the goal of full assimilation into the life of the church for each student.

(3) The senior pastor and other church staff should:

- \* Create a systemic structure and a relational community where all people are welcomed and cared for, especially in the worship services.
- \* Preach to the needs, environment, and situations of the entire congregation.
- \* Build meaningful relationships with adolescents and youth ministry staff.
- \* Take decisive leadership with those who, by their actions, deny adolescents’ access to the experience of community in the larger church body.
- \* Invite the youth staff into the inner circle of leadership in the church.

(4) The lay leadership in the church should:

- \* Ensure that all programmes and staff are committed to a holistic view of the church as the body of Christ;
- \* Create and hold others accountable in maintaining a corporate ethos where adolescents know they are both accepted and taken seriously in their gifts and ministry;

\* Allow no one - lay or staff - to view young people as merely “the youth pastor’s job”.

Nel (2001:99) asks whether the missional approach to youth ministry takes the family seriously. If there is a family, then helping them to find each other in Christ is crucial because generally not many children who are won for Christ make it on their own. A natural family is a wonderful place for churched and unchurched young people in which to grow up. The believing parents of youth should consider themselves to be coaches in the evangelism and discipleship of their children. When parents share their faith relationally and encourage their children with cheering and clapping their hands, then their children are filled with courage to reach the lost (Cf. DeVries 1994:63-68).

Black (2001:102) says that a missional approach to youth ministry tends to neglect to reach, in spite of the Great Commission’s command to *reach* all we can and to *teach* all we reach. The church probably reaches more through relationships than by teaching only but it takes both to be faithful to Christ’s Great Commission (Cf. Root 2007:141).

In his approach Stier (2015:9) also suggests a ‘*gospel advancing view of youth ministry*’, “Equip teenagers for relational evangelism. For teenagers to develop a lifestyle of evangelism, they need to be equipped to share their faith. This includes knowing how to naturally bring up the gospel, explain it clearly, tie in their story, and navigate various responses to the gospel. They also need to learn how to ask great questions and listen deeply to others.”

According to Col. 1:28-29, Paul sees the primary goal of the Christian life to reach the state of maturity in Christ, to become like Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Youth must learn the heart of Jesus for the lost and be disciplined to be like Jesus through youth ministry and their families. Discipling is to meet the needs of others more than in the teaching of techniques (Ogden 2003:101).

## 2.4 The inclusive congregational approach to youth ministry of Malan Nel

The inclusive congregational approach integrates youths into congregational life. This approach sees youths as full partners in every aspect of God's call to the Christian faith community (Senter 2001:71). As the main approach of this research, the inclusive congregational approach can provide a bird's-eye view on the One Body of Christ in youth ministry and will give answers on how a local church makes room for father-absent adolescents.

Nel (2005b) describes in his article on theology:

Theology is this continuing dialogue with God, acknowledging continuously that God initiated the communication/ talks, after the complete breakdown on our side. The ultimate proof of this being His intention and purpose is what we call the incarnation: the word (the 'talk' if you want to) became flesh.

The inclusive congregational approach of Nel tries to explain what God says and how youth ministry should respond not only on the praxis but also in the praxis.

The inclusive congregational approach of Nel's (2001:6) youth ministry that is one body-oriented to find a place for youth (children and adolescents) within every ministry in the body of Christ, and to be a medium of the coming God to the youth as an integral part of the congregation in a differentiated and focused way.

Nel (2000:97) defines youth ministry as *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.*

Martinson (1988:22) says that God's worshipping church is called to inclusivity so that youth ministry can be a regular, inclusive, congregational worship with God's diverse people, who join their presence and voices, language, and concerns.

Dean (2010:46) illustrated the contrast between the one-eared Mickey Mouse model (Figure 2) and the inclusive congregational approach:

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 the youth ministry.

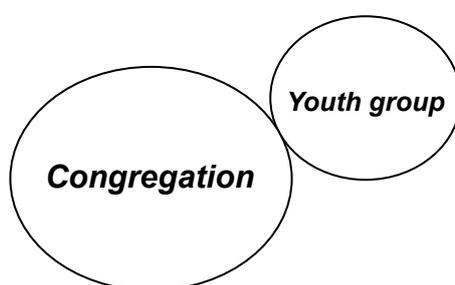


Figure 2. The one-eared Mickey Mouse model of ministry (Stuart Cummings-Bond, “The one-eared Mickey Mouse”, Adapted from Dean & Foster 1998:31; Dean 2010:46)

Youth ministry is unique and special because of their different developmental levels and culture, but not different from any other ministries. Children and adolescents are an integral part of God’s people and of the Body of Christ because they cannot be separated from the entire church even though they are special and unique. They are an indispensable part of the congregation. They also have obligations and responsibilities as members of their local church. They must have a place to participate in God’s action. Youth ministry seeks to participate in God’s action with and for a culturally identified group called children and adolescents. Thus, the whole church must understand the generation gap and the different culture of children and adolescents. They must open their hearts and ears to listen more deeply and intensely to the needs of young people. The congregation must realise that if children and adolescents find that there is no room for them in the church, they will seek to meet their spiritual needs and find their mentors outside the church (Nel

2001:7-16; Cf. Root 2012a:38-39; Dean & Foster 1998:15-16).

About Nel's inclusive congregational approach to youth ministry, Black (2001: 25) asks the following questions, *is there not a need for separate times of preaching, teaching, ministry, and interaction with other youths? Do youths not need their own time as well as meeting corporately with the congregation?* The problem is that too often congregations want youths to participate as adults participate, rather than as youths participate. Youths need to develop specific ways to channel their energies and idealism; they need their own ways to put into practice the movement of God in their lives. They need to be able to serve in ways that are different from adults (Black 2001:25).

To understand the comprehensive and inclusive congregational approach to youth ministry, two main categories of Nel will be explained - (1) God's coming to his people, and (2) Giving names.

#### **2.4.1 God's coming to his people**

In the article "Congregational analysis: a theological and ministerial approach", which focuses on understanding the church as an intermediary in its ministerial role-fulfilment, Nel (2009a) says that ministries are modes by which God is coming to his own and through people to his world to build up the local church. The story of God's salvation is faithfully repeated in a multitude of different ways in youth ministry. Building up the local church is about the integration and coordination of all these modes of ministry.

These modes of ministries can be clustered into four main ministries namely *Kerygma, Leitourgia, Koinonia, and Diakonia*.

<b>The congregation and the process of building up the local church</b>							
<b>The glorification of the Father, Son and Spirit</b>							
<b>By the communication of the gospel</b>							
<b>Through the communicative acts that serve the gospel</b>							
Preaching <i>Kerygma</i>	Worship <i>Leitourgia</i>	Care <i>Paraclesis</i>	Community <i>Koinonia</i>	Teaching <i>Didache</i>	Service <i>Diakonia</i>	Witness <i>Marturia</i>	Leading <i>kubernesis</i>
<b>Often clustered into four 'ministries'</b>							
<b><i>Kerygma</i></b>		<b><i>leitourgia</i></b>		<b><i>Koinonia</i></b>		<b><i>Diakonia</i></b>	

Table 23. Names of ministries and their relationship to building up the local church. (Adapted from Nel 2009a; 2015a:106).

#### 2.4.1.1 The mode of *kerygma* (proclaiming/ preaching)

*Kerygma* is the proclamation of a new state of affairs (Cf. Is. 52:7; 61:1-2; Mt. 11:5), that implicates people in the story (Cf. II Cor. 5:17; 6:2; Eph. 5:8; Lk. 5:20), brings about the healing of life (Cf. Rom. 6:4), and relates to the church situation. The entire word of God gathers itself together in the *kerygma* and focuses on the unique present (Firet 1986:43-50). Norén (1992:42-43) states that when the scriptures are read and preached, God's triune nature and action are presented to the worshipping community. The Great Thanksgiving reveals the work of Christ and invokes the Holy Spirit. All these announce and praise God who is revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The ministry of preaching is the primary means by which God saves and sanctifies the youth. The Spirit of God works with the Word of God to produce new life in the people of God: "Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). People are born again by the Spirit through the "living and enduring Word of God" (1 Pet. 1:3, 23). The *kerygma* has to enter the here-and-now of children and adolescents and proclaim the new state of affairs that has arrived with God's coming (Nel 2000:89; Nel 2009b; Cosby 2015:44).

#### **2.4.1.2 The mode of *leitourgia* (worship service)**

According to Hebrews 10:19-20, the congregations have the confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus. This way is that He has opened for us through the curtain that is his body.

Schnase (2007:33-34) describes worship as those times we gather deliberately seeking to encounter God in Christ. Worship requires looking beyond what people do to see with the eyes of faith what God does. The worship of God is inextricably bound up with a believer's everyday life. Through worship, the congregation discovers the grace of God in their lives to be given through to others. Through worship, the congregation receives power for their life, community, meaning, and hope in their life (Cf. Callahan 1994; 2010:84).

Crichton (1992:20) says the sociologists tell us that for a true community there must be a face-to-face relationship, and for the Christian, this means that the members of the community are persons bound together by faith in Christ and the love of God in us.

Children and adolescents will put into practice the command Jesus has taught us in worship: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”* (Lk. 10:27 NIV). God is served through worship, songs of praise, thanksgiving, the confession of sin, prayers, offerings, etc. Worship is a learning environment in which “God can be seen and heard” both psychologically and epistemologically. And this learning process primarily creates basis attitudes for being a Christian in the life of the youth (Astley 1984; Sonnenberg & Barnard 2012; Nel 2015a:124).

#### **2.4.1.3 The mode of *koinonia* (mutuality)**

“God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” 1Cor. 1:9 NIV

According to Bromiley (1988:447), the term *koinonia* means ‘to share in’, from the verb *koinoneo*, ‘to participate in’. It denotes that friendship, fellowship, companionship, generosity, community, communion, and participation are grouped together - sharing in the divine power of love through common meals. *Koinonia* is the spiritual fellowship that is enjoyed by those who are knit together as one body. As Paul says the bread and the cup are participation (*koinonia*), in the body and blood of Christ, we live in Christ and Christ lives in us by virtue of the Spirit’s mediation of Christ’s living presence. Through this participation we can be a part of his ministry in the world as a community joined together in love (van Deusen Hunsinger 2009:347). Schnase (2007:11) says “*koinonia* is the active desire to invite, welcome, receive, and care for those who are strangers so that they find a spiritual home and discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ.”

Nel (2000:92) suggests that this mode should be intensely focused on the children and adolescents who need family relationships. They have to mature fully within a climate of *koinonia* in the local church. *Koinonia* will bring healing to father-absent children and adolescents in pain, by helping them to hear about one another’s faith in our needs in situations of profound grief or estrangement (van Deusen Hunsinger 2009:376; Nel 2001:10; Cf. Nel 2015a:128-137).

#### **2.4.1.4 The mode of *diakonia* (service)**

“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.” Mk. 10:45 NIV

Nel (2005a:40-42) refers to *diakonia* in the letters of the Apostle Paul. To Paul *being a Christian* and *being a congregation* is at the same time *being in service*. And the *diakonia* of the congregation is to build itself up, and to grow into Jesus Christ, growing in faith, knowledge, truth, and in the fulfilment of its function. It refers to an activity performed out of love for God for the sake of one’s fellow man; it is called a service of love, and the *ministry of mercy*. *Diakonia* has to become the central mode of the serving ministries (Cf. Nel 2015a:121-123).

*Ubuntu* is an ancient Southern African word meaning ‘humanity to others.’ It also means ‘I am what I am because of who we all are’. African saying, “*motho ke motho ka batho ba bang*”, means that a person is only a person in relationship with others. It emphasises the community dimension of social interaction. If someone is hungry physically and spiritually, the *Ubuntu* response is that we are all collectively responsible (Dietrich, Jorgensen, Korslien, & Nordstokke et al., 2014:17). Peter (1 Peter 4:10) says that every individual has received a gift and as stewards, they must serve (*diakoneo*) each other with the manifold grace of God. *Ubuntu* as being part of the community becomes part of the identity of the individual as a member of the congregation (Breed & Semanya 2015). With this concept, local churches must define their identity as the serving people of God and involve children and adolescents in service suitable to their age developments (Nel 2000:93-94). Then Children and adolescents will learn and practice *diakonia* to mould their hearts and change their values and behaviour in Christ as He focused on his people in need.

The comprehensive and inclusive approach asserts that the youth ministry is not a separate or additional mode of God’s coming to the youth. Youth ministry must have all these modes of ministries. Children and adolescents must be reached through all modes of ministries and have a place to enjoy the King while serving the coming of his Kingdom (Nel 2001:6).

#### **2.4.2 Giving names**

The word ‘mission’ comes from the Latin word ‘*missio*’ from the verb ‘*mittere*’, meaning ‘to send’, which covers two things: the act of sending and the content of what is sent, or the relationship between the sender and the one sent (Sandoval 2013:75).

Langmead (2004:8) says “incarnational mission” means (1) following Jesus as the pattern for mission, (2) participating in Christ’s risen presence as the driving force for

mission, and (3) joining God's cosmic mission of enfleshment in which God's self-embodying dynamic is evident from the beginning of creation.

The Greek word 'μαθητηζ' (*mathetes*) is one who learns or is a pupil of another. It has been used for an apprentice, as well as for an enthusiastic follower, even an imitator of a teacher. It implies a direct dependence of the one under instruction upon an authority superior in knowledge, and which emphasises the fact that this relation cannot be dissolved, controls the whole usage, no matter whether the reference is to the winning of technical or academic information and skill (Rengstorf 1967:416-417; Nel 2009a).

In the New Testament 'μαθητηζ', as a noun, is found 250 times only in the Gospels and Acts, denoting the men who have attached themselves to Jesus as their Master (Rengstorf 1967:441).

In the Gospels, the disciples of Jesus are called by Him to discipleship. Jesus commands his disciples to be engaged in the process of 'discipling' disciples. Decisive here is the fact that He calls to Himself disciples who do not seem to enjoy the necessary qualifications for fellowship with Him, for example, the tax-gatherer Levi (Mk. 2:13), who was regarded as a sinner and was shunned by the Jewish (Burggraff 2015; Rengstorf 1967:444).

Jesus comes to his people and calls them to be his disciples and witnesses (Mt. 28:19; Act 1:7). The youth must discover their own unique identity as disciples and witnesses without regard to qualifications. God comes to the youth through all modes of ministries as a way to lead them to participate in the *marturia* of Jesus Christ. If the youth ministry does not transform them to become disciples, followers and learners of Jesus, the church cannot fulfil its mission in the world (Nel 2015b).

David Kinnaman (The Barna Group <http://www.barna.org>. 2006. Sep. 11.), the director of the research of the Barna Group, pointed out to the American youth

ministry that:

There are certainly effective youth ministries across the country, but the levels of disengagement among twentysomethings suggest that youth ministry fails too often at discipleship and faith formation. A new standard for viable youth ministry should be – not the number of attenders, the sophistication of the events, or the “cool” factors of the youth group – but whether teens have the commitment, passion and resources to pursue Christ intentionally and wholeheartedly after they leave the youth ministry nest.

Dean (2010: 110) makes cynical remarks about it:

Most of us do not spend much time thinking about the evolution of youth ministry as a field or a discipline (and let me say at this point, you will live a long and happy life if you choose to ignore these debates altogether). At the same time, the effectiveness and longevity of youth ministry owes much to our academic maturity.

Barna (2001: 6-7) says that:

To pastors and church staff, discipleship is a tired word. To most laypeople, it is a meaningless word. But let's not get hung up on terminology for the moment. Let's get hung up on our failure to produce indefatigable imitators of Christ.

Discipleship is the process of learning the Scriptures, internalising a believer to shape his/her belief system, and then applying the Scriptures to change his/her life. It can be understood as 'a deliberate process of moving Christians forward spiritually' (Burggraff 2015). Ogden (2003:39-56) names eight factors that cause discipleship

deficit;

(1) *Diversion from primary calling* - Ogden says that pastors have not made discipling their primary focus. They have been diverted from their primary calling to “equip the saints for the work of ministry.”

(2) *Disciplining through programmes* - we have tried to make disciples through programmes, without investing in relationships, individual, and personal. Jesus called the Twelve and they stayed with Jesus in a personal relationship. The apostle Paul had Timothy as his ministry partner, training him to carry on after his death.

(3) *Reducing the Christian life* - we have reduced the Christian life to the eternal benefits we get from Jesus, rather than living as students of Jesus. Reducing the Christian life to embracing the gift of forgiveness has made obedience to Jesus in daily life irrelevant even though we know the Great Commission, Mathew 28:19.

(4) *A two-tiered understanding of discipleship* - we have made discipleship for super-Christians (such as pastors, missionaries, and so on), not for ordinary believers. But Paul’s scolding believers for not growing to maturity, as they should, is a long way from building into our theology that there are first-class and second-class disciples (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

(5) *Unwillingness to call people to discipleship* - Church leaders have been unwilling to call people to discipleship because they are afraid that if we ask too much, people will stop coming to our churches.

(6) *An inadequate view of the church* - we have an inadequate view of the church as a discipleship community. But according to 1 Cor. 12:27, the church at Corinth was seen as the body of Christ. Discipleship is never seen as a ‘me-and-Jesus’ solo relationship. For the church is a discipleship community. God is not only saving individuals, but He is also forming his people.

(7) *No clear pathway to maturity* - Most churches have no clear, public pathway to maturity. We have no destination in mind, and so, therefore, no road on which people can walk even if they want to understand the implications of discipleship.

(8) *Lack of personal discipling* - Most Christians have never personally been disciples. How can we then grow Christians into self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ?

Nel (2015b) says that even when churches do evangelise, they do not see converts to become related to the principle and the way in which to 'make disciples.'

Dean (2010:43) describes the disciple-master relationship:

The word "disciple" in the New Testament suggests being both a learner and a follower. A disciple is much like an apprentice. Every disciple has a master, every master hands on a tradition to a disciple. Rabbinical students in Jesus' day were disciples; they learned the rabbi's way of thinking and way of living by following him around for an extended period of time. Jesus called people to follow him too, but he turned the practice of rabbinical discipleship inside out. Most followers chose their master; Jesus chose us. Traditionally, the disciple-master relationship centres on teaching; but Jesus' relationship with his disciples was more personal than pedagogical; he shared his life as well as his teachings. The Pharisees bragged about the burden of discipleship, but Jesus viewed discipleship as a blessing and urged his followers to cast their cares upon him, for his "burden is light" (Mt. 11:30).

Bosch (1991:512) says that mission is multidimensional and covers a broad spectrum, including 'witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualisation, and much more'. '*Missio Dei*' has its origin in the 'fatherly heart of God' which is the fountain of sending love. Jesus says that the Father has sent him to the world through an act of love. Mission acts as a ministry by the whole people of God, as a witness to their faith and as action in hope.

The Father sent the Son, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit send the church into the world. The church exists because God is and has always been saving his world. The main purpose of the church is to make God known in such a way that his creatures and his creation will know Him for who He truly is in Christ (Nel 2005a:31-33; Nel 2015a:107-108).

A discipleship curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century youth ministry is an essential component in the spiritual growth of youth. The youth needs an understandable and useable discipleship curriculum to become a disciple and witness of Jesus Christ. For the youth to develop a lifestyle of evangelism, they need to be equipped to share their faith. To share their faith, the youth must know what they believe regarding Jesus Christ, why they believe scriptural truths, how to defend scriptural truths, and how to practice scriptural truths in the world (Stier 2015: 9; Burggraaf 2015).

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Rom. 1:16).

In youth ministry, the mission is about participation in God’s action of bringing life to all that is dead, because it is God’s desire to be with and for the youth from the heart of God’s love for his children. “As the Father has sent me,” Jesus told his disciples, “so I send you” (Jn. 20:21). God sends the whole church, youth included, into the world to confess Christ. Making disciples in youth ministry is the responsibility and obligation of the church to form the missional identity of the youth. Therefore, the primary ministry of the church to the youth must be the *marturia of Jesus Christ*, because children and adolescents are called to share in the kingdom of God. This significance of God’s ‘call’ in youth ministry cannot be underestimated. It is the inception of the relationship between God and the youth. The word ‘call’ is full of stories about the youth who find themselves serving God in the midst of a discipleship community (Barnett 2014: 216-220; Nel 2001:11; Knoetze 2015).

Youth ministry is not separated and isolated from a local church but must be comprehensive, differentiated, and focused. Youth ministry should be the participation in the building up of the local church, and work with the youth as an integral part of the body of the Christ. Both the young and the old must be invited as a community to participate in God’s action by sharing in one another’s lives (Nel 2000:66).

Paul refers to the Greek word *ekklesia* as the Christian ‘assembly’ of the called/elect

(usually translated 'church'), in the New Testament (Beale 2015). The word 'church' means (1) the universal body of believers who 'belong to the Lord' through regeneration, or (2) any specific geographical representation of that body in any place at any time (Mt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 1:2; Zuck & Benson et al., 1978:38-39).

Therefore, church leaders and the congregation need to understand that the youth are a part of the church, the body of Christ and that youths have a calling, obligations and responsibilities in their local church. The local church should have an inclusive congregational approach to serve the youth, as Jesus served his people. Young people's realities and suffering must become whole congregations. The church has to love, support, trust, and encourage the youth as part of the family of God (Nel 2000:78-79; Cf. Mk. 10:45).

The youth have many theological questions because they are theologians (See Schlag and Schweitzer 2011). Christian tradition has to say something to their questions and their deep doubts. The youth are willing to seek God through their doubts. This is the importance of the confirmation work and the public confession of faith (confirmation) because through confirmation work the youth learn to respect the other's difference, to have deep relationships with confirmands and confirmation teachers, and can explore the Christian tradition extensively to find their identity as Christians.

### **3. Youth ministry and confirmation (public confession of faith)**

Confirmation is a pastoral and educational ministry of the church that is designed to help baptised children to identify with the life and mission of the adult Christian community that is celebrated in a public rite (Gilbert 1969:6).

When considering adolescence, there are two aspects of developmental psychology that are identity and individuation. There are aspects to the identity of a person, namely his/her physical, sexual, social, vocational, moral, ideological, psychological, and religious life. Thus, the youth's identity and spiritual formation cannot be

separated, as they are whole beings and not separate parts of a whole (Rice 2005:179).

Nel (2003:161) says that individuation is the process whereby youths seek to become autonomous individuals by achieving independence from their parents which is part of the process of identity formation. Identity formation is the ability to critically engage in and with life's existential questions, a meaning-making out of life (Aziz, Nel, & Davis 2017).

It, therefore, makes sense that confirmation (the public confession of faith) and the confirmation work are one of the important parts in youth ministry. Confirmation (the public confession of faith) and the confirmation work are important steps to help an adolescent to identify with his/her life as a Christian in front of his/her family and the Christian community. Understood in the context of a youth's uniqueness such as individuality and identity formation- confirmation will be more focused in local churches.

Confirmation can be a special moment for adolescents to confirm their faith in Christ as their Redeemer in front of the congregation who accepted and supports them as members of God's family. It should lead to a mature devotion to God and fellow humans as a member of the Christian faith community. Through their confirmation process, father-absent adolescents have the opportunity to understand the faith and tradition of Christianity.

Confirmation can be defined as a personal act of covenant ratification, which involves heartfelt profession and pledging (Osmer 1996:168). The main aim of the confirmation can be referred to, that all members of the church should understand the Christian faith (Schweitzer, Ilg & Simojoki 2010:16). Confirmation is traditional in Protestantism and should be kept alive from generation to generation. Youth ministers should give the youth the opportunity to deepen their relationship of trust in God which is a living relationship of trust in God through his confirmation (Osmer 1996:27). Through this session, local church leaders and congregation must rethink about *the purpose of the practice of confirmation. And what form this practice should*

*take in the modern context.*

### **3.1 Confirmation in the history of Church**

#### **3.1.1 First five centuries - the adult catechumenate**

Historically, confirmation began with the baptismal rites of the early Church, a straightforward dipping/sprinkling within water, signifying the cleansing of sins offered in Christ and the reception of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation was part of the baptismal rites and firmly embedded in the practice of adult initiation. The adult catechumenate emerged out of the teaching and formation offered to new converts in the early church under the persecution of the Roman Empire. Confirmation was not a separate rite or a distinguishable moment in all baptismal rites (Schweitzer, Ilg & Sijmoki 2010:16; Guy 2004:32-33; Cf. Hinson 1996). Its purpose was to shape the habits of thought, action, and feeling of those who became a member of the church. Catechumens and their instructions were to demonstrate moral and spiritual readiness before they were ready to confess their faith within the Christian community (Ludlow 2009: 14; Osmer 1996:30).

#### **3.1.2 The middle ages - confirmation as a sacrament**

During the middle ages, confirmation turned into a separate ritual of its own and took on sacramental meaning. As the medieval theology of the sacraments developed, the medieval world came to place a higher value on the 'sacramental tasks' of an ordained ministry. Thomas Aquinas described confirmation as a Sacrament that communicates the fullness of the Holy Spirit, strengthening confirmands and allowing them to take up the tasks of the Christian life with greater maturity. In this confirmation centred on God's confirming action in and through the church's sacraments and the special grace individuals receive when confirmed, allowing them

to grow in sanctification and grace (Evans 2007: 55-58; Osmer 1996:30-31).

### **3.1.3 Reformation - catechetical purpose to confirmation**

The Reformers rejected the sacramental system of the medieval church and ascribed a catechetical purpose to confirmation. They advocated a special educational practice that handed on the basic doctrinal teaching of the church to every baptised member. This practice focused on catechetical instruction providing every baptised Christian with the theological knowledge necessary to make an intelligent confession of their faith in Christ. It was also viewed as enabling responsible participation in the life of the congregation and preparing persons to pursue their vocations in the world (Bregman 1987; Dickens 1982; Osmer 1996:31).

Martin Bucer was a strong advocate of catechetical instruction, but he believed that confirmation should be separated from the instruction and focus on a heartfelt profession of faith and pledge of obedience. His thought influenced English Puritans and later in certain parts of American Presbyterianism (Osmer 1996:31).

John Calvin stated that a sacrament is, “a testimony of divine grace toward us, confirmed by an outward sign, with mutual attestation of our piety toward Him... Augustine teaches that a sacrament is a visible sign of a sacred thing, or a visible form of an invisible grace” (Calvin 1960:1277).

During the twentieth century, confirmation can be found in various confirmation curriculums and liturgical texts. It is based on the insights of developmental psychology, modern education, and liberal theology. They focused on helping confirmands engage in a significant act of faith, exploration and discovery of an unfolding journey of faith (Osmer 1996:32).

### **3.2 The purpose of confirmation work**

Confirmation work is an intensive educational programme in Christian catechesis to reach more young people. Christian catechisms are supposed to do just that - equip young people with the theology they could use in their everyday life and with their own questions.

Mercer (2006:165) said about young people that;

To grow in faith, engage in their ministries, and move to increasingly more complex forms of knowledge and practice of their faith, they need theological education that equips them for critically reflective practice within a community of faith and the world.

Young people have their own theologies. They ask, think and communicate theologically when they try to make sense of ultimate questions and to understand what, for example, the idea of God really means while the church does not have answers to the questions that are important to them (Schweitzer 2014).

