Toward an Understanding of Churched Emerging Adults and Their Relationship with God and the Local Church.

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DECLARATION:

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I declare that "Toward an Understanding of Churched Emerging Adults, their Relationship with God and the Local Church" is my own work and that all the sources herein have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

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April 24, 2023

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Date

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The process of completing this thesis has been long and complicated, yet richly rewarding. Attempted only because at the heart of it lies my deep concern for the state of the church, young people, and my great love for my Savior Jesus Christ.

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ABSTRACT:

Unquestionably, it is perspicuous that previously "churched" people who fall in the eighteen to thirty-two age demographic, which is also identified by Arnett (1998) as *emerging adults*, are leaving the church in increasing numbers (Barna Group, 2011; Barber, Setran and Kiesling, 2013; Pew Research Group, 2008; Nel, 2015; Rainer, 2011; and Olson, 2008). What is less evident is an understanding of how congregations are or are not effectively and meaningfully engaging *churched emerging adults*, in the belief that such knowledge will provide key information to understand the relationship between *churched emerging adults* and the local church.

The research will potentially develop strategies to further engage eighteen- to thirty-two-year-olds; while proposing a praxis which strives to introduce and foster a personal, familial, and communal relationship to God. The research will specifically isolate the dormancy of the Christian Church in the United States of America, focusing on the characteristics that underlie the age fragmentation of the congregation, particularly the mitigating factors behind the decline of the local church.

Thus, we endeavor to bring about a clarification to the concept of a lived/everyday theology, the *missio dei* "mission of God" for/through the church, and the praxis of believers (Bosch,1996; Johnson, 2004). The research isolates the life of the church and how it interconnects community and theology specifically with/for *churched emerging adults*. It is important to note that this is not about filling churches, it is about the church fostering a relationship between members, specifically churched *emerging adults*, and God. What new knowledge will be brought to the table? Hypothetically, the research should discover how congregations are or are not effectively engaging *churched emerging adults*. We will then attempt to re-focus church to the centrality of Jesus not the centrality of programs.

The following questions are asked:

1. What identifiable characteristics found in the local church meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults?*
2. What can the local church do about the continuing decline in its on-site attendance/membership, specifically in terms of the eighteen- to thirty-two-year-old age group?
3. How does the Christian community find its way back to being Christ-centered and focused upon the mission of God in the world, *missio dei*?

KEY WORDS:
   Churched Emerging Adults
   ***Missio Dei /* Missional**
   Intergenerational
   Generation Y / Millennials
   Postmodernism
   Generation Z / Boomlets
   Parachurch Organizations
   Congregational Culture / Study
   Youth Ministry Theory

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Chapter 1 Introduction to the Study – Where are The Churched Emerging Adults?

1.1 Research Statement:

Unquestionably, it is perspicuous that previously "churched" people who fall in the eighteen to thirty-two age demographic, which is also identified by Arnett (1998) as *emerging adults*, are leaving the church in increasing numbers (Barna Group, 2014; Barber, 2012; Setran and Kiesling, 2013; Pew Research Group, 2010 ; Nel, 2015; Rainer, 2011; and Olson, 2008). What is less evident is an understanding of *how* local *con*gregations are or are not effectively engaging *churched emerging adults.* Therefore, the goal of this project is to understand the how in the belief that such knowledge will provide key information to understand the relationship between *churched emerging adults* and the local church. The local church as defined by Durekheim is "a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, which unite into one single moral community called a Church" (Wuthnow, 1993: 30). The researcher does not assume anything regarding the personal relationship between the emerging adult and God, but that there is a greater chance of fostering a personal relationship if they are engaged in the local church.

The research will potentially develop strategies to further engage 18- to 32-year-olds, while proposing a praxis which strives to introduce and foster a personal, familial, and communal relationship with God. Heitink (2009: 6) states that "practical theology is the empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society." Polk's (1992) definition of practical

theology focuses on the dynamics that characterizes life in a community of faith or the congregation.

Therefore, the specific research gap within practical theology to be studied is the concept of a lived/ everyday theology, the *missio dei* of the church, and the praxis of believers (Bosch,1996; Johnson, 2004). In other words, the research looks at the life of the church and how it interconnects community and theology specifically with/for *churched emerging adults*. It is important to note that this is not about filling churches, but it is about the church fostering a relationship between members, specifically *churched emerging adults* and God.

Currently, there is a vast amount of literature dedicated to the religious lives of American youth, however according to Christian Smith (2003) this literature is "riddled with serious problems" (Smith &Regnerus, 2003). According to Smith it is either seriously out of date or it is strictly theoretical with no empirical data being offered (Smith & Regnerous, 2003). Often the dismal numbers are tabulated, but very little specific/detailed research pinpoints the identifiable characteristics required for the local church to meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults* directly from their point of view (Pew Research Group, 2010).

In light of the literature study, empirical research, and conducted interviews a new paradigm is required to help the local church not only keep their eighteen- to thirty-two-year-olds while also integrating every member of the congregation from babies to the elderly. What is it that we do not know? We do not know how the spiritual needs of *churched emerging adults* are being met by the local church. The

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study will address questions about programs and strategies leading us to better understanding of church life.

The research will specifically isolate the dormancy of the Christian Church in the United States of America, focusing on the characteristics that underlie the age fragmentation of the congregation particularly the mitigating factors behind the continuing loss of *churched emerging adults*. Pastors, youth pastors, and parents will be encouraged to take a serious look at their ministry and the specific needs of their eighteen-to thirty-two-year-old members.

What new knowledge will be brought to the table? Hypothetically, the research should discover how congregations are or are not effectively engaging *churched emerging adults*. We will then attempt to re-focus church to the centrality of Jesus not the centrality of programs. <becoming missiological>

The following questions are identified:

1. What identifiable characteristics found in the local church meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults?*

2. What can the local church do about the continuing decline in its on-site attendance, specifically in terms of eighteen- to thirty-two-year-olds?

3. How does the Christian community find its way back to being Christ-centered and focused upon the mission of God in the world, *missio dei*?

1.2 Research – Describing the Theme / Question

Local churches are facing the 21st century and, for many of their leaders, there is a sense of exasperation or defeat caused by the perception of a sharp decline in church attendance and member*sh*ip. The perception that the 21st century church is in decline is confirmed by the U.S. Census Bureau (2016) and contemporary scholars including: the Barna Group's Update "*The Faith that Lasts Project*" (2011), Pew Research on *Religion and the Public Life* (2008), as well as Nigel Barber, David Setran & Chris Kiesling (2013), Malan Nel (2000), and David Kinnamen (2006).

The United States Census Bureau Records (www.census.gov; 2016) recently revealed some shocking statistics. There are less than ½ of the number of churches there were 100 years ago. 4,000 churches close their doors every single year. 7,400 people leave the church every single day and 80% of churches are in decline (Hirr.hartsem.edu, 2006). University of California, Berkeley sociologists and statisticians Mike Hout and Claude Fischer, along with their colleague Mark Chaves of Duke University have meticulously documented the decline of the Western Mainline Denominational Church (2013). Hout, Fisher, and Chaves found that 20% of American adults in 2010, say they have no religious affiliation. These numbers are up from 18% in 2005, 14% in 2000, and 8% in 1990 (Hout, Fischer, Chaves; March 7th, 2013).

Pew Research published an article entitled *the US Religious Landscape* (2016); the findings report an even higher percentage of 25% (one in four) Americans claimed no religious affiliation. Pew Research statistics also confirmed that the decline of

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church membership was at a rate of 20% (+) plus annually (Pew Research: 2016). Thus, for every hundred people twenty-five do not consider themselves religious in any way. They are not "members," nor do they practice any religious tradition. Further complicating the eventual "demise" of the Christian church is the loss of current members from within the Judeo-Christian Traditions which continue to rise annually. Pew found that of all church members 20% will leave the church, thus in five years a congregation of 100 members will become a congregation of 34 members. Note this does not account for deaths (Pew Research: 2016).

The Gallop Poll reported that 40% of Americans attend church on a weekly basis. David Olson's groundbreaking work, W*here are the People?* (2008) looked at the poll numbers and found that they were in fact not accurate and were misleading. Olson used data from over 200,000 individual churches' membership and attendance records documented from 1980 through 2008. He compiled and broke down the church data using the same statistical models used by the Gallop Poll, but with more accurate information he discovered a quite different picture of the church. Olson (2008) exposed the truth that in fact only 20% of church members go to church on Sunday for Worship, Sunday School, or Wednesday Night activities including: choir practice, prayer meetings, fellowship dinners, and other classes.

Olson (2008) looked deeper into the church membership numbers and found that the greatest percentage of decline was between the ages of eighteen to thirty-two; thus, it can be noted that church records and statistics reaffirm that the citizens of the

United States of America are leaving their religious traditions (Osmer, 2008; Newbigin, 1998; Pew Research, 2011).

Rainer, T.S. & Rainer, J.S (2011)'s research concurs that two thirds of on-going losses from within the church membership are between the ages of eighteen to thirty-two. Life and metamorphosis are inevitable, thus when adolescents graduate from high school, they also graduate from local church youth programs. Most will move away from home for college or job opportunities leaving their "home" churches behind while they forge a new life or lifestyle which research indicates does not include participation in a local denominational or community church. Yes, there is a natural attrition but unlike previous generations who sought out and settled into church at school or in their new town or at least after marriage and having children; today most *emerging adults* unfortunately never return to church (Rainer, T.S. & Rainer, J.S., 2011).

As has been shown, it is clear that previously "churched" people who fall in the eighteen to thirty-two age demographic are leaving the church in increasing numbers. The proposed study intends to research, by means of qualitative and quantitative methodology, the identifiable characteristics found within the local church which meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults*, in the belief that such knowledge will provide the key information essential to develop a cradle to grave paradigm.

1.2.1 Origin of the Theme

Recently I attended a high school friend's wedding; it was fascinating to reconnect with members of my youth group who, fifteen years later, are married and have families. Many knew I had been to theology school and began to pepper me with questions making it clear that they felt that church was not "relevant" to their lives. On the reverse side they desperately missed the fellowship, friendships, and the support of the church family they knew while growing up within the arms of a congregation. They longed to be part of small groups in similar life stages, many stated their desire to have the wisdom of an "adopted" or "extended" family with parents and grandparents. I began to wonder about this generation who are disillusioned and feel forgotten by the church. Most have moved to new locations and have not turned into a church. Instead, they replaced church with sports, hobbies, school related parent groups, or even game nights with friends.

A casual Sunday morning "ethnographic" assessment ensued when I noticed that our church which is located about two kilometers away from a major college/ university has a limited number of eighteen- to thirty-two-year-old adults. I began to look at current research and church trends. I visited other churches doing further un-official "Sunday morning ethnographies." Consequently, I found little to no interaction between the church, pastors, and the eighteen- to thirty-two-year-old demographic. Churches have slowly become disconnected with a population termed by Jeffery Arnett (1998) as "*emerging adults*." *Emerging adults* are young men and women between the ages eighteen and thirty-two, who have begun to see themselves as,

"transparent" or "unimportant" to the church membership. They are a demographic which cannot be ignored if the church desires to remain engaged with the community. Within the research, I also found that the number of churches closing their doors annually is alarmingly high. According to statistics compiled by Dr. Richard Krejcir, every year more than two point seven million church members fall into "inactivity" (this is not to say that all 2.7 million church members are between eighteen and thirty-two years) causing over four thousand churches to close their doors, sell their buildings, and thus the community of believers are either lost or find another church (Krejcir, 2014).

On November 4th, 2013, the *Huffington Post* printed an article by Nigel Barber entitled "Have Americans Turned against Religion" which asks, "How Religious are young Americans between the ages of eighteen and thirty-two and how does this trend impact the church?" (Barber, 2013). Barber's (2013) study examined the steady decline in numbers amongst eighteen- to thirty-two-year-olds looking for the "reasons" and yet he found only that despite frequent protestations to the contrary this generation is becoming progressively more secular. And that the secularization process is playing out much as it does everywhere else with younger generations becoming increasingly casual about morality, politics, religion, and social issues (Barber, 2013). Kenda Dean's research found that youth today subscribe to a form of "moralistic, therapeutic deism" which states that God wants people to be good, nice, and happy but will only get involved to the extent to which His help is required by each individual. Thus, these *churched emerging adults* are according to Dean "almost Christian" in that they are

religious in some respects, but not all "Christian" in the more traditional sense of theology and practice (Dean, 4). There is a lack of "genuine faith" or of a "consequential faith" and Dean attributes this to the adult members who also may believe similarly (Dean, 14). David Kinnamen's book *You Lost Me* (2012) also explores the reasons why Millenials have left or been "lost" by the church. Note Kinnamen is further explored in the Literature Review.

But these findings are vague, inconclusive, and not practical. Local churches that desire to reach the *churched emerging adults* within their communities are lacking important data. Therefore, further research is called upon to understand the emotional, spiritual, and physical factors that make up the complex web of society, culture, and community in the post-modern 21st century.

Malan Nel (2000) and Setran & Kiesling (2013), studied the strategies of past models proposed to "save the church" and found that the majority of these models were originally established as a reaction to "youth culture/youth revolution." Youth culture is all about rebelling against the norm. "The concept behind youth culture is that adolescents are a subculture with norms, mores, behaviors, and values that differ from the main culture of older generations (Nel, 2000: 64)." Future lifestyles and the plethora of technological options were not considered as models were formulated before podcasts/DVRS/internet/and social media hit the scene. But more importantly the models have overlooked a crucial age bracket (eighteen- to thirty-two-year-olds).

Because of this culturally developed gap, religious institutions have developed para-church organizations including: YWAM, Young Life, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Campus Crusade, and others, to be clear these organizations are NOT part of the church, they are autonomous organizations. They were created in a vain attempt to stop the hemorrhaging of souls by addressing the problem from outside of the church itself. Many Para-Church Organizations have also taken over the "missionary" aspect thus the majority of local churches are no longer connected directly to missions (Lutz, 2011). Missions have lost their centrality in the church and "a church is not a church if it is not missiological" (Newbigin, 1995, 3). Missiology is the local church community and beyond. And therefore, churched *emerging adults* have not been given the opportunity to hear and answer the call directly from within the church (Lutz, 2011). Finally, when questioned scholars and pastors agree that the future of the church and of missions will be decided by the hundreds of thousands of "churched" college students, young married couples, and the "new" members of the workforce between the ages of eighteen and thirty-two (Foster, 1998).

Carey Nieuwhof's blog looks at the trends affecting the church in the 21st Century. Researching topics including "the 8 Reasons Most Churches Never Break the 200 Attendance Mark" to the "12 Cultural Trends You Cannot Ignore," and "the 7 Ways to Respond as People Attend Church Less Often." These trends include the idea that *events* and *programs* keep the church busy, but they are not effective for long-term growth. He challenges the church to drop the *business, consolidate* and affect the community with a few really *GREAT* outreaches that help keep the faith community

engaged while addressing the reality of life TODAY (Nieuwhof, 2013). Nieuwhof (2013) strongly believes that as today's culture continues to change, more churches will be forced to re-evaluate their identities. For many churches this will spell out their demise, but for others who are able to keep up with the rapid transformations they will become more mission-focused and they will thrive; but they must not be cemented in place by "programs" or "initiatives" (Nieuwhof, 2013).

1.2.2 Borders

The borders of this study include: Practical Theology, what is Practical theology and what role does it play within the larger understanding of theology? Too often in the life of the church, theological reflection and the practical matters of leading and serving have been considered independently. Scholars including Heitink (1993), Browning (1996), Newbigin (1995), Osmer (2008), Johnson (1994), and Nel (2015) take these two ideas and have found that they are inextricably woven into complicated and beautiful tapestry which is the local church. Therefore, this study will seek to understand the ways in which theology is practiced by the local church with an emphasis on its decline due to the diaphanous nature of churched *emerging adults* in the 21st century (i.e., eighteen- to thirty-two-year-olds) in need of a missiological transformation.

Practical Theology is used to serve as a collective name for a number of dissimilar disciplines with one basic common denominator, their relation to ministerial practice. Heitink, in his book *Practical Theology* (1993)*,* describes many of the great theologians of the past from Augustine to Martin Luther King and beyond as practical theologians. Many might say that theology is always practical, but Heitink (1993) asserts that it is an academic discipline in and of itself which has international implications.

The parameters of this study fall under the umbrella of Christian Theology with a focus on Practical Theology as it apprises the Local Church and its "missio dei" or missiology. The study will focus on churches both denominational and community located within the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. Each church will receive two different surveys: a ministry survey and a churched emerging adult member's survey. These surveys will serve as the basis for the quantitative aspect of this proposal. Then the churches will be ranked based upon the demographics and the different qualities found to reach the heart of churched *emerging adults*. On the heels of the quantitative results, the researcher will use qualitative questioners and ethnographic interviews to identify concrete insights and strategies that can be usefully employed by other congregations in expanding the Kingdom of God through community engagement specifically designed for churched *emerging adults*.

1.3 Research Paradigm: What do I want to achieve with this research?

The church continues to face decline. Churches have used various models, and have tried a variety of "programs," "focuses," and "missions," without a lasting effect on the overall numbers (Pew Research, 2011). Barna's statistical analysis serves as a magnifying glass pinpointing the majority of the decline is among churched believers between the ages of eighteen and thirty-two (Pew Research, 2011). The proposed study intends to research, by means of qualitative and quantitative methodology, the identifiable characteristics found within the local church which meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults*, in the belief that such knowledge will provide the key information essential to develop a cradle to grave paradigm to help churches regardless of denomination to better carry out *missio dei* within their neighborhoods and to find ways to build lasting relationships with those whose absence will ultimately spell out the demise of the church.

Because statistics point us towards the church, the following questions will be considered: has the local church heard the call to their communities? Do "programs" disciple and foster spiritual growth and deeper understandings of faith? Does the church train, support, and encourage its members to practice their faith not just in church but at the grocery store or in the movie theater, or at the laundry? Do youth groups prepare their members for the next steps in life as churched *emerging adults*? The answer is more than just a no or a maybe, it lies in the foundations of theology and mission as set forth and practiced by the church in America.

1.3.1 Where does this study fit into Practical Theology?

Osmer (2008) states, the primary purpose of Practical Theology is to equip church leaders to understand and engage in Practical Theological interpretation. This interpretation should look at situations or episodes within the context of ministry. Osmer (2008) proposes a model of practical theological interpretation with four tasks: the first task is *the descriptive empirical task* which asks the question, "what is going on?" The second task is *the interpretive task* which asks, "why is this going on?" The third task is *the normative task* which asks, "what ought to be going on?" And the fourth task is *the pragmatic task* which asks, "how might we respond?"

Neil Darragh's (March 2007) article, "the Practice of Practical Theology," defines the terminology in the following way: "practical theology is a theological process that follows a hermeneutical circle with a claim to make connections between the world of human action and the Christian tradition that result in transformative practice." This research is meant to set forth a paradigm that can be used by churches with a result of "transformative practice".

The study will follow in the footsteps of Browning (1996) who used "a thick description" of three case studies. Browning (1996) asserts that practical theology is a function of doing "church." It is the practice of preaching, of worship, and of spiritual formation. If we intend to transform the church it needs to follow Osmer's (2008) call for the *interpretive, normative, and pragmatic* analysis of data gathered regarding the

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church and how it fits into doing Practical Theology. This study will seek to understand how local ministries engage eighteen- to thirty-two-year-olds, *churched emerging adults,* from both a quantitative and qualitative point of view. On the quantitative side it will use a survey to ask crucial questions regarding the effectiveness of the ministry within local churches directed at church leaders and church members. These will then be followed with deeper, more extensive interviews from which qualitative understandings should be generated.

1.3.2 Methodology - What kind of research is this?

Practical ethnographic qualitative research, including interviews with church leaders, church members and churched *emerging adults*, as well as quantitative congregational methodological research will be as done using a set of surveys to quantify how the churches serve this population and their visibility in their community. Thus, a paradigm should emerge having developed from a holistic understanding of churched *emerging adults* between the ages of eighteen and thirty-two. It is not enough to do historical research, to write and test a survey, or conduct an interview. The data generated needs to find its way into a workable paradigm.

1.4 Literature Review - What sources and literature are available?

Practical theology emerged out of the vestiges of a church in crisis due to the loss of any authority including parental, political, and spiritual. This led to an "emancipation" of sorts and with it, church attendance dropped, and new groups or "movements" were born. Heitink states these new "movements/ groups" formed because the church was not satisfying the religious needs of its members. Thus, it is easy to see how Practical Theology is crucial to reversing the trends set forth by an outdated understanding of theology that set aside the centrality of Jesus in the life of the congregation (Heitink and Newbigin, 1993).

Theologian David Kinnaman (2012) in his book entitled *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving and Rethinking Church,* researched the disconnect between the church and "churched *emerging adults.*" Kinnaman asks, "what is being outwardly exhibited? Is there a lack of meaningful engagement between them? How can this be organic to the work of/mission of the (*missio dei*) church (Kinnamen 2012)?" While losses are spread throughout all age groups, further groundbreaking research by the Lifeway Research Group (2007) found that the church attrition rate is predominately within the eighteen- to thirty-two-year-old category. The phenomenon is statistically and theologically compelling (Osmer, 2008: 4).