Schlag and Schweitzer (2011) explained adolescents as theologians with three dimensions (1) theology of adolescents – They have a certain understanding of God and they have thoughts about this understanding, (2) theology with adolescents – theology can help young people to come to terms with their experiences religiously, without seeing their faith to break down and without losing their bearings in life, and (3) theology for adolescents – what the adolescents themselves produce as their own theology. Young people must have an opportunity, “to rethink their faith in the face of various experiences, including alternative views of theology and the process of biblical criticism” through confirmation work. It is, therefore, necessary to develop confirmation and confirmation work for the young people which help young people to travel through life.

Pazmiño (2003) proposed for understanding the nature of God from an adolescent perspective that: (1) God for us and me: God as triune, (2) God despite us and me: God as holy and concerned about sin, (3) God with us and me: God as incarnate in

Jesus and a person like us, (4) God in us and me: God as the Holy Spirit who encounters our spirits, (5) God through us and me: God's presence in the church and the world, and (6) God beyond us and me: God as mystery and present in the future.

Young people seek the church's understanding of who God is; of their ability to participate in the Christian community and to discern the meaning of their calling as disciples. Even though young people have a different language, culture, understanding, and theological perspective from adults they appreciate confirmation because of its long tradition that acknowledges young faith, improves young people's exposure to the Son and therefore the likelihood that their faith will mature and bear fruit (Dean 2010:63).

Christensen, Dormor, Høeg, Ilg and Niemelä (2010:182-189) carried out a survey to clarify how such preparations are organised in a number of Europe's Protestant churches, how they are conducted and what actually happens in the course of the training. The confirmands were asked why they had embarked on confirmation preparation. The results show that young people are willing to accept the Christian tradition. The experiences they had earlier in life, the kind of family they were raised in and the kind of society they are a part of have a significant influence on the decisions they make. They have the same degree of influence on their own choice of confirmation as do tradition and the guidance from their infant baptism about 15 years earlier or, in most countries, even their parents' wish (See table 24).

Kaster (2011), in his research about adolescent catechesis, suggested that a more holistic and multidimensional curriculum (theological education, prayer, service-justice, and vocational discernment) inculcating experiences of community is needed for discipleship formation in adolescents.

<i>I registered for confirmation time,...</i>	Germany	Norway	Denmark	Finland
<b>because my friends did so as well.</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>because I was invited personally.</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>because it is a good old tradition.</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>because I was baptised when I was a child.</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>because I felt obliged to take part.</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>because my parents wanted me to do so.</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>because my grandparents wanted me to do so.</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>because I had been told that confirmation training is fun.</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>because I see myself as a Christian.</b>	-	<b>33%</b>	-	<b>52%</b>
<b>because I want to be able to get married in the church.</b>	-	-	-	<b>73%</b>
<b>because I want to be allowed to be a godparent.</b>	-	-	-	<b>60%</b>
<b>because I want to attend camp.</b>	-	-	-	<b>76%</b>

In cases of a blank space, the question was not asked in these countries.

Table 24. "What is my background and reason for joining the course?" (Adapted from Collins-Mayo & Dandelion et al., 2010:184).

Innanen and Krupka (2010:222-234) said that the curricular situation in confirmation work can be seen from three different points of view; the formal curriculum, the enacted curriculum and the experienced curriculum. Churches can accept a specially written curriculum for confirmation training, or least there are some guidelines about confirmation. These written documents are called the formal curriculum. Confirmation worker's aim, orientation, learning materials and so on that give the context where the training is realised can be called the enacted curriculum. Most

importantly what the confirmand has experienced during the training process and what he/she has really learnt may be called the experienced curriculum.

Confirmation work is about supporting young people in developing their abilities or competences. Confirmation work contributes to important societal values by strengthening the social, ethical and voluntary commitment of the young people (Pettersson & Somojoki 2010:265-275). Confirmation helps young people who are the confirmands to be mature Christians. On the day of the confirmation, through having a special celebration with family and friends, and through receiving a blessing, young people become stronger over time. In order to keep confirmation work on a successful path, a lot of innovative ideas are needed. International cooperation on didactics and pedagogical methods within confirmation work might offer valuable insights for the future (Høeg 2010:243).

Some reasons for the success of confirmation work are: first, the confirmation system must have strong support from families. It is regarded as important by parents and grandparents and is considered an important tradition. Second, the confirmation system must have attained the status of being a part of the youth culture among young people. Third, the leaders and confirmation workers should be well trained and represent a wide range of professions (Innanen, Niemela, & Porkka 2010:160-161).

Congregations need to have a youth-adequate confirmation service and allow confirmands to take part in the preparation of services. Sunday services will promote the dedication of the whole congregation. The confirmands will appreciate this much more if they experience a youth-adequate service during their confirmation time and can themselves participate in preparing services for the congregation (Ilg & Schweitzer 2010; Ilg, Schweitzer, & Simojoki 2010:71).

Confirmation work offers the challenge to involve two or three generations in the church. The confirmands' parents and grandparents have an enormous interest in the activities, and it is a good opportunity for intergenerational dialogue (Lagger

2010:94).

Parents have the important responsibility to help their child who is a confirmand during the confirmation preparation process: They have to be good examples and encourage their child to lead a life of active Christian service. They can encourage their child to reflect thoughtfully on the meaning of the Holy Communion especially – in the confirmation day. They must pray with their child and discuss various aspects of faith and the meaning of confirmation (Cf. [www.confirmation-research.eu](http://www.confirmation-research.eu); [www.theconfirmationproject.com](http://www.theconfirmationproject.com))

### **3.3 Confirmation and baptism**

In the Synoptic Gospels, the event of the baptism is associated with Jesus' recognition and acceptance of a special relationship with his God and Father that marked the beginning of his messianic ministry. It is the declaration of Jesus' Sonship and his anointing with the Holy Spirit for his public ministry (Ferguson 2009:100).

Christian baptism calls for faith in Jesus, it's being administered in Jesus' name, and in its connection with the Holy Spirit. But it is not only a ritual act of administration of water in the triune name but also a way of life conducted in obedience to Jesus' teaching. Baptism confirms God's work of regeneration through faith in Christ, Christians become part of God's new creation, living in harmony with all God's creatures and exercising wise stewardship of the riches of creation (Mt 28:19-20; Cf. Meyers 2014).

The sign of baptism indicates the forgiveness of sin, that a person received the gifts of forgiveness, cleansing and sanctification (Cf. Weil 1983:69; DeMaris 2013; Jensen 2012:9-13).

Cosby (2015:47-48) suggests some specific ways to integrate baptism into the youth ministry; first, teach the biblical significance of baptism to the youth, second, press home the need to see this holy pledge find its full fruition in membership of a local

church, and third, teach the youth how to live from their own baptism by calling on the Lord to create in them a pure heart, sprinkled clean by the inward dwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is also restoration and re-creation. Adolescents who are going through various transitions must stand in a new relationship with God, his people, and the world. They must examine themselves whether their hearts have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in the newness of life (Cf. Rom. 6:4). In their baptism adolescents can be commissioned to be stewards of the world, as witnesses of Jesus Christ. For adolescents, baptism is the confirmation of the electing, reconciling and redeeming work of God, and applied to the life of the individual in baptism (Osmer 1996:177).

### **3.4 Confirmation and the Holy Communion**

Jesus is the Passover Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, whose flesh and blood not only marks them for life but actually gives life. He is the Bread of Life, the new manna, come down from heaven, and sent by the Father (Jn. 1:29; 6; Braaten 2014).

John 6 switches from the verb *εφαγον* to *τρωγω* that literally means “to gnaw, to bite, to chew”. The verb *τρωγω* is more earthy and physical than *εφαγον*. The movement from the verb *εφαγον* (John 6:26, 31) to *τρωγω* (John 6:49-58) indicates a movement away from a purely metaphorical, or spiritual, reading to reading that includes the physical (John 6:51-58). Thus, “to eat” no longer simply means receiving Jesus’ giving of himself by faith in his words, but now proclaims his/her reception of that self-giving by physical eating (Braaten 2014).

The Holy Communion is cyclical. According to Jesus’ command, “do this in my remembrance,” the church “proclaims the death of the Lord until he comes”. The physical acts of eating and drinking are the means by which the believers “proclaim

the death of the Lord” (Seifrid 2016).

The flesh He gives is his living, life-giving, Spirit-filled, risen flesh, which he gives along with his blood. It means that Jesus continues to dwell among his people. To young people, their remembering does not finally rest in themselves, but in the effective word of Jesus that has been given to be heard, seen, and tasted through the Holy Communion (Osmer 1996:174-175; Braaten 2014).

According to Hunsinger (2008:272), the Eucharist is Christ’s sharing of himself with the community through the consecrated gifts of bread and wine, and our sharing of ourselves in the Eucharistic community with one another, through the kiss of peace and works of love.

Hunsinger (2008:278) said that:

The Eucharist as celebrated by forgiven sinners is a living reminder of what can only be attested in humility and hope with respect to cultural transformation. In a difficult world, it is a gift of grace. But grace without the corresponding action is not grace.

The youth must be taught the doctrine, theology, and application of the Holy Communion on a regular basis as a member of the congregation. They must be encouraged to participate in worship, where the Holy Communion is administered. Then youth will experience the gospel message by testing and seeing that Christ’s body and blood were real, true, and spiritual (Heb. 10:25; Cosby 2015: 48).

Adolescence is a period toward adulthood. Every adolescent undergoes various transitions of identity, sexuality, intimacy, capacity for self-transcendence, morality, imagination, and the discernment of vocation. Faith plays the most important role in adolescent development because adolescence is a time of idealism, enthusiasm, curiosity, and growing dependence on God (Martinson 1988: 49-50).

Fowler (1981: 92-93) sees faith as a way of giving purpose to one's life and as a universal human enterprise:

People's evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, others and the world (as they construct them) as related to and affected by the ultimate conditions of existence (as they construct them) and of shaping their lives' purposes and meanings, trusts and loyalties, in light of the character of being, value and power determining the ultimate conditions of existence (as grasped in their operative images – conscious and unconscious – of them).

Adolescents need to develop in a person-to-person loving concern by parents, sponsors, youth workers, and all congregations. Especially father-absent adolescents need the help of the local church to give them the opportunity to deepen their relationship of trust in God as the Father. It is a living relationship of trust in God whose faithfulness has been revealed in Jesus Christ.

Christian family influences are essential for young people to develop their journey of faith. The local church, family of youth and youth ministry must have a close relationship because youth ministry without the involvement of the family is like 'driving a car without an engine' (DeVries 1994:85).

So, the local church must know the family influence to understand the youth in the local church. The local church must be an extended family for youths and the father-absent young people. The next section will discuss the relationship between youth ministry and family influences, and family ministry. It will also discuss the role of the equipped father as the head of the family. Through it, the local church will know what they can do for father-absent adolescents as an extended family.

#### **4. Youth ministry and the family**

The family is a primary agent of socialisation that God created in the beginning. In

the creation account of Genesis 1:1-31, God said every time, "It is good". But the only time God declared "it is not good" was the aloneness of man in Genesis 2:18-24. So, God put Adam to sleep and took a rib from his side, and made a woman as Adam's partner, sharing the same rib and the same flesh to be a family.

Scriptures clearly show that oneness in marriage results from the union of two different people. They complement each other in other ways. God instituted marriage when He created Adam and Eve with the capacity to reproduce their own kind. The family unit usually consisted of the husband, wife and their children (Sell 1995:118; Garland 1999:305-306; Richardson 1996:15).

The family serves various social functions such as the following:

1. Reproduction – arranging conditions for the reproduction of the race.
2. Sexual expression – providing conditions for satisfaction and control of sexual passions.
3. Socialisation – providing for the nurture of children.
4. Status – organising norms related to status given to individuals.
5. Economic cooperation – providing rules for economic cooperation between people.
6. Emotional satisfaction – creating a context for meeting people's emotional needs.
7. Social control – exercising social control (Christensen & Johnsen 1989:16).

According to Sell (1995:118-119), there are in theory four approaches to the roles of husband and wife: the enforced authority, the traditional head-complement, the companionship type, and the egalitarian form. Simply put, the enforced authority is that the wife is the property of the husband. In the traditional head-complement arrangement, the wife is submissive, and supports her husband as a homemaker. The companionship type allows the woman to pursue a career and the husband to be involved in domestic work. The egalitarian form means both husband and wife are

free to have careers, share household duties, and have equal power in decision-making.

Christians argue for biblical equality that husband and wife are to mutually submit to one another as Paul says that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28 NIV; See Eph. 5:21).

The raising of a family as a value in youth ministry was not only a need in modern society but existed since the early Christian ages. Christian traditional families had relevant functions in youth ministry during the old ages. For example, the Greek church’s John Chrysostom (C. 349-407 C.E.), placed the primary responsibility for spiritual and moral training with the family in his pastoral and episcopal ministry. He encouraged Christian spouses by telling them that “the household is a little church”. Martin Luther (1483-1546) said, “The family is charged with the duty of leading the young on the path of personal salvation and protecting them from the worldly values.” The Puritans who owe their theological heritage to John Calvin (1509-1564) made the family a vital and indispensable centre of religious training, organising domestic religion under the authority of the husband and father. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) called the Christian family “a little church”, and family religious education “some of the chief means of grace”. John Wesley (1703-1791) preached on the family’s duty to children, exhorting parents to attend diligently to the religious education of their youngsters from the time they can speak until they married and left home (Cf. Cahill 2000:52-72; Dean & Foster 1998:77-78).

Atkinson (2014: 324-325) concluded after a study of the writings of Augustine and Chrysostom;

The family as an instrument of salvation is not a free-floating construct awaiting the informing principles either of theologians or of modern secular society. Rather grounded in the Person of the Word of God, the family has been given a constitutive nature by the Creator such that it is assumed into the salvific plan of God for all humanity.

Nel (2000:19-20) describes the unique hermeneutic function of the family: that children need parents in order to gain an understanding not only in the mental and physical areas but also in the spiritual area.

Children and adolescents must learn to understand their God and his way of caring for his people. And parents must teach their children who God is and how He acts with his people, as for instance the parental role which was established by Moses:

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy a long life. Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

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 (Deut. 6:1-9, NIV).

The ancient Hebrews recognised the home as the primary teaching institution. Deuteronomy 6 shows that God instructed the Hebrew parents to be the leaders of their children's lives. It asks of parents to look for teachable moments throughout the day allowing for their God-following relationship to be understood and taught.

Parents have an important role in the youth ministry because the best lessons come from natural interactions during everyday life - the frequency with which adolescents talked with their parents about faith, the frequency of family devotions, and the frequency with which parents and children worked together to help other people. Their influence on adolescents' value systems exceeds the influence of youth workers on most occasions. Youth ministry must provide parents and youth workers consistently to teach, model, and build relationships with the youth at the church and in the home (Hunter 2015:148-150; Cf. Benson & Eklin 1990:38).

Patterson's (1984) research showed that people who grew up in church attending worship and not only Sunday school were much more likely to be involved in the church as adults than were those young people who had attended only Sunday school without attending worship.

DeVries (1994:63) proved the importance of the family through his experience as a youth minister that young people who are growing in their faith as adults were teenagers who fit into one of two categories: either (1) they came from families where Christian growth was modelled in at least one of their parents, or (2) they had developed such significant connections with adults within the church that it had become an extended family for them.

The National Study of Youth and Religion (The National Study of Youth and Religious 2003) also revealed the significance of parents' religiosity for emerging adults. Adolescents between the ages of 18-23, who remain devoted to religious faith after high school years, are overwhelmingly young people whose parents were highly religious while their children were teenagers, and for young people without religious parents, congregational relationships with other Christian adults often compensated. Religious commitments, practices, and investments formed during childhood and adolescence, by parents and others in families and religious communities (Smith & Snelling 2009:254-256).

The family is an important source of security, support and stability for youths. A positive family relationship, beliefs, and values are important parts of the adolescent

journey. Father-absent youths need the extended family of the local church to play the role of father instead of the biological parents. The congregation has to develop as the extended family for the father-absent children and adolescents in the local church. They can be a model of a father to the father-absent children and adolescents as a family in Jesus.

Smith & Denton (2005:267) suggest the importance of parents-youth relationships and religious practices for adolescent discipleship:

- \* The best way to get most of the youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities.

- \* Parents and faith communities should not be shy about teaching teens.

Parents must be religious practitioners to their children. Parents must be sensitive to their children's spiritual growth and maturity.

The Bible provides a simple and clear notion of what the family ought to do to raise godly children. Barna (2003:82-83) introduced those as follow:

- \* Parents should provide the primary spiritual training of children (Deut. 1:31; 6:4-9; 11:18-21; 21:18-19; Ps. 78:5-8; Lk 8:39; Eph. 6:4).

- \* Parents must start the spiritual training of children when they are young (Mt. 10:37; 12:48-50; 1Tim. 4:7; 2Tim. 3:15-17).

- \* Part of the parental responsibility is to introduce appropriate discipline into children's lives and to avoid pampering them (Prov. 3:11-12; 13:1,24; 19:18; 23:12-14; 29:15-17,21; Col. 3:20).

- \* Parents are called to introduce their children to appropriate behaviour, as modelled by the Church's patriarchs and saints (Num. 18:11; Deut. 15:20; 16:11).

- \* Parents are encouraged to work in tandem with reliable spiritual partners - such

as the church – but should be sure that those partners are committed to the things of God (1Sam. 1:27-28; 3:1-10; Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:11-13).

\* Parents are charged with passing on the spiritual blessing to the children (Gen. 27; 2Sam. 6:20; 1Chron. 16:43).

\* Before God will hand over great spiritual responsibility to an adult who has children, the parent must give proof of being a dedicated and effective parent (1Tim. 3:4-5,12).

Lanker & Issler (2010:95) states that:

Adolescents coming from a secure attachment background will tend to maintain a secure attachment with God and others because they have been socialised into this way of life. For those who come from insecure backgrounds, their greatest strides in spirituality will come about through their involvement in the religious community as a means of compensation.

Youth ministry always is undertaken in response to young people in the church, but it does not mean the parental resignation of religious responsibilities for the youth. Today's parents bring their children to church to have 'professionals' teach them what it means to be Christian. Youth ministry requires patient and consistent parental attention and congregational participation to the youth's gradual acquisition of traits of character that will allow him/her to express their God-given faith in Jesus who must become their example. The youth will be inducted into a way of life and participate in the life of Jesus with the faith community as modelled by their parents and members of the extended family (Cahill 2000:81; Brown 2014:8-9; Dean & Foster 1998:79).

An adolescent's behaviour depends on his/her involvement with his/her family in spiritual activities like a positive relationship between family spirituality and positive

adolescents' behaviours and attitudes. So youth ministry must reach out to relate not only to the youth but also to their parents, and other family members (Barna 1995: 69-70; Senter III et al., 2001:44-45; Benson & Senter III et al., 1987:207).

Therefore, local churches must encourage parents or members of the extended family to be spiritual leaders at their home and have close family relationships with their youth. Local churches must provide help in parenting to have a close relationship between the youth and God.

Parents or members of the extended family must encourage their youths to share their deepest thoughts and feelings through prayer. Parents or members of the extended family must tell their youths that the Holy Spirit dwells within them and that God understands the groaning within them which cannot be uttered (Rm. 8:26-27; Balswick & Balswick 1990:30-31).

The Local church must have a good concept of the family ministry and must set a proper model of family ministry as part of their ministry. Parents of youths, youth workers and congregations need to be a team as a part of their youth ministry to build an effective youth ministry for their children's spiritual growth (Nel 2001:4-5).

#### **4.1 Family ministry**

As described above by Nel (See 4.) family is the smaller unit of the hermeneutic lebensraum because the family is the foundation of the first experience of the world, of the first relationship with others, of the first place where the personal history starts, and of the first place of listening to the story of God (Cf. Ex. 12; Dt. 6).

Traditionally Christian churches use family metaphors of the Bible such as 'God the Father,' 'Jesus the Son,' 'children of God,' 'brothers and sisters in Christ,' to construct a church community with a certain kind of leadership and patterns of interactions

between its members (Moxnes et al., 1997:103).

A strong family needs to build and maintain these two key relationships: a strong family relationship and a strong relationship with God. A strong and life-shaping family will be characterised by these two kinds of relationships (Strommen & Hardel 2000:18)

### Modern trends in family ministry

<b>Comprehensive- Coordinative</b>	Comprehensive-coordinative family ministry equips parents to function as primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives by partnering with parents and by providing resources and training in their household. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, many aspects of comprehensive-coordinative ministry were revived in family-integrated, family-equipping, and (to a lesser extent) family-based congregations.
<b>Segmented- Programmatic</b>	Segmented-programmatic ministry to families means a separate and specific programme for each member of the family. Influenced by a variety of earlier factors - including young people’s societies, the efficiency movement, the rise of age-focused associate ministers, and the rise of professional youth ministers - the segmented-programmatic approach dominated the last half of the twentieth century.  Family-based ministry, promoted by Mark DeVries in the late twentieth century, represented a reorientation of segmented-programmatic structures to empower parents to participate actively in the discipleship of children and adolescents.
<b>Educational- Programmatic</b>	The educational-programmatic or Family Life Education approach to family ministry establishes ambulance programmes to assist families in crisis and guardrail programmes to strengthen healthy families. In the twenty-first century, Family Life Education continues in many congregations, typically in the form of distinct programmes for family education and counselling.

Table 25. Modern trends in family ministry. (Adapted from Steenburg & Jones 2011:157).

Youths, including father-absent children and adolescents, need caring Christian communities within which they can find a sense of identity as a child of God, and the faith community’s support. The local church as the extended family is the locus of *koinonia*. The local church is to be a family to families in Jesus Christ, and a source

of identity. The church is the place where the children of God can get to know one another intimately and become the One Body even though they have various social classes, races, ages, backgrounds, and religious experiences (Balswick & Balswic 1990:304).

Therefore, the local church must have a clear concept of the family ministry and models of the family ministry to build strong family relationships between church members and adopt the children of God who are from father-absent families (Cf. Table 25).

#### **4.1.1 The concept of a family ministry**

The traditional Jewish community counts membership not by individuals but by families which are understood within the context of generations. The Jewish traditional family includes connections to generations past and future, raising Jewish children as the purpose of the family. Within the Jewish tradition, the family ministry comprises a strong religious education with connections between the generations (Gill-Austern 1998:58-59).

Jones (2011:15) defined the term “family ministry” as “the process of intentionally and persistently coordinating a congregation’s proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives”.

Garland (1999:367-374) said that, “family ministry is helping persons live as they ought to in family life, according to the purposes and promises of God. It includes not only working with families themselves but also developing the congregational community as a support for a righteous family living.”

The family ministry aims to train people how to fulfil parenthood as Christians, which includes nurturing their children in the Christian faith, a task assigned to them in Ephesians 6:4 (Sell 1995:17).

Nelson and Jones (in Stinson & Jones et. Al., 2011:22-29) formulated three characteristic family ministry models: family-integrated, family-based, and family-equipping. Each of these models recognises that the family is a fundamental context for the discipleship of children, and represents a distinct and identifiable approach to the challenge of the family and the church for a life-transforming partnership (Cf. Kostenberger & Jones 2010):

**(1) The family-integrated model for church ministry: a complete break from age-segmented structures**

Proponents of a family-integrated model contend that age segregation goes beyond the biblical mandate and obstructs parental obedience in disciplining their children. In a family-integrated church, all generations learn and worship together, and the entire community of faith calls fathers and mothers to embrace their primary responsibility for the great commission and discipleship of their children. Proponents of family-integrated ministry describe the local church “as a family of families”, and it is a functional description of how family-integrated churches structure their processes of evangelism and discipleship. Families in family-integrated congregations view their households as contexts for mutual discipleship as well as for the evangelisation of unbelievers.

**(2) The family-based model for church ministry: activities and emphases to empower parents within age-segmented structures**

The family-based model retains separate, age-segmented ministry structures. But the difference between family-based models and typical segmented-programmatic models is that family-based churches intentionally include intergenerational activities in each ministry and consistently train parents to function as disciple-makers in their children’s lives. To create and maintain a family-based model, churches must empower the parents to participate in the discipleship of their children and equip the

extended family so that the generations build relationships with one another. Family-based congregations add new activities and expand existing opportunities so that the generations grow in their appreciation for one another.

### **(3) The family-equipping model for family ministry: transforming age-organised ministries to co-champion the family and the community of faith**

The family-equipping model represents a middle route between the family-integrated and family-based models. Whereas family-based churches develop intergenerational activities within existing segmented-programmatic structures and add family activities to current calendars, family-equipping churches redevelop the congregation's structure to cultivate a renewed culture wherein parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as the primary faith trainers in their children's lives. Every activity for children or youth must provide resources, train, or directly involve parents because parents are primary disciple-makers and vital partners in a family-equipping ministry.

These family ministry models involve parents as the primary youth ministers in the church and at home. The family or the home is the God-ordained institution for faith-building in children and adolescents and for passing on the faith from one generation to the next generation (Freudenburg & Lawrence 1998:58).

Through the models of family ministry, the church can be built as a faith family and as the Body of Christ. When parents struggle to know how to discipline their youths, when family relationships are strained or disconnected, the local church must suggest the proper guidance to maintain the family as the God-ordained institution. Therefore, the youth ministry in the local church needs to equip not only youths but also parents for their spiritual maturity and training within the context of the family (Clark 1997:44).

Admittedly, parents have an amazing opportunity and responsibility to take the

unique temperament of each child and overlay it with the character of God by instilling habits and disciplines that will keep them connected to Christ (Holmen 2005:99).

This research focuses on the father and deals with the duties of the father as the head of a family. The research questions in chapter 1 have asked that the local church must think 'what the message of the Bible is about the father and his role in the family' and 'why local churches ignore the necessity of retraining or reeducation of fathers in church'. Even though children and adolescents need well-equipped fathers, at present the local church does not teach the responsibilities of the father according to the Bible, and the model of the father in the Bible.

Nel (2009a) emphasised identity and suggests that a congregation should constantly ask: "Who are we, and what is our purpose in life?" because knowing who we are and discerning where we are going is purposeful, serious and conscientious theological activities. Today fathers, who have children and adolescents, must question themselves, "Who am I in my family?", and "What is my duty and purpose in my family?"

#### **4.2 The well-equipped father as a shepherd**

The term '*pastor*' comes from the Latin word for "shepherd". The shepherd is responsible to the owner and must account for every sheep. He has to lead the sheep in green pastures and quiet waters (Ps. 23:2). He must expend great energy to find a lost sheep, searching over rough terrain and in rocky crags. When he finds it, the sheep is in such exhaustion that the shepherd must put it on his shoulder and carry it back (Lk. 15:4-5).

Every Christian father is called to serve as a shepherd in his home (Cf. Bayly 2010) as a pastor, trainer, and manager:

1) *Fathers have the responsibility to be pastors in their homes.*

A father is the head of his home (Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3), the spiritual leader who has the responsibility to feed his family within the Word of God. Fathers should be able to lead his family to the church as a vital partner guiding his family. Although many denominational men's organisations and local churches have responded to the need to strengthen the father's role as a nurturer of faith in the home, this important role of the father is increasingly neglected as the absence of fathers in many families increases. (Prince 2011:169-176; Freeks 2011; Freeks 2017; Cf. Strommen & Hardel 2000:28-29).