Kinnamen (2012) goes further to identify some reasons behind "Millenials" leaving; the first is generational distinctions having to do with access to information,

alienation, and skepticism toward authority. The second are the ways in which the

churched emerging adults lost can be placed into three categories including the

nomads, prodigals, and exiles. Nomads have left the church, Prodigals have turned

from their faith, and Exiles have one foot in and one foot out. The third is

disconnection where Kinnamen states that there are six factors including:

overprotectiveness, shallowness, anti-science, repressiveness, exclusiveness, and

intolerance of doubt. Without going into each it is safe to say these are "normal" for the

young adult mind (Kinnamen, 2012).

Every generation is distinct from the generation before; thus, sociologists

attempt to gather a generalized set of characteristics and behaviors reflective of their

lives and times. Adults born between 1927 – 1945 are considered the "silent

generation." The "silent generation" values marriage, the military, reading, church, and

discipline. Transitioning to the "me" generation which were born between 1946 –

1973; also known as Baby Boomers. They champion individuality, tolerance, free love,

and they are extremely self-centered. The birth of Generation X in 1974 through 1980

finds a generation stereotyped as technologically savvy, money conscious, suspicious,

unimpressed with authority, and self-reliant (McSaine, 2013). Moving to the

generation of children born between 1981- 1998; they are known as Generation Y or

the "Millennial Generation." They are known for an increased use and familiarity with

communication, media, and digital technologies, and an increase in a neoliberal

approach to politics and economics. The Pew Research Center states that "Millennials"

are confident, connected, and open to change (2012-2013)."

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Charles Shelton (1995) set forth a definition of adolescents and their spirituality: "development begins with puberty and stretches throughout the years spent in college or pursuing their vocation" (Shelton, 1995, pg 3). Adolescents should be differentiated into three core groups including: early, middle, and late adolescents. Shelton (1995) explores each stage; this study will focus on middle to late adolescence, which spans the ages of eighteen to thirty-two.

1.4.1 Emerging Adulthood

According to Jeffery Jensen Arnett, a psychologist, (1998) "emerging adulthood" is the transitional period between high school and adulthood, and it is marked by the formation of identity, the establishment of more mature interpersonal and intimate relationships, and the transition to self-sufficiency. Arnett proposes five "features" or characteristics of the "emerging adult," these include: 1. Age of Identity and Exploration. 2. Age of Instability, 3. Age of Self-focus, 4. Age of Feeling In-between or Transparent, and 5. the Age of Possibility (Arnett, 2014). The demographics of *emerging adults* have been modified to include the age from eighteen to thirty-two years old, because young adults are entering adulthood later due to more education, later marriages, and they wait longer to have a family... These variations contribute to the research done by Shelton and Arnett (Arnett, 2014).

Further quantitative research done by Tim Thornborough (2011) shows that 89% of former "postmodern" youth group members are lost forever and that the

Christian Church in the United States will eventually see its demise if this trend is continued. *USA Today* found that 70% of those who leave the church do so between the ages of eighteen and thirty-two. This leads scholars to believe that college, new vocations, relationships, and entertainment are the main factors in church decline; subsequently painting the university, sports, movies, jobs, love interests etc. as devilish adversaries (Thornborough, 2011).

Qualitative research by Arnett uncovers the idea of a "quiet revolution" among *emerging adults* (2014). The revolution has taken place so quietly, in fact, that it almost went unnoticed by the church and brought with it a sense of being "transparent," unseen, not needed or wanted by the church (Arnett, 2014). Steve McSwain of *the Huffington Post* (2014) suggests the following factors have precipitated the disconnect from the church either permanently, for an extended period, or they were never members in the first place. There is a demographic remapping of America: technology, a leadership crisis, competition with other activities and cultures, religious pluralism, a "contemporary" worship experience, and false promises/ phony advertising (McSwain, 2014).

Chris Brooks (2013) in his article entitled, *Is Youth Ministry Subtly Sabotaging the Church,* a college minister at the University of Alabama, states that there are three major factors related to generalized church statistics. Beginning with current and historical church attitudes toward children and youth, the contextualization and communication of the gospel, and ending with true life-changing discipleship. There is also an underlying CRISIS as youth are rarely prepared for a spiritual life outside of the

quintessential "youth bubble." These churched *emerging adults* are not "ready" for their next steps (Brooks, 2013).

David Kinnamen (2012: 12) in his book *Unchristian* reports "the university setting does not usually cause the disconnect, it *exposes* and magnifies the shallow-faith problem of our young adults." According to Dr. Malan Nel (2000: 8), "One of the greatest defects of youth ministry is often the absence of a sound theological foundation." Without these foundations a genuine, holistic, contextual, and relational outreach to the "transparent ones," retention seems impossible.

1.5 What is the Relevance of this Research?

Research has shown us that the future of the church is in jeopardy, study after study shows that if the decline in attendance of *churched emerging adults* is not only stopped but reversed, we will lose the beautiful spiritual traditions that have stood the tests of time. Worship and prayer will be lost, granted a change is needed, but we must return to the firm foundations upon which the first century church was built. The use of congregational studies, practical theological aspects, current practices as well as surveys will quantify and qualify how congregations serve the eighteen- to thirty-two-year-old demographic. Urban Atlanta's 350 square kilometers houses eight colleges and universities making it a good city to use as a model.

Our churches have been adding more and more "programs" and "social events", but they are not recognizing the need for salvation first and the need for a loving missiological congregation who will purposely include churched *emerging adults* in their community and embrace them through simple things like a meal with family and friends, for those in college perhaps a free washing machine, or even a simple movie on the couch. Recent research shows us in black and white in tables and graphs about who is dropping out and when, but no one is addressing the important questions including: How are churched *emerging adults* meaningfully engaged by the local church? And how can the church invite them back into a relationship with God and the local church; without creating a new "program" (Osmer,1999).

Chapter 2 – Congregational Studies, the Early Church,

the Case for the Inclusive Missional Congregation

2.0 - Introduction

The second chapter will look at congregational studies and enumerate them by tracing church history and the role of *missio dei* from its inception to the present day and how it is the foundation of the missional church (Bosch, 1996:17; Arthur, 2013: 1-3). Light will be shed on the development of the Christian community from the history of the Early Church, the early tenets of Christianity, the foundational writings of the early church, through to the 20th and 21st century church, *missio dei*, missions, missional, and Kingdom churches. The chapter culminates with a look at the relationship between congregational culture, *missio dei*, today's Youth Ministry, and the missional / Kingdom church.

2.1 - Congregational Studies

The church has endured peaks and valleys for nearly two thousand years. It has outlasted nations, governments, kings, and dictators. Today despite its history the Western world is experiencing a decline in church membership, particularly in the area of churched emerging adults. It has been documented that ninety four percent of high school church going students will leave the church after high school (McDowell, 2006: 13). Postmodernity has changed the needs of today's congregations, individuals born in the postmodern era often find the Christian church to be a tool of politics, agenda driven and thus unacceptable and irrelevant to people's daily spiritual needs

(Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007: 36). Constantine was the first to eliminate persecution in the early church creating a life of relative ease until the Crusades began (Gonzales, 1984:106). Today's church mirrors the early Christian's of Constantine and for unstudied churched emerging adults the challenges of Christianity are unnoticed creating a dynamic of instability (Johnson, 1994: 4).

The study of the dynamics of congregational life has become its own discipline: Congregational Studies (Ammerman, et al, 1998: 39). These studies guide the examinations of how communities actually "do" church and how they are affected by cultural or social changes (Hartford Institute for Religious Research, 2016: 1). James Wind (1993:103-110) wrote the article, "Leading Congregations, Discovering Congregational Cultures," in which he discusses the changes that have been documented though ethnographic[1] means by sociologists and anthropologists within local churches. Wind (1993: 107) asserts the work of Geertz (1973:22) stating that their "thick description," which is a way to describe in detail the multilayered and many-textured reality of cultural life, it is not only true in the life of a small tribe in South America but also in the case for churches. Leaders have been confronting distinctive congregational cultures for centuries, consider the changing of the liturgy or the version of the Bible used within a particular congregation. What is more according to Wind (1993:109) theology schools and seminaries do not prepare Christian ministers to study the congregations they will lead instead they focus on teaching student-ministers Basic Theology, Church History, Styles of Worship,

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[1] Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture in great detail without participation in that culture. The Ethnographer does not seek out the unusual but rather the daily routines of peoples be they middle class soccer moms or an obscure tribe in South America (Fetterman, 1998;1)

Leadership Models, Pastoral Care, Greek, Hebrew and other valuable topics. But universities and seminaries do not encourage students to take a step back and study the actual congregations they are about to lead (Wind, 1993: 107-110).

Congregational Culture is very decisive. Culture is defined as the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguish one group from another. It is transferred from generation to generation through language, material objects, rituals, institution's art and music (Roberto, 2012: 2). According to Ammerman (1998 :72-82), Congregational culture is constructed out of theological and denominational traditions: expectations from the dominant culture, patterns of social class and ethnicity along with the invisible aspects carried by its members and leaders; and whenever one of these elements changes the congregation will inevitably change as well. "Thus, congregational culture is more than the sum of what people bring with them and more than a mirror image of the theological traditions; it is a unique creation constructed from people's interactions over time (Ammerman, 1998: 80).

My suspicion is that we have not genuinely asked ourselves: How does the church relate to *churched emerging adults* from a congregational cultural perspective? What kind of congregational culture embraces *churched emerging adults*? How have churches adapted? Does the missiology of the church matter? Does the aestheticism created by the pastor and congregation of a particular church matter? How does *missio-dei* play into this phenomenon? The answers to these questions will be revealed as this study continues to unfold.

2.2 – The Early Church

Rome and Antioch were destined to play a significant role in the spread of Christianity throughout the known world (Hinson, 1991*:* 59-60; Curtis, 2015*:* 1). Congregational Studies have revealed that Biblically and historically there are four fundamental reasons for the emergence of house churches as the primary place for Christians to gather. First, culturally home and extended family were central to everyday life, thus it was a natural place to nurture and disciple new Christians. Secondly, a household offered security and community to new Christians who were marginalized and often persecuted by both the Pharisees and the Romans. Thirdly, a household supplied an already existing venue that embodied or would commence to embody Christian values. And finally, when the group outgrew one household, they divided into two groups to have more space for the fellowships to grow and in time they divided thus the church was able to grow in exponential numbers (Hinson, 1991*:* 59-61; Curtis, 2015*:* 1).

2.2.1. The Early Tenets of Christianity

The early tenets of Christianity were quite simple: Jesus was God Incarnate in the form of a man (the Son of God). Salvation from hell and eternal life came through Christ's sacrifice upon the cross. Christ's sacrifice was the final sacrifice for eternity never again would a goat, a sheep, or any other

creature be needed to cleanse human sins. A personal relationship with God was to be part of daily life for a believer (Hinson, 1991*:*109; Curtis, 2015*:* 2).

Hospitality was a building block at the core of the Christian fellowship taking place in New Testament home churches. Subsequently, the Apostle Paul and other church planting missionaries made tenacious efforts to convert entire households, making house churches central to the advance of Christianity (Doyle-Nelson, 2008*:* 11). Thus it is easy to see how house churches were expedient when used as a strategy for evangelism, and tended to be more personally encouraging to members as they journeyed through life together in community especially during times of cultural transition and / or intense persecution (Atkinson and Comiskey, 2014*:* 75-87). It was during the reign of Constantine that actual church buildings emerged with similar characteristics of synagogues (Hinson, 1991*:* 200).

2.2.2 The Modern Church

The Modern Church has adopted a business model to attract parishioners and manage church affairs (Barna, 1988*: 13-15). This has created a wide division or chasm between the protestant churches of today and the First Century Church (Religion Facts: *Christian History,* 2015*: 225; Gonzales, 1984*: 20). The early church exploded after Pentecost; the disciples saw thousands of lives changed in mere hours. Believers met in homes; an example was the home of Aquila and Pricilla (1 Corinthians 16:19 and Romans 16: 3, 5) another home church was Lydia's domicile in Philippi where she met Paul and had her family baptized (Acts 16:25-40). Home churches were venues for Christian growth, teaching, prayer, and community (Acts 18:2-3) (Doyle-Nelson, 2008; Religion Facts: *Christian History,* 2015*: 225). Early home churches continued to grow in numbers and in profound faith especially during the persecution under Rome before the time of the "Christian King" Constantine. House churches shared the Word, worshiped, prayed and fellowshipped together. Respect for the Holy Spirit's guidance was foundational. The Early Christian lived their lives communally sharing everything with one another for the growth of the Kingdom of God (Hinson, 1991*: 60; Curtis, 2015*: 2). What are the main characteristics of the first century church and how can this insight help the declining church of the 21st century (Hinson, 1991*: 59-62; Gonzales, 1984*: 22)?

2.2.3 Foundational Writings

The early church found a need to unify the church teachings. Thus, they began to carry on in Paul's tradition of letters to gather and agree on basic themes and they circulated the works, these were the foundational writings. Which shapes theology today.

2.2.3.1 *The Didache*

The early church writings have been dated back to the middle of the 1st Century through the Middle Ages including the works of the Apostles, St. Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna. They demonstrate that Christianity was built upon Salvation through Christ alone as found in Ephesians 2:8 (Hinson, 1991*:* 8; Poe, 1990*:* 291). [8]"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

The early gentile Christians also followed what was known as *the Didache* or "the Teaching of the Lord by the Twelve Apostles." *The Didache* is an enigmatic early Church document describing early Christian ethics, practices, and order. It was written for the guidance and education of the Christians in the mid first century through the fourth century (Lowe, 2015*:* 1-5; Lake, 1913*:* 1-8). Remember the Gentiles had little to no formal training regarding Judaism, Jesus, and the Pauline Church thus this manuscript served as a primer of sorts. The

original document was found inside a monastery in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) in 1873CE with no prescribed author, written in Koine Greek as well as other copies in Syriac, Latin, and Coptic (Lowe, 2015*:* 1-8). The document is a composite manuscript and has four primary parts:

1. *The Two Ways* (the Way of life or the Way of death): Chapters 1 -6 which contain moral instructions for the Christian Life in order to prepare converts for Baptism, and the Eucharist (Lowe, 2015: 1-8).

2. *Liturgical Manual:* Chapters 7 – 10 consist of ritual practices concerning Baptism, food, the Eucharist, fasting, and prayers (Lowe, 2015: 1-8).

3. *Leaders in the Early Christian Community*: Chapters 11 -15 give instructions about apostles, prophets, and teachers. This section details the protocol for the appointment and acceptance of authorities in a Christian Community (Lowe, 2015*:* 1-8).

4. *Eschatology and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ*: Chapter 16 discusses eschatology containing exhortations of perseverance, warnings of the end times as well as tribulation and the second coming of Jesus Christ as found in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, 1st Thessalonians, and Revelation (Lowe, 2015*:* 1-8).

Robinson (2009*: 3*) *What Early Christians Believed,* discusses the four major parts of the *Didache* as including the following list of basic topics: love your neighbors, enemies, and persecutors; abstain from lust; give your possessions to the needy; do not murder; do not commit adultery, fornication, theft, abortion, or infanticide; do not be prone to anger; do not engage in sorcery, witchcraft, enchanting, or astrology; share all things; do not eat food sacrificed to idols; be baptized in living water; beware of false prophets; elect honorable Christians as Bishops and Deacons; and be ready at all times for the second coming of Jesus.

The Didache shows us that the early church teachings were based upon the close literal interpretation of the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles found in the New Testament; however, it was not long before the Prevenient Christian Church began to debate theological questions (Gonzales, 1984*: 91-99*)

2.2.3.2 The Nicene Creed

Interestingly, the premiere tenants of the church crossed with society and began to stir up theological debates as a result Constantine assembled the Bishops of Nicaea in an effort to compose different ideas and tenants of the Christian faith, the Bishops were expected to absorb the various interpretations, test them against the written scriptures and then make some definitive statements about the Christian faith and its foundations (Hinson, 1991*: 232*).

The Bishops of the First Ecumenical Council responded by writing the Nicene

Creed in 325 C.E. Additions were made by the First Council of Constantinople in

381 C.E. (Conservapedia, 2015: 2-7).

The Nicene Creed:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
He came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
He suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Nicene Creed (Conservapedia; 2015*: 1-7*) set the stage for the next two thousand years, it is within these parameters theological understanding where we find comfort, admonishment, encouragement, faith, philosophy, directions for a life surrendered to the accouterments of God. Pivotal moments change the world and for Christians and their faith this was one of those moments in 381 CE that has remained part of the foundation of the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christian Churches through today and will continue to serve as a basic dogma despite changes in culture or in society (Conservapedia;2015*: 1-7*).

Joel Elowsky (2012*: 295-311*) in his article "The Ministry in the Early Church", wrote, "I am going to paint in rather large brushstrokes, a picture of what ministry looked like in the early church and how it was organized and how it saw itself in terms of purpose or identity." The early church focused on missional aspects of growing the kingdom of God, thus with a joint effort the entire congregation utilizing all of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) found in the apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, and pastors. But as the church grew the missional aspects faded and were exchanged for order, structure, and discipline. Thus, leading to the passing away of emphasis on apostles, prophets, and the spiritual gifts and so the early church transitioned and abandoned these early gifts (Elowsky, 2012*: 298*).

Early church doctrine is based upon the experiences and practice of Christ, His Apostles and the writings of men including Ignatius, Clement, and Polycarp who were personal disciples of Jesus' Apostles. Through their writings we see authentic glimpses of what the Christians believed when the church was young. Early Christianity was not theology centered; it was relationship centered. The early Christian's faith was built on a personal relationship with Christ. As Christendom grew so did the reach of the church and along with-it confusion and heresy emerged which led the early church Fathers to hammer out theologies and doctrines (Bercot, 2009:1-23). Church History is critical to our understanding of the confines of how the church was and how the modern / postmodern church reflects those initial years.

2.3 The 20th and 21st Century Church

The dawn of the 21st century places the church in a unique position in terms of a moment in which to re-evaluate, understand, and implement theology for a new generation. Postmodernity, global migration, communication, technology, violence, murder, war, hunger, poverty, distortion of morality, other cultures and religions, Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, natural disasters, tragedy, terrorism, the economic downturn, and the breakdown of the nuclear family, all factors into understanding how to undertake church for and with a new generation (Wuthnow, 1993: 148-150). Many churches are holding on to the last

vestiges of modern fighting against the postmodern. But within that is a desire to remain unchanged, to hold fast to the past, they have recognized the need of the parishioners and in response they have added a program or two, but they have not done the real work (Johnson, 1994: 7). Numerous local churches have not taken a step back to understand postmodernity, to reach out to Generation X and the Millennials, to find a new way to do church together instead of apart through intergenerational traditions (Seibel & Nel, 2010: 1).

2.4 *Missio Dei*- **The Mission of God in the World, the First Glances of Missiology**

Correspondingly, *Missio Dei* is simply translated from Latin as *the mission of God in the world*; thus, the church is only a small part or small subset of God's work (Arthur, 2016: 1). *Missio Dei* calls forth a church characterized by the incarnation of Jesus Christ. What is the mission of God? Where and how is this mission active in the world? How does the mission of God connect to Practical Theology*?* "Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God's Mission" (Wright, 2006:23-24). As John Stott (1992: 335) wrote so beautifully, "Mission arises from the heart of God himself, and is communicated from His heart to ours. Mission is the global reach of an infinite God."

But what is God's work or God's mission and how has it been defined generationally? There has been an ebb and flow in meaning throughout the decades. Thus, a brief historical overview is important (Arthur, 2013: 2). The term *mission dei* was initially seen in the works of Augustine, but it was Thomas Aquinas who first used the words to describe the "activity" of God in the world. This "activity" or "work" starts with God's sending of His Son into the world to close the gap between God and Man created by sin and is continued when God sent the Holy Spirit as our comforter to help guide us through life. The most important interpretation of *missio dei* is the communication of the Gospel; a true witness by virtue that Christ proves through actions, God's love and concern for the world (Arthur, 2013: 3).

Karl Barth (1932: 32) and by extension Hartenstein (Barth, 1932) set forth the idea that "mission" is God's work, and that authentic mission comes from the Church's response to the Great Commission. Thus, *missio dei* (God's Mission) should be the church's mission or *missio ecclesiae.* "This new understanding led to foreign and domestic missions funded by the local church and the work of committed Christians who travel to foreign and domestic locations to spread Christianity (Nel, 2015: 17-19)."

However, after the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War the idea of God's mission was brought into question by preachers, leaders, theologians and scholars. A number of precipitating issues arose, causing the expulsion of missionaries from China, Japan, the Middle East, North Africa, and many parts of communist/ socialist countries. The new "secular" states were on the rise and the Church was being

pushed aside. The third issue was amongst the denominations regarding the Holy Spirit's place in the believing communities (Englesviken, 2003: 482).

Church leaders tend to see *Missio Dei* as a theology which emphasizes the final disagreement over the difference between a Christ centric and Cosmo centric view of God's involvement in the world today. What is a Christ centric or a Cosmo centric view of mission? A Christ centric view sees God's work in the world centered on the work of Christ through the church and then into the world. Whereas a Cosmo centric view sees God at work in the world which then has an effect on the church (Sundermeier, 2003:560).

Two trains of thought arose regarding mission: the first teaches that the church does not have a mission of its own rather it takes up God's mission which is the redemption of the world. On the other hand, the second premise states that the church is now invited to participate in God's redeeming mission which is defined by God's Triune Character. Denominations have long seen mission as a way to reach the unreached parts of the world through expansion of the "institution" of church, but *Missio Dei* brings about a correction placing God at the center of mission not the church (Arthur, 2009:1).

If you do not have Christ as the center of both the church and mission, history shows that the fellowship will not survive. Mission and evangelism should not at its core have the intention of forcing its "western" agenda, ideology, lifestyle, language, and education upon the unreached. We must remember that evangelism is not a human construct but rather it is God's work, and it begins to take place long before we humans' endeavor to "help" Him (Arthur, 2009:2).

Newbigin (1995:76) takes the idea of the Triune God and spells out the roles of God, the church, and mission. God the Father lays down a firm foundation, God the Son invites us to live transformed, and God the Holy Spirit who prompts a person to respond in repentance and faith. The Triune God is fundamental to the church and to mission. They are instruments in the hands of God. Thus, Newbigin argues that it is the church which must embody *mission dei (the* mission of God) as it is an outward focus. This is important because an abundant number of churches have lost this understanding and they do NOT focus on their community. Therefore, the church ignores Newbigin's premise that the church's role is not to support the mission of God to their community and the world but to be the mission of God (Newbigin, 1995:76; Arthur, 2009:3). In fact, Newbigin (1995:2) once wrote, "More and more Christians of the old Churches have come to recognize that a church that is not 'the church in mission' is no church at all." (Note: He said IN mission which implies an intrinsic connection a blending; ON mission shows a posture of action or doing.)

2.4.1 Missional Churches: *Missio Dei* in Practice for the World?

What is a Missional Church? Zscheile and VanGelder (2012*:*1) states that "a missional church is a church whose identity lies in its participation with the *triune God's mission* in all of creation. Thus, in missional ecclesiology, it is God's mission that has a church, not a church that has a mission." Bosch defines *missio dei* as "God's revelation to us. He is the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to take part" (Bosch, 1996*:* 10).

What should be the foundation, aim, and nature of mission? How does Christian mission relate to other religions? Historically Christian Missions have had four motivations: conversion (or Soteriology which emphasizes on a "personal" decision to repent of sins and turn to Christ), eschatology, church planting, and philanthropy (Bosch, 1996*:* 360).

Historically "missions" have stressed church planting in the absence of cultural understanding leading to the creation of mirror image churches similar to the sending church or denomination. Missions have stressed philanthropy, helping communities with food, medicine, education, doctors, dentists, new orphanages, and new church buildings; but from the "western" point of view. Finally, the most revered but often forgotten part of missions has been the idea of educating persons regarding eschatology and soteriology; then bringing them

to a personal decision for Christ (Bosch, 1996: 360). But this philosophy often leaves God out of the focus of *missio dei* (Nel, 2015: 96).

Stepping away from the "historical" lens, our perspective brings us to the idea that both the church and mission are to be one in the same tool of God to be used by God to bring about His kingdom in the hearts of people. God's work is universal therefore not limited by a "western worldview." Newbigin (1997:18) points out that the overwhelming motive for the mission is the love of God for His creation. Bosch (1996:390-391) takes it a step further proposing that the mission of God or *missio dei* must constantly be renewed and reconceived for the 21st century world for the church both inside and outside the borders of Western culture.

The 21st Century *missio dei* includes a greater awareness that the church needs to be more holistic, contextual, and complex because it needs to be relevant to a world that is increasingly defined by globalization, secularism, technology, urbanization, hyper-consumerism, postmodernism, and economic inequality and why because God is and always has been holistic, contextual, and complex. The 20th century local church has tended to place missions and *missio dei* aside allowing others to do that "work." This is now evident within the 21st century church. Theologians in the 21st century have witnessed the change within churches. Churches are no longer fellowships but rather they have become "social" clubs leading to secularization and the loss of Christ at the center (Newbigin, 1997: 127, 160; Nel, 2015: 57).

Culturally in the United States of America, we are facing the breakdown of the family and thus the loss of a sense of belonging. Emil Brunner (Wickeri, 2004: 187-191) once wrote "a church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." Therefore, Brunner is saying that the church cannot exist if there is no mission, because the Gospel's message is central to mission, central to the church, and cannot be dissected apart (Wickeri, 2004: 187-191).

What does *missio dei* mean to the local church; has it heard the call of God to their communities? Do "programs'' disciple and foster spiritual growth and deeper understandings of faith? Does the church train, support, and encourage its members to practice their faith not just in church but at the grocery store or in the movie theater, or at the laundromat? Do youth groups prepare their members for the next steps in life as churched emerging adults? The answer is more than just a yes, no, or maybe it lies in the foundations of theology and mission as set forth in the church and then practiced in America. *Missio Dei (missiology)* must be practiced, preached, and be the focus of our churches. The goal of this chapter is to understand the foundation of the Church and how the life of Christ, the Gospel, has suddenly in the later years become less and less important to the church and its people (Nel, 2015: 111).

Since the church exists for the sake of Jesus Christ the One who brought it into existence "then as a creation of God it is accountable to God" (Nel, 2015*: 90*). Hence, "developing a missional church is essentially about guiding a congregation to exist in such a way that the Name of the only living God is glorified" (König, 1972*:92-98*). The term missional was first laid out by Roxburgh and Boren as an invitation for people to reimagine or come into alignment with God's imagination regarding what He wants in and through the church (VanGelder, 2007*:33*).

VanGelder (2007*: 33-34*) writes about developing a Missional Framework by laying out what a missional congregation is NOT exclusively based on any of the following, in other words a Missional Church may include one of these but is much more than any one of these ten things VanGelder (2007) lists:

1. The Missional Church is not based upon the life of one man but rather the wholeness of the Trinity.

2. The Missional Church is not labeled missional due to their externally cross-cultural emphasis.

3. The church is not missional based upon outreach programs and external focus.

4. Missional church is not another label for church growth and effectiveness.

5. Missional church is not a label for churches that are effective at evangelism.

6. Missional church is not a label to describe a church that has a clear mission statement with a vision and purpose for their existence.

7. Missional church is not a way of turning around ineffective and outdated church forms so that they can display relevance in the wider culture.

8. Missional church is not a label that points to a primitive or ancient way of being the church.

9. Missional is not a label to describe a new format of church that reaches people who have no interest in traditional churches.

2.4.2 Characteristics of a Missional Church

According to Scott Thomas (2011: 1-11), there are ten well known characteristics of a Missional Church these include:

1. The missional church is committed to the authoritative, infallible, inerrant, inspired Scriptures.

2. The missional church understands the centrality of the Gospel expressed in all aspects of life – the missional church is not dependent upon programs or methods but rather by the transforming power of the Gospel.

3. Gatherings are characterized by Christ-centered worship, preaching of the Gospel, prayer, Lord's Supper, and Baptism.

4. A missional church understands it has been sent by God as missionaries in their own culture – "it is not about realigning our Bible to the culture, but by God's grace, realigning the culture to the Bible (Thomas, 2011:3)."

5. The Missiological Church is boldly and intentionally promoting the Gospel through making disciples and church planting globally through collaborative expressions of mercy and generosity for the advancement of God's mission in all nations but not exclusively so.

6. A missional church is dependent upon the Holy Spirit to empower and lead believers as agents for evangelizing and making disciples. They proclaim the truth with boldness dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. Missional churches use relationships and sacrificial love as expressions of love to others on their journey toward faith.

8. The goal of a missional church is to walk in community with others as Jesus pursues them in His own way and timing.

9. A missional church does not exist for itself; it is a hands-on training ground for Christians.

10. Godly, biblically qualified elders are needed to lead a missional church. Just like Titus was commissioned by Paul we need our churches to have qualified elders who can equip non-vocational leaders to lead and share in the responsibility for the mission and for the discipling of new believers (Thomas, 2011: 7). These ten things are crucial to a solid understanding of the Missional Church. Thomas and VanGelder seem to contradict each other but in fact what they are trying to say is that to be a missional church you must be noted for all of these hallmarks not just one; and that having "missionaries" all over the world does not make the church missional.

2.4.3 The Kingdom Church

Looking at the world within which we "the church" live should direct our theology of mission, of evangelism and of discipleship. These would fall into the idea of kingdom ministry. The Kingdom of God is directly concerned with the entirety of the human situation. It seeks to transform the lives of people through ministry-based evangelism and mission. The hallmarks of a Kingdom Church will be holistic, inclusivistic, global minded, indigenization, enculturation, incarnation, tolerance, reconciliation, cross-cultural, incarnational, communication oriented, catalytic, and transforming mission as is the heart of God (White, 2002: 33). What does it mean to be a Kingdom Church? According to Ron Johnson (2004:473-495) a Kingdom church is not concerned only with growth but rather with every aspect of the human situation. A Kingdom church's goal is to communicate the gospel to the present culture in order to see transformation within the lives of our community. A Kingdom church is known for its centrifugal ministry. (Centrifugal force pushes away from itself). Thus, centrifugal ministry is focused upon the community's needs; it considers culture and context, a community in need of the transforming power of God (Johnson, 2004: 473-495). Therefore, a church should not attempt to build the kingdom of God but rather joins God as GOD builds His Kingdom. This is crucial for the local church finding itself within postmodernity trying to minister to churched emerging adults while maintaining a sense of tradition and wholeness.

The signs of a thriving Kingdom Church would be similar to those of a missional church under God's rule, and what does it look like when his rule is taken seriously? According to Nel (2015: 95) a few things stand out: "People love Him as the only true God; People bring more than offerings they give of themselves; People live in peace with one another in a community built on fairness and justice; People show to one another and to God the love, devotion, and concern that God first showed them." When a congregation follows Christ under the guidance of the Spirit they become a sign of the Kingdom, a Kingdom Church. Thus, it is vital to follow Christ as the head of the congregation in order to understand the church as part of the Kingdom (Nel, 2015: 95).

2.5. Congregational Studies

The study of congregations has been an ongoing discipline beginning at the dawn of the 20th century, but it was not until the late 1980's that the field was properly named "Congregational Studies" (Ammerman, et al.; 1998: 10). Congregational studies are a form of sociological research, intended to give an exact picture of the realities of church life. The underlying motivation is the desire to better understand the relationship between "social change and congregational life" as a means for further growth within church life (Ammerman, et al.; 1998: 15).

The field of congregational studies is extensive and Ammerman et al. (1998*:* 10) identified six categories under which congregational studies are assembled these include: Ecological Studies which focus on the sociology of church and community (e.g., Dudley, 1991*:* 74-75; Ammerman, et al.; 1998*:* 82; Wuthnow, 1993; Eiesland, 2000). Cultural Studies which focus on the congregation as a community (e.g., Ammerman, et al.;1998*:* 15; Dudley & Johnson, 1993; Roof, 1993; Becker & Eiesland, 1997). Process Studies which analyze how congregations organize themselves (e.g. Ammerman, et al.; 1998*:* 15; Roof, 1978; Halverstadt, 1991; Gillespie, 1995; Becker, 1999). Resource Studies which focus on the fiscal resources and management within a church (e.g. Ammerman, et al., 1998*:* 132-166; Hoge, Zech, McNamara & Donahue, 1996, Wuthnow, 1993). Leadership Studies and Theological Studies which focus on how churches lead and form a Biblical foundation (e.g., Ammerman, et al., 1998*:* 16-17; Carroll 1991; Hahn, 1994; Wimberly, 1997; Browning, 1996; Anderson & Foley, 1998; Guder. 1998). And finally, the seventh category which collects all of the above six is General Studies (e.g. Hope, Carroll, & Scheets, 1989; Wind & Lewis, 1994; Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley & McKinley, 1998*:* 1- 33). These scholars have highlighted upwards of thirty-six socio/religious trends found within postmodernity (Ammerman, et al.; 1998*:* 1-33).

In the United States there are three basic church models: the traditional model, the corporate model, and the Kingdom/missional model (Nel, 2015*:* 97). It is important to note first that all church models begin with the Head Leadership and that is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Under Christ the church is overseen by a group of elders, or pastors who are the spiritual leaders of the church. In

Acts 6:1-4 we see that in the early church, in addition to spiritual matters, the Apostles also encountered other things that needed attention and in order to stay primarily focused on the spiritual aspects of the church they appointed deacons (Ammerman, 1998*:* 33).

Hence, the traditional model was born during the Middle Ages when the church held a primary role in everyday life. They still considered Christ as its head, under him there are pastors / elders / priests, and under them the deacons. Today the roles of deacons vary from denomination to denomination, for some like the Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church deacons function as priests/ministers in training, but in others they serve in different leadership roles (Honeycutt, 2001*:* 2-3). The traditional model continues to thrive even after modernity dawned in many denominations including the Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church, and the Methodist Church. In the traditional model various aspects like finances or hiring are overseen by the board members or the diocese (Honeycutt, 2001*:2*-3).

Over the decades numerous denominations or individual churches who have grown exponentially have adapted the traditional model into the corporate model. The corporate model still maintains the pastors/elders as the spiritual leaders, but they are also more like a CEO of an organization. As the CEO they directly oversee everything including the various ministries and the finances with some input by a church board made up of elected members. Smaller churches are in some ways easier to oversee because you do not need a large team but in other ways everything is the job of the pastor or a group of unpaid volunteers. Larger churches and mega churches usually

have a team of pastors as well as a full corporate office team with business managers, secretaries, accountants, etc (Wuthnow, 1993*: 1-3; Nel, 2015*: 26-27).

A recent congregational study by the Baylor Institute for the Studies of Religion (2016*: 1-234) has found that the postmodern church is in yet another evolution one that is leading us to ask new questions because our members are demanding change as they see their churches dying which leads us back to the purpose of this study which is to give congregations a chance to grasp "missio dei" and reach out to churched emerging adults thereby saving their churches.

2.6. Congregational Culture – *Missio Dei* as Inclusive

The "Study of Exemplary Congregations in Youth Ministry" by Thomas Berkas found that congregational culture generates four spheres of relationships and practices that intersect and impact the faith of young people and the entire congregation. These include Congregational Faith, Age Appropriate Ministries, Household and Personal Faith Development and Leadership. The study shows that the key is the power of the intergenerational faith community. Young adults who grow up in a multi-generational faith community with quality relationships informed by a strong faith in Jesus Christ know a personal present God who is living and active. Thus, according to Roberto (2012*: 14) "the power of faithful, multi-generational Christian relationships is at the heart of congregational culture that develops and nurtures Christian faith in all ages and generations." Seibel and Nel (2010*: 1) present the importance of the church's

intergenerational calling as crucial, charging the church with the challenge of perpetuating its faith tradition from one generation to the next. *Missio dei* calls for the church to take its intergenerational dynamics seriously. The missional church is the bearer of tradition and yet it is inclusive in character (Seibel & Nel, 2010*: 1*). *Missio dei* is the heart of God for the church. Remember that God's work is not limited by a worldview or a generation it is universal and eternal.

Chapter 3 – Churched *Emerging Adulthood* and Youth Ministry Theory

3.1.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduced the purpose of this research as the identification and conceptualization of the characteristics required for the local church to meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults*. Chapter Two looks at congregational studies with regard to the history of the church, its foundational writings, along with the characteristics of the Missional or Kingdom Church. Chapter Three will explore the complexities of the history and its effect upon generational differences with the intention of focusing upon the new sociological phenomenon *emerging adulthood*. Chapter Three is divided into three sections: The Generational Concerns Related to Youth Ministry, A Historical Perspective of Youth Ministry, and The Theological Approaches to Youth Ministry.

Chapter three explains "community/culture" in terms of the historical developments leading to the ethos of the 21st century and postmodernism, in particular how "community/culture" relates to religion. Culture is like glue that sticks a group of people (a community) together; it helps maintain belief systems, traditions, and the arts within a diverse and often overpowering society (Johnson, 2005). Culture refers to a group, one might even say a community, which shares common experiences that shape the way its members understand the world (Philips, 2018, 92). Subsequently, it is critical to have a better understanding of culture, community, and postmodernism in order for the local church to use wisdom and discernment in reaching the next generation (Osmer, 2005; Barber, 2012).

3.1.2: Community and Culture in Light of Postmodernity.

Postmodern society's foundations are based upon a *rebellion against* modernity (Lakeland, 2010). According to historians and philosophers, the age of modernity began in 1660 and ended in 1900 (Foucault & Carrette, 1999; Bernauer & Carrette, 2004). Modernity, also known as the Age of Enlightenment, was an intellectual movement (Grenz, 1996). Jurgen Habermas stated, "the project of modernity…held the extravagant expectation that the arts and sciences would further not only the control of the forces of nature (sciences) but also the understanding of self and the world, moral progress, justice …. and even human happiness (Habermas 2001, 162-63).

Modernity attacked the church, specifically the church of the Middle Ages which stood as the center of education and life, by trying to prove that the Bible was simply a set of fairy tales or myths. Scientists through extensive research claimed that there are in fact scientific explanations behind Biblical stories including creation and the seven plagues (Grenz, 1996). Modernity made science the new "religion;" thus leading the subsequent generations to be firm in their zeal for scientific truth. Modernity placed the quest for knowledge (which is always for good and not for evil), through science and technology, and self at the center of life; thus, replacing the church and family (Grenz, 1996).

The end of modernity was instigated during Friedrich Nietzsche's time. He was known as the "greatest foe of modernity." Nietzsche wrote: "God is Dead, God Remains Dead, and We have killed him;" he was suggesting that the acceptance of God's death would end the long-established standards of morality and purpose thereby freeing society from the constraints of religion. Deconstruction was a direct impulse by many scholars to dismantle the Enlightenment project, as many began to believe that there is no one unifying factor or concept. God is dead in the hearts of modern people killed by rationalism and science; but further buried by a world no longer convinced in an eternal power or that "knowledge was inherently good" (Grenz, 1996:7).

Nietzsche's faithful disciple was Michel Foucault who became known as the most "influential and flamboyant philosopher of postmodernism (Birkey, 2009). Therefore, Nietzsche and Foucault had rung the bell that ended the modern age (Birkey, 2009).

Postmodernism has one particularly important trait or hallmark. The identifying hallmark is the absolute denial of the possibility of the existence of absolute truth (Best and Kellner, 1991). Postmodernism claims that TRUTH is simply a "created" morality by a particular social group that is then forced upon others in order to use knowledge and power to manipulate and suppress them. This explains the determination of Postmodern Scholars' desire to "deconstruct" any type of "religion" or "truth claim" (Bauman, 1987).

Tim Keller (2001) states, "in this view, all truths and facts are now in question marks." Therefore, when the church claims to have "truth" instantly there are postmodern scholars like Martin Irvine (2013), Steven Best (1990) and Douglas Kellner (1991) ready to pick apart these claims in an effort to prove their "postmodern" or "millennial" agenda. It is important to understand that Postmodern thought is not brand new but rather has evolved and developed over a number of decades (Hermida, 2008).

Postmodernism is a wide-ranging term which is applied to literature, art, philosophy, architecture, fiction, religion, and cultural/literary criticism. It is a reaction to the assumed certainty of the scientific or objectivity of the era (Best and Kellner, 1991). Postmodernists are highly skeptical of an explanation, which claim to be valid for all people groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person's life (Bauman, 2002). In the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually. Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will often be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal (Kellner, 2005).

Foucault (Foucault & Carrette, 1999) celebrated the complexity of post modernity and championed the atheist mindset. Key influences of Postmodernism are the DEATH of God, Objective Truth, Exclusive Truth, Objective Meaning, Thinking/Logic, Objective Interpretation, and Objective Values. Foucault's influence continues to guide many Generation X and Millennials as they reject, their grandparents and parents, Christian morality (Birkey, 2009).

The postmodern attack on religion in particular Christianity is quite different from that of modernity. David Dockery (2001) in his book *the Challenge of Postmodernism* explains: "Postmodernists critique Christianity by claiming that Christians think they have the only TRUTH." Thus, religious people, including Christians, are considered "intolerant" because they often attempt to convince others to believe in Jesus Christ (Dockery, 2001). This is an overview of postmodernism.

3.2 Youth Ministry – Generational Considerations: The Hallmarks of Each Generation

Generations born into the postmodern world often suffer from the loss of identity. Living in a world where there are no absolutes, where truth is considered relative; it means having no foundation, no stability, no meaning to life, and no identity. This can even manifest itself as having no place in the universe (loss of centrality). There is a sense of blurring the real and the unreal, a destruction of Western capitalism, and a social manipulation of class (Bauman, 2016). These ideas lead us to ask what hallmarks or characteristics express their identity as a cohesive generation.