## *2) Fathers have the responsibility to be trainers in their homes.*

Freudenburg, after visiting some organisations (Luther Seminary, Holy Nativity Church, St. Luke's Church, and St. Stephen's Church) which have family-friendly concepts, suggests valuable ideas and ways to help parents which can be applied to fathers to be a good trainer in their homes (Freudenburg & Lawrence 1998:74-77), to sum up;

- \* Parents must redefine their role in their children's faith growth, as primary faith-nurturers.

- \* Parents must teach the faith at home by modelling faithful living.

- \* Parents must be trained and equipped to nurture faith and life skills in their children to shape their children's faith at home.

- \* Parents must be trained to be 'peer listeners' with their own children to know how to teach, lead discussion, and listen at home.

- \* Parents must read the Bible with their children with an age-appropriate reading list of Bible at home (Cf. Munroe 2008:116-119, 141).

### 3) *Fathers have the responsibility to be managers in their homes.*

Fathers must discipline and love their children as long as their children are living in their household so that their families maintain orderly and respectful household environments. This is an essential expectation of their role (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6; Plummer 2011:51).

Barna (2007: X V) divides parents into two groups as *revolutionary parents* and *typical parents*. In brief, revolutionary parents are those who understand that their role is to guide their children to understand the principles and outcomes that honour God and advance his purposes. On the other hand, typical parents are those who do not consider it a priority, have little or no training in how to nurture a child's faith, have no related standards or goals that they are seeking to satisfy, and experience no accountability for their efforts.

Revolutionary parents, to use Barna's words, have a biblical view regarding the spiritual development of their children and their responsibility concerning this important matter. They are also interested in the content that youth ministry leaders teach their children, how they conduct the experience and how they would interact with the parents (Barna 2007:56-57).

The father's role, as a spiritual leader, is explained in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy, Moses gave fathers instructions that focused on urging Israel to keep God's instructions when they enter the Promised Land (Deut. 1-11).

Hamilton (2011:37) says that Deuteronomy 6:4-9, known as the '*shema*', uses the masculine singular form for 'you'. It means Moses did not give this responsibility to some abstract group of fathers in the community but to each individual father. Every father with a son was commanded to teach diligently – say again and again to his son the "Words" that Moses commanded. Fathers in Israel were commanded to embrace the theological confession that the Lord alone is God (v. 4), they were to love Him (v. 5), know his Word so that they can obey Him (v. 6), and they were to

teach diligently God's Words to their sons.

Dean (2010:3-4) in "Almost Christian" says, *"The religiosity of American teenagers must be read primarily as a reflection of their parents' religious devotion (or lack thereof) and by extension, that of their congregations."* Dean (2010:10) continually says, *"Three out of four American teenagers claim to be Christians, and most are affiliated with a religious organization – but only about half consider it very important, and fewer than half actually practice their faith as a regular part of their lives."*

It is not too much emphasis to say that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents because they are most important in forming their children's religious and spiritual lives (Smith & Denton 2005:261).

The local church's role is to train and support fathers to be the primary youth ministers in their family or home as a responsibility that cannot be neglected. Youth and family ministry should teach fathers how to intentionally build relationships with their children because fathers provide a model for their children who often derive their view of the Heavenly Father by what they know and experience with their earthly father. It is important to be reminded that the responsibility to raise children as mature spiritual adults is primarily the responsibility of the child's father (Nel 2001:12; Barna 2007:25; Hunter 2015:151-152).

The local church must concern itself about the empowering of fathers to discipline their children and to build the God-ordained institution for faith-building in children and adolescents. But a father cannot go about this process alone without the help of the church, specifically of some godly individuals such as youth ministers, church leaders, and congregations as an extended family. If there are father-absent children and adolescents in the local church, the congregation must provide them with models of a father to grow up in their faith.

Father-absent and the lack of a father role influences children and adolescent to

have negative role models but are able to compensate for a lack of a positive role model through social support and reliance on another caring adult (Bushfield 2004).

Pastors and congregations must know how to make a devoted extended family with the father-absent youth, and how father-absent youths can adopt the image of the 'Father God' even though they have no biological father as models.

## **5. The extended family**

An extended family can be described, from a sociological approach, to incorporate three or more generations, including great-grandparents, grandparents, parents and children, commonly referred to as vertical generations. Aunts and uncles may also be members of extended families and form what is known as horizontal generations (McKie & Callan 2012:17).

Traditional African thinking is informed by communal life; a person realises his/her place and responsibilities within a community of other people. A child is born into a family community, which includes members of the extended family (Mkhize 2006:187).

Martin & Martin (1985:12) also state that traditional African societies have a valuable and specific extended family system which is the basis for caregiving. Their kinship bonds are strong with "live together and work together; and the result of their joint labour is the property of the family as a whole" and "like a vast network stretching in every direction, to embrace everybody in any given local group," linking each person to everyone else. From the anthropological aspect, an extended family refers to a domestic group or a composite of domestic groups consisting of two or more nuclear families linked together through parent and child (patrilineal extended family, matrilineal extended family) or through siblings (fraternal or sororal extended family) (Keesing & Strathern 1998:506).

### **5.1. What is an extended Christian family?**

The sociological and anthropological approaches delineate the boundary of the extended family within kinship, but according to Jesus, God's family means adoption, and not simply a biological relationship.

DeVries (1994:116) defined an extended Christian family as a community of believers who affirm and encourage growth toward Christian maturity.

This community of believers as a secondary family becomes a vital link in helping the youth to mediate the transition from their place in their family of origin to their place in the broader society (Dean & Foster 1998:80).

God called his people to unity within the One Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4). Church members, in 1 Timothy 5:1-2, were to interact with one another as family members: older men as fathers, younger men like brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women like sisters. Christians were called "brothers and sisters" from the birth of the church (Park 2011:225; DeVries 1994:66). The members of the church of the first century were called to leave their earthly familial allegiances and to form relationships with one another as a new family of God. They loved one another as Christ had commanded them (Guernsey 1982:100-112). As followers of Jesus, parents have the primary responsibility for the spiritual formation of their own children. But parents are also God's adopted children as a part of the larger family of God (Rom. 8:15-23; Gal. 4:5). This larger Christian family is the church, the household of God incorporated by faith in Jesus Christ. This is a new family which affirms and focuses our identity as believers (Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 1:27-2:4; Stinson & Jones et al., 2011:15).

Furthermore, this extended Christian family and youth ministry must participate in the mission of God to complete Christ's Great Commission. The Father sent his Son, and the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit, and the Father, Son, and Spirit send the church into the world until the kingdom of God has come (Bosch 1991:390).

For this reason, all congregations, parents and unrelated adults can nurture positive, informal relationships with the youth or father-absent youths they know and see in their local church. Youths who come from non-Christian families also need a circle of adult Christians to model the Christian life for them. If adults in the local church do not support or care for the youth and for father-absent youths, the youths will be deprived of important sources of nurture (DeVries 1994:67; Benson 2006:206-210).

Sometimes, even when the parents are antagonistic towards the Christian faith, young Christians are able to continue to flourish in their faith because of a connection to an extended family that can offer him/her a different set of faith values. Several pieces of research by Lanker & Issler (2010:96) show that non-parental relationships with adults (such as a youth pastor or a congregation) during adolescence have been connected with long-term Christian spirituality, and this relationship was described by young people as their 'family' and 'parent figure' when their own parents were not available (DeVries 1994:117).

## **5.2 The role of the youth pastor in a family-based youth ministry**

One model that churches often look to for fathering is the pastor. Youth pastors have not only to teach the Bible to the youth but have also to show love and intimacy in their lives towards them (Eph. 4:11; Phil. 3:17; 1Cor. 11:1). This demonstration of intimacy and the love of Christ will play the part in drawing the youth (especially father-absent adolescents) right into the arms of the Father (Sweney 2011:100).

Powell, Griffin & Crawford (2011: 141) asked a post-youth group of students what they wanted to see more of in their high school youth ministries, they answered (in order of priority): (1) *time for deep conversation*, (2) mission trips, (3) service projects, (4) accountability, and (5) *one-on-one time with leaders*.

Youth need a youth pastor and a youth worker who will walk with them through the Christian journey and nurture them to become all that God desires them to be (Burns & DeVries 2001:24).

Sometimes youth pastors (or pastors) fail to notice their own families. They should be the prime examples of fathers caring for their families (Munroe 2008:156-158).

Paul says to Timothy, “If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?” (1Tim. 3:5 NIV).

Sell (1995:19) suggests that first pastors and youth leaders must think about how their own family life affects what they do in the church and how church life impacts on their families. All members need to support youths and father-absent youths to sustain the local church as a whole.

Van der Ven (1998b:156-157) explains that the general competence of the pastor in ministry needs the following four components- knowledge, insight, skills and attitudes; (1) the pastor should be capable of the reproductive apperception, recognition and actualisation of basic information narratively and conceptually structured in the fields of hermeneutic theory and communication theory; (2) the pastor should be capable of the interpretative production, convergent production, evaluative production and divergent production of basis information narratively and conceptually structured in the fields of hermeneutic theory and communication theory; (3) the pastor should have the ability to use social methods and techniques in the domain of hermeneutics and communication; (4) the pastor should have the ability to use his/her hermeneutic and communicative attitudes.

In addition, Nel (2000:119-122) refers to three demands that youth pastors must meet:

(1) Calling- the youth pastor must remain involved in youth ministry because of a calling. It is not possible to maintain youth ministry without a calling.

(2) Inclusive perspective- youth pastors must take an inclusive approach to youth ministry in order to perceive the whole picture.

(3) Finding an identity- how youth pastors see and value themselves is vital to the

growth of the youth in the local church. Youth pastors must continue to find their identity as the constant becoming of the image of God (Cf. Jeon 2016:93-94).

Recent research (Aziz, Nel, & Davis 2017) by utilising a theoretical and qualitative empirical approach in interviewing pastors in the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA), found that *“the youth pastor should be someone who has a relationship with Jesus Christ, is called to youth ministry and has a love for the youth. Furthermore, the youth pastor should qualify as an elder according to the Pastoral Epistles in 1 Tim.3 and Titus.”*

A youth pastor needs to have empathy to understand and sympathise with youths. Empathy is a feeling that touches the relationships that make people, a magnet that draws others. Empathy is how people experience the ontological relationships that make a person (Root 2013:91).

The youth ministry is not a programme. It must be a relational ministry. If people do not know one another, do not feel cared for, and do not sense that the rest of the community values them, the church is simply not the church. Young people can build significant relationships between the youth pastor/youth leaders and Christian adults in youth ministry. Youth pastor/youth leaders are crucial for adolescents who need close primary groups beyond their families to help them test “who they are” in the process of identity formation (Dean & Foster 1998:26-27; Cf. Root 2007:15-17; Clark 2015:81-82)

The youths live with unanswered questions. When youth pastors help them work through Christ’s answers, they strengthen the youth, prepare them for better decision making, and realign their priorities. Young people are looking for role models to imitate. Young people are watching, listening and imitating the relationship role models of the youth pastors or youth workers. When the youth see the youth pastor, they should see Christ (Burns & DeVries 2001:21; Hunter 2015:158). The youth want to have some meaningful and answering times to seek spiritual maturity while the local church misjudges them and provides entertainment to attract the youth and to let them share in the fun.

Youth pastors should be dedicated to walk the spiritual path together with adolescents as their guardians and family. They must listen more deeply to their needs and be a part of their lives (Roebben 2005).

The roles of church leaders and youth workers are very important to the youth as godly models and non-familial natural mentors. The greatest majority of adults who are labelled as natural mentors are youth leaders and youth pastors (Lanker & Issler 2010:99).

### **5.3 The role of the congregation in a family-based youth ministry**

“Do teenagers think that their local congregation is a good or not a good place for them to go to talk about serious issues like family problems, sex, alcohol, or troubles at school?” According to the data, most attending teens (70%) rate their congregation as a very good or a fairly good place to talk about such serious issues. Attending teens also rate their congregation with high marks for teaching them what they want to know about their faith. The congregation can be said to be an important place for teens to make significant contact with adults other than family members (Smith & Denton 2005:61-65).

The entire congregation is seen as the larger family of faith in Christ. The different parts are connected to one another, and together they make up the body of Christ. The entire congregation must recognise its role in raising a child in faith. The congregation is important to father-absent adolescents to act as the family of God - stretching out their arms to the father-absent adolescents in love and healing, and to carry them in prayer (Purves 2004: x x vii; Dean & Foster 1998:98-99).

According to Fowler’s (1981) Stages of Faith there are seven stages in the development of human faith: (1) Primal faith (infancy); (2) Intuitive-projective faith (2-7 years of age); (3) Mythic-literal faith (7-12 years of age); (4) Synthetic-conventional faith (12+ years of age); (5) Individuative-reflective faith (21+ years of age); (6)

Conjunctive faith (35+ years of age); (7) and Universalising faith (45+ years of age).

Stage four, Synthetic-conventional faith is the adolescent stage when young people are influenced by their family, by peers, and by a religious community as 'mirrors'. The most important 'mirrors' are the eyes of peers and respected adults who reflect a "self" that young people accept almost without question. Those persons whose 'mirroring' of the young person has the power to contribute positively or negatively to the set of images of self and of accompanying meanings that must be drawn together in form his/her identity and faith. Through these adult-youth relationships young people may stand a chance of forming an identity that takes into account 'who they are in God's eyes', and they may know that only God's eyes reflect who they truly are (Fowler 1981:154; Dean & Foster 1998:45-46; See 2.3 Fowle's Stages of Faith).

Bruce and Cockreham (2004) say that if adolescents are encouraged and are helped to make spiritual connections with an adult they respect, adolescents may live healthy spiritual lives, helping the adolescent overcome and counteract cultural problems.

DeVries (1994:126) suggests establishing a youth mentoring programme that matches every one of the youths in the church with an adult from the church because youth including father-absent children and adolescents need a spiritual father who can be a godly model to equip them and to help them to view their lives more biblically (Cf. Dean & Foster 1998:83-84). A mentor in the biblical sense may establish a close relationship with a protégé and on that basis through fellowship, modelling, advice, encouragement, correction, practical assistance and prayer support, influences his/her studies to gain a deeper comprehension of divine truth, lead a godlier life and render more effective service to God (Krallmann 2002:122).

Father-absent children and adolescents are in need of an extended family which can be godly examples. When they feel warm and welcome in the congregation, they are relatively positive about the general environment of their congregation. In this way, the father-absent adolescents may move into adulthood as a person that will take on

the responsibility of being an adult as a responsible member of the faith community.

Thus, the congregation must practice their godly gender roles with *Koinonia* and *Diakonia* that father-absent children and adolescents can see God as the Father who brings healing, mercy, and joy in their lives. It is necessary to describe the meaning of the “body of Christ” as the “family of God”.

## **6. One Body of Christ**

The youth ministry models and practices that focus on individual faith are a reflection of individualism in postmodern society and also in the church. Even adults in a church flee intimate relationships and deny the Johannine mandate of “loving one another” (Jn. 15:9-17). They want to love children and adolescents in the church from a distance (Clark 2015:79).

Nel (2000:181) emphasises ‘the One Body of Christ’ as follows:

Children and adolescents should be built up as a part of the whole. They are in no way a group that is being built up elsewhere (separate from the whole body, in youth organizations or independent church youth ministries), only to be added later, at a certain age, as a supplement to the whole. If this kind of approach to youth ministry had been successful, there should have been many examples today of local churches that have gained new life as a result of this addition.

There are two aspects to be the body of Christ described in Paul.

The first aspect of living together as the body of Christ is intrinsically connecting among the members. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul employs the metaphor of the “One Body” to address specific pastoral issues within the bounds of one local community of faith. As the Body of Christ, the local church is the historical field of experience, witness and praxis in which the father-absent youth’s faith is formed in thanksgiving

for the gift of what he/she has been given. As the One Body, the local church must see to it that fatherless children and adolescents grow together, search together, and live together within the congregation as an integral, vital, and important part of the “One Body of Christ”. Each youth is an irreplaceable member for the fulfilment of his Body. The youth have to be incorporated in every line of thought and received into all modes of ministries as part of the whole in the local church. (Nel 2000:64-66, 78; Cf. 1Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:7-13; Clark 2015:79-80).

Second, there is the call to the members of the body to function as partnering agents of Christ on earth that collaboratively participate in Jesus’ work on earth spreading God’s rule (Clark 2015:80).

Hastings (2007:30-32) says that Romans 12 contends that the relation of divine and human agencies are within the singular missional-ecumenical “Body of Christ.” Paul (Rom 12:4-5) describes himself and the distant Roman Christians as inextricably bound together in Christ’s body as “members one of another”. This means that Paul tries to convince Christian communities, whose relational unity is found in Jesus Christ alone, that they have much to gain from active engagement with Christian communities in other places. The members of the “One Body of Christ” are called to commit themselves to and be conscious of (1) the *mission* of God within a situated Christian community; and (2) the *ecumene* with other Christian communities who equally share in the operation of divine grace across space, time, and sociocultural boundaries (See 1 Cor. 1:2). This *missional-ecumenical* communal ideal is simultaneously local and global. Christ’s Body is the organic field of his relationship to the world. The members of his Body have responsibilities to awake to the world to be joined in God’s salvation. This ecclesial Body of Christ necessarily includes the intersubjective relationship between Christ and Christians in a communion of mutual self-giving, and it plays a major role in who they are in any local context (Nel 2009a:4; Kelly 2010:794).

The members of the “One Body of Christ” are called to remember that what we have received we have received to give. As mentioned above (2.1) Youths have obligations and responsibilities as members of the ‘One Body’ in their local church.

They have to participate in God's action towards the world. Youths as people of the Kingdom within the community of the faithful need to experience this shared life in order to share their lives with others in the Kingdom outside their community. The salvation by God's grace must flow from every believer in Christ in every nation through youths who know that the Body of Christ is always greater than what can be experienced in any one place. Our youths who are being identified as a member of the One Body of Christ, by becoming Jesus' disciples, they must share in his story and his gospel to extend the Body of Christ in this world (Nel 2005a:272-274; Clark 2015:80-81).

## **7. Summary**

In Setswana, '*ngwana ke wa dikgomo*' or '*o e gapa le namane*', which means that 'marrying someone also means marrying his/her children'. Marriages in the traditional sense include not only husband and wife but also children (Lesejane 2006:175). It shows that a marriage can be described as an introduction to an extended family in African communities.

Clark (2015:85) says that the goal of youth ministry must shift away from segmenting young people off from everyone else to offer them a mutual, empowering, engaging, and supportive new family. The goal of youth ministry is for every child, and every adolescent to be so embraced by the community of faith that they know they always have a home, a people, and a place where they can discover who they are and how they are able to contribute.

Father-absent adolescents need to feel part of the family and the community in order to develop a sense of self-worth. If they could not find a place in which they can feel a sense of security they will be adults who were raised in dysfunctional families from childhood, emotionally injured, and seriously unprepared to perform basic household tasks. They have to learn elsewhere what they did not learn from their families. The

local church should be ready to cushion the negative effects of disrupted father-absent families. The local church should be ready to provide guidance for them who need to become part of the faith family (Sell 1995:130; van Zyl Slabbert, Malan, Marais, Olivier, & Riordan et al., 1994:73).

As Müller (2011:3) states in his article, the local church needs a postfoundational practical theology to listen first to the stories of fatherless adolescents in their real-life situations which is a specific and a concrete situation. And their contextuality must be interpreted from the true foundation.

The functions of the main ministries, *Kerygma*, *Leitourgia*, *Diakonia* and *Koinonia* must flow to them until they accept God's salvation and the love of the faith community. The local church must answer the questions, 'Who are we to father-absent youth?', 'Where are we with them?', and 'How are we going to build the Body of Christ?'

The meaning of "shalom" has three fundamental features that are mutually constitutive: (1) physical well-being, including adequate food, clothing, shelter and wealth; (2) a desirable relationship between and among people; and (3) the acquisition of virtue, especially honesty and moral integrity (Yoder 1987:130).

The congregation must look after adolescents with absent fathers who live their lives without shalom. A local church must show compassion to these adolescents who are in need and must consider their needs.

Twenty-one father-absent adolescents will participate and respond to the interview to share their stories. The local church will discover that they must have *shalom* in their lives. Next chapter will deal with these questions and will focus on empirical research with adolescents who live without their biological father. It will also reconsider effective youth ministry to father-absent adolescents in the local church, and their relationship with their local church.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Empirical research**

#### **1. Introduction**

This study considers that there should be an understanding of the role of a father with biblical concepts, and a sound understanding of father-absent adolescents with the concept of the inclusive congregational youth ministry in the local church.

Within the problem statement of this study- the lack of the understanding about the various roles of father and father-absent adolescent with the concept of an inclusive congregational youth ministry leads to an ineffective and inefficient youth ministry in the local church- each chapter described and reviewed.

Chapter 2 described a variety of roles of the father in the Bible. Chapter 3 reviewed the roles of the father in children and adolescent development. Chapter 4 dealt with the roles of the father in South African history. Chapter 5 focused on the theories of youth ministry and family ministry to help local church leaders to understand the concept of a family-oriented youth ministry.

Practical theology is defined as “the empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society” (Heitink 1999:6). According to Osmer (2008:33), the descriptive-empirical task carefully considers what is going on in situations as a means of a “spirituality of presence” (Osmer 2008:37).

Chapter 6, as part of the descriptive-empirical task, listens carefully to the voices and physical gestures of father-absent young people in local black communities who are experiencing painful feelings, negative thinking, and difficult situations due to the absence of their fathers. It will also listen to the situation of local church pastors, how they understand father-absent youths, how they relate with them, and how they help

them as members of the Body of Christ.

## **2. Research aims and questions**

Schweitzer (2014:147) states for a sound methodology that “the basis upon which questions of methodology have to be judged, be it in practical theology or in other academic fields, first of all must be the relationship between research questions on the one hand and the design of a research project on the other. The quality of research depends on the adequacy of this relationship”.

As referred to in chapter 1 this research has four general aims to understand the father’s role as a spiritual leader in the Bible, to describe the role of the father in child and adolescent development, emphasizing the unhealthy influence of father absence on the child and adolescent, to discuss findings about the present situation of the local church with children and adolescents who live without a biological father, and to examine the implications of the research findings for inclusive congregational youth ministry.

The research questions guiding the empirical research are as follows:

1. What is the message of the Bible about the father and his role in the family?
2. Which factors are likely to influence increased father absence?
3. How does father absence affect to youth ministry?
4. How do the father-absent adolescents feel about the absence of their biological fathers and about God as the Father?
5. How can the local church help father-absent adolescents who live with their biological father being absent in their home?

### **3. Methodology**

This study employs semi-structured one-to-one interviews. The semi-structured interview provides an opportunity for the researcher to hear the participants speak about a particular aspect of their life or experience. The participants are allowed a guiding role in determining how the interview proceeds. (Greeff 2011:235; Creswell 2009:183; Willig 2008:24-26). An interpretive description approach was used to explore the phenomenon of value transmission by father-absent adolescents and local pastors (Creswell 2007:57-58).

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the research committee of the Faculty of Practical Theology of the University of Pretoria, as well as the individual father-absent adolescents and local pastors in the study, through informed consent.

#### **3.1 Research sample**

With regard to this study there are two sample groups, the group of father-absent youths and the group of local pastors:

(1) The group of father-absent youths who grew up in families without their biological fathers. The age group of 18-28 years was sampled for the interview in order to identify how each father-absent adolescent felt about his/her absent father and the figure of 'God as the Father'. It deals with unique experiences of their situations and this research process will help them to understand themselves better. The adolescents interviewed were selected as described in 3.1.1 below.

(2) The group of local pastors who are currently in the ministry, involving father-absent adolescents. In the group of 43-52 years who are senior pastors in a local church, were sampled for the interview in order to share their own experiences with father-absent adolescents on how they understand them, how they relate with them,

and how they help father-absent adolescents in the church as an extended family. The pastors interviewed were selected as described in 3.1.2 below.

The participants' anonymity was carefully protected in this study. The researcher handled participants' information in a confidential manner to protect their anonymity as participants. The researcher explained why a recording was being made and how it was going to be used. The researcher recorded interviews by voice recorder. All participants were treated with fairness and respect.

### **3.1.1 Adolescent participants**

Fifty-two father-absent adolescents of 18 years and over, were recruited from 15 local churches from three of nine South African provinces, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and Gauteng. The researcher received 52 names of adolescents who live without their biological father. According to the alphabetic order, every second one was chosen (Creswell 2009:155; Strydom 2011:228). 26 participants were selected, but five of the father-absent adolescents among them were disqualified being under the age of 18 years. Thus, 21 father-absent adolescents participated in the interviews for this research.

Using qualitative research, an English letter of introduction and their informed consent for participation in academic research were explained to them. The letter of introduction and their letter of informed consent included statements of confidentiality or anonymity, and the right to self-determination, as well as that all information will be treated fairly and be kept anonymous by the researcher. The 21 father-absent adolescent participants signed the consent letter.

The adolescent participants were informed that they should be 18 years or over, should have been brought up in a family with an absent father, and be willing to share their own experiences verbally. Their ages ranged between 18 and 28 years and they were from three of the nine provinces in South Africa.

Even though Willis (2011:142) says that the social interaction between online personas produces equally fruitful data for social researchers as off-line communication methods, this research conducted off-line interviews, face-to-face, to read interviewees' attitudes and emotional actions. Thus, the participants' verbal and nonverbal responses as their subjective understanding and meanings of their experiences are provided in this chapter.

### **3.1.2 Local pastor participants**

The researcher worked with a missionary who is close to the local pastors. He assisted the researcher in recruiting twenty-five local pastors from 13 churches which from three of nine South African provinces, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Gauteng. The number of interviews was limited to one per church. The researcher listed their names in alphabetically order in each of the 13 churches and randomly selected one out of every church (Creswell 2009:155; Strydom 2011:228). Finally, 12 black local pastors who were currently in charge of ministries were invited to participate in qualitative research.

In the same manner, as with the adolescent participants' qualitative research, an English letter of introduction and their informed consent to participate in academic research were discussed with them. The letter of introduction and their informed consent included confidentiality or anonymity, the right to self-determination and that all information will be treated fairly and be kept anonymous by the researcher. The 12 pastor participants signed the consent letter.

The twelve pastor participants were also informed that they should currently be in the ministry in local areas and be willing to share their own experiences and thoughts about father-absent adolescents in their churches.

### **3.2 Data gathering**

The researcher made an appointment with the participants in the different communities to visit their churches to conduct the interviews. One-by-one the participants were informed orally and in writing about the purpose of the research. They were also told that they could discontinue or refuse to participate in the research, and the collected information would remain confidential (Creswell 2009:89-92; 2007:141-142). The interviews were conducted at their churches according to their choice, after Sunday service or during a week after their prayer meeting. All the venues were private, pleasant and comfortable. The interviews took approximately 30 minutes.