3.2.1 Maturing in the United States: Six Generations Living Together

Years accumulate; change transpires with each generation as they fashion themselves as explorers with edits of the past, crystallization of inspiration and engineering of new roads to create the way for themselves. According to Jill Novak (2015), currently in America, there are six very distinct generations. Each of the six living generations in the United States has specific qualities and historical events that have shaped the people's evolution (Pew Research, 2014).

Each generation can be generalized and differentiated from earlier or future generations in terms of overall likes, dislikes, and attributes all formed out of shared experiences. These collective experiences have set ideologies especially in terms of family and religion. The church is aware of the ever-changing world but has found it difficult to adapt without losing their closely held "traditions" (Novak, 2015). Jill Novak (2015) wrote *The Six Generations Living in America,* she states that the generations include: the GI Generation, the Mature/Silent Ones, the Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y or Millennials, and Generation Z or Boomlets.

3.2.2 The GI-Generation or Traditionalists

Novak (2016) put together a list of distinctive features for each generation. The oldest generation living in the United States and still contributing are what many term the "Greatest Generation," "the GI-Generation" or "Traditionalists" they were born between 1901 and 1926, they are the children of WWI, and they fought during WWII after living through the Great Depression; all leading to an ideology of teamwork to overcome when life is difficult and push forward toward progress and the future (Novak, 2016). They are assertive, team players, community minded, have a strong sense of morality (what is right from wrong) and civic duty. The idea of loyalty went beyond God, Family, and Nation. They started social organizations including the Lions Club, Rotary, Masonic Lodge, and labor unions. For the GI Generation there is no such thing as retirement. Marriage is for life. Sex and pregnancy outside of marriage are not acceptable. They avoided debt and knew life before technology including the radio and jet planes. Finally, the "Traditionalists" place importance on their personal faith passed down from their parents, church, and community (Novak, 2016; Hole, Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010).

3.2.3 The Mature Silent's

The next generation is the "Mature/ Silent's" who were born between 1927 and 1945, their formative years were during WWII known as a time of conformity. As children they grew up listening to the radio reports from Europe and then Japan during WWII. Marriage and family, jobs, and church were traditional and a lifetime commitment (Novak, 2016). Divorce and intercultural marriages were not acceptable to society. Reading newspapers and listening to records and the radio were their favorite past-times. They are often seen as hard working, disciplined, self-sacrificing, and cautious (Hole, Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010).

The Mature/ Silent's are expected to train for, start, or stay at the same job or in the same company for their entire adult lives. This was a freedom because they knew without a doubt what their income would be allowing them to save for their children's education and own a second "vacation" home or cabin in the woods. Jobs for all, suburbs, subdivisions, television, big band/swing music, and innovative sporty or ultra-comfortable cars became part of life. They took time to dance, entertain, and enjoy their families/neighbors. Church was important, often quite ritualistic and always heartfelt. The Silent Generation adapted, changed, and continued to contribute; many have chosen to use their retirements to give back to the world starting with their communities and churches (Novak, 2016; Hole, Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010).

3.2.4 Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomers, eighty million strong, were born between 1946 and 1964 but they are divided into two subsets. The first subgroup or subset came to be thought of as the "save the world revolutionaries" they dealt with the aftermath of WWII, lived under the idea of morality and moral authority. Feminism and Civil Rights were central to the ideology of the 50's and 60's. Mothers had begun to pursue part-time or full-time professions, creating the two income households and children who inevitably spent a lot of time alone. Rock 'n Roll emerged as does the first "TV generation" who were less likely to be neighborly (Hole. Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010).

The Baby Boomers also sought after the "American Dream" which led to the second subset which is known as the "party hearty and career climbing hippies", (yuppies). Hippies are considered to be part of a "youth culture" that found, experimented with drugs and experienced "free love/sex/birthcontrol." Divorce rates rose, along with the acceptance of homosexuality. Both fit in the anti-war, pro-equal rights, equal opportunity, question everything, spend now, pay/worry later, whose careers define them. They are a generation for whom medicine, friendships, hobbies, and personal outlook will mean a long life with plenty of time to enjoy their retirements. Today, many remain engaged in fellowship and cling to the power of God despite the closing of many churches (Novak, 2016; Hole, Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010).

3.2.5 Generation X

Generation Xers were born between 1965 and 1980, and they were the first generation of "latchkey" kids. "Latch key" children went home, after school, to an empty house, because both of their parents were working. Thus, they grew up isolated, but also street-smart. Which lead to an individualistic nature. They are often cynical when it comes to big business and unimpressed by authority (Hole, Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010).

Generation Xers' strategy is to change their neighborhood, not the world. This stems from the failure of the Vietnam War. Values are relative and subsequently they see society as disposable. They often marry late and divorce easily creating single parent households. Moreover, they remember a time when computers were not used in everyday life. While Generation Xers were at the helm, the transition from written knowledge to digital information took place (Novak, 2016; Hole, Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010).

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) came on the scene in the 1980's and is the only lethal infectious disease that was not subjected to quarantine and thus it has spread continent to continent with no end in sight (Novak, 2016; Hole, Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010). This was shocking and affected the spirit of the age. Much like the hippie movement of the 60's and 70's the MTV generation of the 80's and 90's is a youth culture based upon music and popular culture. Generation Xers are known for being individualistic, entrepreneurial, anti-government, and anti-big business; but had a strong work ethic

and were driven. They are part of the formations of the more "corporate" model in churches which has in essence made church irrelevant to their personal lives (Novak, 2016). This generation parented the Millennials and in many cases allowed church to be a choice for their children.

3.2.6 The Millennials / Generation Y

The Generation Y/Millennials were born between 1984 and 2000. History places 9/11 at a pivotal moment in their formative years. Generation Y is a completely digital generation, they do not remember a world not dominated by computers and technology (Novak, 2016; Hole, Zhong, Schwartz, and Clugston, 2010). Thus, they are the first generation with schedules and digital datebooks to organize their daily lives. Millennials love brand names and using credit cards as money is second nature to them. As a consequence, they are more likely to be in debt. They are willing to work in teams and tend to see their jobs as a part of their daily routine that needs to be in balance or harmony with their lives and their social involvement. They often seek work with flex time, telecommuting, and sabbaticals to maintain their hobbies (Novak, 2016; Pew Research, 2011).

Psychologist Shelly Buffington (2011) author *Exiting Oz: How the New American Workforce is Changing the Face of Business Forever and What Companies Must Do to Thrive*, writes that "most managers have absolutely no clue how to manage the millennial generation." Technology has changed their lifestyle and thus their attitude

toward their work environment. Often questioning why they should work from a cubicle if they can be just as effective from home or the skate park. Time and flexibility are more important than financial compensation or benefits. Bill Gates and Steve Jobs are their heroes (Buffington, 2011).

Social Media has given millennials a new type of intelligence followed by different talents: quick thinking, technological savvy, and globally connected. Dan Schwable and Buckingham (2014) authors of *Promote Yourself: The New Rules for Career Success* state, because of social networks everyone has to think and ask themselves, "What is my reputation?" Because if people want to stand out to recruiters who will be looking online, they must build an online presence and a personal brand or the competition (who has already built their personal brand) will take their job. The rules of communication, dress and lifestyle have changed drastically (Schwable and Buckingham, 2014).

The parents of the Y generation for the most part did not make the tenants of the Christian faith a focus in their home, in fact often they would say, "we will be neutral and when the child grows up, he or she can make a personal decision about what Religion or church they would like to follow / join (Buffington, 2015)." The same is true of sexuality and gender identity (Novak, 2015).

Generation Y has strong ties to their parents, and many live at home after high school or college. Jeffery Arnett (2014, p 12.) tells us "adolescence is a distinct new chapter in life that will be around for many generations to come, today's extended adolescence is not a problematic distortion of the life cycle, but rather an entirely new developmental stage that extends from age 18 to the mid or late 20's," Arnett (2014) calls this new developmental stage *emerging adulthood*.

3.2.7 Generation Z or Boomlets

Generation Z or "Boomlets" were born after 2001. In 2006 there was a record number of births in the United States, of which 49% were Hispanic. Currently they are two age groups the "tweens" ages eight to twelve and the "toddlers" age's two to four (Novak, 2015). They are historically remarkable in their ability to spend money $51 billion dollars are spent by tweens every year with an additional $170 Billion spent by their parents and grandparents on their behalf (Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project, 2017). Sixty-one percent have a television in their room, seventy-five percent have video games, and eighty-five percent have personal cell phones, computers or tablets, or all three. Many Boomlets have "eco-fatigue" they are tired of hearing about the environment (Vox, 2009).

Decisively with the advent of the computer and web-based learning children are leaving toys behind at younger and younger ages, thus toy companies including Mattel have seen their target age drop from ten years old to four or five years old. It is projected that the target will drop to 3 years old in the near future. Unless innovations in technology makes toys more relevant to Generation Z (Vox, 2009). The church's role in the life of Generation Z is yet to be understood. While we see churches closing, buildings re-purposed or bulldozed, we do not know the lasting impact of the aforementioned changes upon the spiritual life of this generation (Novak, 2015).

Thus, the generations born into a postmodern world suffer the loss of identity and a loss of centrality. Living in a world where there are no absolutes, where truth is considered, relative means some individuals have no foundation, no stability, no meaning to life, and no personal identity. This uncertainty often manifests itself as individuals have no place in the universe. There is a sense of blurring between the real and the unreal, a destruction of Western capitalism, a social manipulation of class, and more awareness of the world around them (Best and Kellner, 1991).
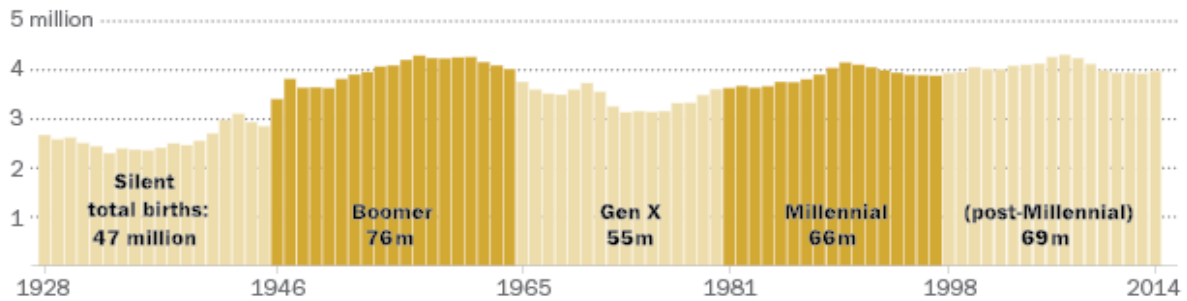
Chart of Generations

Greatest Generation GI Generation 1900-1925 47 million	Silent Generation or the Builders 1925 – 1945 76 million	Baby Boomers 1946 – 1964 78 million	Generation X 1965 – 1983 66 million[2]	Millennials 1984 -2000 83 million	Generation Z – Post Millennials or Boomlets 2000 - 2020 73 million
WWI – pivotal moment	WWII – pivotal moment	JFK is Assassinated – pivotal moment	End of the Cold War – pivotal moment	9/11 the pivotal moment	Record Number of Births
WWII Teamwork Assertive Team Players Community Minded Sense of Morality Loyalty to God, Family and Nation Social Organizations No Retirement Marriage was for life No Sex Outside of Marriage Avoided Debt Pre-Technology Personal Faith	Era of Conformity Radio Jet Planes Marriage, Family, Jobs, and Church were traditional and commitments Newspapers Records and Radio American Dream Hardworking Disciplined Self-sacrificing Cautious Saved for education and retirement. (Retirement was about giving back to the world instead of relaxing) Comfortable Cars	2 Subsets: "Save the World Revolutionaries" Morality and Moral Authority Feminism Civil Rights "Career Climbers" Women Professionals Rock n Roll TV Generation 2 Income Families Youth Culture – drugs, free love/ sex, anti-war, spend now / pay later, workaholics, Divorce Rate Rise Homosexuality Equal Opportunity Long Life / Long Retirements Cling to the Power of God – not church	Individualistic Latch Key Kids – Isolated Childhoods Unimpressed by Authority Cynical to Big Business Values are relative Society is Disposable HIV hits the scene Marry Later Divorce Easily Single Parent Households Anti-government Anti-big business MTV "music" Culture Transition to Digital World Driven Take on massive debt for the chance at dreams Church becomes Irrelevant	The Digital Generation Schedules and Digital Datebooks Brand Names Credit Cards Lg. National Debt Teamwork Flex Time Globally Connected Reputation is Important Social Media Online-Presence Personal Brand Telecommuting Sabbaticals taken for Hobbies Gender and Sexual Identity become a Choice No Defined Faith Strong ties to parents Extended Adolescence Mega – Church Gen.	49% Hispanic 61% TV in Bedrooms 75% Video Games 85% Cell Phone, Computer, or Tablets or a combination Toys are obsolete. Computer and Web-based Learning Eco-Fatigue Blurring between the Real – Unreal Destruction of Western Capitalism Social Manipulation of Class International Awareness Churches Closing Church Role is Unknown

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[2] **Numbers include immigration statistics. "American Generation Fast Facts"** *CNN Library*
http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/06/us/baby-boomer-generation-fast-facts/

Chart 2 - Births in Each Generation

Births Underlying Each Generation

Number of U.S. births by year and generation

Source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services National Center for Health Statistics

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Chart 3 - Projected Population Chart

Projected population by generation

In millions
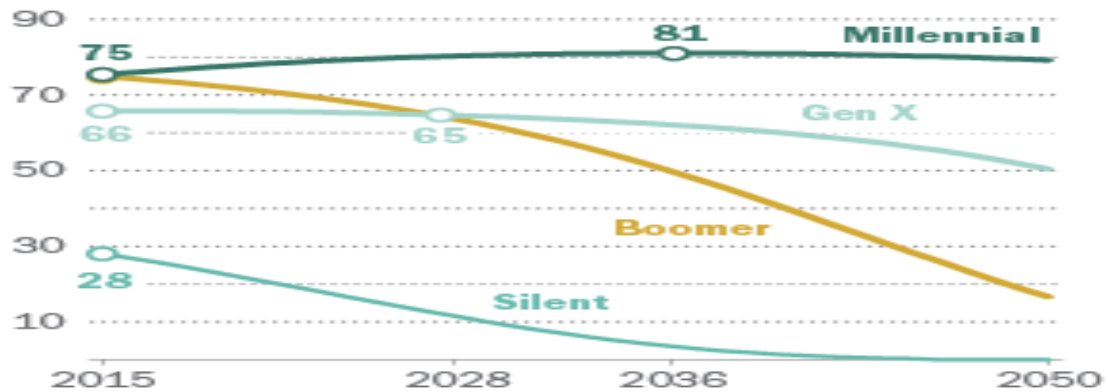
Note: Millennials refers to the population ages 18 to 34 as of 2015.
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau population projections released December 2014 and 2015 population estimates

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3. 3: *Emerging Adults* – A New Life Stage

Research set forth by Arnett in 1998 found that there is in fact a new "life stage" which falls between adolescence and adulthood. David Setran and Chris Kiesling (2013) took this research further in their book "Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood." The aim of this research is to understand at a deeper level who *churched emerging adults* are and why they often feel, in the words of Jeffery Arnett, "transparent to the local church" (Arnett, 1998). Arnett claims in his new book "Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road" published in 2014; that there are five characteristics common to *emerging adults* including: identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between adolescence and adulthood, and the idea of a plethora of future possibilities.

In 2019, *emerging adults* (ages 18 to 35) are no longer made up by one generation and thus the different characteristics of these generations must be taken into account. These characteristics will have a greater or lesser effect upon the local church, but the overall congregational practices will have to adapt to their needs. Research will allow for an understanding of the current relationship between churched *emerging adults* and the local church and the changes that may help the church find its way from today into the 22nd Century. These will be large overarching key changes, not small generation specific changes, but rather changes needed because of the advent of a new life stage *emerging adulthood* that needs to be addressed theologically.

Generation X *emerging adults* are described as "spiritual" but not "religious" (Kinnaman, 2011, 35). While <u>Huffington Post's</u> Macrina Cooper-White's article "Millennials are the Least Religious Generation Yet and Here is the Surprising Reason Why (Sept 14, 2015)," states that unlike Gen Xers, Millennials are significantly less "religious" and much less "spiritual" than any other generation. This is due to a rise in individualism as part of a cultural shift. "Individualism" is a cultural system which places more emphasis on self than on the society around them. Thus, it conflicts directly with religion as organized religion usually involves certain rules that go along with being part of any organized group (Cooper-White, 2015).

According to the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA students across diverse institutions have "very high levels of spiritual interest and a desire to spend time exploring the meaning and purpose of life" (Astin, A. W., Astin, H.A., and Lindholm, J.A.; 2011: 4). Leading sociologists conclude that there is an intensification of spiritual awareness during this stage of life although Tim Clysdesdale (2007) points out that:

> Asking incoming American College Freshman whether they have an interest in spirituality is like asking a soldier in a trench whether he has an interest in world peace. To learn that most agree should not surprise us the critical questions are whether indicating interest in religious and spiritual life makes a difference in present activities and long-range goals.

According to Eddie Williams (May 23, 2013), in his article "21st Century Church: A Call to a New Kind of Church for a New Culture" the Christian Church must take a step back and look at a couple of crucial factors which are leading to the decline of the church in America. First is the "church bubble", is the sheltered sphere within which its members were born and raised, where they made friends and served, where they spent their free time and married. They had no non-Christian friends, and they only watched and/or listened to Christian music, TV-shows, TV and Radio channels, news stations, and radio stations. They vacation at Christian retreat centers and attend crusades and Christian concerts. Often, they send their kids and grandkids to Christian schools; to them the world is perfect within the church bubble (Willliams, May 23, 2013).

Second, is the idea of the "same old church." Interestingly, this has shifted and changed but not positively. Churches have made entertainment and soft politics and soft sermons their strategy removing Jesus and sin & redemption from the picture. Many churches have abandoned teaching the cross in favor of rock concerts and movies. These may have worked in the 80's and 90's, but that was in an era where hellfire and brimstone were preached from the pulpit on a weekly basis and it served the purpose of bridging the gap between adults and teenagers. In the 21st century most churches no longer teach sin and repentance because they do not want to offend the non-Christian visitors. The adverse effects of not teaching the truth based upon sound theology are smaller than the adverse effects (Williams, May 23, 2013).

Thus Williams (May 23, 2013) suggests that the local 21ˢᵗ Century Church needs to focus on four important aspects: 1. Preach the Word – he states that we would be surprised to find out how little our church members know about the Word of God. 2. Contextualize Our Churches, in other words make sure we are looking at the demographics and needs around us and adapting as needed. 3. Make Disciples of every generation and 4. Finally, "Let's Pretend the Holy Spirit Has a Say" in Church.

Penny Edgell in her article <u>Faith and Spirituality Among *Emerging Adults*</u> states that, "the religious landscape in the United States is in a period of long-term fundamental transformation starting with Generation X and all the evidence suggests that today's *emerging adults* will provide a catalyst that accelerates this transformation" (Edgell, Summer 2010, *Life Long Faith* Vol 4.2 pg 2). Frank Powell in his article, "10 Reasons Churches are NOT Reaching Millennials'' (2016, *Church Leaders.com*) discusses the pessimistic or negative feelings most churches have toward Millennials. Powell agrees with Edgell when he states, "the next generation is poised to transform the culture of the world," but he adds these crucial words "FOR THE GOOD" (Powell, 2016). According to Edgell (2010), churches tend to be resistant to change, *emerging adults* do not understand why churches feel the need to stay stuck in the mud of tradition, and in fact for many *emerging adults* traditions are not important. When families, communities, schools, and churches no longer have their traditions, lives are torn apart. This deeply affects both Generation X and Millennials, but in two very different ways, complicating the core work of the local church (Edgell, Summer 2010, <u>Life Long Faith</u> Vol 4.2 pg 2).

Both generations of emerging adults have a love-hate relationship with church. In an open letter from Jonathan Aigner, we read that they are tired of "being 'targeted' 'advertised to' and 'entertained,' enough is enough they are asking for a return to the Jesus of Nazareth, to a place where the deepest, grittiest, most desperate questions are asked and answered. No easy 'Jesusy clichés,' no 'three points and a take home,' no 'advice or therapy' no 'entertainment;' rather show us how to be the hands and feet of Christ, struggle with us as we grow and learn. It is not too late, but you will have to be as uncool, radical and different as Jesus was when He was on earth (Aigner, 2015)."

3.4 Youth Ministry – An Historical Perspective

3.4.1 Introduction:

Kinnaman (2011) claims that, "to respond effectively to the spiritual needs of the next generation, established institutions and communities must understand these young people be willing to work through the cultural confusion and change in appropriate, Biblical ways" realizing the seriousness of missing the mark entirely (35). In order to know how to "respond effectively" we must understand the History of Youth Ministry and Religious Education. Therefore, a basic sketch of Catechism, the Sunday School Movement, the advent of Youth Ministry, and Campus Ministry will be followed by an in-depth look at the History of Youth Ministry as well as the basic message behind them.

3.4.2 Religious Education: the Sunday School Movement and Youth Ministry

The theory behind the task of Sunday School and Youth Ministry is *religious education:* "the theological education of children and young adults" (Root, 2007). According to Price, Chapman, Carpenter, and Yarborough (1959: 5) "to educate comes from the Latin term *educare* in its first conjunctive form which means 'to nourish or nurture'." *Educare* also means "to lead out," this is the idea of the drawing out and development of a person through education (Price, Chapman, Carpenter, & Yarborough, 1959: 3). Thus, if we take the two ideas of Christian education to nourish/nurture and to lead/develop, we discover a full understanding of the Christian education process in which we teach information and then encourage the use or exercising of the newfound knowledge. Yet, the advent of modern religious education came on the heels of a need not to educate for the sake of bringing people to Christ but to educate as a means to correct behavior (Root, 2007). Tracing the historical line of Sunday School and Youth Ministry is an important part of understanding how we have arrived at the way in which Youth Ministry is practiced today.

3.4.3 Early Christian Education

The Early Christians made an effort to educate their converts this came out of the rich Jewish and Roman traditions where learning was highly prized. It was believed that a new convert must thoroughly understand the Gospel before he or she could

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make a conscious decision to follow Christ. The rich tradition of education through catechism goes back to 100 C.E. and continued through the centuries. Catechism pupils advanced through the stages from "hearers to kneelers to those approved for baptism" (Price, Chapman, Carpenter, & Yarborough, 1959: 54).

The work of the Monastic and Cathedral Schools played particular importance in the passing on of the historical traditions as well as the development of many doctrines, church decrees, prayer, and music. They also gave training to future monarchy throughout Europe thus coloring moral life for generations. Medieval Universities became places of outstanding teaching in the law, medicine, theology, and the seven liberal arts. They were known for excellent teachers who produced great thinkers and leaders including Dante, Wycliffe, Copernicus, Luther, and Calvin. These men ushered in the Reformation and with it the strongest apologetic for the value of religious education as a means for social progress (Price, Chapman, Carpenter, & Yarborough, 1959). But institutional education or higher education was a luxury for the wealthy or the powerful and over the years this led to uneducated masses whose spiritual life was guided on Sunday's if they could take the time off work to attend services.

3.4.4 The Sunday School Movement:

The rise of the Industrial Revolution brought poor peasant families from the countryside to the cities to work in factories. Children and youth had never worked outside the family home before, and the lifestyle was horrendous for both adults and children alike. This led to an immense number of children in the streets on Sundays roughhousing, running in gangs, pilfering, which also led to fighting and drunkenness. Education was not free in the 1700's and thus these children received no education and the family fell into chaos. Thus arose the most far-reaching educational activity in the field of religion since the Reformation: the Sunday School Movement and it had nothing to do with the church itself. Historically the origin of Sunday School or as it was known "Sabbath School" originated in the 18th century with Robert Raikes (1735-1811) and Thomas Stock (1750-1803) an Anglican priest and a printer from Gloucester, England who became concerned about these neglected children. They used their own money to print materials and then paid for them to be taught by either an older boy or a woman. Newspapers began to publish stories about the Sabbath Schools leading many Anglican churches to adopt similar programs (Digital.library.mcgill.ca, 2005). Soon John and Charles Wesley and William Fox reported and supported the Sunday School Movement and encouraged their integration into both the Methodist and Baptist Churches by 1785 (Drury, 2010).

Going to America brought freedom, from religious persecution and social castes, although it created a whole new set of challenges as survival meant work for every member of the family regardless of gender or age. The persecution from which they had fled bound the families together in prayer, scripture reading, and worship but often when they arrived in the new land the lack of resources shifted their focus away from spiritual matters and education. However, Edwin Wilbur Rice's (1917) book *The Sunday School Movement (1780 – 1917) and the American Sunday School Union (1817 -1917)* states that a new version of an old proverb fittingly describes the educational zeal of the founders of the American nation, "tell me what you are learning and I will tell you what you are…" (40). Regardless of their vastly different views on political matters the American founding Fathers were united in this truth, that education and religion are vitally necessary for the stability and happiness of any people (Rice, 1917: 40).

The Quakers in Philadelphia in 1790, just seven years after the Revolutionary War founded their "First Day Society" and began teaching the children of the poor. The Mennonites also set up schools to educate their children and teach Christian principles. Although churches would soon lose their grip on education, a new system would set the pace for public education in America (Price, Chapman, Carpenter, & Yarborough, 1959: 21). Some American ministers were reluctant to adopt Sunday School, but mothers were very vocal and the churches gradually came around and even began to allow women to teach some of the classes in the United States (it was common to have women teachers in Great Britain).

In 1830-1860's the Sunday School Union began to send missionaries West, which was a feat as they had only three full time administrators overseeing dozens of volunteers. Churches began to see Sunday School a part of the evangelistic strategies. The Sunday School Union developed a curriculum for every age group. Denominations asked publishing houses to print and sell theology specific curriculum which continues to flourish today (Price, Chapman, Carpenter, & Yarborough, 1959).

3.4.5 Birth of the Modern Youth Group:

The Industrial Revolution and the Great Missionary Awakening in 1787 – 1930 played a large role in launching a whole range of young people's societies. In 1867 Theodore Cuyler formed the first youth group program in his church. Not long after churches all around him followed with weekly meetings specifically for young people. The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was formed in 1881 under Dr. Francis Clark, Pastor of Williston Congregational Church in Portland, Maine. These led to many new Denominational Youth Programs including the Epworth League (Methodist) 1889, the Baptist Young People's Society 1891, and the Luther League 1895(Price, Chapman, Carpenter, & Yarborough, 1959).

By the opening of the 20th century youth groups in churches had become commonplace throughout America. They gave young people a sense of belonging, a place to take part in Godly things, and hope. And yet youth groups were not the same thing as Sunday School, in fact a great dichotomy existed. Where Sunday School was

about teaching theologically based catechesis. The Youth group was left to be "incidental, or at least the so-called "unofficial" or autonomous category" (Nel, 2000: 8). Churches now had a place within which to fulfill the Great Commission while also removing young adults from the harmful influences found on the streets but there was not a theological structure within which they intentionally encouraged Christian growth. (Price, Chapman, Carpenter, & Yarborough, 1959).

3.4.6 Para-Church Organizations:

The Industrial Revolution birthed yet another organization, on June 6th, 1844, George Williams a draper who was concerned about the lack of healthy activities for young men in major cities created the Young Men's Christian Association. It was a specific answer to options available to young men after work, mainly gang violence, taverns, and brothels. Williams was concerned with the state of society at the time thus he founded an organization dedicated to "improving the spiritual condition of young men engaged in the drapery, embroidery, and other industrial trades" (Price, Chapman, Carpenter, & Yarborough, 1959: p, 252). George Williams stressed gender segregation, the Bible, and prayer. It was not a denominational organization, with sleeping quarters provided specifically to bring men out of the factories, off the streets and gave them a wholesome place to study and sleep. Thomas Valentine Sullivan saw the need in the United States and started the first YMCA in Old South Church in Boston on December 29, 1851. The Young Women's Christian Association developed in the United States and much like the men's it offered shelter, Bible studies and prayer. In

1853 Anthony Bowen, a freed slave, opened the first African American YMCA in Washington D.C. By 1855, there were YMCAs in the United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United States (Our History: A Brief History of the YMCA Movement, 2017). Soon varieties of other youth programs were intentionally developed and became well known they include (Senter, 2010, 111):

- Young Life – 1911 Arthur Wood in Great Britain; 1941 James Rayburn in USA

- International Child Evangelism Fellowship – 1923 J. Irwin Overholtz

- Young People's Church in the Air – 1929 Llyod Bryant

- Christian Service Brigade – 1937

- Pioneer Clubs – 1939

3.4.7 Campus Ministry

In the early 1700's Count Zinzendorf started societies for young men in Germany, where they would learn catechism and join choirs. The Moravian Church organized groups for young people of both sexes to encourage "spiritual experiences." Many who led in the settling of America held degrees from Oxford and Cambridge and soon after they arrived, they feared there would be an illiterate ministry so Harvard was founded in 1636 followed by Yale, Princeton, Brown and others. In 1706, the first Christian student organization was formed at Harvard University to promote study of the scriptures and "clean living". Charles Wesley followed with his "Holy Clubs" in

1729 a place for young men to seek religious conversion, practice prayer, and learn to study from the Greek New Testament as a means to finding the "ideal Christian experience" (Price, Chapman, Carpenter, Yarborough, 1959,). Campus groups continued to grow, focusing on providing students with a place to study the scriptures and to pray.

The 20th century brought with it many Para-church campus based organizations including: InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Nurses Christian Fellowship, Navigators, Youth for Christ International – Campus Life, Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth with a Mission, and the Theological Student Fellowship Denominations also started Campus Ministries that are not local church based including: the Baptist Student Union, United Methodist Campus Ministries, Reformed University Fellowship (Presbyterian), Blue Fish (Presbyterian), Episcopal Campus Ministries, and Lutheran Campus Ministries (Senter, 2010).   What Corbett and Johnson (1972: 3-5) wrote, is still true today:

> …large youth organizations emerged predominant from this early youth ministry. These large organizations encompassed all of the youth activities of the church and developed into highly structured national bodies…

Like many religious organizations and the church during the youth revolution of the sixties and seventies these organizations also suffered many setbacks. Despite this Christians everywhere maintained their support in a hope that the youth would remain in church (Nel, 2000). Youth Groups and Societies have always found their

success based upon young adults' needs for comradeship, a sense of belonging, enthusiasm and hope, involvement with responsibility for part of the planning, and shared leadership. According to Nel (2000: 57) "Christian young people have had to work together and fight together. From these motivations large and strong denominational ministries grew: one of the largest is the Southern Baptist Youth Ministry."

3.5 In Depth History of Youth Ministry

Youth ministry is more easily understood generationally if it is placed within a historical perspective. Three books have informed this section: Andre Root's book *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry* (2007), Mark Senter III's book *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in* America (2010), and John Pahl's book *Youth Ministry in Modern America* (2000), provides a set of time of historical time periods: Pre-1900; 1900 to 1940; 1940 to1960; and 1960 to 2000. Historically, childhood has always had a great significance within society but when did it end, and adulthood begin? Until after the early twentieth century "adolescence" did not exist in the minds and hearts of humanity.

3.5.1: Pre-1900's

The American concept of a young man or woman at the turn of the century was not based upon age, actually, it was based upon size. In fact, as soon as a young man or young woman was tall enough and strong enough to "do the work" they were sent to work. School was considered a luxury afforded only to the wealthy or the powerful, it was used to "better oneself" when work was complete for the day or the season (this is the primary reason that school was scheduled for winter months as these months meant less physical labor). Therefore, as early as twelve to fourteen years old a child became a young man or woman and began working full time. Young women became schoolteachers or seamstresses as young as fourteen to add to the family income (Hine, 2000: 16). Harvey Graff (1995: 66) describes the idea of *age synchronization* "there was relatively little of what has come to be called age synchronization, a standardized mark through childhood, adolescence, and youth on the road to adulthood." This did not include a few important activities including grammar school (in the winter) and apprenticeships (working alongside a trade for the sole purpose of learning it). These are both tied to the common thoughts of childhood and being "able or big enough" to work as a benefit to the family rather than "a culturally age-specific assignment" (Graff, 1997: 67). According to John Demos (1986: 101) "age norms of all kids were rather loosely maintained; the pattern or rather absence of pattern can be seen in the records of school attendance… where widely different ages were mixed together, often in a single classroom." The cultural transition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century undermined both school and apprenticeship This was due to

the acceleration of the Age of Industry, the immigration of unskilled workers, and automation. No longer was it easier or cost effective to hand-make goods including shoes, dresses, tools, etc. This drove young apprentices and skilled laborers out of the job force back to the family farm or to retrain for jobs at large factories and construction projects near these urban city centers. Slowly even the family farm began to disappear, and factory jobs began to wane making way for the rapid passage from child to adult to cease; leading to a large group of young people who needed specialization through a necessary new stage of education. Technical school, college, teacher education made their way on to the horizon. This opened the door for the arrival of "adolescence," and this led churches and parachurch ministries to give specific attention to young people (Root, 2007: 28; Senter, 2010:7).

American evangelicalism was in part the work of the first great American theologian Jonathan Edwards, and one of America's most infamous preacher's George Whitefield. These men seasoned Protestantism with a theology constructed from their experiences in Colonial America (Hart, 2004: 7). According to D.G. Hart (2004:12) they looked past European Protestantism and the idea of an impersonal faith and saw the intense importance of "personal conversion." They taught preachers to move away from liturgical and sacramental needs of a community to a more dynamic and personal religious "experience" in which "the hearer of a sermon would come face to face with their sinfulness and experience conversion and the love of God in an immediate way" (Hart, 2004: 7). The new recipe was no longer communal but personal and by the mid-nineteenth century evangelicalism had become the "functional equivalent of an

established church in America" (Hart, 2004: 12). Early evangelicals set up associations and initiatives in the belief that personal salvation and holy lives would lead to righteous living and upright societies on the heels of the Second Great Awakening of the 1820's and 1830's (Hart, 2004: 12). The crashing waves of modernization knocked Protestantism off balance opening the doors to skepticism; especially because of scientific advancements (Root, 2007: 30). The Biblical foundation that the Evangelicals had trusted unquestionably for centuries seemed to be in danger of washing away leading them to respond fearfully for their children thus they gave immediate attention to the new age distinction known as "adolescence." Thus, many scholars believe that youth ministry was a direct reaction of Evangelical Protestantism to modernization in particular science (Root, 2007: 30 & Pahl, 2000: 60).

3.5.2: 1900 – 1940's

Modernization had arrived and with it came sweeping changes within society, culture and education. New social structures and organizations appeared including modern schools, the corporation, and the middle class or nuclear family. Decades earlier reading, writing, and mathematics were meant for self-improvement now education would become essential to finding employment. Thus, grammar school led to high school which became the place where adolescents could obtain the education necessary to enter into the world of business, factories, hospitality, or go on to university. Historically students had always spent more time with adults but with the advent of High School they began to spend their most meaningful hours locked away

with other young people their age so as Reed Ueda explains, "The high school institutionalized the peer society. The high school insulated the peer society…. away from parents, away from the church, and away from the workplace, high school students felt pressure to conform to the standards of the group" (Ueda, 2008: 120). High school students must have been acutely conscious that what was ahead was vastly different from the world their parents had known, and this widened the gap between the generations. Parents saw an ambivalence and this created frustration thinking that their children did not grasp the "real world" they were about to emerge into. The truth was both generations were now living in a newly complex society (Root, 2007: 35; Senter, 2010: 17; Pahl, 2000:60-69). Psychologist G. Stanley Hall (1904) states that students are in fact caught in a period where they are not children, and they are not adults they are therefore "adolescents." Therefore, they are ontologically different. High School became the norm in the 1920's partly due to the Great Depression, thus going to school became the work or "developmental" task of the adolescent (Root, 2007: 34; Senter, 2010: 18-23).

It is important to note that High School did not bring a "universalized" experience but rather it brought about a number of pluralizing forces into the lives of families. This led to the growing awareness of multiple life options available and by the 1940's there was quite a diverse youth culture. As Peter Berger (1973: 79) asserts, "Modern society … confronts the individual with an ever-changing Kaleidoscope of social experiences and meanings. It forces him to make decisions and plans… it forces him into reflection … not only the world but the self becomes an object of deliberate

attention and…. scrutiny." Sociologists call the need for deliberate reflection – "reflexivity" (Beck, Giddens, Lash; 1994: 174). Society was now confronted with sweeping changes and exposure to the new ideas of the 20th century worldviews causing a reflexivity and re-envisioning of social practices would become paramount; this included religion (Root, 2007: 35; Senter, 2010: 29; Pahl, 2000:72).

The end of the nineteenth century and religious reflexivity had a significant impact upon Evangelical Protestantism. But the early decades of the twentieth century shattered Evangelical Protestantism's once dominant influence in American culture; this was due to new scientific theories, pluralizing of urban centers, and the diversity of immigrants. Two responses out of the rubble. The first was to accept scientific methods to become more "relevant" to a pluralistic world. They often looked to emerging psychology, sociology, evolutionary theories, literary criticism to help them discover new methods to reshape and revive the Protestant Christian community in the 21st century. The second response was to see modern scientific methods and pluralism as threatening and deadly to Christianity and therefore retreat to core traditions and an inerrant view of Biblical authority. They called themselves fundamentalists who felt the best defense was to expose and devalue any group or individual that opposed or worked outside this commitment which came to a head in 1925 with the Scopes Trial. The Scopes Trial was a modernist-fundamentalist battle over the teaching of evolutionist scientific theory in a high school in Tennessee, the fundamentalists won but it created a significant backlash of negative media portraying fundamentalists and the church as rigid, hateful, backward, and ignorant (Marsden,

1995). Most fundamentalists were shocked by this negative reaction, and it caused them to retreat away from the world and place great importance upon personal evangelism (Root, 2007: 36; Senter, 2010: 188; Pahl, 2000:72).

The dominant form of age-specific youth ministry between 1900 – 1940 started in 1881 with Francis Clack who inaugurated the first <u>Young People's Society for Christian Endeavor.</u> He wanted to create a youth society where the young people were expected to pledge accountability and responsibility. The idea spread like wildfire as it merged the best of Sunday school and YMCA curriculum and many denominations followed with similar ideas. By the 1920's most churches relied upon the denomination to supply the appropriate materials as well as camp in the summer; this boosted numbers and commitment among young adults. But the 1930's created a devastating end to a large number of these youth societies as most adolescents were being drawn further and further away from church related activities into their local high school's extracurricular activities. Modernist views were having a resounding effect and diversity would increase throughout the 1940's and adolescents were finding youth culture arousing new desires for entertainment, social sophistication, and even personal intimacy and many churches found themselves with programs that were in no position to compete (Root, 2007: 39; Senter, 2010: 165-8; Pahl, 2000: 125-132).

3.5.3: 1940 – 1960's

The 1940's brought with it new opportunities for every member of the family. They had new dreams, many of which came from the advancements made by technology including cars, houses, and jobs. There was of course a sense of risk that came with scientific advancements which brought about more than just the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb. The Cold War began out of the political fears associated with what might become a nuclear Armageddon when the all-out cultural war against communism began with the USSR. The bottom line began to dictate business, and this moved into everyday life and relationships. Soon many became materialistic seeking meaning and personal fulfillment from things and social status instead of thorough deep interpersonal connections. These brought about a slow decay upon the family unit and religion. After WWII, the expectation for adolescents was to take part in secondary school or even a college education. High school was now not only classes during the day but had expanded into extra-curricular programs including sports, drama, dances, and clubs, leading to an exclusive peer culture taking them away from their parents almost 24 hours a day. Adolescence had become more than a stage of life it had become a way of life, an organic youth culture that had been forming for decades had now solidified. Young adults now wanted their own music, fashion, entertainment, even their own language (Root, 2007: 41-44; Senter, 2010: 212-213). These things were considered cool: hamburgers, cars, rock music, blue jeans, anything new or unique.

The idea of being cool became the obsession for most teenagers in the middle decades of the 20th century. This meant having the best jeans, knowing the popular

music, driving the fastest car, being unique not who was the smartest but who could form and live out "self-chosen" relationships. (A self-chosen relationship is "for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another, and which is continued only in so far as it is thought of by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it" (Giddens, 1992: 58). By the1960's there were more flavors of cool (including: jocks, preppy, religious, etc.) which brought with it a sense of splintering within youth culture (Root, 200: 43; Senter, 2010: 22 & 34-5).

The exhilaration of WWII's victory, the country's newfound international leadership and the building of the middle-class brought a sense of conservatism. In the late 1940's, fundamentalism was confronted with yet another crisis but from within when the children of those who had formed safe colleges and seminaries due to the 1925 split became disillusioned and discontent with their parent's stance toward society. Thus, they used the national opposition to atheistic communism and the new conservative middle-class ethos to reform their image. They worked on a Biblical but friendly faith and a resurrection of the nineteenth century evangelical nomenclature. Yet this new "evangelical" movement was intellectually secured by a group of young scholars (Root, 2007: 46; Pahl, 2000: 132).

In the late 1940's America began their love affair with Billy Graham, a man who would become known as "America's Pastor," was an energetic yet patriotic preacher who was heard at the rallies of the growing Youth for Christ Movement but in 1949 he debuted with his own crusade in Los Angeles California. He was seen as a

compassionate and principled American not as a backward fundamentalist (Marsden, 1995: 15). Graham's message had two main parts a nationalist message of American domination over the risk of atheistic communism and a straightforward theology of the need for a personal intimate relationship with Jesus Christ (Root, 2007: 47; Senter 2010: 256).