The data is based on direct storylines told by the participants without any influence from the researcher. This process gives credence to the outcome of the research.

The period of conducting interviews was from August 2018 to October 2018.

### **3.3 Data analysis**

Twenty-one father-absent adolescents answered the 19 questions about their absent-fathers, their own experiences, their feelings about their fathers and the figure of 'God as the Father'.

Twelve local pastors who are currently in the ministry with father-absent adolescents were asked 11 questions to share their own experiences and ideas how they understand, how they relate to, and how they help father-absent adolescents in the church.

The interview proceeded in English. The researcher informed them that the language of this interview was optional either in English or in the mother-tongue of

the study participants or a mix of the two languages. As both research sample groups were willing to proceed in English, the interviews proceeded in English and were recorded by the researcher.

After completing the interviews, the voice recordings had been transcribed verbatim. Considerations in data analysis including computer-assisted programmes, the method of open coding and memoing were used (Creswell 2009:186; 2016:152).

The analysis of the results of the interview data is enriched with verbatim quotes and verified with literature.

#### **4. Analysis of the father-absent adolescents' interview data**

Table 26 depicts the biological data of the father-absent participants. All the participants shared dwellings with their mothers and/or siblings. It was also common to live with maternal grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Most of them did not know their father during childhood. A few had no contact at all or did not know their fathers' identity.

Four main themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews with the father-absent adolescent participants. Table 27 shows the main themes and question details which were designed and presented below:

**Biological data of the father-absent adolescent participants**

<b>Code - Age - province of Participant</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Age of participant when father became absent</b>	<b>Relations with father</b>
<b>FA01 - 24 – MP</b>	Female	Unemployed	Since her birth	None
<b>FA02 - 27 – MP</b>	Female	Part-time	12 years	None
<b>FA03 - 18 – MP</b>	Female	Gr. 12	6 years	Very poor
<b>FA04 - 18 – MP</b>	Male	Gr. 12	Since his birth	Very poor
<b>FA05 - 20 – MP</b>	Female	Gr. 12	Not sure	None
<b>FA06 - 28 – MP</b>	Female	Unemployed	8 years	None
<b>FA07 - 20 – MP</b>	Male	Gr. 10	Not sure	Very poor
<b>FA08 - 21 – MP</b>	Female	Gap year	Not sure	None
<b>FA09 - 19 – MP</b>	Female	Gap year	Not sure	None
<b>FA10 -27- MP</b>	Female	Unemployed	15 years	None
<b>FA11 - 24 – LP</b>	Female	Unemployed	12 years	None
<b>FA12 -19 -MP</b>	Female	Gr. 12	6 years	Very poor
<b>FA13 -25 -MP</b>	Female	Unemployed	Never knew him	None
<b>FA14 - 28 -GP</b>	Female	Full-time	5 years	Very poor
<b>FA15 -20 -MP</b>	Female	Gr. 12	Never knew him	None
<b>FA16 -18 -MP</b>	Female	Gr. 12	Not sure	Very poor
<b>FA17 -18 -MP</b>	Female	Gr. 12	Since her birth	Good
<b>FA18 - 28 -LP</b>	Male	Self-employed	6 years	None
<b>FA19 - 21-GP</b>	Female	Student of Unisa	12 years	None
<b>FA20 - 27-MP</b>	Male	Full-time	13 years	None
<b>FA21 - 19-MP</b>	Female	Gr. 10	4 years	None

Table 26. Biological data of the father-absent adolescent participants. (GP=Gauteng Province; LP=Limpopo Province; MP=Mpumalanga Province)

## Main themes and question details for the father-absent adolescent participants

Themes	Code	Question details
<b>Description of the participants' relationships with their fathers</b>	QA01	1. Do you have contact with your father?
	QA02	2. Do you hear from your father?
	QA03	3. When last did he make contact with you?
	QA04	4. What do you know about your father?
<b>Description of the participants' awareness of fathers' absence</b>	QA05	5. How do you feel about the word, 'father'?
	QA06	6. If you had regular contact with your father what would have wished your relationship to be?
	QA07	7. When/why did you think that you needed your father?
	QA08	8. If you become a father/mother how would you treat your children?
	QA09	9. How are you feeling about your absent father?
	QA10	10. Do you have any negative feelings about your father, even if you may not know about your father?
<b>The influence of father's absence on the participants' relationship with God</b>	QA11	11. How do you feel when someone says, "Heavenly Father," or "God, our Father"?
	QA12	12. Could you please try to explain why you feel that way?
	QA13	13. Have you experienced any negative feelings about the "Heavenly Father", or of "God, our Father"?
	QA14	14. Do you experience/Have you experienced the closeness and tenderness of God as Father in your life?
<b>Description of the context of the participants' relationship with pastors and church</b>	QA15	15. Do you think that your church/pastor understands your painful feelings and difficult situation?
	QA16	16. If you said yes, could you please tell me when you felt that your church/pastor understood?
	QA17	17. Have you thought about your pastor/any church member as your father?
	QA18	18. If you said yes, when/why did you think that?
	QA19	19. Could you please name three things that you would like your church/pastor to help you with?

Table 27. Main themes and question details for the father-absent adolescent participants

#### 4.1 Description of the participants' relationships with their fathers



Eighteen of the twenty-one father-absent adolescent participants answered that they do not have contact with their fathers. 16 participants were separated from their fathers at ages between birth and 8 years (FA01, FA03, FA04, FA05, FA07, FA08, FA09, FA12, FA13, FA14, FA15, FA16, FA17, FA18, FA19 & FA21). Unsuccessful father-child relationships are often caused by the absence of fathers. South Africa is one of the countries in the world with the highest figures of father absence (Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha 2010).

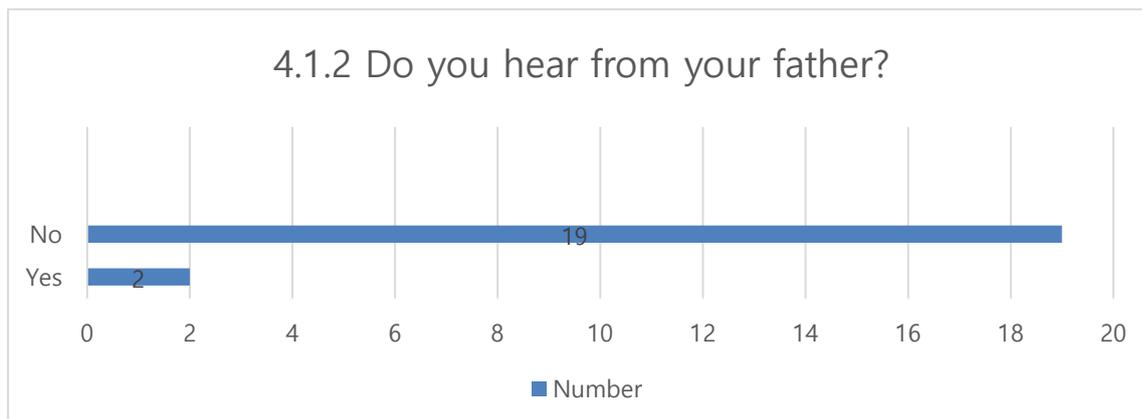
Three participants answered about their biological but absent fathers with jejunity. They seemed to be quite settled in father's absence:

*"My father is alive, but I do not have contact with him." (FA08)*

*"... we only talk when he is concerning school fees and money for food only." (FA12)*

*"He lives separately. He has his own family. He has another wife and children." (FA16)*

#### 4.1.2 Do you hear from your father?

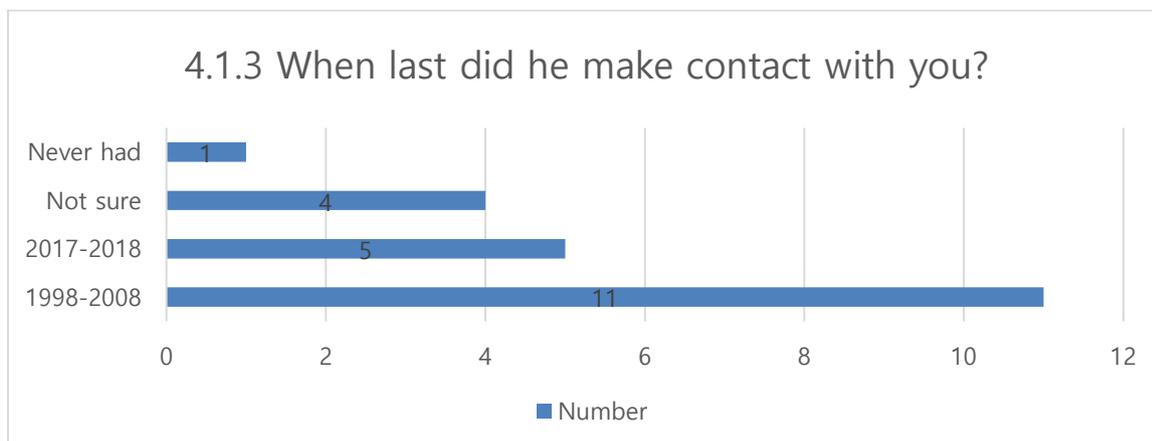


Nineteen of the twenty-one answered they do not hear from their fathers (FA01, FA02, FA03, FA04, FA05, FA06, FA08, FA09, FA10, FA11, FA12, FA13, FA14, FA15, FA16, FA18, FA19, FA20 & FA21). The participants expressed the lack of sharing their lives and time with their fathers:

*“No, not that much. Maybe in a month it will be once, or maybe we could pass maybe two or three months without talking.” (FA12)*

*“Yes, but now and then after a long time.” (FA07)*

#### 4.1.3 When last did he make contact with you?



Eleven of the twenty-one participants indicated the last contact with their fathers as 10-20 years ago, from 1998 to 2008 (FA01, FA02, FA04, FA05, FA06, FA10, FA11, FA18, FA19, FA20 & FA21). Five participants answered that their father made contact between 2017 and 2018 (FA03, FA08, FA12 & FA17). Four

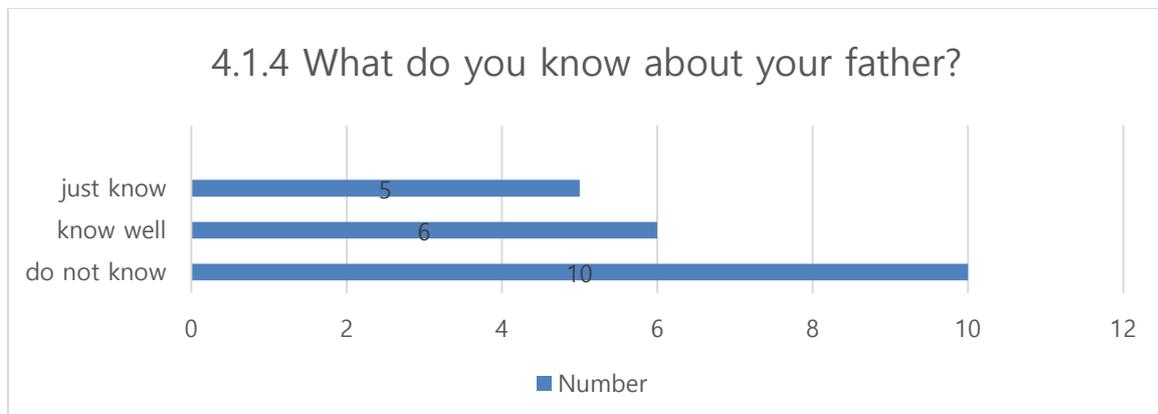
participants were not sure when the last contact with their father was because they were small children when they were separated from their fathers completely (FA09, FA13, FA14 & FA16). That is why they could not remember the last contact with their fathers.

*“He did not contact me but my sister. It was last year, early. It was the time we had a query where he is staying. We did not know where he was. Then we found that he was living in SunCity.” (FA09)*

*“...I have seen him twice in my life. The first time when I was 8 years old, the second time when I was 13 years old, and last time when we buried him.” (FA04)*

One participant, who never knew her father seemed to be doubting about her identity, said:

*“Since I was born, he did not make contact.” (FA15)*



Ten participants answered lamentably that they do not know about their father (FA03, FA04, FA05, FA06, FA08, FA13, FA15, FA16, FA18 & FA21). Five participants answered that they just know their father (FA01, FA07, FA09, FA12 & FA14), and six participants answered that they know their father well (FA02, FA10, FA11, FA17, FA19 & FA20).

If fathers did not provide care and support for their children, they were seen as failing to fulfil their responsibility as a breadwinner, and their role as men were questioned.

The participants were raised by their mothers, grandmothers, or relatives while their fathers did not assist or support them. Of the twenty-one participants, nineteen were raised by their mothers and/or grandmothers (FA01, FA02, FA03, FA04, FA06, FA07, FA08, FA09, FA10, FA11, FA12, FA14, FA15, FA16, FA17, FA18, FA19, FA20, FA21), 2 were raised by their relatives, uncle and aunt (FA05 & FA13).

Two participants who were raised by their maternal grandmother without the support of their fathers' state that:

*"I lived with my grandmother. I was raised by my grandmother. My mother passed away in 2002. My father did not support me. Only my grandmother supported me. I knew him in 2008. When I was young, I did not know my father." (FA01)*

*"Think that what happened is my parents got divorced when I was 5 years old. Then I went to live with my grandmother. I did not have a relationship with my mother and father. But when I was 10, I think my mother searched for me and she took me, and I stayed with her." (FA14)*

Even though they have heard about their absent fathers, the participants' innermost feelings of deprivation of a father have results.

*"He has so many children with different mothers. He got some diseases. He loved us a long time ago. He worked as a taxi driver but now he is suffering from those diseases. I do not know what it is. Then he is staying at home with other children and their mother. I saw him last July (one month ago), he once came home, it was from tetanus to see us. Yoo...It*

*was so painful seeing him like that. He much ached. It was so painful for us. He abandoned us, but a father is a father to us. We cannot abandon him.” (FA09)*

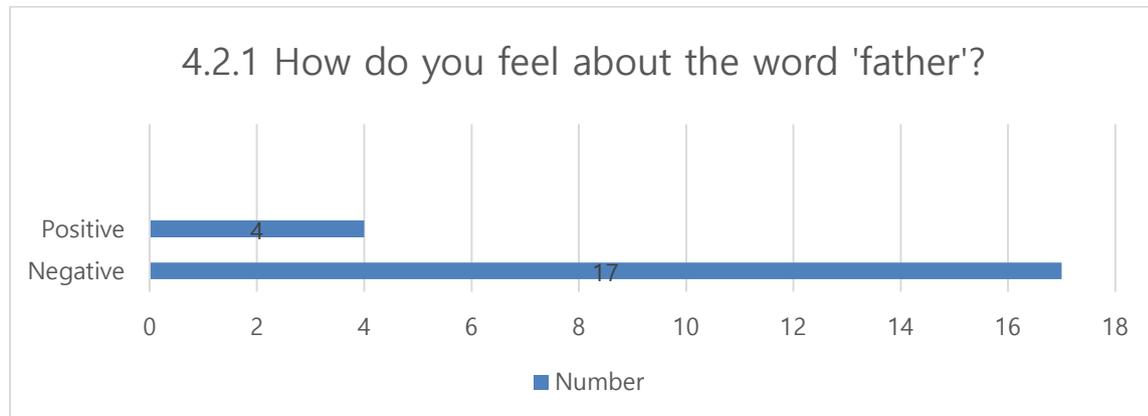
*“I do not know what my father has done. He abused my mother, not only my mother, but other people also. The neighbour told me that he was so cruel...He lived separately. He lived with his other children. He did not support me and my family, never...When my mother was pregnant with me, he did not treat her well. He was abusing her physically after it got bad, my mother told me that. He did not come to me as his son...” (FA04)*

*“He works for himself. He puts on the DSTV. He does not support my family...He is a quiet person. I do not know many things about him, but I just know that he is my father. That’s all. I do not have any special experience. We do not spend too much time together. Maybe I can see him for just one day, and then after one month. When I meet with him, I do not do anything. I just visit him and see how he is doing, then go back home, just like that. I cannot remember what he said when we met. We do not have any bond... we do not.” (FA7)*

One participant said directly using a degrading word, “liar” when talking about her father:

*“I do not know, he is a liar. He does not know where we live...” (FA16)*

## 4.2 Description of the participants' awareness of their fathers' absence



Freud (1969:9) says, *“I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father’s protection.”* As father-absent children lost their protection, they have a negative feeling about the word ‘father’. Seventeen participants who felt negatively about the word ‘father’, used the words, ‘bad’ (FA05), ‘pain’ (FA01), ‘nothing’ (FA07, FA08, FA09, FA10, FA12, FA14 & FA16), ‘problem’ (FA04), ‘uncomfortable’ (FA13), ‘sore’ (FA17), ‘sad’ (FA03 & FA21), ‘difficult’ (FA11 & FA20) and ‘no exist’ (FA15). They felt that their fathers were non-existent and meaningless:

*“I am having a problem with this word, I cannot call someone as father, in this way I do not understand it. I know by that word that there is something called father, the person who is a father to a child or something but then for me, a father does not exist. I can see the children who have fathers but then for me, I grew up without father.” (FA04)*

*“Right now, with the word ‘father’, I do not feel anything. Since I came to this church my heart is now okay because I found fathers. When I was young and before coming to this church the word ‘father’ was very painful because my mother raised us alone and we had no one to say ‘father’ to him. So, it was painful. I wish I had one.” (FA09)*

*“I do not know. He does not exist. I do not know anything about him. Even my*

*family do not know him. He does not exist.” (FA15)*

#### **4.2.2 If you had regular contact with your father what would you have wished your relationship to be?**

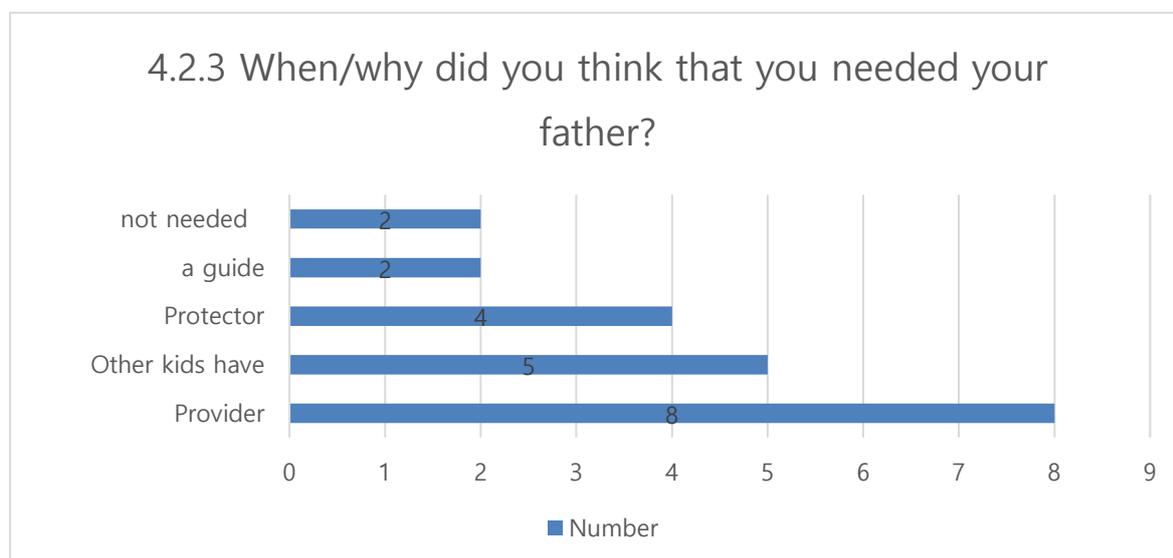
Nineteen participants would have wished a good relationship with their father. Two participants did not answer this question (FA05 & FA19).

They expressed anger with their fathers' absence (FA16), felt betrayed and abandoned by their fathers (FA03), but on the other hand, they longed for their father to be there (FA01, FA09 & FA14). This feeling was also expressed by the participants who felt deprived of the father's love, attention, caring, spending time together and sharing the life together (FA02, FA03, FA04, FA06, FA07, FA08, FA10, FA 11, FA12, FA13, FA15, FA17, FA18, FA20 & FA21). They miss their fathers. They eagerly want to have their fathers' love:

*“I did not finish my matric...I was just thinking about my father. When my friends called their father, me, I do not have a father. My mother is not working, and I also think where my father could be. My friend talked about her father, but I do not have a father. So, I grew up like... my situation was no good because I drank too much when I grew up smoking and go to the tavern, with bad friends, and bad influence from friends. Maybe when on Thursday I was going out to the tavern, I will then come home on Tuesday or Wednesday... I needed money so it is like selling my body, but not publicly. I thought if my father was alive, I would not do this thing because if he is working, he could buy anything when I want something, he could give me and do something that I want.” (FA06)*

*“Like father and son relationship, he is the strong one. Maybe if he was there for me when I need him most, just spend time with him, support me where he has to and may be talk with me, tell me something which fathers have to tell their sons. But unfortunately, he is not here...” (FA07)*

*“Spend more time with him, go out as family...just like a normal family. I just want him to support me like he supports his son.” (FA08)*



Most of the participants stated two key resources namely financial (FA01, FA05, FA11, FA12, FA13, FA18, FA19 & FA21) and emotional support (a guide FA04 & FA20; a protector FA02, FA06, FA09 & FA10; other kids have FA07, FA08, FA14, FA15 & FA17). Two participants stated that they do not need a father (FA03 & FA16).

They need someone who supports them, loves them, and guides them into adulthood. Most of the participants explained in their story why a father’s presence in the household was very special:

*“Maybe if we do not have money and food, we thought if he was there, he could make a plan.” (FA11)*

*“When my friends talked about their fathers, I thought that my father was not here. So, I left them and hid my feeling.” (FA07)*

*“I was the person who is unable to defend myself. But I know that if my father knows me, he will stand for me and say, ‘no, no...there is a misunderstanding here. This thing is like this and like that.’... if my father was there, he was going*

*to be standing in the gap because he knows me. He was going to tell them, 'no, no... this is not like that.' So, in times like that, I do wish my father was here because some of the things that we are failing to say or to do, and my father could be standing in the gap and say, 'I will do it for you, I will say for you.'"*  
(FA10)

One of two participants who answered she did not need a father disclosed her feeling (FA03 & FA16). Her father lives with another wife and children. He does not care for her and her mother. She is so angry with her father:

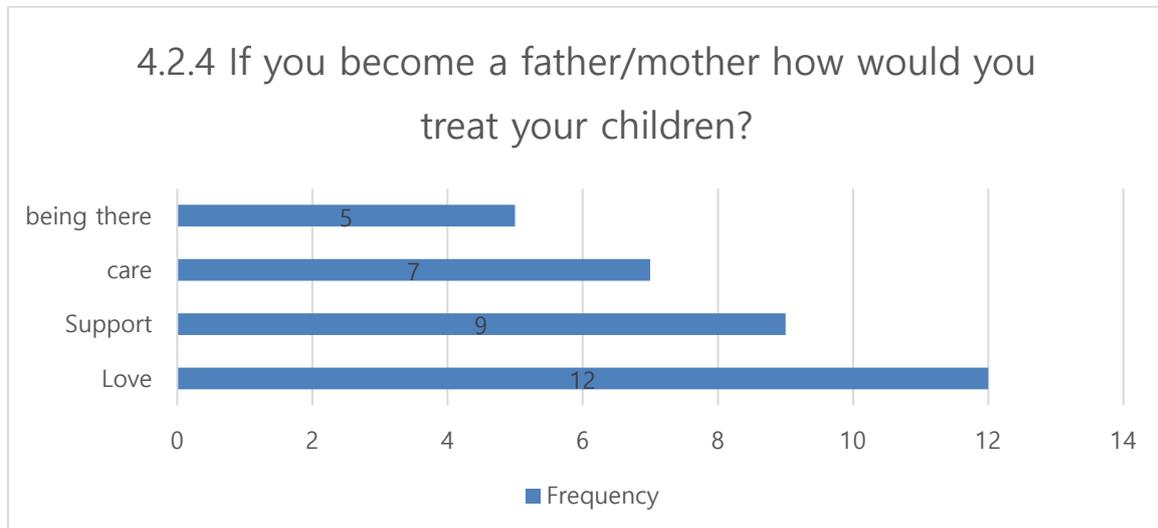
*"I never did... I do not like my father. I am angry with my father very much because he cares for his children who live with him, but he does not think about me. I feel that I am abandoned."* (A16)

A participant who recently paid 'lobola' emphasised that guiding children about personal issues into manhood was seen as the most important father-responsibility. As he grows up, he needs someone to guide him because he must get married. He does not know how to prepare for it and what to do:

*"Especially when I am facing challenges, you know, a father is there to help you, to pick you up, to advice you. Sometimes to stand on your behalf you see, 'this is my son. You cannot touch him.'... The only person who stands for me now, it is God and physically I have to stand for myself. I have to do things myself. When I am facing a challenge, I have to solve it myself... The life without a father is very tough because sometimes you need someone to help you, to guide you. That is very important, you need someone to guide you."*  
(FA20)

Two of the participants (FA14 & FA17) were raised by their stepfathers, states that they needed their biological fathers because things are not the same. They wanted to be treated equally with stepsiblings but, their step fathers did not treat

them as his own children.



The participants answered, using the word, 'love' (12 times), 'support' (9 times), 'care' (7 times), 'being there' (5 times), and 'good communication' (2 times), 'spending times together' (2 times), etc...

Their aspirations for the future seemed tied up with getting a family. When discussing what kind of fathers/mothers they wanted to become, the participants emphasised three functions as responsibilities in parenting; to care emotionally, to support economically, and to provide protection. Especially they expressed a wish to be emotionally close to their children, and also wished to live with their children to be a caring mother or father.

*"With love and care... just like a normal family." (FA03)*

*"If I become a father, I will be so friendly. I do not want to follow in my father's step. I do not want to live and go on with the same pattern as my father's, no! I want to be nice and supportive of my children. When they need me, I want to be there every time. I want to be a supportive father..." (FA04)*

*"I will treat my children good, I am going to treat my children good and going to teach them where I was to put them grow up nicely. I will not do things like*

*that was done to me in the past because it was not good. I was getting sick, last year 2017, April. I was smoking too much so I got TB and was sick too much. My pastor came to my home to pray for me. Since that day I woke up and believed that God is like our insurance. I do not want my children to grow up like me because it is not the right thing. It was a bad thing.” (FA06)*

*“I will treat them with love as I needed the love when I was a young boy. I will be there for them; I will support them. I will support them financially. Actually, when they need me, I will be there as their father. When I needed my father, he was not with me. It was not nice.” (FA7)*

The above-mentioned ways of bringing up children illustrate the father-absent adolescent participants’ desires and wishes toward their absent fathers.

#### **4.2.5 How are you feeling about your absent father?**

Due to the lack of a role model and feelings of rejection, some of them say that a father does not necessarily need to be a biological parent. 21 participants expressed their deep bitter feelings about their absent fathers. It is an important subject in this study, so all the participants’ own stories follow to show how they feel about their absent fathers:

*“... it was so hard to see other children, they are going with their fathers while I do not have one. I do not have someone to be called father. It feels like he did not want you...” (FA01)*

*“Sad...” (FA03)*

*“I feel sad, I feel very sad. It is just nothing I can do. I Just have to accept and try to find peace about it. Anyhow It is not nice at all.” (FA10)*

*“Feeling sad because I know that I am not going to see him again (as he*

*passed away) no wish to know him..." (FA13)*

*"I feel so bad because in this world it is very difficult to lose a parent, yes, it is very difficult... I do not want to lie." (FA11)*

*"Sometimes I feel very bad... other kids talk about their fathers, but I do not get the chance to talk about him because he has not wanted me to be in his life." (FA16)*

*"Sometimes I feel bad. When I am alone, I think about him. Sometimes life is so terrible, but I make sure that I am good. My father did not support me. He supported his family over there." (FA05)*

*"I am feeling bad. Bad and angry sometimes. 'why me, I do not have a father. Why do I grow up like this, why? Why me?' I always asked myself, 'why me?'..." (FA06)*

*Very bad... a lot of things it is not easy for me to achieve. It is very difficult without a father. (FA18)*

*"My feeling was so painful... I was doing Gr. 7. Then there was an oral topic, and the topic was 'how much do you believe your father.' I did not say anything and just went to ma'am and explained to her that I stay with my stepfather, not my real father, and she said 'okay', and allowed me to sit down and not talk about it. It was very painful." (FA17)*

*"I felt that I was abandoned. Every time when I thought that I am abandoned, I was crying and crying, and after that moment, I am okay, go back to my normal situation... now I do not need him anymore." (FA04)*

*I can say first; it was not easy at all, but now I am okay. I must be free and forget and I must trust in God. (FA19)*

*"I miss him a lot. I really miss him." (FA20)*

*"I miss him too much." (FA07)*

*“I do not know. I do not get love from him, but it is life...” (FA08)*

*“I am not feeling anything. When I was still small, my mother used to tell me ‘your father left us’. I was young and did not understand anything. I told my mother, ‘he will come back, maybe he works, he will come back.’” (FA09)*

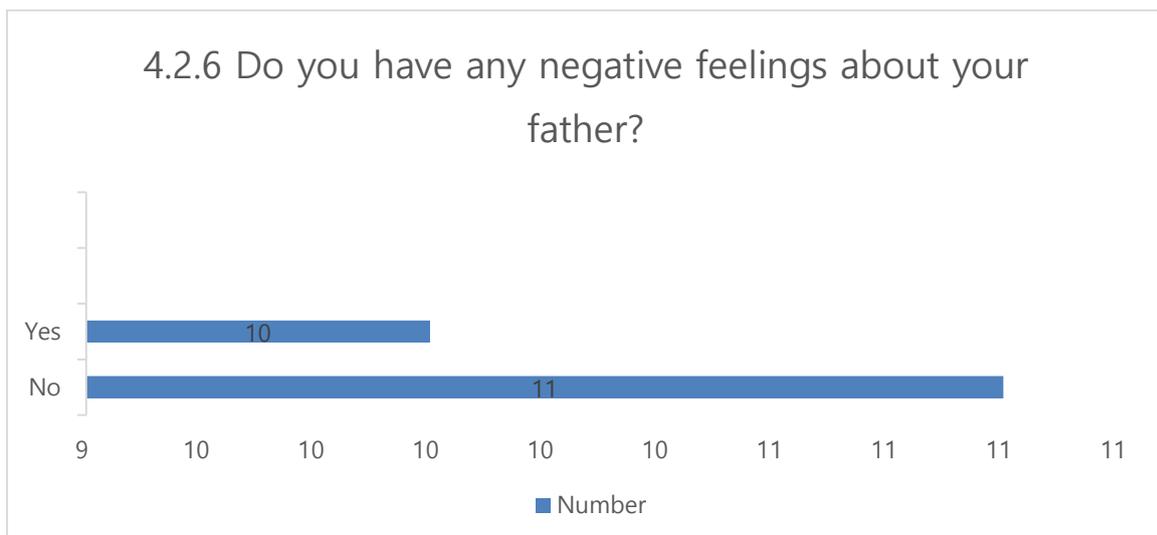
*“I am fine. I accepted it, and God is giving me strength for what to look, I just moved forward.” (FA02)*

*“Now, I am okay, I no longer feel bad or sad. I am growing up and there is nothing of him being absent that hinders me from growing any way. So, I do not feel so bad.” (FA12)*

*“Right now, I feel I am fine...I forgive him with my heart...why I am holding back because if I am not forgiving the hate will come back to me.” (FA14)*

*“I do not know how I feel because I do not know him. He did not do anything for me. Even my family do not talk about him, so... I have only my mom as a parent.” (FA15)*

*“I respect him, but I feel he is my blood, and I respect him.” (FA21)*



Ten of the twenty-one participants said, ‘yes, I have negative feelings about my

absent father' (FA01, FA03, FA04, FA05, FA06, FA07, FA08, FA09, FA12 & FA19). They evaluated their fathers' behaviour as generally negatively. They were also concerned about the lack of respect that their fathers demonstrated towards wives or partners. Two male participants' stories are examples:

*"Yes, I do have negative feelings...The way he treated people I do not like about him. My father abused my mother very much when she was pregnant. That had hurt me a lot. I asked myself what kind of father he was. By myself, I do not like father." (FA04)*

*"Yes, my mother has a big problem with my father. They did not want to talk with us because they thought we are young, so I do not know much but I know they had a problem. That is why they live separately." (FA07)*

Eleven of twenty-one participants said that they do not have any negative feelings about their absent fathers (FA02, FA10, FA11, FA13, FA14, FA15, FA16, FA17, FA18, FA20 & FA21). The point is, 'No' means that they do not think about their absent fathers any more. They felt that their absent fathers were unrelated persons.

One expressed the void in her life is not having her biological father:

*"No, I do not have any more. When I was still young, I did, because I remember that time, he came once, and he said that he promises me that he would buy me a school uniform. He took the size that I wrote down for him as my size, the shoes' size, everything, but he never came back. He never came back since that time. I think 10 years later when I met him... I was angry, but he did not see it... it is not necessary to talk about it. It was... I was angry at that time. He was so free, talking as if nothing happened. I was disappointed like ... for me, 'How do you leave your child to stay with her grandmother for so many years. You never check and never visit.' But when we met the first time as if nothing happened, as if it was okay for him to be outside... so I thought that I should just make peace in my own heart." (FA14)*

The other participant who recounted the hurt he had endured growing up said that:

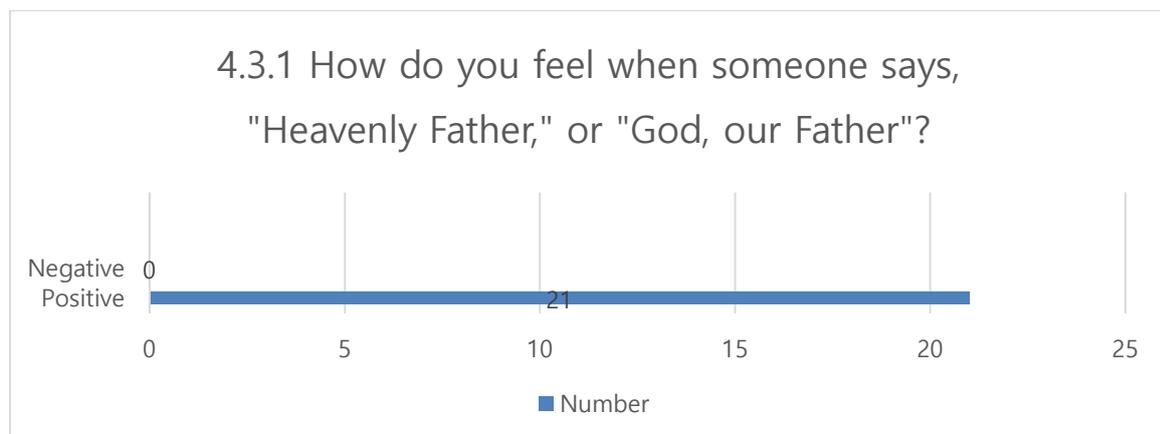
*“No, I accepted it. He worked too hard as an individual, so he was so tired, so he was exhausted. Me, being drifted away from him, I do no longer care.” (FA18)*

Even though they live without their biological fathers, when their fathers show support and care, the level of the negative feeling about their absent father is not the same as with a father who does not support his family.

One participant did not know her biological father until she was 10 years old, because her parents divorced when she was very small. She stayed with her mother, stepfather and stepsiblings. Before she met her biological father, she had negative feelings about her father. Since she met her biological father, her negative feeling toward her absent father changed. Now her father contacts her often, and he started to support her. She explained her feeling with a smile:

*“No, I do not, because I really need him as my father, because I saw without my father, the absence of him, it is not okay. I need love from him.” (FA17)*

### 4.3 The influence of a father’s absence on the participants’ relationships with God



The statement of the problem (See 1.2) in this research states that father-absent

adolescents do not easily understand the role of a father and may have a negative feeling about God the Father. However, all twenty-one participants answered positively on the question 'how they feel about God as the Heavenly Father or as, our Father'. They indicated that they feel good/okay (FA03, FA04, FA05, FA06, FA09, FA10, FA11, FA13, FA14, FA15, FA16 & FA21), happy (FA01, FA 08 & FA19), comfortable (FA07), strength (FA20), nice (FA18), and amazing/great (FA02, FA12 & FA17). Most participants seem to be well-adjusted and have a personal God-fearing faith.

#### **4.3.2 Could you please try to explain why you feel that way?**

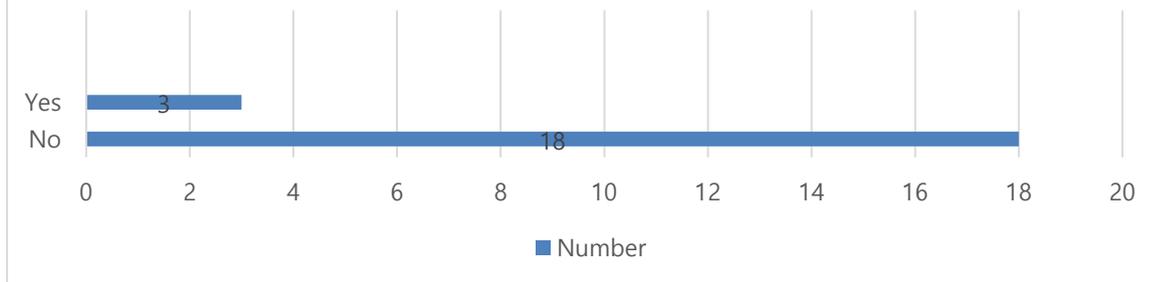
Most of them unanimously expressed, *"even though my biological father is not there, God is there for me (FA06, FA07, FA08, FA09, FA10, FA11, FA14, FA16, FA18, FA19, FA20 & FA21). Even though my biological father abandoned me, God, our Heavenly Father never abandons me (FA01, FA 03 & FA04). I always thank Him for what I have (FA17). I am excited because I have a Father (FA15)."*

They are convinced that God is the Father, provider and protector of their lives. They are pleased to call God, Father:

*"Sometimes I feel like happy because I know that He is the Father of orphans, he is the father with whom you can share everything, and he will never leave me. When I call Him, I feel he is my real father. He did not abandon me. He is always there and I can talk to him anytime I want. Without any fear without any doubt. I feel happy." (FA01)*

*"That gave me strength because I began to understand that even when my father, my biological father, is not there, God is there and that let me look up to God for what I need from a father. I look up to God for comfort, I look up to God for healing, I look up to God for provision, I look up to God for everything. So, I am raised with God as my Father." (FA20)*

### 4.3.3 Have you experienced any negative feelings about the "Heavenly Father" or of "God, our Father"?



Only three participants said that they have experienced negative feelings about God (FA 04, FA12 & FA18). Those negative feelings were caused by their absent fathers' behaviour and their ways of living.

One participant emphasised that his absent father abused his mother physically when she was pregnant. He met his father only two times in his life. When he saw his friend's father, he was doing something good for his son. The participant said that he did not have any negative feelings about 'God, the Father,' but has complained to God about his cruel father and his abnormal behaviour:

*"No, never, but I have complained to God because when I was still young, I did not have a father. Some other children grew up with their fathers. Why me...why should I be naughty like this... but now not much, because I understand a little bit of life." (FA04)*

Another participant said that her father married and divorced repeatedly. Her father has many children from different wives. Usually, the wives take care of their children. She points out that her father produces many father-absent children like her:

*"I used to complain about my father but now I do not. That only thing I complain about is that each and every year he marries and divorces, marries and divorces. When he marries and has kids he divorces. Where is his responsibility for kids? So sometimes I complain to God about my dad. He, my*

*dad has to stop this because he is putting other kids in situations that are unwanted. We are used to that, but these kids are newly born that they do not understand such things, so it might have a negative impact on these kids. So, I do complain about that, but other than that I do not.” (FA12)*

Another participant said that his father was a pastor. The father left his family to do God’s work when he was 6 years old. So, his family scattered and wandered from relative to relative for a long time. He sees a doctor regularly because of depression and the intermittent explosive disorder.

*“Yes, I have. The negativity goes with curiosity. How does the Heavenly Father run his process with us, his earthly things, and his heavenly things, because there are a lot of question marks that I do not understand and a lot of confusion. So, it makes me as an individual to accept it. Even though I do not want to accept but I just have to accept because after all, He is the Creator. It makes me have those negative thought even deeper about God.” (FA18)*



Twenty participants replied they have experienced the closeness and tenderness of God as the Father in their lives as follow:

*“I remember my grandmother was sick. It was so very painful. In such a way*

*that although I was young, I had to take care of the old lady. Sometimes I feel it be too much. But something keeps on saying 'you are held, everything is going to be okay. I am with you no matter what the situation is. But I will give you the strength'... My grandmother was my mother and my father, my brother and my sister because with everything I need to talk about, I go to her and she listened. If I need something even if I see that it is difficult for her, but she did it. She did a lot for me.” (FA01)*

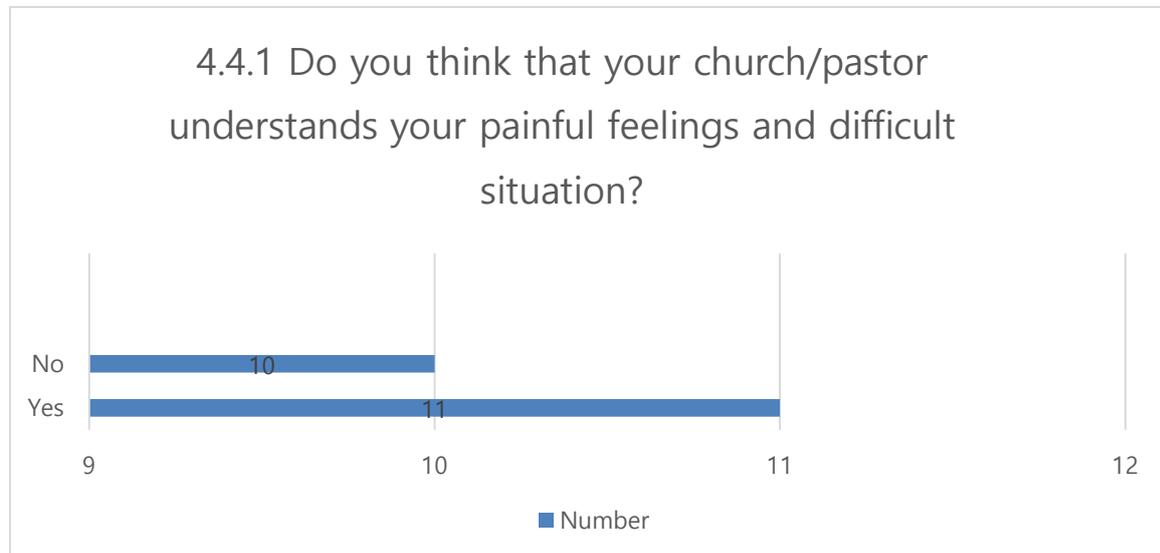
*“When I feel down, or sad I go to pray, afterwards I feel almost okay. So, I can say that I feel the tenderness of God.” (FA07)*

*“Yes, what I know is that God is the Father of orphans. He is my Father. I feel sometimes God is loving me unconditionally. Even if I make mistakes every day, He always forgives me. So sometimes I feel that I do not deserve his love.” (FA13)*

Only one participant said that she had not experienced the closeness and tenderness of God as the Father (FA15). She had no contact with her father since she was born. She has never seen her father. She lives with her mother and step-siblings. She does not feel anything about her absent father. However, she is excited when she calls on the 'Heavenly Father' because she then feels that she has a father. She said:

*“How can I say...no. I have not experienced it but I wish to experience it each and every time when I pray, 'God I need your presence to experience that moment.'” (FA15)*

#### 4.4 Description of the context of the participants' relationships with their church/pastor



Eleven participants said that their churches/pastors understand their painful feelings and difficult situation (FA01, FA06, FA07, FA09, FA11, FA12, FA13, FA14, FA18, FA19 & FA20). They said that their pastors understood their problems (FA06, FA07, FA09, FA12, FA13, FA18) and supported them (FA01, FA11, FA14, FA19 & FA20)

Ten participants said that their pastors do not understand their painful feelings and difficult situations because they, the participants have not told their pastors about their feelings and situations (FA02 FA03, FA04, FA05, FA08, FA10, FA15, FA16, FA17 & FA21). Usually, they do not have a close relationship (FA02, FA04, FA10 & FA16), they keep quiet about their feelings and situations in the church (FA03, FA05, FA08, FA15, FA17 & FA21). So, if their pastors do not ask about their feelings and situations, they do not talk to them about their feelings and situations.

*“I have never had a close relationship with my pastor. So, I do not think that he understands...I have not told my pastor about my deep feeling, but I wish I will do so someday.” (FA02)*

*“I do not think that he understands my painful feelings and difficult situation. I am*

*not the kind of person that speaks with someone freely, even in my home, they complain about this. When I have trouble I do not speak, I just solve it by myself. I still have a problem. I do not like people to feel pity for me, no..." (FA04)*

*"I do not talk to my pastor, so she does not know my story. Because she did not ask me, I did not speak to her about my painful feelings and difficult situation. I do not speak if someone does not ask me. But if I speak to her about my problem, she supports me." (FA08)*

*"I do not think that they understand because I did not share it with anyone in the church. I just keep quiet alone. For this one, I just do not feel to speak about it. Sometimes I experience that they are going to charge me and discourage me, so I am just glad to live like that." (FA15)*

#### **4.4.2 If you said yes, could you tell me when you felt that your church/pastor understood?**

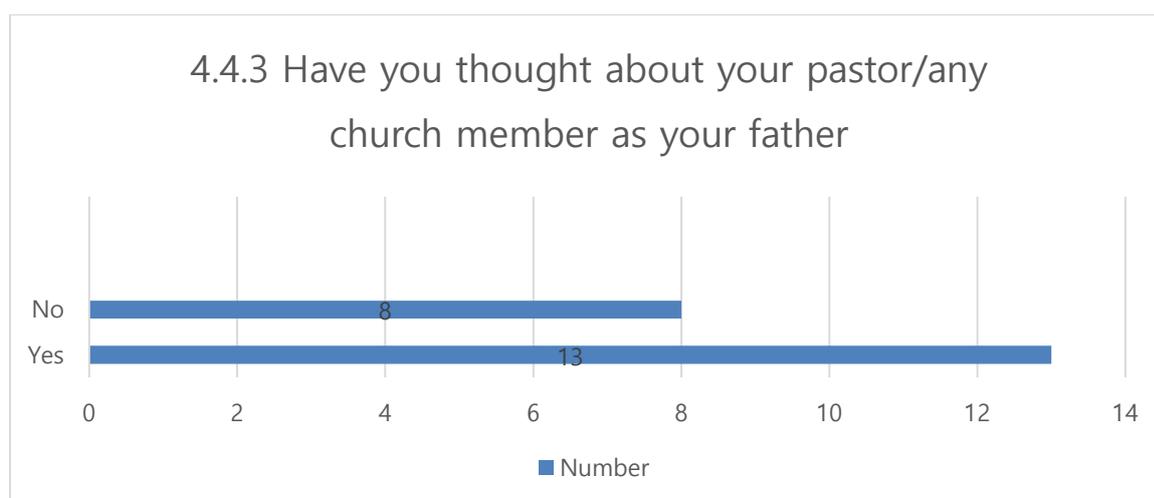
*"When I have a problem, I go to my senior pastor to talk. She understands me and gives me a word of comfort. She is the one who understands most." (FA07)*

*"My pastor feels for me, she encourages me, telling me what to do when I am in a situation like a counsellor to me. It is helping a lot. She knows what we are going through. I do not speak to her often, but when I have some problems, I speak to her. And she always tells us whenever we have a problem, we must come to her then she will assist us. She supports me. (FA09)*

*"I think both my local pastor and my pastor at my home town share the same mind, they sincerely love me. They always support me whenever I need something. Sometimes, even when I do not say something, they are there to say ask, 'are you okay? What do you need?' And then they give me advice and*

*guidance, 'you should do 1,2,3... then you will be alright.' I believe they understand, and they are very supportive. I often speak to them." (FA20)*

As mentioned above, when they have a good relationship with their pastor, they often speak to their pastors. When they have problems or need guidance, they freely ask their pastors.



Thirteen of the twenty-one participants think their pastors are their fathers (FA01, FA02, FA06, FA07, FA08, FA11, FA14, FA15, FA16, FA17, FA19, FA20 & FA21).

Eight participants indicated, 'No, they have not thought about their pastors or any church members as their fathers' (FA03, FA04, FA05, FA09, FA10, FA12, FA13 & FA18). These eight participants are those who said that their pastors do not understand their painful feelings and difficult situation (See 6.3.5.1).

One participant illustrated that it was not easy for him to have father-figure because he does not know what a 'father' is, and what the 'father's role' should be. His identity as a man is being shaped in a situation of father absence, and a women-centred household:

*"As I said before... father to me, it does not exist. But now my mother has reunited with another man...He treats me well. I feel that sometimes I just ask*

*myself where he was by the time I was growing up. I just used to think what if he was there when I was growing up. My mother lives with my step-father at Moloto. I live with my brother and nephew. And I have a problem with him. I cannot stay with my step-father speaking a long time...I cannot be part of a conversation with him. I remember that I saw him once a week when he came on Sunday to drop off some food or something. I greet him 'how was the life,' and he tells me 'it is fine,' then I go, and he goes separate ways. There was on a Saturday, a family gathering at his house or my home. He came and greet me 'how is it then, how is it then...' that was it. I do not think that he is a shy person because he is also a pastor over there. I think he is open, but sometimes I have a question about what he is asking himself and thinking that I do not like him because sometimes I feel guilty because I do not give him his time, I do not give him my time. He tried so to bother me, but I keep on running away, I do not know, I am not used to a father.”*  
(FA04)

#### **4.4.4 If you said yes, when/why did you that?**

According to thirteen of the twenty-one participants (See 6.3.5.3), they think of their pastors as their fathers. They also said that their pastors understand their painful feelings and difficult situation (See 6.3.5.1). Usually, they often communicate with their pastor. When they have problems, they ask their pastor for help and advice (See 6.3.5.2).

They feel that they are cared for when their pastors treat them as their own children (FA01, FA02, FA06, FA07, FA08, FA14, FA15, FA16, FA17, FA20 & FA21), and when their pastors support them (FA06, FA11, FA14 & FA19). They see their pastors as their fathers. It seems that sharing common experiences produce a sense of intimacy, and they accept the pastor or church member as their father. They mentioned that:

*“...when I see him, I feel that I have a father. When he preaches, I look at him and listen. Then I forget that I do not have my blood father. I call him father. He is my father. He cares for us all in the church. I like him very much*

*because he cares about his children in church. When I need money to go to church for service or all-night prayer, he cares for me with money to go there. Now I feel that I have my father, I have both parents.” (FA06)*

*“Because he was there as a father on the way of God, and he played fatherhood a lot. He understands a lot, he is caring, he is loving, and when I ask support, he will give supports.” (FA14)*

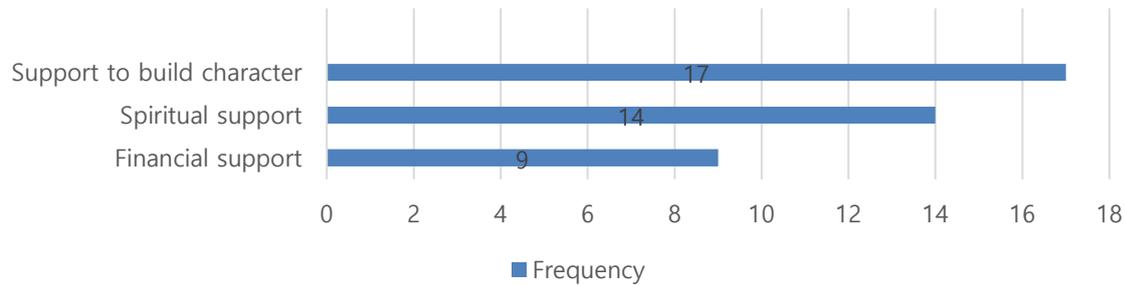
*“... he is so concerned about us that he always asks about my feeling. He cares about me physically and spiritually. I talk to him. I speak anything to his wife.” (FA15)*

*“Because even though we are not his children he treats us like his children. He does not see us only from outside like other children. He sees us as his real children. He is very busy, but he does not have a high voice. His voice is always down. If we have done something wrong, he stays with us and says, ‘this thing is wrong, please do not do it again’. He is like a father to me. I often talk with him.” (FA17)*

*“It is because of how he treats me. He treats me as a son. And he gives me that love of a father that a child expects to get from his father. He gives me that support, he wants what the best for me. Therefore, I can say because of that I also look up to him as a father.” (FA20)*

*“He used to treat me as his child. when I was at home, he used to call me and check whether I am okay or not? And I felt that he cares for me.” (FA21)*

#### 4.4.5 Could you please name three things that you would like your church/pastor to help you with?



Participants' answers: 9 times would like their churches/pastors to help with financial support (FA01, FA06, FA09, FA12, FA14, FA15, FA19, FA20 & FA21), 14 times with spiritual support (FA02, FA04, FA05, FA06, FA07, FA08, FA10, FA11, FA13, FA14, FA15, FA17, FA19 & FA20), 17 times with support to build their characters (FA02, FA03, FA04, FA05, FA07, FA08, FA09, FA10, FA11, FA12, FA13, FA14, FA16, FA17, FA18, FA20 & FA21).