D. G. Hart explains evangelicals held that conversion empowered people to take responsibility for themselves.

> "Conversion leads to a highly disciplined and moral life where born again believers stand more or less on their own two feet, without depending on others for help. This outlook may not automatically commit an evangelical to the principles of free enterprise and unregulated markets; but it certainly gives plausibility to the kinds of political arrangements that have benefited middle-class entrepreneurs who own or work in family business (2004: 107)."

Billy Graham noticed this need for a new simple straightforward theology not of hell, fire and damnation but of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In a culture where technical rationality was dominant and the arrival of the self-chosen relationship, Graham's message was on target and relevant. Thus the 1940's and 1950's youth ministry was no longer denomination oriented but rather it was evangelistic. Parachurch organizations had taken over denominational functions inventing new categories of religious activity to take to the marketplace with the idea of then transmitting back a non-denominational version of evangelical Christianity. Thus relational-youth ministry was born in the post-WWII era and was built and gained momentum under two organizations Young Life and Youth for Christ. Both organizations confronted the major shifts in American culture: the arrival of youth

culture and new ideas about intimate personal relationships. Relational youth ministry recognized the need to go to where the students and young adults lived their lives, the schools, the parties, the ball fields, and the after-school clubs. They intertwined themselves into the lives of the students, in essence became "missionaries" or "missional" to American teenagers and it worked (Root, 2007: 52). They saw this type of Relational Ministry as theologically Incarnational; as Christ entered a foreign world to save humanity so should we enter the world of youth culture to save the young adult (Root, 2007: 53; Senter, 2010: 271; Pahl. 2000, 133-135).

3.5.4: 1960-2000

In the 1960's high school was entrenched within the cultures of American society such that many couldn't even remember when it was not part of everyday life. Youth culture continued to fragment with newfound sexuality and a continued re-definition of what was considered "cool." The 1950's ethos of flag, faith, family and the child was being rocked by racial inequality, feminism, sexual revolution, drug-using counterculture, and the Vietnam War. A sense of distrust came into the American consciousness for family, for faith, for government, and for young adults. This distrust would create a perpetual generation gap for each successive generation (Root, 2007: 55).

Adolescents in the 1970's, 80's, and 90's found that chasing the conglomerate cool was a waste of time and energy and gravitated toward smaller groups where one could actually experience personal intimacy as opposed to always fighting to find it. The adolescent world was not firmly in place, but it had found momentum in fragmentation of the original youth cultural ethos by consumerism and marketing creating a plurality and great distinction between the hippies, metal heads, punks, nerds, skaters, jocks, red-necks, preppies, etc. While adolescents like adults had an expanded view of the planet and its inhabitants, they turned inward forming small specific peer groups (Root, 2007:56; Senter, 2010: 280; Pahl, 2000,127).

Post modernity takes over in the 1990's leading us to wonder if Max Weber's construct of the "iron cage" had merit. Friedrich Schweitzer (2004), writes that adolescence had become a stage young people entered but could never leave, in a global world small "tribe-like communities" were essential to survival. Without these groups youth are left intimacy-starved in a world where connections are self-chosen amidst confrontational diversity and technical-consumerist rationality (Root, 2007: 57).

American Evangelicalism was sounding alarm bells on the heels of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, Vietnam, Watergate, feminism, drugs, and the sexual revolution. But American culture would continue to become deeper entrenched into pluralistic openness leading evangelicals to feel that it was hostile to their commitments as Christians. As D.G. Hart (2004: 147) explains,

The United States entered a new phase of cultural history in which Protestantism no longer yielded to a common sense of purpose and set of standards as it once had. The resurgence of evangelicals in America…can be explained chiefly as a reaction to this situation ... the change in America from a Protestant to a post-Protestant society, makes evangelicals appear to many as old-fashioned, if not a little obnoxious.

Thus, the evangelicals tried two strategies: first, they mobilized the idea of individuals befriending individuals as a means to create relational contact through the self-chosen relationship. Second, was the use of politics like the *Moral Majority* which tried to convince politicians and power brokers that it was advantageous for them to heed the concerns of evangelicals. The issues they stood behind included: personal moral choices like abortion, prayer in school, creationist education, and family values (they saw the culture as subversive to parental authority). Thus, the idea of relational ministry for the evangelical offered a fragmented and consumer driven adolescent culture with a chance to be in a relationship with adults who could help them steer clear of the pitfalls of a hostile culture and encourage them in their own sub cultural identity (Root, 2007: 59).

Young evangelical pastors were beginning to re-envision the local church, attempting to make them more culturally relevant as well as more attractive amongst the plethora of options in the religious marketplace. One important strategy was to hire full-time youth ministers who were often young dynamic personalities whose sole responsibility was to care for the education and evangelization of the young adults in his or her congregation and beyond. Numerous congregations turned to leaders who had been trained by Young Life or Youth for Christ as they knew they were skilled at

ministering to adolescents and usually considered "cool." Soon many universities began offering degrees specified to the Youth Ministry (Root, 2007: 60; Senter, 2010: 292-4).

The pluralistic-culture had become hostile for youth thus relationship-centered ministries provided the greatest opportunity for impact. Adolescents had stopped chasing cool and therefore youth ministers could focus their energy on creating distinct groups in the diversified youth culture. The silver-bullet was budget, youth pastors could use the consumer driven culture to their advantage as they provided large, expensive programs for the purpose of relationship-building. They focused on outings, Christian concerts, Christian theme-park nights, Christian Camping trips, Christian Sports teams, Christian Bands, all in an effort to present him or herself and their "program" as being "with it" and trustworthy and thus worth the risk of forming a relational contact (Root, 2007: 61; Senter, 2010: 308-9). Thus, relational ministry has been used as an evangelistic strategy to address the many challenges confronting evangelicalism in a modernized and globalized world. The many forces that birthed relational ministry were cultural and thus reactionary instead of theological or Incarnational (Root, 200: 61; Pahl, 2000; 1982). But the fact that these ministries were established and have survived both Para-church and denominational does not mean they are the best model for reaching out to young people. In fact, this paper will show that stand alone ministries have had a lot to do with the fact many churched *emerging adults* have left the church.

3.6 Basic Youth Ministry Theory

What is Youth Ministry Theory? Youth Ministry theory is "the way in which the church responds to the development of youth, not to shield them from adult problems but rather prepare young people to cope with adult problems by incarnating God's presence as they come of age" (Pahl, 2000: 28). The purpose of God for youth ministry should be the same as the purpose of God for and with His church. All members should seek a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, all members should be meaningfully challenged with the message of the Bible to think seriously and constructively about its consequences, all members should study the Word enthusiastically and act self-reliantly to its messages, all members need to develop a Christ-centered view of life and all members should learn how to deal with the relationship between faith and reason (Nel, 2000, 67).

3.7. Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church in the 20th Century

Youth Ministry has before it many generations of history but the 20th century can be boiled down into four different views: the Preparatory View by Wesley Black (2001:40), the Missional View by Chap Clark (2001:78), the Strategic View by Mark H. Senter III (2001:114), and the Inclusive Congregational View by Malan Nel (2000:2). Each view takes youth ministry from a slightly different approach, but they all have the same desire, "to grow Christ in the hearts and minds of young people." Understanding each approach separately will help us to further explore what Youth Ministry is in the 21st century.

3.7.1 Wesley Black's Preparatory Approach

Wesley Black's Preparatory approach sees ministry to adolescents as in the stage of preparation to take part in the life of the existing church as leaders, disciples or evangelists. In the Preparatory approach there is a clear purpose with every activity, thus Black goes on to say, "Youth ministry is everything a church does with, to, and for teenagers that builds them into becoming the church. This includes organized groups, elected leaders, planned programs, strategic experiences, carefully designed curriculum materials, as well as informal conversations, intergenerational experiences, worship, and spontaneous happenings away from the church campus" (Senter, 2001: 43). The students are seen as in training and are given opportunities for service both inside church and on mission, thus it is almost like a school for the future church member. Youth groups should be the place for young adults to grow under the watchful eyes of spiritual mentors (2001: XIV). Youth ministry when done well blends evangelism and discipleship as well as it both separates and integrates. It separates because youth need developmentally specific teaching, but it integrates because they will always be part of the larger whole of the church family (Senter, 2001: 44).

3.7.2 Chap Clark's Missional Approach

Chap Clark's Missional approach views youth ministry solely as a mission of the church. They are a group with which to use responsible evangelism meant to disciple young people into established churches. They often operate semi-autonomously and the youth minister as well as other Christian youth are seen as missionaries of the church whose responsibility it is to go into the community and communicate the gospel to the next generation (or their own generation if the case may be) (2001: XIV). Clark states, "missional youth ministry takes adolescents and their culture seriously enough to provide them a sociological and theological bridge from the secularized world of the young into a broad, rich community of faith, hope, and love" (Senter, 2001:91) Thus every program of the church is meant to be an intentional reaching out /extension of the local body where every person who desires to belong to the community is welcomed (Senter, 2001: 92).

3.7.3 Mark H. Senter III's Strategic Approach

Mark H. Senter III's Strategic approach to youth ministry considers a youth group an actual new church of the future, perhaps a "church plant." Ministers are meant to use continuity in discipleship and the teens assume roles of leadership in evangelism and fellowship. They will eventually with the blessing of their "mother" church go out and form a new church (2001: XV).

The Strategic Approach to Youth Ministry has seven steps: 1. Solid Youth Ministry is formed from a blend of evangelism, discipleship, and worship. 2. Vision for Continuity with the blessing of the church the Youth Pastor now takes his "church" and starts a church plant thus the mother church replicates itself. 3. The Leadership Team diversifies part stay at the mother church to lead the youth left behind and part stretch themselves to go and begin a multigenerational church. 4. A Critical Mass is formed of at least 200 people willing to leave the mother church and invest themselves in the new church plant at the blessing of the mother church. 5. Relevant Ministry Style is created based upon the Scripture and is appropriate to the entire new intergenerational ministry. 6. Time and Support, even in the best of circumstances new church plants take plenty of time and financial resources. 7. Location is best decided by the financial resources available to the church plant. "Thus, it is time to stop thinking of youth ministry as a lifetime commitment, and begin viewing youth ministry as giving birth to a biblically and culturally relevant church that will, in time, give birth to additional churches in response to the needs of future generations" (Senter, 2001:125).

3.7.4 Malan Nel's Inclusive Congregational Approach

Malan Nel's Inclusive Congregational approach integrates youth into all congregational life. They are part of the heartbeat of what happens in worship, prayer, discipleship, preaching, teaching, fellowship, and mission. The "youth are full partners in every aspect of God's coming to the faith community" (2000, XV). Nel states that Youth must be included as full participants in four ways: 1. Congregation must never think of the faith life of youth separately from the faith life of the adult members. 2. Youth must not become a separate group within the congregation. 3. Youth must not be neglected or ignored. And 4. Youth are the congregation's responsibility, not merely the responsibility of the "youth workers." Nel states, Youth are to be considered full participants of the church because "when they have no reason to value their congregations they often meet their spiritual needs and worship elsewhere, historically this has been in youth organizations outside the church" which leads to the church ultimately losing their generation (Senter, 2001: 8).

The inclusive congregational approach and Bonhoeffer agree that youth ministry is not about finding an extra place for yet another ministry or another program. It is not about finding a place outside, what many have termed a "ghetto" but about finding a place for youth in every ministry. Youth need to be included in every ministry of the church: the diakonia – the ministry, the koinonia – the fellowship, the didache – the teaching, the cybernesis – management & administration, the paraklesis – pastoral care, and of course the leitourgia – worship. If youth can become an integral

part of everything that happens within the church community the church will experience an amazing energy that comes from them being young and full of life (Root, 2014: 43-45).

3.8 Bonhoeffer's Approach –The Eight Theses on Youth Work

Andrew Root's book, <u>Bonhoeffer; the Youth Worker</u> is a wonderful biographical yet fully annotated discussion of Bonhoeffer's *Eight Theses on Youth Work* (Root, 2014, 117). Bonhoeffer's First Theses states:

1. Since the days of the youth movement, church youth work has often lacked that element of Christian sobriety that alone might enable it to recognize that the spirit of youth is not the Holy Spirit, and that the future of the church is not youth itself but rather the Lord Jesus Christ alone. It is the task of youth not to reshape the church, but rather to listen to the Word of God; it is the task of the church not to capture the youth, but to teach and proclaim the Word of God (Root, 2014: 119).

According to Andrew Root (2014 :119), "Bonhoeffer starts his theses with an explosion; he seeks to shake youth ministry free from cultural accommodation to the youth movement." Today the church is stuck within these same idolatrous ideas; we in essence place the youth above God. The future of the church is not dependent upon the youth it is dependent upon God, we must resist the temptation to place anything above God.

Bonhoeffer's Second and Third Theses state:

> 2. Our Question is not: What is youth and what rights does it have, but rather: What is the church-community and what is the place of the youth within it? 3. The Church-community includes those on earth who God's dominion has torn away from the dominion of death and evil, those who hear the Word concerning the establishment of God's dominion among human beings in Jesus Christ and who obediently assemble around this Word in faith. The church-community is Christ's presence as the true Lord and Brother. Being in the church-community means being in Christ; being in Christ means being in the church-community. Sacrifice, intercession, and confession are acts of fellowship in the church-community. It is only within the church-community that one can pass judgment on the church-community. By nature the church community cannot be judged from the outside (Root, 2014: 122-23).

Bonhoeffer is attempting to re-focus our attention upon who we are and who youth are in and among us the church-community (Root, 2014). According to Root (2014), the Church-community was not the brick-and-mortar church but rather the communion of people with which we encounter the living Christ. Those with whom we share prayer, preaching, sacraments, and sacrifice are our brothers and sisters, our Church-community. Youth are part of the whole of this community not singled out but co-sharers in Christ's church (Root, 2014). Youth ministry should seek to practice activities or programs that will reflect the Spirit of Christ.

Bonhoeffer goes on with his Fourth and Fifth Theses which state:

> 4. the church-community suspends the generational problem. Youth enjoys no special privilege in the church-community. It is to serve the church-community by hearing, learning, and practicing the World. God's Spirit in the church has nothing to do with youthful criticism of the church, the radical nature of God's claim on human beings has noting with youthful radicalism, and the commandment for sanctification notion to do with youthful impulse to better the world. "Christian" and "youth" is rather harsh

and not very credible word combination. The issue is not "modern" or "old fashioned" but rather solely our thinking concerning and from the perspective of the church. 5. The Bible judges' youth quite soberly: Genesis 8:21; Isaiah 3:5; Jeremiah 1:6; Ecclesiastes 11:10; 1 Peter 5:5 2 Timothy 2:2 et passim.

Bonhoeffer is calling us to throw out the idea of the "generational problem" if this is true then churches are forced to a new understanding of Youth Ministry. The reason that the Youth Ministry was created and exists today is because of the generational gap. Parents often focus on the idea of the "gap" forcing them to believe that it is necessary to create a special program to fill it in. This leads our Youth Ministers to feel they are often on the outside of church because they are not part of the whole. They are there to fill a fictitious generational gap. Because they are called to literally "fill in a gap "or to be "stopgaps" they are often not seen as the one who brings the Word of God to the young people (Root, 2014). They are not essential to the church's identity and thus the Youth will never be essential to the church. According to Root (2014: 127-128), "the theological turn in youth ministry invites youth workers to turn back and return to the center of the church-community. But the theological truth in youth ministry recognizes that this turning back can only be done by embracing the theological, for the theological, is at the center of the church-community – it is where we encounter the living Christ." So, we must stop being over attentive to their generation instead let's give them a place at the center.... the very heart of Christ.

Bonhoeffer's Sixth and Seventh Theses read:

> 6. Church youth work is possible only on the basis of addressing young people concerning their baptism and with the exclusive goal of having them hear God's Word. It remains the act of the church-community toward its members. Every transgression of this boundary constitutes a betrayal of Christ's church-community. 7. It may well be that the youth do not have the right to protest against their elders. If that be the case, however, the authenticity of such protest will be demonstrated by youth's willingness to maintain solidarity with the guilt of the church community and to bear that burden in love, abiding in penitence before God's Word. (Root, 2014: 132)

Bonhoeffer states throughout his work that after Baptism all are equal members of the church-community therefore there is no such thing as youth work after Baptism. Thus, if the church continues to give youth some sort of special privilege it is a betrayal beyond that of bringing them to the point of Baptism. There is no such thing as a generation gap because in "Baptism we are dead in Christ and now made alive (Eph2:5) to live one to another in and through the Holy Spirit" (Root, 2014: 132). This does not mean that youth like other members do not need specifically age-appropriate theological education because they do. It is just that they are not a separate "special" group they have a responsibility to the whole as the whole has a responsibility to them. In Bonhoeffer's Seventh theses he is pushing the church-community a bit further not from the idea of we are all part of the same center but that there are times when the youth may need to help their elders take a "prophetic" or "visionary" stand as long as they are maintain solidarity, authenticity, and bear the burdens of the church-community / congregation in love (Root, 2014: 133).

Bonhoeffer's Eighth Theses States:

8. There are no real "church association"; there is only the church. The church youth association is not the youth of the church-community; that youth includes, rather, all baptized young people. Every church association as such already discredits the cause of the church. Such associations can only be perceived as makeshift entities, which as such have only relative significance (Root, 2014: 134).

It is important to take a couple of things into mind when it comes to this eighth theses. First this would have been around the time of the dawn of the YMCA but most of the other associations would not have been founded as such. Also, he is making a particular point and that is that after a young adult is brought to the point of Baptism it is time for them to become part of the church-community and I agree. Youth Associations have done amazing jobs at evangelization, camps, missionary work, discipleship programs, but they are not and never will be the church. They must not be confused with the church and youth associations must make every attempt to work with the local church (Root, 2014).

The inclusive congregational approach and Bonhoeffer agree that youth ministry is not about finding an extra place for yet another ministry or another program. It is not about finding a place outside, what some have termed a "ghetto" but about finding a place for youth in every ministry.

Senter the editor of "Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church" states (2001: xvi):

> As neat and clean as these approaches may seem; they are mere theory unless the young people are God-seekers. Programs have never produced spirituality or created churches. For that matter neither have relationships, Bible studies, retreats, cross-cultural projects, prayer meetings, or evangelistic events. Instead it is the Spirit of God working in the lives of young people creates a hunger for discovering God through Jesus Christ.

It is important to take this into consideration if a young person, any person, is not spiritually hungry and prepared by the Holy Spirit it doesn't matter what type of youth program or youth emphasis or youth focus a church or group may have they will not come to a knowledge of the living Christ. Thus, spiritual readiness is a crucial part of all church communities and it can be seen as a passion for God. When a young person has a passion for God then any type of youth ministry will work but if that passion grows cold and they do not feel connected to the larger church as a whole they will leave the youth ministry and not return to church as a member and this is what we have seen happen with *churched emerging adults*.

3.9 Youth Ministry Theory in the 21st Century: Five Views

The 21st century has opened the door to many new complex issues facing young adults and thus churches; these include a serious crisis with youth at risk, social justice, gender and sexuality, drugs and alcohol, single parent families, abortions, teen parents, and modern technologies. Thus, aforementioned models are not invalid in fact the Practical Theological and missional aspects are simply calling for a new conversation to deepen and to broaden based upon the current trends and needs of youth ministries. Youth ministers are being forced to think deeper to find a more "stable theological footing for not only what and how we do our work but also why we do it and where it fits into God's plan for the entire church" (Clark, 2015: xiii). Thus, today's youth ministry needs a theological, psychosocial, and ecological grounding; a new trajectory of sorts. Thus, Clark has gathered five relatively unique voices and perspectives on the basics and foundation of what youth ministry should be about now and in the coming decades with a sense of commitment, leadership, and sponsorship to his perspective.

3.9.1 The Gospel Advancing View of Youth Ministry by Greg Stier

Greg Stier is the leader of Dare 2 Share, a cutting-edge, highly relevant ministry philosophy that according to him is two thousand years old. Dare 2 Share "a gospel advancing approach cultivates that passion and does not only bring lost souls into the kingdom but leads to discipleship acceleration in their own hearts and lives. When reaching non-Christians with the gospel becomes a primary passion, and transformation is triggered on a whole host of spiritual development levels" (Stier; 2015).

The ministry takes what it sees in the gospels and in Acts and implements it in today's world. According to Stier, "it is a messy approach that embraces the bad, the broken, and the bullied. But it is an approach that truly transforms teenagers not into 'good church kids' but into world changers" (Clark, 2015: 4). Jesus was on a search and rescue mission for the lost, and this is the lens he trained his disciples through. His three and half years with the disciples were full of teaching and training as they literally were on a mission trip to save the world. Toward the end of that time Jesus spent it on "the Great Commission" which Stier translates into "the cause" for today's teenagers. It is the desire for the teen to take up the spirit of the Great Commission, to be like Jesus, to go and reach the lost. The amazing thing is that this leads to discipleship in their own   personal lives so as they reach out, then they grow. It's not about evangelism but nurturing them to live and give the gospel in word and deed and

thus triggering in them personally spiritual formation and transformation. But how does this work? First of all, there is a lot of truth in Tim Keller's words "Teenagers have more information about God than experience of him, therefore get them into places where they have to rely on God" (Clark, 2015: 8).