*"She can help me to give me clothes and money when I go to church, and I want my pastor to help me by teaching me how to read the Bible." (FA06)*

*"Help me further my studies. Pray for my family to live a healthy and happy life. Then advise me along the way by being with me. I live with my siblings since my mother passed away in 2013. We are 9 siblings: 2 older sisters and 2 brothers have a different father. While they were still young their father passed away. I want to study teaching at the university." (FA09)*

*"I would like him to help me with the relationship between me and my mother. I want to live peaceful and happy, having a normal relationship with my mother." (FA02)*

*"To master patience in any circumstance and any situation that cross me. I need patience, to master it. I am not a patient person. My family always push my temper because they know that I am a short-tempered person." (FA18)*

A participant who has a 2 years old boy, was raised by her grandmother. Her mother passed away in 2002, and her grandmother passed away in 2011. She only survived. She told her story with tears in her eyes:

*“In prayer... for work. And then... maybe food. As I bring up my boy (2 years old) it is sometimes difficult when I do not have enough money. Sometimes he is sick, and I do not know what to do.” (FA01)*

Another participant hardly started his story. He is addicted to cigarettes and dagga. He started smoking dagga at 10 and was introduced to cigarettes at 15. The church does not know about it but would like to help him to stop smoking. His story shows why the local pastor and church members must be close to youths to listen:

*“I would like my pastor, or my church help me to quit smoking, because smoking dagga, you know dagga, I started smoking dagga since I was 10 years old. Cigarettes are the other one besides dagga. I think I am addicted to cigarettes...I have been trying to go to my pastor telling him: ‘pastor, I have this problem. I am drug addicted, so can you please help me?’ But then I was shy.” (FA04)*

## **5. Analysis of the pastors’ interview data**

Table 28 provides information about the 12 pastor participants. The age of the participant pastors is between 43 and 52. They are senior pastors in the church, and the period as senior pastor is three years or more. Twelve of the six pastors are full-time ministers and another six pastors are part-time ministers.

**Information of the pastor participants**

<b>Code - Age - province of participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Employment</b>
<b>LP1 - 51 - MP</b>	Male	Married	Full-time
<b>LP2 - 52 - MP</b>	Female	Married	Full-time
<b>LP3 - 49 - GP</b>	Male	Married	Full-time
<b>LP4 - 49 - MP</b>	Female	Married	Part-time
<b>LP5 - 50 - LP</b>	Female	Married	Full-time
<b>LP6 - 44 - MP</b>	Female	Single	Part-time
<b>LP7 - 45 - GP</b>	Female	Married	Part-time
<b>LP8 - 43 - MP</b>	Female	Married	Part-time
<b>LP9 - 51 - LP</b>	Male	Married	Part-time
<b>LP10 - 50 - GP</b>	Male	Married	Full-time
<b>LP11 - 43 - MP</b>	Female	Married	Full-time
<b>LP12 - 44 - MP</b>	Female	Married	Part-time

Table 28. Information of the pastor participants. (GP=Gauteng Province; LP=Limpopo Province; MP=Mpumalanga Province)

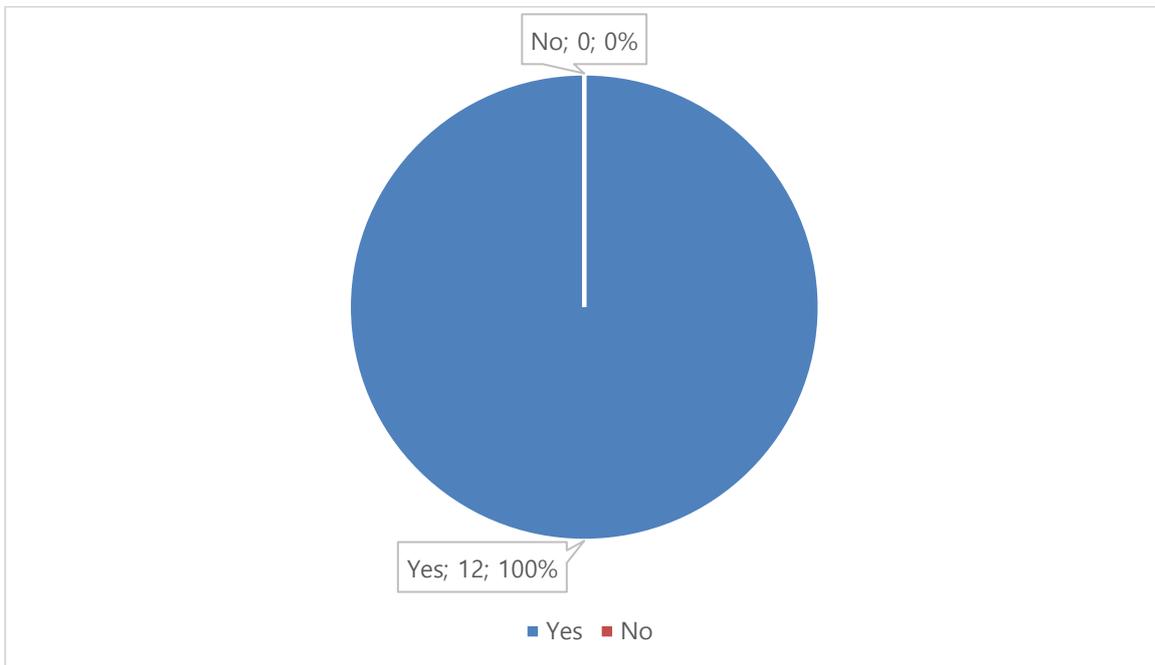
Three main themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews with local pastor participants. Table 29 shows below the main themes and question details which were designed and presented:

Themes	Code	Question details
<b>1. Description of the participants' recognition of father-absent youths</b>	QP1	1.Are there any father-absent youths in your church?
	QP2	2. Are there fewer youths who live with their fathers or more of them in your church?
	QP3	3. Does your church currently help father-absent youths?
	QP4	4. If you said yes, could you please tell me how your church helps the father-absent youths?
<b>2. The participants' descriptions of relationships with father-absent youths</b>	QP5	5. Have you experienced any difficulty with helping father-absent youths?
	QP6	6. If you have experienced, could you please tell me any difficulties when you help them?
	QP7	7. Have you asked the father-absent youths what they need?
	QP8	8. If you have asked them, please tell me what they said.
<b>3. Descriptions of the participants' awareness of fathers' absence</b>	QP9	9. Do you read any books or articles to understand father-absent youths?
	QP10	10. What do you think is the most important thing to consider when dealing with father-absent youths?
	QP11	11. Does your church have a programme to re-educate or retrain fathers and men to improve their family situation?

Table 29. Main themes and question details for the pastor participants

## 5.1 Description of the participants' recognition of father-absent youths

### 5.1.1 Are there any father-absent youths in your church?

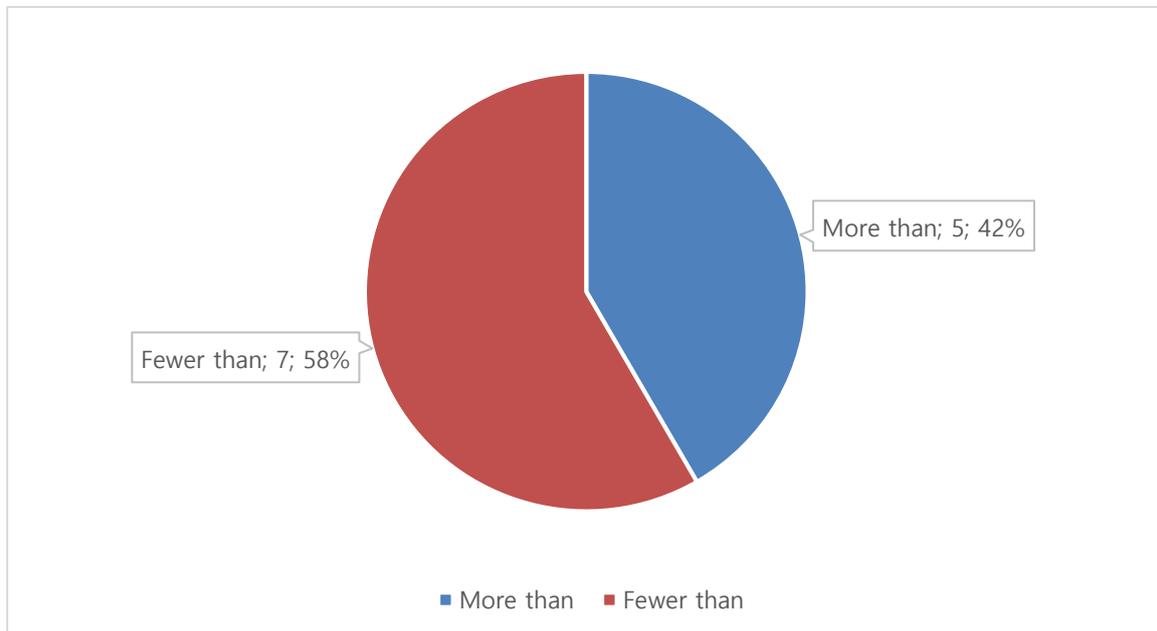


All twelve pastor participants answered that there are father-absent youths in their church. This result is only natural because according to Stats SA General Household Survey 2017 (Cf. [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za)), the biological father of 61.8 % of children younger than 18 were absent from the household.

In the Limpopo Province, 60% of adult men are absent from the home for more than 6 months per year. 76% of the children do not live with their biological father present on a regular basis (Collinson, Tollman, Kahn, Clark & Garenne 2006).

In the Mpumalanga Province, only 22.1% of black South Africans are legally married, and only 11.6% live together like husband and wife ([www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)).

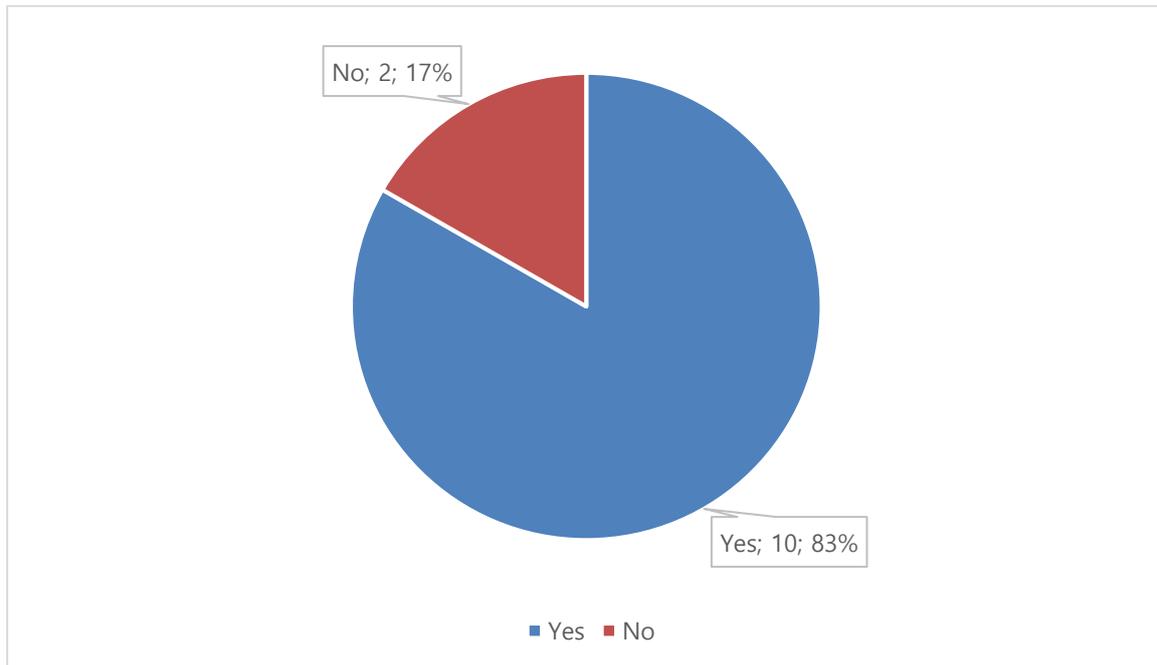
### 5.1.2 Are there fewer youths who live with their fathers or more of them in your church?



Seven of the twelve participants said that father-absent youths are fewer than father-present youths (LP01, LP02, LP03, LP04, LP05, LP06 & LP09). Five of the twelve participants said that there are more father-absent youths than father-present youths in their church (LP07, LP08, LP10, LP11 & LP12). This result excludes small children raised by teenager single-mothers. Additionally, in 2008, 30% of children in South Africa were born to mothers under 20 years old, and most (95%) of births to teen mothers were to those aged 17 or older (Ward, Makusha, & Bray 2015).

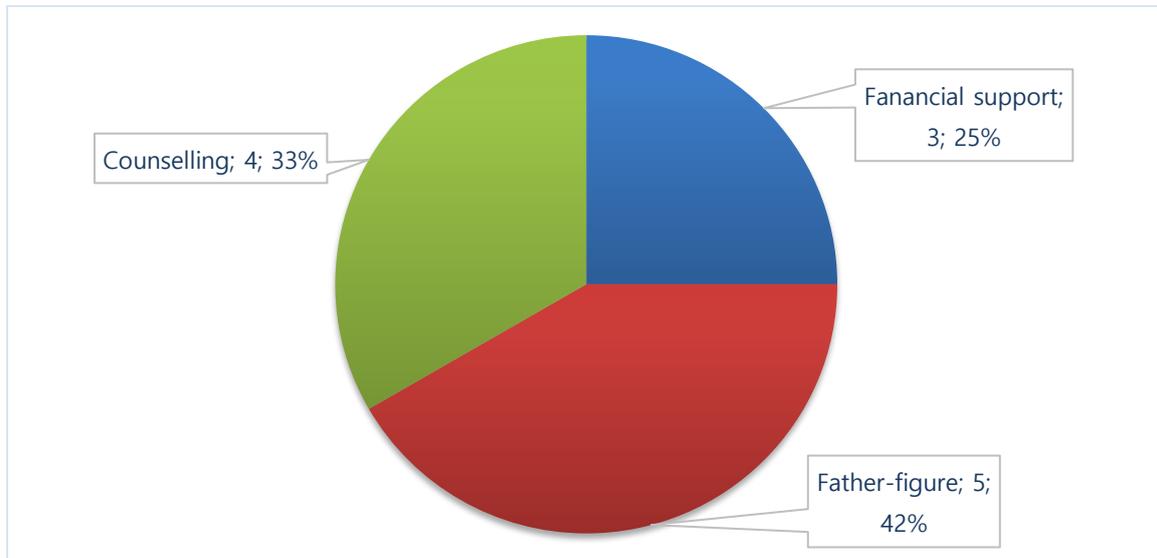
*"I say they are more, but others are small. Little teenage girls become pregnant and have kids. Sometimes they do not stay with their boyfriends, and then the kids grow up fatherless. Now they are at the children ministry."  
(LP12)*

### 5.1.3 Does your church currently help father-absent youths?



Ten of the twelve participants replied 'yes', currently they help father-absent youths (LP01, LP03, LP04, LP05, LP06, LP07, LP08, LP09, LP10 & LP11). Most of the father-absent youths are from poor families. If a father-absent youth attends church with his/her mother or any relative, it is easier to notice that his/her father does not live with him/her. If a father-absent youth attends church alone, it is difficult to realise that he/she is a father-absent youth because they tend not to report to the church or their pastors until they have a good relationship with their pastors or the church leaders.

#### 5.1.4 How do you help the father-absent youths?



Three participants said that they currently help father-absent youths financially (LP04, LP05 & LP09). Five participants said they help father-absent youths to have a father-figure (LP03, LP06, LP07, LP08 & LP11). Four participants said that they help father-absent youths with counselling (prayer, teaching and listen) (LP01, LP03, LP04 & LP10).

It is important that the local pastors and congregation be present in the father-absent youths' lives with the same intimacy and love that God shows to them. They explained how they help father-absent youths in their church as follow:

*"I do not just pray for the people. There is a prayer, yes, and after prayer I make sure that I leave something on the table for the children to eat and to buy bread. I sometimes leave my money... They are my church members that's why I say I cannot just end up by praying for these people. I have to do something for them to live." (LP04)*

*"We provide sanitary pads for the girls and we provide clothes, and when they come to church, they must eat something. So that they can pay concentration. For their family also, we try to help them most of the time, maybe buying*

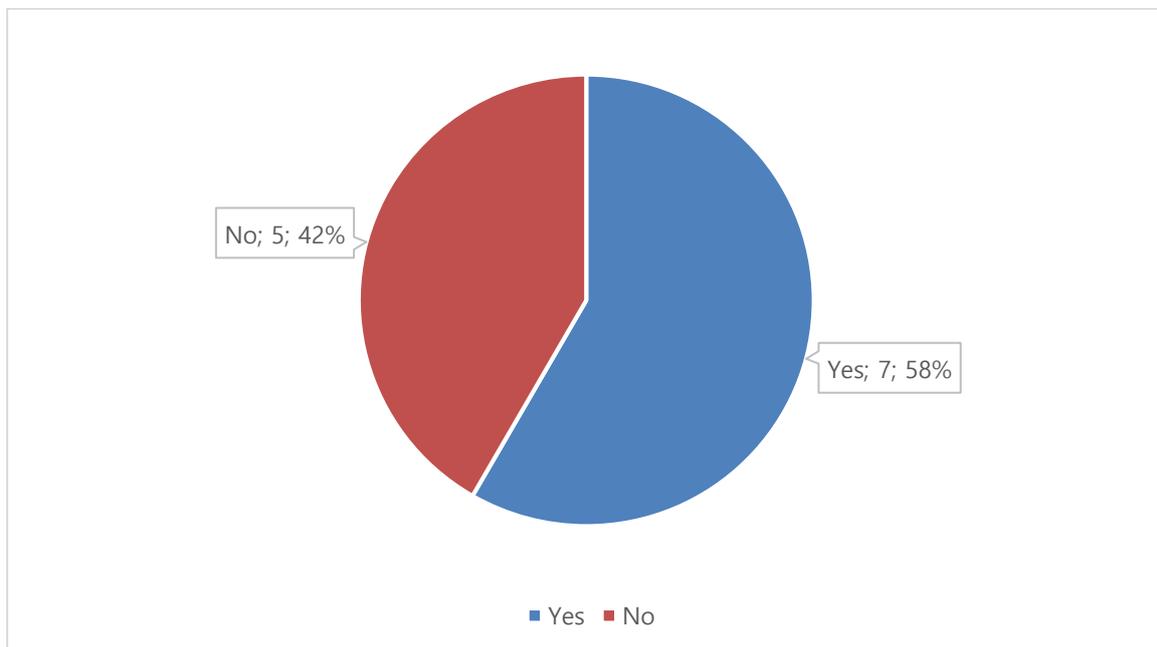
*general things; like a meal, washing soap, tin stuff that can last.” (LP05)*

*“...we can build a close relationship with that person. And encourage them, you know in the church there is a father figure we have the bishop and we have pastors, we have uncles. Those people can play a father role in your life.” (LP03)*

*“...we deal about everything that junior youth’s conference about including where they do not have fathers. We requested them (fathers in the congregation) to become father figures as their fathers, as their role models.” (LP06)*

## 5.2 The participants’ descriptions of their relationships with father-absent youths

### 5.2.1 Have you experienced any difficulty with helping father-absent youths?

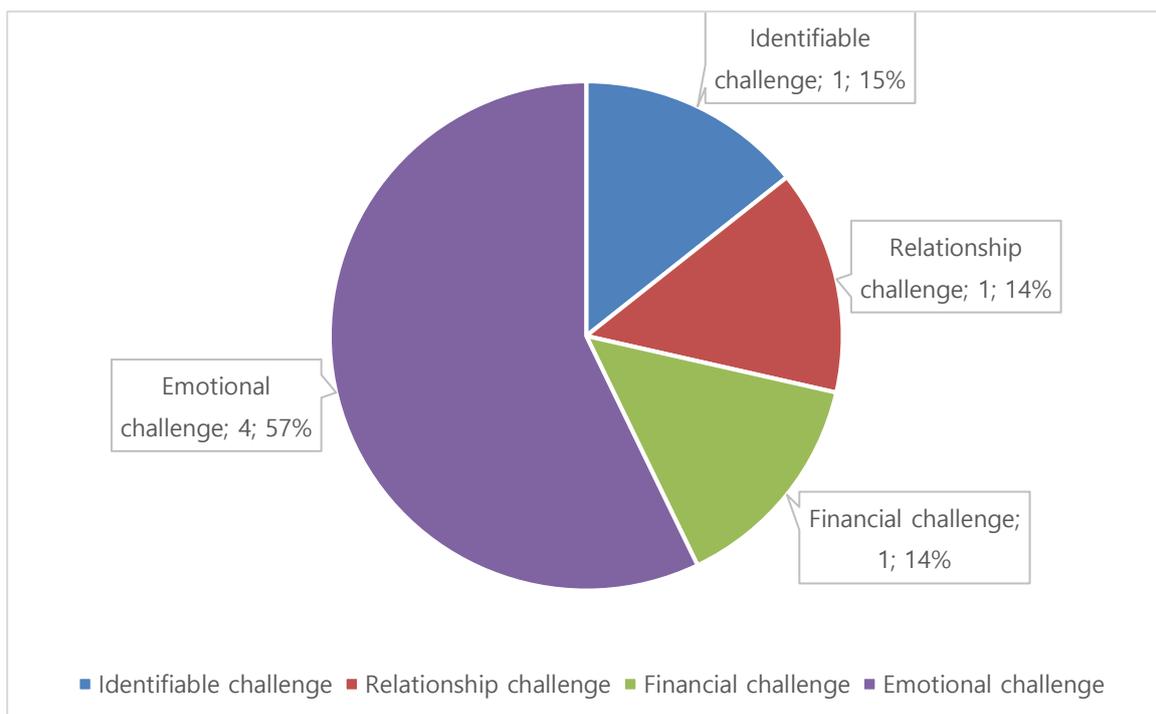


Seven participants indicated that they have experienced some difficulties with helping father-absent youths (LP01, LP04, LP05, LP07, LP09, LP10 & LP11). Five participants said that they have not experienced any difficulties because they think

that youth, especially who are in adolescence are different. It does not matter whether they live with their biological fathers or not (LP02, LP03, LP06, LP08 & LP12).

*“No, not that I know of because sometimes the difficulty can be with those who have fathers and with those without fathers. It is about 50:50. There is not specific. Youths are just youths. They just go out of hand whether the parents are both mother and father. But when they decide what they want, it becomes a problem.” (LP12)*

### 5.2.2 If you have any experience, could you tell me any difficulties when you help father-absent youths?



Four participants talked about the emotional difficulty (LP05, LP07, LP 09 & LP 10). One participant shared his experience to deal with father-absent youth. He mentioned their sensitive emotion:

*Yes, some kids are aggressive. They do not want to listen. They are angry all the time. They are aggressive. The kids, sometimes they are naughty and then, we as parents may tell them about their father, 'you do like this, because you are like your father, you do this because...you do not this, because I am buying you clothes because your father is absent, doing that and that'... So, these things make kids angry all the time ...they need a lot of attention because they realise that 'my father or my mother since she takes me to my grandmother, and my mother has gone away.' That kids think that no one is loving me." (LP09)*

Another participant indicated the identifiable difficulty (LP01) to find father-absent youths in their church. Due to the lack of connection with church leaders, they cannot be taking any notice of the church. He explained the reason as follow:

*"There is a little bit difficult because firstly we see a child without a father in our church but if his mother is not there also, then we cannot notice that his father is not there. Then when busy doing some things and come to a child, you will notice that this child is grown up without his father, with his mother only." (LP01)*

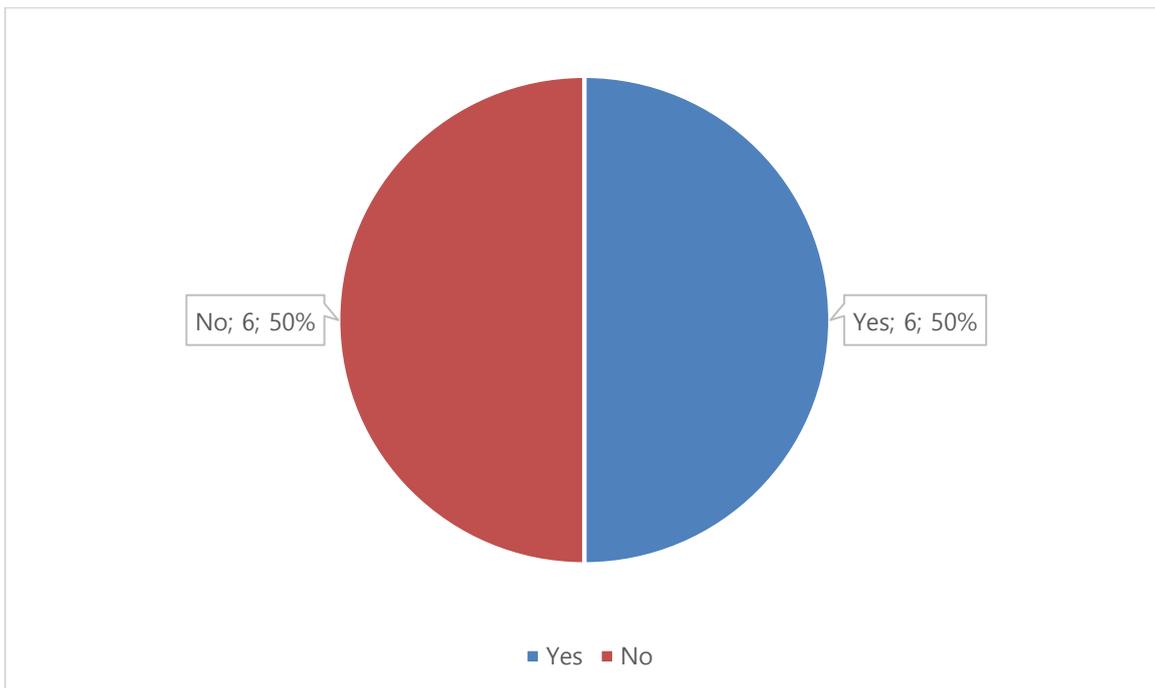
Sometimes when pastors help father-absent youths, they use to face their private life as a financial challenge (LP04). She has to help not only youths in need but also her family as a breadwinner. Sometimes it is stressful to her as she stated:

*"Yes, I do because I also have a family. My husband is not working, my daughter is not working, so it becomes difficult for them because now I have to make sure I balance my life. My family needs something that I have to help them with even my extended family. Sometimes it becomes difficult to help. I am the breadwinner like I said, my husband is not working so I must make sure that I balance my life. I help them, I help others. We even at school have children you can see that. Sometimes this one really needs help, so that's why I said sometimes it becomes difficult to me." (LP04)*

A participant (LP11) pointed out the weak relationship between pastors and father-absent youths because the father-absent youths do not know how to make a relationship with others:

*“...when the father is not there the child does not know how to relate with the father because the father is not there. And as he comes to God sometimes, he finds pastors in the church and needs to relate to them as he relates to a father, so if he never experienced to relate with his father, it becomes very difficult to relate to pastors as fathers because he never had a relationship. So, it is something new for him to start to bond with somebody as a father which he never had physically. So sometimes it is a problem, but I think we are taught enough to know how to relate with others.” (LP11)*

### 5.2.3 Have you asked the father-absent youths what they need?



Six participants have asked what father-absent youths need (LP03, LP05, LP06, LP07, LP08 & LP09).

The half of pastor participants have not asked what they need (LP01, LP02, LP04, LP10, LP11 & LP12). Usually, they say to father-absent youths that when they need help just tell them.

*“No, not specifically what they need. Like with all the youth I spoke to, are having some problems. When I experience youths’ lives with problems, I just speak to them, but I never ask them whether they need something whatever. But I always say, ‘if you need something or you want to talk to, I am here.’” (LP12)*

*“Not really, I never asked them what they need because sometimes they are ashamed to tell me. I am just thinking that for them the most important thing is food because children cannot live with a hungry stomach. Then the rest of it just follow. Sometimes if I do ask them, they will never say that. They will say, ‘I am okay, I am fine.’ So that personally to me, just give and leave them. But since you have asked me, maybe that is a good idea for me to ask them what else they may need.” (LP04)*

#### **5.2.4 If you have asked them, please tell me what they said.**

Two of the six pastor participants (LP03 & LP06) said that father-absent youths asked them financial support to go to school (school fees, school shoes...):

*“Normally they will be talking about their material needs rather than emotional needs. They will say, ‘I need shoes, I need money for this...’ that is what they normally say. They would speak about their financial need.” (LP06)*

The value of the father is crucial in terms of the ‘love’ and ‘attention’ that he gives his children and how he leads by example when it comes to values. Children need fathers who actively involved in their lives (Williams 2008). Growing up without their

biological fathers, father-absent children and adolescents forfeit the experience of the journey with their fathers as a part of their lives.

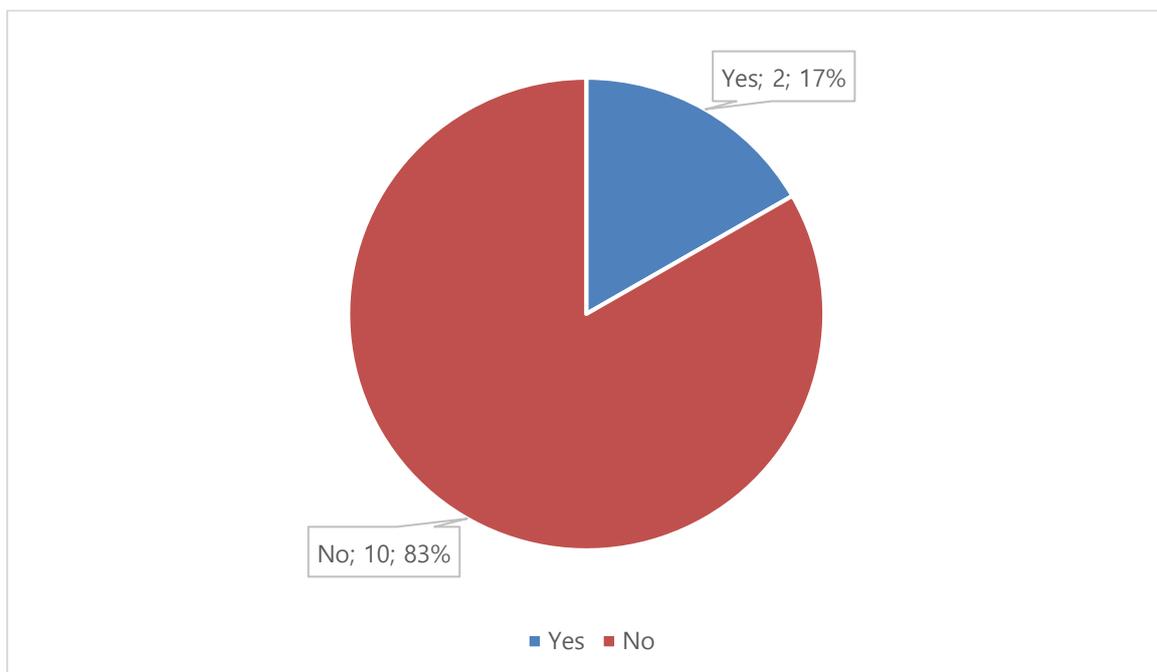
Four pastor participants said that father-absent youths want their fathers back (LP05, LP07 & LP09) and the love of their father (LP08).

As a pastor who has a ministry in Limpopo, he said it in the following way:

*“Most of them want their parents back. Most of them tell me, ‘I want my father,’ or someone will say, ‘I want my mother’. But most of them want their parents back. They are wondering where their parents are. Unless their parents are dead or, if their parents are living somewhere, most of them want their parents back.” (LP09)*

### 5.3 Descriptions of the participants’ awareness of fathers’ absence

#### 5.3.1 Do you read any books or articles to understand father-absent youths?



A very small percentage of the participants indicated that they read articles or

books to understand father-absent youths (LP03 & LP11). They tend to depend on their own experiences and circumstances:

*“Not yet, I only read Christian’s books and some other books. But some of the Christian books treat those topics only a little bit but not so much. That’s why the mothers in our church must open so that we can help them where necessary.” (LP01)*

*“No, I do not. I am just helped by the Bible, just to see, just by giving. The Bible tells us to give to help each other. I never read books about youth work. I am just using my own life experiences.” (LP04)*

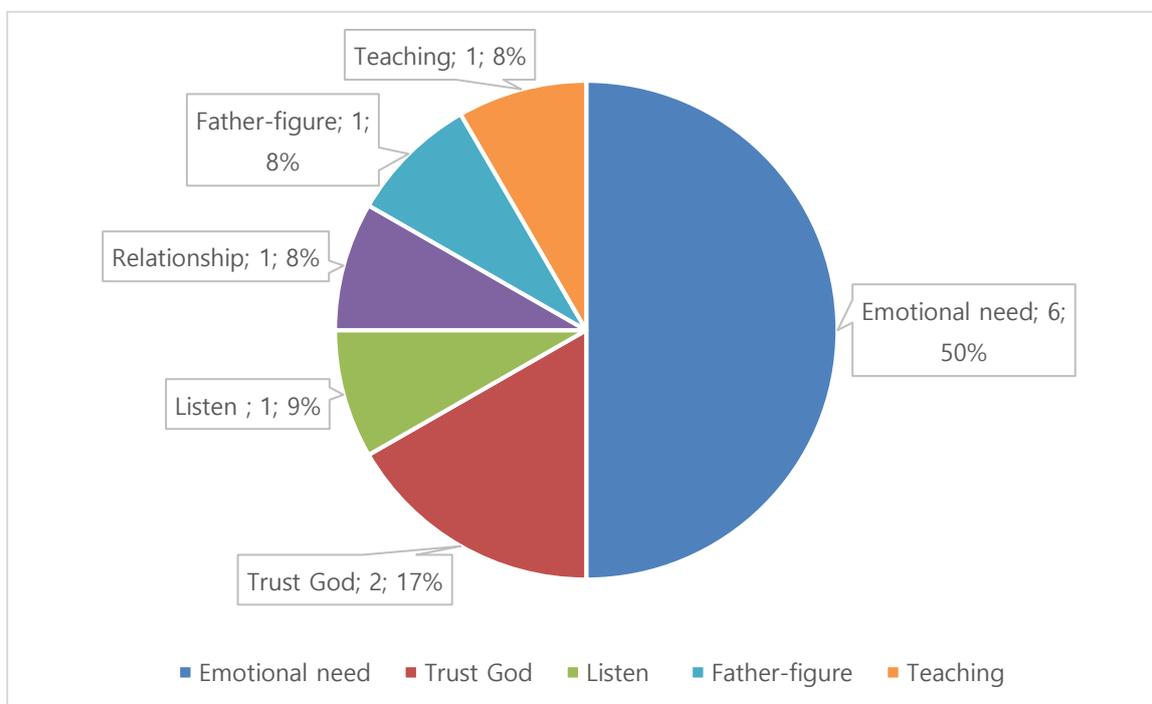
Two participants answered that they read books and attended a course which can help to understand and to learn about fatherhood, a father-figure, and the relationship between fathers and sons. They said that it helps them a lot in the field of ministry:

*I read a lot of books because being a youth leader I read a lot of books. K. D. Jake, Maxwell ...all the teachers like that are related to fatherhood because I, myself grew up without my father. My father passed away when I was 9 years old. I grew up with a single parent. As grown by my mother, I know the gap of not having a father. But God helped me. It was when I was 15 years old, God saved me. Then I took as my fathers in the church, like the spiritual preacher. Spiritual fathers were my role model. Thereby that gap was getting smaller and smaller. I feel more comfortable because I took as my role model the fathers in the church. Then I did not have that aloneness of not having a physical father, yes.” (LP03)*

*“Me personally, yes I did. Even I attended some courses when I was working where we were talking about there, ‘the relationship between children and fathers who are not there’. So, I think, yes, they are some posters that I read. It helps a lot when I do ministry to them because it helps me to understand where they are, and I understand them as they are struggling to relate with pastors as fathers*

*because they never had that experience. Even personally I know, because I never had a father myself. So, it is very difficult, sometimes it is very difficult to read that God is the Father. If you never had a father, you do not know how to relate to God. Sometimes you struggle to relate with God as a Father because you do not know how you approach a father, how to talk to your father, because you never had a physical father...” (LP11)*

### 5.3.2 What do you think is the most important thing to consider when dealing with father-absent youths?



Six pastor participants said that the most important thing when dealing with father-absent youths is the consideration of their emotions (LP02, LP03, LP06, LP07, LP08 & LP09). Other participants responded that the most important thing is to make them trust and know God as their father (LP04 & LP05), listen to them (LP01), help them to have father figure (LP12), make a good relationship with them (LP11) and teach them to be responsible parents in future (LP09).

*“I think rather than finance, we really need to consider their emotional need*

*because as a boy, he will need a role model, he will need someone to love and to care for him. I think it is very important to consider rather their emotions, yes, I think it is more important..." (LP06)*

*"First, you must treat them with great respect, and try by all ministry to listen to them. Do not try to tell them whatever you think. Listen very carefully to some of the answers you will get from them... If you listen to them, they will come nearer and feel open to speak with you." (LP01)*

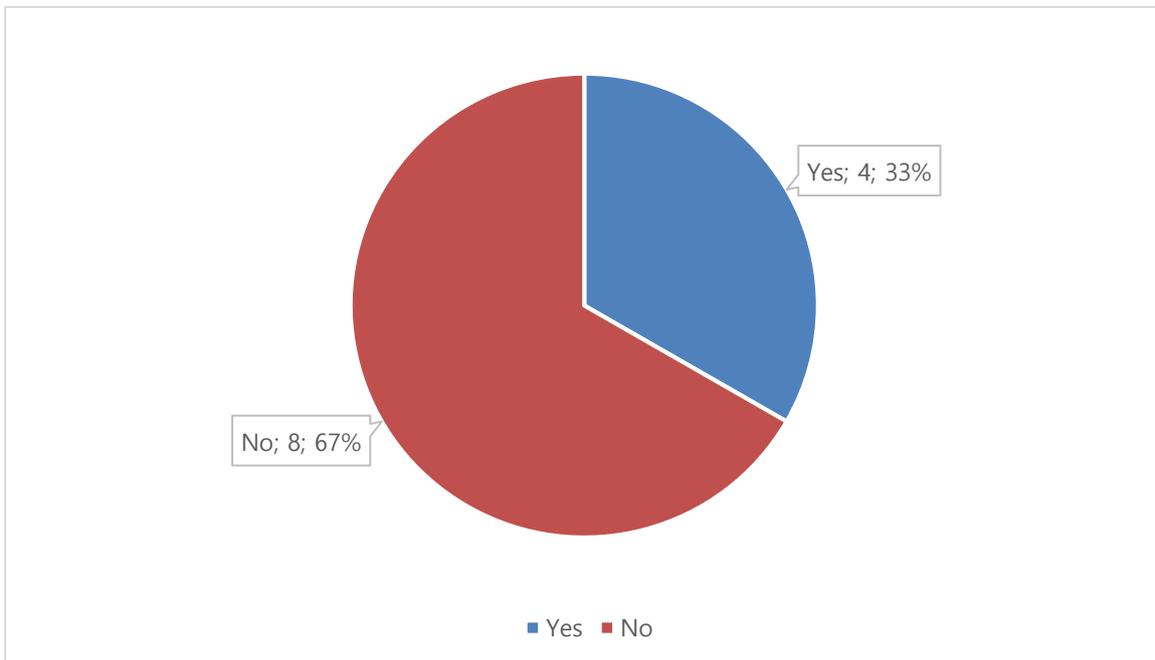
*"The most important thing to consider is to advise children and their moms to trust the Lord." (LP04)*

*"The most important thing is to make them understand that God is always there for us. God is there for anyone whether you have a father or not. God is Father for everyone. I used to say to them, 'Leave your biological father, maybe one day he will pass away, and God will always be there for you.' So, it is the most important thing to tell them to think and that they must rely on God." (LP05)*

*"The most important thing is to teach these kids to be responsible fathers in future....so we teach them, as your father left you, you must as a grown-up man, not leave your kids. We teach them they must break up the problem that his father and his father's father made it and it must not be repeated." (LP09)*

*"The child without the father, firstly he/she needs a father figure. And girls, sometimes the girl falls into a man's hands because she needs a father's love." (LP12)*

### 5.3.3 Does your church have a programme to re-educate or retrain fathers and men to improve their family situation?



If the church is small and only has a few male church members, they do not have any re-education or retraining programme for fathers and men. But if the church belongs to a big denomination, such as AFM (stands for “Apostolic Faith Mission”), they have the opportunity to join the Men’s conference regularly. Only four participants said that they have an annual programme for father and men (LP01, LP02, LP11 & LP12).

One of the participants (LP01), who is an AFM pastor in Mpumalanga, explained about the ‘Men’s conference’, which is sponsored by his denomination.

*“Yes, we do have a programme to train men, we call it ‘Men’s service’. It is where we recognise the children without fathers because men’s service is from 13 years and includes fathers also. Then we tried to research what we can help our congregation. When we discover the need of some of the fatherless children, this and this... we will deal deeper on this topic so that we can help and guide them. Because some of them, they are grown up, and they must marry, but they do not know what to do... then we must be nearer to them to*

*help them. Every second week of the month is the branch for 'Men's service'. Every second month, we have the circuit's 'Men's service' for seven branches. But our branch meets every second week of the month, on a Saturday, to have our 'Men's service'." (LP01)*

Other participants, who are pastors of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, said that they have a special conference for fathers and sons. They said:

*"Yes, we have 'Fathers and Sons service', teaching fathers to relate to children, and children relate to their fathers. I think it works because even they who do not have fathers want this programme. The benefit is that they meet father figures. I think that works. Father-absent youth can see the good in a father even though they did not see their fathers when they were growing. But in this programme, they can see, 'Ah, if I have a father then this and this can happen, father is someone who is like this...'" (LP02)*

*"Yes, once a year, even for those who do not have fathers. The fathers in the church, are helping them how to live with them as fathers." (LP11)*

*"Yes, we do have that programme because we have men's and boy's services once a month. It is rotated. Last week it was here, and another branch will have it on another month... so they need men who are married and those who are not married and boys, teenagers. That is why they gather together, and I think that it helps them. They teach the Word of God, and something social life, and how to handle these boys when the time comes for them to reach their teenage. They feel that they need to do something out of hand, and what to do to help those who are out of hand." (LP12)*

Through those conferences, they have a good opportunity to learn about the father's role, how to establish a good relationship between father and son, how to help father-absent boys to have a father-figure.

## **6. Summary**

This section will reflect upon the empirical research where participants contributed in two sample groups, father-absent adolescent group and local pastor group. According to the alphabetic order, twenty-one father-absent adolescents were chosen from 15 local churches. Twelve local pastors who are currently in ministry were selected from 13 churches.

### **6.1 Summary of reflection of the father-absent adolescent participants**

Twenty-one father-absent adolescent participants shared their own experiences of their situations, feelings of being brought up in father-absent families and the figure of God as the Father.

#### **6.1.1 Lack of father involvement**

Twenty-one father-absent adolescent participants were brought up by their mothers, maternal grandmothers and/or relatives who provided for their basic needs. Most of them did not receive any form of support and assistance from their biological fathers or paternal relatives. Some of them did not know who their fathers are, and where their fathers are. Furthermore, the lack of father involvement caused a non-existing relationship between father-absent children and paternal relatives.

#### **6.1.2 Aspirations toward father's love**

Even though some of the participants felt unloved, abandoned and rejected by their biological fathers, they sought care, warmth, attention, spending time together, and sharing the life together from their fathers. They missed their father and longed for their father to be there.

### **6.1.3 Wishing for being a good parent**

When they become a father/mother they would like to treat their children with love, care and support. They did not want to follow in their fathers' ways of a lack of all sense of responsibility. They want to be a caring parent. The church must help them to reform their negative feelings about their fathers to have a biblical view of a father. It will help them to form a biblical value of family.

### **6.1.4 The feeling toward God as Father**

Most of the father-absent participants have negative feelings about their absent fathers, but it did not influence their feeling toward God, the Heavenly Father. Rather they felt a sense of security in God's presence as their Father. It was not from a mentality of overcompensation. They emerged with the identity of a child of God, a conviction that their Heavenly Father, God, is there for him/her, and are certain that God, the Father is with him/her.

### **6.1.5 Lack of support from the church**

The participants wanted to receive direct support from the church and pastors. Due to lack of support, they wished for financial support. Due to their lack of a father's role they wished to have a general education through their pastors and churches. The local church should be a place where young people are educated to be imprinted with religious and cultural values. To guide father-absent youths into adulthood, the local church must provide various opportunities to have male mentors in the congregations. Pastors and congregations can give form to the father-figure and help them with good role models.

## **6.2 Summary of reflection of the local pastor participants**

Twelve pastor participants who are currently in a ministry, involving father-absent adolescents. They opened their ministries and shared their experiences with father-absent adolescents on how they understand them, how they relate with them, and how they help father-absent adolescents in the church as an extended family.

### **6.2.1 Excluded father-absent adolescents**

There are a remarkable number of father-absent youths in black communities who do not receive any support from their biological fathers. Sometimes the church fails to recognise that he/she is a father-absent youth if there is no way to report to the church/pastor about him/herself.

### **6.2.2 In need of cultural support**

When the local pastor/church helps the father-absent youth, the pastor must be concerned about their sensitive feelings and emotions. Most of the participants acknowledged that adolescence is a specific and unique period but seemed that it does not motivate the need for training to understand youth culture.

### **6.2.3 Responsibilities of the local church**

A weak relationship causes disconnection between pastors and father-absent youths. The church may fail to notice their needs, but the church must take responsibility as the One Body of Christ.

According to an African proverb (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>), *'it takes a whole village to raise a child'*. The local church, as an extended family, must provide a father-figure to the father-absent youth. Church members must be good examples as fathers and mentors. This study suggests that the local church must design

programmes to aim at reducing the impact of father absence from the home on adolescent behaviour. The local church and congregation have the responsibility to reduce the prevalence of delinquency among adolescents and to consider a counterplan with the situations.

#### **6.2.4 The quality of the local pastor/youth pastor**

Local pastors need to have education in order to have sound perspectives and understanding about father-absent youths. They need to learn the concepts of youth ministry, various children and adolescents developmental theories, psychotherapy...etc. which is useful to deal with the congregation in local churches.

#### **6.2.5 Qualification required of a father/man and guardian**

The local church must provide re-educational programmes for fathers and men to improve their families and to prevent the reproduction of father-absent families. The local church must provide programmes to development parental skills, co-parenting skills, and to help to become eligible fathers. Adult men in the congregation should learn how to build a good relationship with children and adolescents, considering their development because they can be a role model to their nephews, nieces, or other youths who live without their biological fathers. They must learn the father's role and responsibilities through the Bible. The local church should guide young couples to become information about marriage, having children and parenthood.

The local church should also offer a programme to grandparents who take care of their grandchildren to inform them of how to understand new generations, how to build a good relationship with their grandchildren, and how to solve their stresses...etc. Many father-absent children and adolescents live with their grandparents. The grandparents play a major role to raise their grandchildren while their single-mothers work far away. The local church must be sensitive to the grandparents' needs and their seeking support when they have problems and

challenges with their grandchildren.

The local church must take an active part in helping to build healthy families within their congregation.

## **7. The interpretation**

As an interpretive task, this chapter interprets the situation of the father-absent adolescent participants and the pastor participants regarding the challenges in youth ministry.

The interpretive task helps to better understand and explain their particular situations and contexts. The interpretive remarks of father-absent adolescent participants and pastor participants are the following:

### **7.1 Father-absent adolescent participants:**

#### **7.1.1 Lack of communication between local pastors/congregation and father-absent adolescents**

Most of the father-absent participants agree that they need mentors, guardians and fathers from the congregation who are willing to journey with them. However, the relationships between father-absent youths and pastors/congregations are important. Lack of intimacy and of the sense of closeness may not establish a mutual understanding.

According to Lanker and Issler (2010), there is a very strong correlation between the presence of natural mentoring relationships and spiritual development in adolescents. These relationships begin on an average around age 11 and most of the mentors (87%) are non-familial adults who are related to their churches or youth groups. Natural mentoring relationships may touch many aspects of adolescent life such as self-esteem, overcoming of problem behaviour, preventing and reducing

depression and reducing high-risk decisions (Haddad, Chen & Greenberger 2011; Hurd & Zimmerman 2010).\_

From an Eriksonian perspective, usually, girls do not separate from their mothers until early adolescence. At that time, fathers' social-emotional support can function as a 'bridge' from the mother to the larger society, allowing daughters to successfully negotiate the transition to autonomy and providing opportunities for constructive interaction with males (Snarey 1993:344). Father-absent girls may remain at a relational disadvantage with male pastors or church leaders.

Father-absent adolescents need an atmosphere where they belong and are welcomed into the fellowship of believers and the ministry of the church.

Local pastors and congregations must become place-sharers with father-absent youths to understand them and their world. They must enter father-absent youths through good and close relationships to take responsibility for their broken families, violent peers, sexual abuse, the deep psychological trauma and poverty.

Root (2007a:129-130) discusses a 'relational youth ministry', and states:

We often neglect to understand that their suffering is an invitation to enter gently into relationships of place-sharing... Rarely discussed is our vicarious responsibility for the full humanity of the adolescent... We may have taught them that God cares and that their sufferings can be brought to the foot of the cross, but have we placed ourselves at the foot of this same cross, saying, "Let me carry your pain with you, and in our mutual suffering God will minister to us"?

Thus, when the local pastors and leaders are ready and willing to meet father-absent adolescents where they are, they would in an accepting way begin to build a relationship with their leaders (Nel 2000:116; 2018e:265). If there is a good and close relationship between pastors and father-absent youths, they talk to them about

their stories easily and more often. Otherwise, pastors and congregations will lose track of a point of contact with father-absent youths.

As role models, young people in the church want to follow the pastors' footsteps and want to receive encouragement and safe spaces from their local pastors. Local pastors/congregation need to commit themselves as guardians for youths whom they have responsibility and that promote their well-being (Whitehead 2011: 16-17). Through the participants' remarks, local pastors and congregation must reaffirm parental responsibility as an extended family.

### **7.1.2 Lack of contact with their non-resident fathers**

Time spent together with their parents provide children with a feeling of warmth, support, and a sense of security. Most children have a longing for their fathers to spend time together (Richter & Smith 2006:161). Fathers should be there to help children to understand in particular the need to be a role model. Boys need to take up their own role of fatherhood and manhood when they mature (Goeke-Morey. M. C., & Cummings. E. M. 2007).

However, the father's absence leads to a decline in the quality and quantity of contact between fathers and children. Father-absent children and adolescents have fewer opportunities to get financial support and emotional support from their biological fathers (Carlson 2006). They receive less supervision or time with a parent than children and adolescents living in two-parent homes (McLanahan & Sandefur 1994: 28; Dornbusch et al., 1985).

Non-resident fathers who do not support their families economically are more likely to disengage from involvement in many other aspects of their children's lives than non-resident fathers who do support them economically. They often pay little or no child support or provide it, but it declines in time after separation. Children also have a lower attachment to their non-residential fathers (Christiansen & Palkovitz 2001; Seltzer 1991; McLanahan & Sandefur 1994: 26).

Family income is closely related to the family structure, and differences in the income account for a substantial portion of the differences in well-being between children in single-parent and two-parent families. Some evidence supports that the amount of child support spent impacts on a wide variety of results in child development, such as children's improved standard of living, health, educational attainment, general well-being, higher levels of social and emotional adjustment, and fewer behavioural problems (Aughinbaugh 2001; Seltzer 1994; Marsiglio, Amato, Day & Lamb 2000).

Living in poverty is to deter children's social, psychological, and cognitive development. Children who live with a single-parent or in stepfamilies are more likely to use and abuse illegal drugs, alcohol and smoking compared to children who live either biological or adoptive parents (Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Capps, R. C & Zaff, J. 2006; Kelly 2000; Painter & Levine 2000). In families where the mother remarries or cohabits with an adult male, the quality of parenting is still likely to be lower than in families with two biological parents. Stepfathers sometimes compete with the child for the mother's time, adding to the mother's and the child's level of stress (McLanahan & Sandefur 1994:29).

As mentioned previously many studies proved that father involvement protects children and adolescents from engaging in delinquent behaviour, and is associated with less substance abuse, less drug use (Cf. Harris, Furstenberg & Marmer 1998; Coombs & Landsverk 1988; Zimmerman, Salem & Maton 1995).

The father-child relationship is an important resource for children. The quality of the child-father relationship is related to the quality of the mother-non-resident father relations and the mother-child relationship (Dunn, Cheng, O'Connor, & Bridges 2004; Cf. Aldous & Mulligan 2002; Harper & Fine 2006).

Thus, an interaction of non-resident fathers with their children should predict positive outcomes for children (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb 2000:1184).

### **7.1.3 In need of a family-based youth ministry**

In South Africa, child-rearing has been characterised by multi-caregivers in the lives of children, such as the extended family. Grandparents are the most important category of caregivers and play a major role in bringing up father-absent youths (Louw 2013). Not all grandparents are equally committed to their grandchildren. Grandparents raising grandchildren are more likely to suffer depression than grandparents who are not raising their grandchildren (Minkler, Fuller-Thomas, Miller, & Driver 1997). Grandparents need help to raise their grandchildren. Almost all the father-absent participants were brought up by their maternal grandmothers while their biological fathers did not support and assist them.

'Home' (in various forms) is the first place of the youth ministry. The congregation should realise that family is a little congregation and the congregation is an extended family. Parents or guardians are the primary Christian educators for faith-building in children, adolescents and emerging adults and for the passing on of faith from generation to generation. Local pastors and congregations, as an extended family, have a parental responsibility to care for and to lead father-absent adolescents into the faith community.

Youth ministry starts with a God-fearing family that can support father-absent adolescents who have challenges in many realities.