This is where relational evangelism comes into play through the elements of a Gospel Advancing Ministry to make youth ministry powerful by:

1. Equipping teenagers for relational evangelism comes by creating in them a lifestyle of evangelism. They need to know how to naturally bring it up, explain, tie in personal stories, navigate questions, and listen deeply. This takes patience, prayer, coaching, and modeling.

2. Share stories, stories, stories and more stories: storytelling is the fuel of movements both big and small.

3. Give the Gospel Relentlessly. Charles Spurgeon was asked about his preaching style and his response was, "I take my text and make a beeline for the cross." Youth leader David Herweck said: "The message of the gospel is not something necessary at the beginning of a teenager's faith journey: it is their faithful companion every step of the way. We never graduate from the truth of the Gospel; rather we cling to it and allow it to bring about more and more change in our lives" (Clark, 2015: 11).

4. Ever wonder why Jesus invested in the twelve disciples instead of the masses? A Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute article titled "Minority Rules: Scientists Discover Tipping Point for the Spread of Ideas" noted that when just ten percent of the population holds an unshakable belief, their belief will always be adopted by the majority. Leading to our next crucial key: Start and focus on the 10% (Clark, 2015: 11).

5. Gospelize Everything – to truly build a Gospel Advancing Ministry model every project must be grounded in the gospel (Clark, 2015: 12).

6. Make Prayer a BIG DEAL – the importance and priority of prayer throughout the entire process cannot be overemphasized. We must pray for, teach, and mobilize our leaders and youth to pray everywhere and in everything (Clark, 2015: 12).

And finally, the Gospel Advancing Ministry Model must include three sets of adults: adults to sponsor it, parents to coach it, and church leaders to embrace it. Without one of these key sets of adults the model will falter and fail. Finally Stier's model states that "every community will find different strategies work for them but let's remember that youth ministry is more fun and more rewarding when lives are being transformed through the gospel through discipleship in both the hearts of the current church members and the surrounding community" (Clark, 2015: 15 ; Steir, 2016: 1-42).

3.9.2 Reformed View of Youth Ministry by Brian Cosby

Cosby cannot overstate the idea that we need a Reformed View of Youth Ministry, one that focuses not on "entertainment" or "gimmicks" but rather goes back to the basics of a "distinctive theological doctrine as exposited by the Protestant Reformation and post Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, where parents (especially fathers) held primary responsibility in the training of their children in the teachings of the church" (Clark, 2014: 38; Cosby, Feb 12, 2012). Thus the parents and the church leaders are to work in an integrated and unified effort in the discipling of the youth through these means: the Ministry of the Word, Prayer, the Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), Service, and the Gospel Community (Clark, 2014: 38; Cosby, Feb. 12, 2012).

Kenda Creasy Dean says, "Three out of four American teenagers claim to be Christians, and most are affiliated with a religious organization – but only half consider their faith an important part of their lives" (Dean, 2010: 3-4). Thus, the importance of method comes to the forefront. How do we move these bored, purposeless, yet self-professing religious teens into a sustainable, treasured, Christian faith while watching out for the overuse of gimmicks and entertainment? (Clark, 2014; 40; Cosby, Feb 12, 2012).

We begin with the idea of faithfulness over success…. All youth ministers have even after a few months experienced the burnout associated with trying to create a mountain top experience every week instead of creating faithful meaningful weekly progressive ministry that includes the five previously mentioned areas or what Cosby calls *means*. 1 Corinthians 3:7 and Acts 2:42-47 both speak of the five things the early disciples and the church devoted themselves to including: the Ministry of the Word, Fellowship, the Lord's Supper or Sacraments, Prayer, and Service.

The first meaning is *Ministry of the Word*: this would include preaching, teaching, and reading of the Bible as the primary means by which God saves and sanctifies in large groups, small groups, alone, and within the family. The second meaning is *Prayer,* many remember exactly where they are during a traumatic moment well, add prayer and it will become more relevant to a teenager's daily walk. There are five basic ways we can add prayer: 1. Pray during the meetings 2. Create small intimate groups within the larger context to build intimacy and friendships (girls with girls, and boys with boys works best) 3. Have seasons of prayer including time of fasting during the journey of the year 4. Encourage the youth ministers and volunteers and parents to come together and pray for the youth, each other, the church, the community, and most of all for God to be glorified within the youth ministry's work and 5. Finally be prepared to pray in times of crisis and emergency for members and the community at large (Clark, 2015: 46).

The third means is the *Sacraments* including both Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both of which immerse the teenager in the life and mystery of the church. Begin by teaching about Baptism and the Lord's Supper, make sure they are present during their celebration, and finally encourage and prepare the teenagers to experience these means of grace themselves. The fourth and perhaps easiest means is that of *Service.* Most teenagers actually desire to be part of acts of service, and it is within "*these moments where God grows our faith, extends our love, and brings us joy and peace" (*Clark, 2014: 48)*.

Finally, the most important piece of the Reformed View of Youth Group and that is the Gospel Community or Church. These take place on the Sabbath during the *Lord's Day* and are where all major intense ministry moments happen: 1. weekly preaching and worship 2. Multigenerational discipleship and service 3. the Sacraments 4. the responsibility of Church Membership 5. Church Discipline. And finally 6. Learning from God appointed and ordained Church elders and deacons as spiritual parents. It is crucial that within the Gospel Community, teenagers are able to be both *sound and safe.* By *sound* we are discussing the promotion of sound theology and Biblical doctrine and by *safe* we are rest assured that in Christ we are accepted and identified as a child of the Almighty God thus giving anyone a sense of unshakability with a firm foundation not vulnerable to outside immature trends or influences (Clark, 2014: 51).

Therefore Cosby (Clark, 2014: 52) ends with these words:

> God has already provided both the content and the method of Biblical youth ministry. These means of grace, as we've seen, should inform how we go about drawing young men and women into the church and into a life of faith. While many youth remain disillusioned by the gimmicks and fog of an entertainment-driven world of empty pleasures, let us preach Christ crucified to our youth and display him as the all-satisfying Savior that he is. With all my heart, I plead with you not to be tempted with success, professionalism, or the fading fads of our self-centered culture. Rather, strive to faithfully feed his young sheep through means of grace that God has already provided his church and "let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go one to maturity…. And this we will do if God permits" (Heb 6:1, 3).

3.9.3 The Adoption View of Youth Ministry by Chap Clark

Chap Clark contends that the primary reason that we have lost so many hearts and minds of our youth when they leave high school is because we have failed to provide them with the most vital resource which is the God-given faith community. Leading him to his *adoption view of youth ministry* centered on the New Testament metaphors (Clark, March 13, 2017). The first is the metaphor is that of the "body of Christ," where we are all called to work together (1 Corinthians 12): and the second is the "family of God" where we are to consider one another as brothers and sisters of one Father, children of God (John 1:12). "Intentional connections between the generations; intergenerational relationships which become contextual applications for the living out of our mutual adoption in Christ" (Clark, March 13, 2017). Thus, the church is to be a family of families. To lead in proactively connecting its members especially those who are disenfranchised from the dominant segments of society and or the congregation itself.

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Postmodern society has excelled "in creating a cultural commitment to 'hurrying' children in a form of giving them everything they need except for what they need the most, adult support and authentic presence" (Clark, 2014: 82). In turn this has delayed development in the area of *faith development*. In our desire to present the Gospel we have not ensured that it comes with a quest for a lifelong faith because it comes without the long-term, broad-based familial support that they need to grow up into a healthy, mature, interdependent faithful member because most youth ministries are not presented as integral parts of the family of God or the body of Christ (Clark, 2014: 83).

This is where Chap Clark's Youth Ministry the Adoption Model comes into focus. Youth ministry needs to shift away from the isolationist or segmenting methodology and instead offer them "a mutual, empowering, engaging, and supportive new family" (Clark, 2014: 85). This happens by abandoning any idea that any individual can solidify or gain their lifelong faith in one to four years in favor of understanding that it takes a lifetime of external expressions of faith to collectively add up to a mature faith. Thus, we must rethink youth ministry so as to "*literally adopt them into the family of the church. The goal of youth ministry as adoption is for every child, every adolescent, and every young adult 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*" *(Clark, 2014: 85).*

This happens in three steps:

1. Personal Response – the starting line for all discipleship and the living out of our mutual adoption of Christ.

2. Youth Ministry is the Beginning Point of the Adoption Phase – and thus should not be thrown out simply modified to have a higher purpose.

3. Who does the Guiding? Youth Leaders and volunteers are the Adoption Guides this means they serve as connection makers between young adults and other members of the congregation based upon similar interests or opportunities this gives the teenagers adults who will invest in them outside the normal confines of the youth ministry area. Adults being intentional about voice, empowerment, and inclusion for the young. This might be in the form of sports or art or music or journalism or business or technology or mentoring.

The entire church must be willing to take part in this type of youth model or it will not work. They become a sort of mentoring community – as there is a *Role of Leadership in the Adoptive Church* (Clark, 2014). In the words of Clark, *"*When a worship leader, elderly couple, or middle-aged divorcee build familial relationships - with appropriate safeguards and boundaries to protect them – when members of the church send out invitations to small group meals, invest in one another's activities, encourage others to participate in business, pastoral, or ministry decision making networks, know one another's stories, and mutually pray for God's work in and through them – this is adoption (Clark, 2014: 90).

3.9.4 The Ecclesial View of Youth Ministry by Fernando Arzola

Fernando Arzola invites, encourages, and challenges youth leaders to be intentional in reflecting ecclesiology in response to the fact that most Protestant youth ministry has deleted all ecclesiology from its theological radar and practical application Arzola, March 13, 2017) Most youth ministry spends its time on discipleship and music but they leave behind all Historical Orthodox Perspectives as well as Ecclesiology and the Four Creedal Characteristics of the Church. The Ecclesial View works to reclaim these historical and theological underpinnings of the Christian faith. Arzola begins with the *historically orthodox perspectives* which come from the works of Donald G. Bloesch (*The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission,* 2006*)* from the Reformed tradition; Thomas C. Oden (*The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of New Life in Christianity*, 2003) the Methodist tradition; and Robert E. Webber (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail,* 2013) the Anglican tradition.

Each scholar takes their tradition and integrates the idea of connection, connecting the foundations of Christian tradition to the needs of the church today. Bloesch (*Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 2006) argues for a catholic evangelicalism which is three steps: 1. reappraise Biblical authority 2. recover evangelical distinctiveness and 3. Promote our catholic substance (286). Oden (2003) is considered the proponent of "paleo-orthodoxy" this is a theological viewpoint that calls on Christians to rely on the wisdom of the historic and the early church. Finally, Webber is known as the founder of the Ancient-Future movement, a theological viewpoint committed to connecting ancient Christian faith, worship, and spirituality

with the postmodern and post-Christian world (Webber, 2000). Webber then walks

through the five stages of the church throughout history as a means to reclaim the

Incarnational view of the church. In the ancient stage: the church was understood as

the "visible continuation of the presence of Christ in the world" (Webber, 2000: 73).

The classic period's hallmark is the threefold order of ministry: Bishop / Presbyter,

and Deacon whose purpose was to hand down the orthodox teachings, to Shepherd the

flock and to appoint others to be faithful ministers within the church (Webber, 2000:

74). In the thirteenth century Roman Catholicism began to develop with its most

dramatic roles being that of the Pope and the hierarchical/ecclesial concepts of

authority. The church was no longer a community of equals; all the power was held by

the clergy and this led to moral and political corruption (Webber, 2000: 75). The

Reformation was a response to these corruptions in the church, the "true" church was

seen as a place where the Word of God was preached, and the Sacraments were

administered leading to the congregational and Presbyterian models of church

government. This led to many new denominations, the independent church movement,

missions, and parachurch organizations (Webber, 2000: 78). During the modern stage

the church was seen as having a diving calling to "proclaim the gospel message" with a

shift to the "invisible" church (Webber, 2000: 79).

The ecclesiological problems of today's church were actually inherited from the

Enlightenment including: pragmatism and individualism. Pragmatism resulted in a

theological understanding of the church to the extent that they were considered

corporate models instead of bodies of Christ. Often the importance is placed upon

"leadership development" thus leading to a more corporate than an ahistorical model is examined or placed into practice. Most feel their job at the youth level is to legislate morality (Webber, 2000: 79). The second problem is the emphasis on *individualism* which has led to an historical view of the church. While some denominations have an appreciation of church history generally speaking many leaders are uninformed of any history prior to the reformation. This radical individualism often leads church movements and fellowships to not value church history especially as the mystical concept of Jesus' time. Instead, the church is seen as a human organization made up of individuals. This is especially true of youth ministers (Webber, 2000: 80).

Fernando Arzola suggests that by *Recovering the Four Creedal Characteristics of the Church* we can re-engage our youth ministries in a new and vibrant way. The First creed: *The Church is One:* Christ founded only one church and intended for that church to be one. In John 17:20-21 Jesus asks the Father to protect the unity of the church. The second creed: *The Church is Holy*; holiness is unquestionably an important theological concept, but it has been treated as a personal characteristic over a part of larger church life. But the church must be holy as Christ is holy and challenges the church to be holy. (Ogden, 2003: 319). Youth pastors have the unique opportunity to help teenagers through role models, stories, and protection if they need it (Ogden, 2013: 39). The church is the holy body of Christ and should be treated as such. The third creed is that of the *Church is catholic:* there is a lot of rich heritage within the word "catholic." The church is universal not only in the sense that it is worldwide but also because it is faithfully rooted in the truth of Jesus Christ and the Atonement (Ogden,

2013: 40). The fourth creed is that *the Church is Apostolic*: to understand the church as apostolic is to acknowledge its ancient roots, "Apostolicity indicates that the church is linked to and built on the past" (Ogden, 2013: 42). According to Arzola, "recovery of the characteristics of the church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic may help many churches and youth ministries to look outside themselves, both individually and locally and toward the larger, universal, and historical church" (Clark, 2014: 120; Arzola, 2008).

Arzola indicates there are three practices that will help Youth Ministries find their Ecclesial roots. These include Practice 1: Reappropriation of the Four Characteristics of the Church. The four characteristics of the church are: *one, holy, catholic, apostolic* by using these to pull our youth ministries further backwards into the history of the church we root them into those four key areas. Practice 2: Reappropriating an Incarnational/ Visible Understanding of the Body of Christ. Youth ministers would do well to take Webber's five-stage paradigmatic survey of church history as mentioned before and use the nuances to inform their understandings of how the church can be Incarnational and transcend geographical boundaries.

Practice 3: Developing a More Formal Teaching of Ecclesiology. Teaching ecclesiology has two strengths both informational and formational. From an informational perspective teaching members of the church about the early church, the development of church doctrine, the evolution of liturgy, worship , and the sacraments as well as further church history and the issues surrounding the church, the reformation, the counter-reformation, the tension of the church in the world, the

ecumenical movements, and the contemporary state of the church you raise the corporate awareness of the congregation and inform it as to its place within the larger context of the universal church as well as church history. Knowing one's roots is always an advantage. From a formational perspective youth members will be embedded within the body of Christ and root their faith in the ancient church. They will be able to participate in the communion of the saints, grow from the writing they read, recognize the relationship between personal holiness and corporate holiness in Christ, re-establish and reconnect to the importance of personal spiritual formation within the context of the local church and beyond. Learn to understand and review the issues of faith and together find a rooted faith (Clark, 2015:123; Arzola, 2008).

3.9.5 The D-6 View of Youth Ministry by Ron Hunter

D6 is short for Deuteronomy 6. In Deuteronomy 6: 1-9 we read

6 Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the LORD your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, **2** so that you and your children and your children's children may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. **3** Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.[a] **5** You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. **6** Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. **7** Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. **8** Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem[b] on your forehead, **9** and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Thus we read Deuteronomy 6: 1-9, "it is a foundational passage showing God's heartbeat of how faith and values are to be transferred from one generation to the next," in it God commands the older generations of grandparents, parents, and the faith community as a whole to exercise generational discipleship by example and diligent instruction and not to delegate this role to anyone else. We need the church and the home to provide these "echoing voices" to speak the truth into the lives of our children and our teenagers. "Deuteronomy 6 commands parents to take the lead in the spiritual development of their kids. Youth pastors, children's ministers and especially lead pastors are vital to transforming the church into a family ministry culture" (Hunter, 2015).

The D6 approach involves integrating leadership from both the church and the home to disciple current and future generations of children and teenagers. The church is considered the theological anchor and training ground for families and especially for parents. The goal is to equip parents to best reach their kids in the methods and ways to best teach, model and build relationships with their own kids. The D6 model suggests that because a youth minister and other ministers have a restricted amount of time with the youth it is important for the parents to build relationships at church and in the home. Parents learn through sermons, small groups, Sunday school, and relationships, so they in turn can provide consistency for the family. Most youth ministers of today are expected to be superheroes carrying the burden of salvation, discipleship, and mentoring of teens but the D6 model helps parents' partner with

them. The D6 model also reaches further back and begins by training the infants and toddlers / nursery workers and parents, the preschool and children's ministers and parents, and the student's ministers and parents. D6 believes that it is with this type of teaching we are better able to fulfill the calling God has placed upon the lives of both those in ministry and more importantly parents (Clark, 2014: 152-154).

The Role of the D6 Youth Pastor is fivefold. They are to be 1. *Transformational leaders* – by this we mean their goal is to strive to help their followers become stronger. Bass and Riggio say "transformational leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacities." "The D 6 Leader; these are leaders whose main goal is to empower others toward greater maturity and capacity of their own; to invest in the future of teens and to help develop parents to share in the spiritual development of their kids" (Clark, 2014:157; Hunter, 2014).

Parents and Leaders are to 2. *Build a Strategic Philosophy*… There is a difference between a program and a philosophy. Leaders must see programs as the tactical way to accomplish a bigger strategy. The bigger strategy is the philosophy, the basics upon which the entire program is built. This goes back to teaching them to think differently and then act differently based upon the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God as the center instead of the program as the center, re-adjusting the focus back to solid Scriptural foundation will change the philosophy and the program (Clark, 2014:158; Hunter, 2014).

Then D6 Youth ministers will *3. Build a Team Approach – among Staff and with Volunteers.* Guiding philosophies become stronger when adopted by every staff leader from the Nursery to the Youth. For example, can you imagine if a kindergarten teacher ignored typical learning fundamentals like basic social skills, counting, phonics and recognition sets what would first grade teachers do? The same is true within the church we need to coordinate among all the staff and all the ministers and all the volunteers to ensure parents are being trained and helped from the day the child is born this will in turn give youth ministers an amazing foundation to build upon when it comes to youth ministry which is undeniably one of the most difficult stages in an adolescent's life. "Can you imagine if every age group ministry leader worked with the target group and the secondary target group their parents, yes initially this does mean extra work for the minister, but if each person begins to understand their role, if they begin to grow in their knowledge, then together they will make minister's efforts to grow the youth exponentially more effective (Clark, 2014: 160).

Leading us directly into number 4*. Teach Students*. Youth pastors teach students vital concepts, character building, Biblical values, and how to use their God-given talents in life. Planning how to build these into a student's life takes time but if we teach the principles and then entrust the parents to follow up with the lessons as life happens... WOW. Youth pastors will need to take an inventory in the teenagers junior and senior year making sure that the basics have been taught and caught and are ready to be lived out in the real world of college and career. To do this best they will need parental involvement, but they will need to refocus on re-teaching in practical ways

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those elements that may be missing before the teenager moves on to college/ career (Clark, 2014: 160).

Finally, D6 Youth Pastors must *5. Coach Parents to be Coaches*. What does this mean? As a teenager runs around the track of life, they have a couple of coaches and one is the youth pastor and the other is the parent. For many they feel the youth pastor is their coach but the coach can only be there for some of those races as they have others to also be coaching while the parent can be at each and every race and are… the D6 youth minister will teach the parent how to be an effective coach thus helping their youth and encouraging them onward into adulthood (Clark, 2014: 161). According to Ron Hunter (Clark, 2014: 162),

> D6 knows no time limit, no cultural boundaries, and no geographical preference. Generational discipleship passages show the value of the church equipping people, making marriages stronger, helping parents spiritually coach and guide their kids. When all the ministries of the church find ways to strengthen parents to help their kids, every generation wins, and our culture will see the difference. D6 represents God's original plan for how to nurture a Christ-follower generationally from birth throughout the circle of life.

Clark Forbes, founder of *Rooted www.rootedminsitry.com* a grace-driven youth ministry dedicated to advancing and equipping youth leaders in his article "Don't Farm Out Your Child's Discipleship to the Youth Pastor" agrees with the Deuteronomy 6 philosophy. While adding that Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it," calls parents to action reminding them that their children and teens will learn the most from seeing the gospel *modeled* at home. Students whose parents care deeply about the gospel and actively disciple them have a

better chance of growing deep roots in God. Often parents leave academic success up to the schools and spiritual success up to the church; but neither the school nor the church can replace the parental role. Thus, we need to learn to not outsource a child's discipleship to the church but rather take responsibility. Realizing that discipleship is not a science and working with a "teenager" is no easy feat. Parents (and the church) will often stumble and fail but it is the power of the Holy Spirit and the saving gospel upon which we are to lean relentlessly united as parents and their allies: youth ministers, children's ministers, senior pastors, volunteers and other parents within the faith community (the church). Therefore, "discipleship is not a church program or activity, but a lifelong relationship developed with a child, (a young adult, and an emerging adult) around the gospel" (Forbes, March 13, 2017).