### **7.1.4 Budgeting by the congregation for father-absent adolescents**

Budgeting by the congregation for father-absent adolescents is a dire need. While father-absent adolescents are suffering from poverty and lack of support, the congregation tends to be grudging in budgeting for their financial support. The father-absent adolescents were not receiving enough care and support from their churches. Some of them did not receive any help or support from their pastors or congregations. Through the interviews, the father-absent adolescents dropped hints about their expectations regarding constant care and support. There is no area

which is less important than other fields in the congregational ministry when the church draws up a budget.

### **7.1.5 In need of a knowledge of God**

All humans have a spiritual essence that enables them to experience connections and to create meaning in life. Spirituality is the quality that holds all the questions about the purpose and reason for one's existence in the world (Harris 2007). Spirituality helps people cope with everyday stresses by giving them hope and meaning in life through the values they live out daily. Spirituality, therefore, is a vital part of a human being's everyday life experience (Witmer & Sweeney 1992). According to Raftopoulos & Bates (2011), spirituality is an important aspect of adolescence in adolescent resilience, because spirituality helps adolescents recover from the low points experienced in their lives.

Finding identity is one of the major developmental tasks in adolescence. As Nel (2000:100-102) states that in youth ministry identity-finding means becoming the person God created and recreating him/her to be someone in Christ. Local church and pastor should deal with father-absent youth's own finding of identity and must be involved in their journey to find their Christian identity.

One body of Christ, the community of faith must offer our youth a rich spiritual heritage. The Christian faith community has stories about 'our Heavenly Father' to pass on to the younger generations. The values and priorities of the children of God arise from deep and intimate relationships with 'God, our Heavenly Father'.

The local church must have messages which can respond to the searching youth about the mysterious God. The local church must answer when father-absent youth look for a way to live with questions that are not easily answered. Local pastors and congregations must be mentors and guides for them on their journey to find 'our Heavenly Father'.

Thus, father-absent adolescents must have various opportunities to learn the Bible as children of God. If the church neglects the teaching (*Didache*) in youth ministry, young people may lose their faith identity, their purpose of life and their place of belonging. A relationship with God which is deep and with profound knowledge will develop a close faith connection with God who is the Father of the fatherless. Then they may be able to interpret their life experiences which they could not understand such as 'why this thing happened to them', 'why they should experience hardships that other children have not experienced', and 'where/how they can find solutions'. Father-absent adolescents need to find God through the Bible. They need to rely on God for their lives as their Saviour, Father, Guardian, Provider, and Protector.

#### **7.1.6 In need of well-rounded education**

The vicious circle of the absence of the father is repeated in the father-absent adolescents' lives such as dropping out of school, teenage pregnancy and poverty for example.

Low-income families face many challenges that inhibit their ability to provide for their children, with the result that their children do not receive needed services and are at great risk such as school failure, crime, delinquency, and unwed pregnancy. The lack of education keeps individuals from attaining higher paying jobs and increase the likelihood of experiencing poverty at some point during their lifetime (Rank 2001).

Living in any type of married household reduces the risk of early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. Adolescent school girls with absent fathers are raised without their biological fathers. Now they are suffering from financial problems when they raise their own children suffering just like they have suffered because their fathers do not support them.

Usually, teenage pregnancy leads to drop out of school. It makes it difficult to get a job and to make money for a living. Moreover, because of low self-esteem and the lack of sex education, there can become more serious problems such as HIV/AIDS. These matters must be settled without delay.

The church also is an important place to teach those fathers, men and sons because God created male with a particular purpose and, the Fatherhood of God in the Bible is the original image for earthly fatherhood and, the origin of human fatherhood is born out of the Fatherhood of God (Munroe 2008:23-31; Vorster 2007: 174-176; Freeks 2017).

Father-absent adolescents need to have an opportunity to learn all-round education in the local church within a homely atmosphere. They need a space to talk about their challenges in a free and open atmosphere with their pastors and congregation.

## **7.2 Pastor participants:**

### **7.2.1 Lack of concern about father-absent adolescents**

Several studies found that father involvement is positively correlated with children's overall life satisfaction (Formoso, Gonzales, Barrera & Dumka 2007), less emotional distress (Harris et al., 1998) and fewer expressions of negative emotionality (Easterbrooks & Goldberg 1990).

A father's physical absence means an emotional absence as well. Even though they are too immature to survive in the world, they are exposed to a life where they must take responsibility for their own lives, and the decisions they make. The participants do not only suffer physical loss but also suffer emotional and psychological losses.

Father-absent children and adolescents are more aggressive. Many studies have identified links between father's absence from the home, as the result of parental divorce and separation, remarriage and re-partnering, nonmarital childbirth, and socio-emotional problems in adolescence. Even though there is adequate mothering, father absence can produce short-term and long-term effects such as difficulties in achievement, curtailment of aggression, and difficulties with adult roles involving

cross-sex relationships (Krampe 2003; D'Onofrio et al., 2005, 2006; Horn & Sylvester 2002).

By having no loving and caring father in the house, they lose a sense of stability and an opportunity to develop a stable identity. Especially when other children speak about their fathers, they feel deep shame such as unworthiness and impropriety about themselves. The absence of a father produces negative results in children and adolescents' feelings and emotions.

Most of the pastor participants agree that church leaders and congregations should be concerned about father-absent adolescents' feelings and emotions when they deal with them. Local pastors and congregations need to understand that a father's absence affects children emotionally, and they need someone to share in their negative feelings in the absence of their fathers (Cf. Freeks 2017).

Furthermore, they are required to learn about the people in their ministries. The pastor participants do not seem to fully understand the father-absent participants' difficult situations and painful feelings. Pastors and youth workers must learn and know how to start to communicate with others, and how to listen to their stories. Pastors are waiting for adolescents to come and tell them about their problems and needs, but father-absent adolescents are waiting for their pastors to come first and ask them about it. The participants shared their lack of knowledge about father-absent adolescents and the specific period of adolescence. Pastors should realise that they must continually grow intellectually to understand their congregations.

### **7.2.2 In need of an inclusive congregational youth ministry**

Youth are sensitive to the attitude of their pastors and congregations. When pastors and congregation work on 'why' and 'how' questions, it will make a difference. They should pay attention to the deeper question of how to create space for the youth in the local church. Father-absent youths must not be neglected or ignored because the youth have to be incorporated in every part of the ministry (Nel 2000:78; Nel 2018c: 216).

Local pastors are in serious need of understanding that children, adolescents and emerging adults are an integral part of the local church. To help to clarify the concept of 'youth as an integral part of faith community', Nel (2018a:64) explains that 'integral' means 'to be part of' and 'no way of separating'. He (2018a:65) advises local churches that: (1) although youth are unique, they should never be 'apart' from the rest of the faith community; (2) they should never and nowhere be ignored (not seen or not taken seriously); (3) they are the responsibility of the local faith community of whom they are an integral part.

According to Hatchett (2001), "the world is often viewed in a collective sense, and there are a shared concern and responsibility for the well-being of others within the African community. The spiritual quality of life depends upon the vitality of human communities to sustain its members who in turn assist others and in doing so become a part of the whole".

As a faith community, local churches are important to understand the environment in which black children are raised. If a local church builds and influences the father-absent adolescents as part of an extended family, the church can help the father-absent adolescents to go through the various developmental stages in their lives.

### **7.2.3 Budgeting by the congregation for youth ministry**

As mentioned above, the issue of budgeting for youth ministry needs serious attention in the local church. The drafting of a budget shows which part is most highly regarded among ministries in the church. Youth ministry is an essential part of the whole ministry in the church but is easily neglected. Some pastor participants said that their churches do not help father-absent adolescents anymore. That is why they use their own money to help father-absent youths because there is no budget for them in the church. It may also cause difficulty in the pastors' private life, and it can be a big challenge when the pastor is the only breadwinner in his/her family. If the pastors cease to help them because their own difficult financial situation, what will happen to the father-absent adolescents?

#### **7.2.4 In need of trained youth pastors**

The pastor participants' churches have not trained youth pastors. Some of them were once youth pastors before they became a 'real' pastor. Pastors/youth pastors must rely on their calling from God and be trained to fulfil their calling. Well-trained youth pastors and volunteer youth workers are needed in the youth ministry of the local church. Professional youth pastors may establish a proper philosophy or theology for youth ministry in the local church. Professional youth pastors will see the comprehensive picture of the ministry that can lead to the development of a sound youth ministry with an inclusive perspective approach. The local church must consider gradually to dismiss their dependence on untrained volunteer youth leaders.

Local church pastors and church leaders must study the youths where they operate. Nel (2018e:266) points to the weakness of volunteer youth leaders in the local church. Usually the local church depends on volunteer youth leaders or youth workers who have little time for the work and are untrained. Youth pastors and workers must be trained as youth specialists. Training youth leaders and youth workers to equip them to qualify in youth ministry is an essential part of youth ministry. Nel (2000:131) refers to qualifications for 'adult leaders' by Goetz (1977:283-285) such as 'a sincere love for and sympathetic understanding of the youth', 'the willingness to learn', 'the ability to give pastoral care to the youth'...et cetera.

Local pastors, as shepherds and role models, have a great influence on the youths in the church. They also have an influence on the society where their congregants live. Moreover, the pastors' way of looking toward the father-absent youth can be extended over the whole community.

In the research undertaken, Aziz, Nel and Davis (2017), found that 57% of youth pastors said the primary responsibility of the youth pastor is pastoring, including caring, nurturing and counselling, and 72% felt that a career in youth ministry is dependent on the ability to relate to youth.

Thus, pastors and leaders must be trained and learn to respond to the change of times because adolescents are very quick to adapt to the trend of the times. Local church pastors should guide the congregation on how to care for the father-absent youth as an extended family (Cf. Nyanjaya & Masango 2012).

### **7.2.5 In need of a good relationship between local pastors/congregations and father-absent adolescents**

Van Deusen Hunsinger (2009) says that:

When we want to know and be known by another, we seek a bridge, a way of connecting to the other. Finding our common needs and vulnerably asking the other for help forms that bridge... From a Christian perspective, the theological ground of compassionate listening is found in God's own listening to human hearts whenever we reach out to God in prayer.

A weak relationship cuts off the connection with them and results in an awkward silence between pastors and adolescents.

Sometimes father-absent youths become pessimistic because they are faced with the reality of tragic life. As a basic unit of Christian society, the local church should be sensitive and responsive to the needs within the local church.

Root (2009:15-16) explains how difficult it is to have a relationship that is hurting youth:

I started to realise that relational youth ministry was much more difficult than I had previously thought or experienced. It appeared that, because of these adolescents' deep suffering, they were unable to be influenced toward the ends I desired for them. Their deep wounds of poverty, abuse, abandonment, and violence kept them from trusting me.

The purpose of youth ministry is to make disciples who are in a relationship with God and their neighbours. The father-absent adolescents' suffering must be shared by the congregation through a relational youth ministry (Cf. Root 2007a: 126-129; 2013:135-139).

## **8 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to conduct empirical research in order to research father-absent adolescents' feeling about their absent fathers and God as the Father in their lives. This chapter also conducted research on the actual condition of the local pastors' understanding of father-absent adolescents. As the most appropriate method for the research, qualitative interviewing was selected.

Local pastors/congregation must teach men who live without their children that non-residential fathers have the potential to contribute to their child's and adolescents' development. Sarah & Daly (2007) confirms that non-residential fathers have the potential to contribute to their child's development by 1) paying child support, 2) developing a collaborative and cooperative relationship with the child's mother, and 3) investing in an authoritative parental role. It will lead to the quality of the parental alliance and the parents' warmth, sensitivity, good adjustment, and discipline style. It makes the difference between a well-adjusted child post-divorce and one who is angry, scared, or limited in cognitive and social skills (Whiteside & Becker 2000).

Local church leaders must recognise the influence the father absence has on children and adolescents. They and the congregation have to find ways of helping father-absent children and adolescents as an extended family, to manage preventable problems with them, to make good relationships with them, to help them to become good parents, and to help them to be faithful disciples of Jesus in the local church.

A research conducted by Snarey (1993:328-329) found that

The childrearing fathers did not dismiss or deny the difficulties of their boyhood experiences, but neither did they grant them the power to determine their lives. Rather they turned their fathers' weaknesses into their own strengths...There was a sense in which they had forgiven and reconciled with their fathers. Positive fathering received provides a direct picture or model to be passed on. Negative fathering received provides a negative picture that must first be reworked, but then is also able to provide a reworked, positive model of fathering to be passed on.

Even though father-absent youths are raised without their biological fathers and facing many difficulties in their lives, they can sever the vicious circle of father's absence which is repeating from generation to generation. They can rather turn their fathers' weaknesses into their own strengths when they become parents.

The goal for youth ministry is bringing about of the *shalom Yahweh*. *Shalom* refers to well-being and health. It also connotes material, restored relationships, emphasising the social concept. Father-absent youths need this *shalom*. They must be prepared to be entirely part of their family, their local church and their communities to establish a *shalom* Kingdom (Nel 2018c:203-206; 2000:69-71).

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

#### **1. Introduction**

Chapter 7, as a pragmatic task of practical theological interpretation, focuses on the task of forming and enacting strategies of action that influence events in ways that are desirable. Osmer asks the question, 'how might we respond in ways that are faithful and effective,' requiring a model in a theology of 'servant leadership' (Osmer 2008:175-176). Therefore, this chapter will suggest that indications based on the theory and the data from the empirical research, as well as the limitations of the research.

#### **2. The research problem concerned**

This study suggested the hypothesis that when local church leaders and congregations recognise the influence of father absence on children and adolescents, they can help father-absent children and adolescents as an extended family and can manage preventable problems with them. Church leaders should focus on re-education or retraining of fathers and men to build up their family and the local church.

The research problem leading this study is as follows:

The lack of the understanding of the various roles of father, and about a father-absent adolescent with the concept of the inclusive congregational youth ministry leads to an ineffective and inefficient youth ministry in the local church.

### **3. The research questions concerned**

Five main research questions were suggested:

First, what is the message of the Bible about the father and his role in the family?

Second, which factors are likely to influence increased father absence?

Third, how does father absence affect youth ministry?

Fourth, how do the father-absent children and adolescents feel about the absence of their biological fathers and about God as Father?

Fifth, how can the local church help children and adolescents who live with their biological father being absent in their home?

### **4. The hypothesis concerned**

When local church leaders recognise the influence of father absence on children and adolescents, they and the congregation can help father-absent children and adolescents as an extended family and can manage preventable problems with them. Church leaders should focus on re-education or retraining of fathers and men to build up their family and the local church.

### **5. Indications of the study**

An indication of the study on father and father-absent adolescents as the challenge for youth ministry and should be implicated within the context of the father-absent adolescents and local pastors. According to the pragmatic task, the researcher will suggest 'what we can do as leaders differently and better'.

## **5.1 Is there an effective role of pastors in the lives of father-absent adolescents?**

Transformational leadership helps shape how meanings are made throughout the implicit storylines and narratives which guide people's experience. People's experience determines how people see and react (Marshak 2013).

There should be a close relationship to connect between father-absent adolescents and local pastors. The transforming leadership involves 'deep change' and to carry out the 'inner voice' of the father-absent adolescents, however, the empirical research showed the poor relationship between father-absent adolescents and pastors. Some father-absent participants stated that it is difficult to talk to their pastor.

To exercise an effective role towards father-absent adolescents, pastors must have a concern for their duties, accountabilities and responsibilities, such as fatherhood to keep the father-absent adolescents healthy and guiding them physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

The researcher would suggest that pastors resort to:

- \* Create and maintain a relationship with father-absent adolescents similar to a relationship between a father and child. Root (2007a:141) states that relationships are "the concrete place where we meet the transcendent otherness of God in God's revelation and subsequently become place-sharers for young people"
- \* Study the influence of absent fathers on children and adolescents. There is a lack of continued education for pastors or youth pastors to develop a sound theology of youth ministry and understand father-absent adolescence. There should be continued and systematic education for pastors/youth pastors.
- \* Be a positive role model for the father-absent adolescents.

## **5.2 Is there a father-figure in congregation for the father-absent adolescents?**

Faith communities should pay attention to enhance a culture of '*Ubuntu*' in all members of the local church (Du Toit 2017:56; Cilliers 2017:67-68). Father-absent adolescents need someone as a mentor, role model and guardian in the congregation to enhance family resilience and knowledge related to future parenthood. Preventative training should be in the annual programmes of the local church focusing on improving the involvement of father figures and other role-models in the faith community.

With the identity of a child of God, father-absent adolescents can have a father-figure in the family and congregation, who consists of grandparents, uncle, pastor, elder, and other members of the community.

The researcher would suggest that:

\* Practice the Scripture which is, "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body -whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part of many" (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, NIV), and "So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Romans 12:5, NIV).

\* Study the concept of an extended family as the local church. For the father-absent adolescents who do not grow with their biological fathers, the extended Christian family means not only a safety net but also a new family which affirms and focuses their identity as believers (DeVries 1994:121).

\* Take a look at adolescents' culture to understand them. The term "place-sharing" which includes three components that must be considered: (1) the person, (2) culture and (3) transcendence/revelation (Root 2007a:143). Congregations need to be an open-door faith community that welcomes youth who are there and those yet to come. The congregation must embrace them with an inclusive congregational

approach.

\* Reinvent family in order to embrace and to encourage father-absent adolescents. The congregation must be a 'father-figure' for those father-absent adolescents' in order to affirm who they are and their model male behaviour on (or the role of a father) who values and respects youths. So, when they have a family event in the church such as baptism and confirmation, the congregation can be their 'parental' step in.

### **5.3 Is there neglect of father-absent adolescents in youth ministry?**

The absence of father affects and influences various children and adolescents' development, adolescents' well-being, adolescent culture, juvenile delinquency and even youth ministry.

Father-absent adolescents are an integral part of the congregation and members of the whole congregation. They must have a sense of belonging in various areas of ministries in the local church, interacting with the congregation and church leaders (Nel 2015b).

The researcher would suggest to:

\* Gather information about father-absent adolescents' home lives and personal challenges. This information can be interpreted as listening to the many unspoken ways father-absent adolescents attempt to communicate their needs, desires and concern.

\* Rediscover discipling father-absent adolescents as the manifesto of the church (Matthew 28:16-20). Discipleship is about learning more about God and about learning how to live their lives to glorify God (Nel 2015b).

\* Understand the career youth pastor. Youth ministry is a specialised ministry of the

church with a focused response to children, adolescents, young adults and parents/guardians. A qualified youth pastor is needed in the context of the father-absent adolescents and the local church (Aziz 2016:227-233).

#### **5.4 How can a local church help and support father-absent adolescents?**

Youth ministry is for participation in the action of God with and for young people. McKnight (2015:16) states:

The church is God's world-changing social experiment of bringing unlike and different to the table to share life with one another as a new kind of family. When this happens, we show the world what love, justice, peace, reconciliation, and life together are designed by God to be. The church is God's show-and-tell for the world to see how God wants us to live as a family.

The local church must show the father-absent adolescents the Christian life which the world has been unable to show them. Through the congregation's life the absent-father adolescents can learn and be disciplined on how to live life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

The researcher would suggest that:

\* Help father-absent adolescents to discover their identity, "who am I" as the local church. Identity formation is the person's 'physical, sexual, social, vocational, moral, ideological and moral identities' which cannot separate from the spiritual formation. It engages in and with life's existential questions, a meaning-making out of life (Aziz, Nel & Davis 2017). Father-absent adolescents are raised up without their biological fathers. However, through the discovery of their identity, they can sever the vicious circle of father's absence, moreover, they can be good parents, managing to remain resilient.

\* Design programmes for parent/guardian. Dedicated programmes for fathers/men and guardians which is designed by South Africans who understand and are familiar with the South African context are needed. Grandparents who raise their grandchildren could be trained based on the findings of this research. They could support father-absent adolescents to overcome the challenge of an absent father by means of family members and caregivers.

\* Earmark a sum of church budget for father-absent adolescents. There should be a specific budget for the father-absent adolescents. Father-absent adolescents may expect direct and continuous support from the church. They should be provided support by the congregation in order to ensure their basic needs are being met.

\* Practice ministry corporately and individually to father-absent adolescents. Nel (2015a:73) states that the Holy Spirit is at work in the whole, the *Corpus Christi*, the body of which "I" am a living member. It must not be underestimated when local church participates God's action for the father-absent adolescents.

## **6. Areas for further research**

Based on empirical research, the following fields of research have emerged:

6.1. The impact of grandparents as an intervener between father-absent adolescents and non-resident biological father. There has been concern about grandparents as caregivers for father-absent children and adolescents. Grandparents play a major role and may provide helpful networks for family members.

6.2 The relationship between father-absent families and local pastors/congregation.

A local church may play a role in contributing to the resilience of father-absent

families. Pastor and congregation could provide a father-figure and role models, as well as they could help father-absent adolescents leading a spiritual quality of life.

### 6.3 The interaction between resident step-father and non-resident biological father.

Father-absent participants have mentioned the merits and demerits of their step-fathers. The interaction between resident step-father and non-resident biological father may impact father-absent children and adolescents' life and even youth ministry in the local church.

## **7. Limitations and shortcomings of the study**

1. Time and a small number of participants limitation have restricted the expansion of the research on the reality of the father-absent adolescents and local pastors. The research presented the own experiences of a small number of participants to discover the reality of father-absent adolescents and local pastors, which makes it difficult to generalise the findings.

2. The insufficiency of literature focusing on father-absent adolescents in youth ministry from a South African context limited the study. While there is an increasing number of academics publishing on the approach of social sciences to deal with father-absent adolescents, the literature focusing on father-absent adolescents in youth ministry remains a limited pool of resources.

3. Even though there is a diverse cultural background in South Africa, one race limitation has restricted the study to observe from different contexts. A black community is not as familiar as a white, coloured, Indian or Asian community. The different result could be produced in a vast cultural background in the context.

4. Language could be an obstacle during the interviews as the participants spoke in English. There may have been some untold and unexplained stories due to both the participants and researcher being English second language speakers.

## **8. Concluding remarks**

Relational ministry is about helping adolescents be authentic human beings as determined by the incarnate, human Christ. It joins them in full solidarity with humanity, helping them avoid and oppose that which dehumanises, and helping them claim their humanity in worship and service of the human God...We must follow the incarnate Christ as He walks into the centre of the world's suffering. When we turn from the suffering of the world, we turn from the cross, which is to turn from the Christ who is found on the cross (Root 2007a: 92, 94).

“Incarnational” or “relational” ministry does not mean to be a saviour for father-absent adolescents. It can be described to be ‘transparent’ to the Saviour whose love shines within the congregation and is enacted through the congregation (Dean et al., 2010:49).

As Root (2007a:15) states that ministry is not about using relationships to get individuals to accept a ‘third thing,’ rather ministry is about connection, one to another, about sharing in suffering and joy, about persons meeting persons with no pretence or secret motives.

Youth ministry cannot remain a ministry that only focusses on the spirituality of the

youth because their spirituality is grounded in their own experiences and all other developmental processes (Apostolides 2017).

Local faith community context requires reflection and action into the lives of father-absent adolescents which is the majority of the social problem in South Africa. The local church must pursue the youth they lose due to any lack of care and restore them to the congregation's shared life of faith. The ways to do this would be first there is a need to recover a more appropriate and contextual understanding of the father-absent adolescents. Second, there is a need to reform the identity of father-absent adolescents within the congregation. Third, there is a need to rediscover the vocation of the local church to participate in the action of God toward his people.

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT  
FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

**Title Of The Study:**

Father absence and adolescents as a challenge to youth ministry

**Researcher:**

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You are cordially invited to participate in an academic research study due to your experience and knowledge in the research area, namely Youth Ministry. Each participant must receive, read, understand and sign this document *before* the start of the study. If a child is 7-17 years and is requested to partake in a research study, the parent/legal guardian must give consent. Children from 7-17 years are also required to sign an assent form.

- **Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study is to (1) understand the father's role in the Bible, (2) describe the role of father in the development of children and adolescent, (3) find about the present situation of the local church with adolescents who live without a biological father, and (4) examine the implications of the research findings for expanding a need-oriented diaconal ministry in youth ministry. The results of the study may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of our findings on request. No participants names will be used in the final publication.
- **Duration of the study:** The study will be conducted over a period of 3months and its projected date of completion is 31 Oct. 2018.
- **Research procedures:** The study is based on qualitative research. In terms of interviews, the information will be gathered through structured and unstructured interviews.
- **What is expected of you:** (1) How the father-absent adolescents feel about the absence of their biological father, (2) how they feel about our 'Heavenly Father', (3) how the local church perceives the father-absent adolescents and (4) how the local church can help the father-absent adolescents as an extended family.
- **Your rights:** Your participation in this study is very important. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without stating any reasons and without any negative consequences

however If you decide to withdraw you are requested to submit the notice in writing. The relevant data will be destroyed, should you choose to withdraw.

- You, as participant, may contact the researcher at any time in order to clarify any issues pertaining to this research. The respondent as well as the researcher must each keep a copy of this signed document.
- **Confidentiality:** All information will be kept confidential by the researcher. The participants and their organisations will be kept anonymous. The researcher will have access to the raw data and handle it directly.
- **Remuneration:** No money / fees gifts or any form of reward will be awarded / offered / can be expected by co researchers / respondents / participants at any time during the research

## WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

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I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature of this research. I understand that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the research. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number of the Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

## VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT *(Only applicable if respondent cannot write)*

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I, the researcher, have read and have explained fully to the respondent, named \_\_\_\_\_ and his/her relatives, the letter of introduction. The respondent indicated that he/she understands that he/she will be free to withdraw at any time.

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annexure B**

### **Questions for the father-absent adolescent participants**

1. Do you have contact with your father?
2. Do you hear from your father?
3. When last did he make contact with you?
4. What do you know about your father?
5. How do you feel about the word, 'father'?
6. If you had regular contact with your father what would have wished your relationship to be?
7. When/why did you think that you needed your father?
8. If you become a father/mother how would you treat your children?
9. How are you feeling about your absent father?
10. Do you have any negative feelings about your father, even if you may not know about your father?
11. How do you feel when someone says, "Heavenly Father," or "God, our Father"?
12. Could you please try to explain why you feel that way?
13. Have you experienced any negative feelings about the "Heavenly Father", or of "God, our Father"?
14. Do you experience/have you experienced the closeness and tenderness of God as Father in your life?

15. Do you think that your church/pastor understands your painful feelings and difficult situation?
16. If you said yes, could you please tell me when you felt that your church/pastor understood?
17. Have you thought about your pastor/any church member as your father?
18. If you said yes, when/why did you think that?
19. Could you please name three things that you would like your church/pastor to help you with?

## **Annexure C**

### **Questions for the pastor participants**

1. Are there any father-absent youths in your church?
2. Are there fewer youths who live with their fathers or more of them in your church?
3. Does your church currently help father-absent youths?
4. If you said yes, could you please tell me how your church helps the father-absent youths?
5. Have you experienced any difficulty with helping father-absent youths?
6. If you have experienced, could you please tell me any difficulties when you help them?
7. Have you asked the father-absent youths what they need?
8. If you have asked them, please tell me what they said.
9. Do you read any books or articles to understand father-absent youths?
10. What do you think is the most important thing to consider when dealing with father-absent youths?
11. Does your church have a programme to re-educate or retrain fathers and men to improve their family situation?

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