3.10 Conclusion:

By tracing the Sunday School Movement, the Advent of Youth Ministry, the four types of Youth ministry in the 20th Century and the five views of Youth ministry in the 21st century we are able to see that the church continues to struggle with how best to catechize, educate, train, prepare, and send out our children, students, and youth into the world. The church has failed and faltered and perhaps will continue to do so. But in each of these models and views we read the work of men who care deeply about youth and doing ministry with and for them albeit in many different ways forms and fashions. Programs and Parachurch Ministries have done amazing work in evangelization, camps, and missionary work, discipleship programs, but they are not and never will be the church. They must not be confused with the church and youth associations must

make every attempt to work with the local church (Root, 2014: 42). Youth need to be included in every ministry of the church: the *diakonia* – the ministry, the *koinonia* – the fellowship, the *didache* – the teaching, the *cybernesis* – management & administration, the *paraklesis* – pastoral care, and of course the *leitourgia* – worship. If youth can become an integral part of everything that happens within the church community the church will experience an amazing energy that comes from them being young and full of life. The goal of this chapter is to place Sunday School Movements, Youth Ministry and its various approaches in conversation with the idea of *churched emerging adults.*

Chapter 4 – Empirical Study

4 Introduction

Chapter Four describes the procedures and decisions made during the quantitative and the qualitative research processes, respectively. The data is presented and reflected together with the analysis thereof, relevant to the defined problems stated in the research.

4.1 Quantitative Research

Chapter Four begins with a section on quantitative research. Quantitative research seeks "to understand the actions and practices in which groups and individuals engage everyday life and the meaning they ascribe to their experience" through the gathering and analyzing of information (Osmer, 2008: 49-50). The information is either received in or transcribed into a numerical data format (Witte and Witte, 2010: 9).

4.1.1 Research Preparation

Chapter four opens with an overview of the location where the study will take place and how the churches were selected. The chapter continues with a look at the different characteristics of the spiritual life of the local church desired by churched emerging adults as identified by scholars including Wuthnow (2007:1-2). Setting the stage for the qualitative and quantitative analysis of local churches and their

awareness/ understanding of the ever-changing postmodern world and the affect it has had and is having upon their ministers and their congregations specifically in terms of engaging churched emerging adults.

4.1.2 Research Theory and Chapter Divisions

Emerging adults are a significant percentage of society especially in Metro -Atlanta where there are thirty-two different colleges and universities drawing students between the ages of 18 to 32. Thus, the churches should have a unique makeup of membership due to the high number of students living in and around these colleges and universities as well as those who have recently graduated and have found jobs in the city. Remembering that not all *churched emerging adults* currently go to college does not change the fact that they are important to society's future. Lutz who wrote *College Ministry in a Post-Christian Culture* (2011:41) states, "college ministry is the most strategic mission field in the world today, because they grow up to be leaders in every sphere, the impact they have on the world far exceeds their numbers."

Para-church organizations like Campus Crusade (known as CRU), InterVarsity, Navigators, and Young Life have known this for generations. Para-church organizations have a known formula for "*churched emerging adult*" ministries on a college campus or on the mission field. Jon Saunders (2015: 3) states that the formula is "deliberate + efficient + aggressive evangelistic ministry = salvation and discipleship."   But they are not intentional in their work to channel students into the local churches (Saunders,

2015: 3). Thus, it has been documented that churched emerging adults who do not find a "home church" begin to sense a disconnection from church. This often leads them to drop out of church entirely when they graduate from college or complete their masters, doctorates, medical school, residencies, fellowships etc. Not to mention those churched emerging adults who never go to college they might be overlooked entirely by the local church and especially by the college based parachurch organizations (Saunders, 2015: 4). Lutz (2011: 153) agrees, "Connecting students to the local church is imperative for the churched emerging adults as well as for the survival, health, and growth of the church."

Thus, this chapter will lead us back to reproduce from Chapter One the questions the research sets out to answer, namely:

1. What identifiable characteristics found in the local church meaningfully *engage churched emerging adults*?

2. What can the local church do about the continuing decline of its on-site attendance/membership, specifically in terms of those eighteen to thirty-two year old age group?

3. How does the Christian community find its way back to being Christ-centered and focused upon the mission of God in the world, *missio dei*?

These questions should provide key information, through statistical /quantitative research as well as qualitative research, essential to developing strategies to stop and perhaps reverse the trend while proposing a cradle to grave paradigm.

Researchers including Barna (2014), Kinneman (2014), Arnett (2014), Setran & Keisling (2013), Powell (2011) and Evans (2015) suggest that the most important traits an emerging adult is looking for in a local congregation include: Discipleship and Mentoring, Genuineness of Heart, Relevance to Daily Life, Jesus-Centric/ Incarnational, Holiness and Sanctification, Community and Family, Opportunities for Service, Preservation of the Mystery of God. Therefore, the questionnaire and interview include questions regarding these traits and their presence within each church.

The chapter is divided into two main parts leading to the concluding chapter. **Part One: Quantitative Research** will include: Steps 1 & 2 as outlined above: the nature of the data elicited from the questionnaires as well as the results of the questionnaires. **Part Two: Qualitative Research** will include Step 3: discussing the congregations selected as well as summarize the interviews with the leaders of the participating churches and the inferences that can be drawn from these interviews. Finally leading to **Chapter Five** which will be the conclusion of the study, where a "cradle to grave" integrated intergenerational paradigm will be developed to highlight the identifiable characteristics found in the local church which meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults* ultimately leading to the slowing of its decline and the ways in which a church can in fact keep/attract churched emerging adults.

The following should be noted:

1. The questionnaire instrument and interview questions are original and developed entirely by the author (a complete copy of each can be found in Appendix A & Appendix B respectively).

2. While the final questionnaire instrument was developed in consultation with my thesis advisor Dr. Malan Nel, and the staff of the University of Georgia's Statistical Consulting Center, its final form remained the responsibility of the author.

3. All the data generated by the questionnaire instrument and the interview questions was compiled and analyzed by a graduate student: WenHao Pan in statistics at University of Georgia's Statistical Consulting Center under the strict guidance and supervision of the department head XianYan Chen. The conduct of the analysis of the data generated by the questionnaire, including the selection of the best type of analytical tools and the methodology employed in generating the report were determined by the University of Georgia's Statistical Consulting Center which also approved the final report.

4. The results below are based on the Computer-Generated percentages and the subsequent Statistical Analysis of the "Study of the Churched Emerging Adults Relationship with the Local Church." Developed by the University of Georgia's Statistical Consulting Center.

4.1.3: Location - Metro Atlanta.

Atlanta's Metropolitan Area is the locus within which the boundaries of this project lie. The Southern States of the United States of America are referred to as the "Bible Belt" due to the sheer number of churches, one on every corner in every town stretching from Texas to West Virginia. The "South" is made up of fourteen states with Georgia being the largest of them (Ambrose, 2004: 3).

The history of Georgia begins with the Spanish Explorers in 1540 whose mission was to find a faster way to the Far East to enhance the Spanish position within the spice trade. In 1733, James E. Oglethorpe after being granted a royal charter from the British, founded the first permanent settlement for English debtors. Georgia would be administered by Oglethorpe and twenty other trustees. Georgia was founded as a colony for English debtors with a ban on slavery, but it was not long before Oglethorpe realized Georgia was unattractive to the new colonists. Thus the "debtors only" strategy was dropped and the ban on slavery was rescinded. The government shifted from being a colony ruled by trustees and became an official British "Royal Colony." It was not long before thousands of new settlers began to arrive in Georgia and they established numerous lucrative coastal plantations growing cotton, rice, and tobacco (Ambrose, 2004: 4).

The Revolutionary War (1775 – 1783) brought with it many challenges and changes including Georgia's status when it signed as the fourth State of the Union, and it approved the U.S. Constitution; although the state gave up this identity during the Civil War (1861-1865) when it succeeded from the Union and joined the Confederacy. Not long after the "Confederate" identity was established, Georgia began to take its place as center stage for many Civil War battles. This decision brought with it the devastating actions of Sherman who burned Atlanta to the ground while marching on to Savannah (Cobb and Inscoe, 2009: 2). In 1870, five years after the war between the states Georgia was readmitted into the Union (Cobb, 2008: 23). Notably Georgia was the first state in the entire nation to establish and fund a university when the doors to University of Georgia were opened in the wilderness of Athens located in North Georgia. In 1836 Wesleyan College, known as Mount Holyoake Female Seminary, was founded upon Christian Methodist Episcopal principles, and the first graduating class was in 1840(Cobb, 2008:24). The first private Baptist College, now Mercer University was founded in 1833 in Macon, Georgia.

Atlanta is the capital city of Georgia, and it is the research location for this paper. The history of Atlanta began at Fort Peachtree where Peachtree Creek flows into the Chattahoochee River as this was the dividing line separating the Cherokee and Creek Indians. In 1814, Fort Peachtree was built to oversee the ever-expanding South. Soon the railroad decided to build its end points for both the Atlantic and Western lines at a point called the "Terminus." In 1837 a post was driven into the ground and named "the zero-mile post," it is four blocks from the current day Five Points at

Forsyth and Magnolia Streets in Atlanta. The Metro – Atlanta area would go through a series of name changes starting with "Thrasherville"after its founder John Thrasher; "Terminus" referring to the end of the railroad lines; "Lumpkin" after the governor Wilson Lumpkin although the governor asked that they name it "Marthasville" after his daughter. In 1845 the Chief Engineer of the Georgia Railroad suggested renaming the city to match its heritage; "Atlantica-Pacifica" which was made official, but it was quickly shortened to "Atlanta" in 1847 for ease of use, and in 1868 "Atlanta" was made the state capitol (Ambrose, 2004:3).

Fast forward to the 21st century, Georgia leads the nation in the production of paper, carpets, textiles, apparel, chemicals, and farming / processing of chicken. Agriculture products include corn, cotton, onions, tobacco, soybeans, eggs, peaches, and peanuts. Georgia is typical of the "new" South, it encourages new industrial initiatives and leads in the communication industry (including CNN, FOX, TURNER, NBC, etc.). Its role as a transportation hub for the region has grown to include Hartsfield-Jackson Airport (one of the busiest airports in the United States), Delta Airlines, Amtrak trains, and Greyhound buses. Other important companies headquartered in Atlanta include: Coca-Cola, Home Depot, UPS, AT&T, Newell Rubbermaid, Equifax, and Aflac (www.census.gov/quickfacts/table, 2013: 3). The population of Georgia is 9,919,945 (Cobb and Inscoe, 2009: 6) and is very racially mixed including Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, Europeans, and Asians.

Geographic boundaries must be considered when doing a questionnaire/ interview-based research with the limitations of a single researcher. Until now the study has vaguely referred to "Metropolitan Atlanta'' this is an area which historically includes the following counties: Dekalb, Cobb, Fulton, Gwinett, Coweta, Fayette, Douglas, and Henry (www.atlanta.com/county-profiles). However, for the purposes of this study only everything inside the circular highway system known as Interstate 285 as well as a 35 mile radius surrounding I-285 will be considered.

4.1.4 Stratified Sampling

The Statistical Stratified Sampling Theory was used to select the churches with the largest number of target subjects within the Metro Atlanta Area. The Statistical Stratified Sampling Theory states that when your objective is to produce an estimator with a small variance it is best to find units that are as similar as possible based upon race, economics, geographic area, and / or age (Rossi, Wright, and Anderson; 1983: 37). Categories A, B, and C qualified as strata as they are homogeneous within themselves, exhibit greater variability between them and samples of suitable sizes can be selected independently from each (Gupta and Kabe, 2011: 41). Sample sizes were defined as the percentage of the sample population of each stratum. The method of simple random sampling was used to ensure "that each different possible sample of the desired size has an equal chance of being the one chosen" (Peck et al., 2015: 38).

In the case of this study the units (category A) are churches that are found within the Metro Atlanta Area and the estimator is their large populations of eighteen to thirty-two year old's who share a Christian Theological heritage. Denominational mix (category B) was important so the churches were chosen from the Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian traditions; as well as four non-denominational churches. Another issue to consider was race (category C) because many churches in the South are still very mono-ethnic thus care was taken to choose churches from each ethnic group in addition to multi-ethnic congregations within the Metropolitan Atlanta Area.

4.2 Study Design

The study questioned current churched emerging adults attending a youth fellowship at the time of the survey, leaders were reluctant to share names of individuals who had discontinued attendance. Fourteen churches "known" within ministerial circles for reaching our intended demographic, churched emerging adults between eighteen and thirty-two years old, were identified within the Metro-Atlanta area. Each identified church was sent a letter of introduction as well as an invitation of participation in the research study and a consent form to join the study. Seven of the fourteen churches responded indicating their willingness to participate with a signed consent form.

The second step was to question the eighteen to thirty-two year olds from each of the seven churches by handing out business cards to every emerging adult member with a link for them to go online and fill in the questionnaire. Simple randomness was maintained, and it kept the churches from "hand picking" subjects for our study thereby creating skewed results. This step was supremely difficult as "churched emerging adults," millennials in particular are difficult to convince to complete a questionnaire. I provided each church with an envelope full of business cards to be handed out to the "churched emerging adults" at random during their weekly services. I also followed up by attending the services myself and made sure that the ministers had sufficient cards to hand out. A total of five hundred business cards were distributed and amazingly only 110 "churched emerging adults" actually went online and filled in the questionnaire.

The third step was to engage each church in an in-depth interview as well as research regarding the church's history, current ministries, and dedication to life within the community. Each church's minister whose responsibility focused on work with the "churched emerging adult" 18 to 32 year olds was interviewed. Often the church administration and senior pastor were interviewed depending upon availability. The goal was to find out the role of the local church and theology in the lives of churched emerging adults. Hypothetically, the research will help us discover how each church was effectively engaging our demographic.

The final step uses the gathered information both quantitative and qualitative and compares them against the research and criteria detailed in Part 3.3 of Chapter 3. Thus, enabling the researcher to apply the concepts of Practical Theology to the research problem in an effort to fulfill the hypothesis and offer the local church a strategy to win and keep the hearts of emerging adults in the church.

4.2.1 Designing the Questionnaire

The research title and research problem statement provide the focus through which sections of chapter 2 and chapter 3 are explored. The questionnaire provided categorical data directly from "churched emerging adults." It was noted above the primary purpose of the questionnaire was to find out: 1. What identifiable characteristics found in the local church meaningfully engage churched emerging adults? 2. What can the local church do about the continuing decline in its membership, specifically in terms of 18- to 32-year-olds? 3. And how does the church find its way back to being an Inclusive Missional Congregation?

The information elicited from the questionnaires provided results for churched emerging adults who may be considered somewhat intuitive in that they value:

1. Worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition.

2. Solid teaching that can change or enhance a person's life.

3. Opportunity for the expression of a person's Denominational Heritage.

4. The use of email and social media as paramount.

Beyond these four elementary conclusions much of the in-depth information regarding the churches and the emerging adults in the churches, actually involved in the study; attention must be turned to the results of the questionnaires and the interviews conducted with the participating congregations, beginning with the questionnaires.

4.2.2 Section Headings Pertaining to the Questionnaire and Their Relationship to the Research Questions

Six section headings were designed to guide the reader in contextualizing the questions and statements within the questionnaire considering the three main research questions noted above, these groups were not designed to measure any intrinsic relationships but to simply organize and group the questions based upon the type of question, they include:

Section A: Demographic Variables; these questions produced variable which simply tell us the basics about the churched emerging adults filling in the questionnaire.

Section B: Churched Emerging Adult's Church Background; focused on the background of the participants.

Section C: Churched Emerging Adult's Current Habits and Relationships with the Church.

These questions established Patterns of Church Engagement by the Churched Emerging Adult. Question 1. falls under Section C. Question 1. What identifiable characteristics found in the local church meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults?*

Section D: Church Engagement of Churched emerging adults: these questions asked how well the church engages and relates to Churched Emerging Adults. Question 2. falls under Section D. Question 2. What can the local church do about the continuing decline in its membership specifically in terms of 18 to 32 year olds?

Section E: Churched Emerging Adult's Spiritual Motivation to become adults in an inclusive missional congregation. Question 3. falls under Section E. Question 3. And how does the church find its way back to being an Inclusive Missional Congregation?

The data was collected through categorical variables (Hastie, et al., 2013:1) and continuous variables (Witte & Witte, 2010: 15). The categorical variables recorded sex, race, gender, denomination, and level of education. The continuous variables recorded include age, marital status, number of years in a particular area of the city, years in the congregation, years as a Christian, and church attendance.

4.3 Empirical Analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to a mass of collected data and can be messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating (Marshall &Rossman, 2010: 207). Such an exercise in analysis and interpretation requires the application of both deductive and inductive logic (Best and Kahn, 2013: 283). This section displays the data per category and per question both descriptively and inferentially as it relates to the purpose of this research. They include graphs and charts. We are dealing with three very distinctly different statistical models one is based upon a straight percentage, the second is the histogram and the third is based upon the active score where multicollinearity becomes a major issue. Therefore, it is important to cover each separately to avoid misinterpretations.

4.3.1 Evaluation and Interpretation

Explorative-descriptive research will be applied to the data from two statistical angles, they simply take each question from the questionnaire individually with a basic percentage analysis to see if any notable patterns exist and if any data can be gleaned from these patterns. And the questions will be analyzed based upon histograms developed by the statisticians and how each question relates to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. These have been pulled together for a fuller understanding of the empirical data.

Descriptive research provides a systematic description of the data from which the explorative research can undertake its explanation and interpretation (Heitink, 1999: 229-230). This is aligned directly with Osmer's (2008: x) method of Practical Theology. First through the Descriptive-Empirical task of "Priestly Listening" which asks the question: "What's going on?" (Osmer, 2008: 31-78). Second is the Interpretive task of "Sagely Wisdom" exercised through the "qualities of thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation and wise judgment guided by the researcher's interpretation and reflection" (Osmer, 2008: 81-86). To describe, examine, explain, and interpret data the presentation of descriptive statistics is followed by inferential statistics to determine differences, associations, and relationships (Witte and Witte, 2010: 5).

4.3.2 Descriptive Statistics: From the Basic Questionnaire Questions – Information Taken from the Basic Percentages Provided by the Computer Based Questionnaire Program to be followed by the UGA Statistical Analysis and Histogram Extrapolations.

The descriptive results provide meaning to the quantitative information obtained through summarization and description (Kumar, 2002: 102), provided that a satisfactory sample percentage return and size are obtained. The questionnaire questions are intended to help us study the "churched emerging adult" experience and see the nature and extent to which the church is or is not meeting their needs and thus is or is not contributing to their loss in numbers. Our goal is to also then propose a new paradigm for the church based upon the results of the quantitative, qualitative,

and literature review / research analysis that has been done. The questionnaire questions were intentionally written to elicit information and to see if any patterns developed about the emerging adult questionnaire participant and the church they are attending.

The "Data Exploration" that follows is a statistical analysis of the data from the questionnaire studied in direct relationship to the research questions posed at the beginning of the thesis using a histogram plot. The work was completed by WenHao Pan and XianYan Chen at the Statistics Consulting Center at the University of Georgia.

4.3.2.1 Introduction and Data Exploration

WenHao Pan and Xian Yan Chen state; that it is known that previously "churched" people who fall in the eighteen to thirty-two age demographic are identified as "churched emerging adults." They are leaving the church in increasing numbers. The purpose of the research is to study the identifiable characteristics found within the local church that are meaningfully engaging churched emerging adults. Surveys were conducted to collect information from the 110 respondents. The following table lays out the three research questions and pinpoints which survey questions directly respond to each of the questions as originally asked by the researcher.

Table 1. Summary of the Research Questions

Research Question	Survey Questions to be studied
1. *What identifiable characteristics found in the local church meaningfully engage churched emerging adults,?*	*Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32_1, Q32_2, Q32_3, Q32_4, Q32_5, Q32_6, Q32_7, Q34_1, Q34_2, Q34_3, Q34_4, Q34_5, Q34_6, Q34_7, Q34_8, Q34_9, Q34_10*
2. *What can the local church do about the continuing decline in its on-site membership specifically in terms of 18-32 year olds?*	*Q14, Q15, Q21, Q22, Q23_1, Q23_2, Q23_3, Q23_4, Q23_5, Q23_6, Q23_7, Q23_8, Q23_9, Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28_Snapchat, Q28_Twitter, Q28_Podcast,Q28_Livecast_Streaming_Videos , Q28_Email_Lists, Q28_Wifi, Q28_Facebook, Q28_Instagram*
3. *How do 18 to 32 year olds relate to the church? How does the Christian Community find its way back to being Christ-centered and focused upon the mission of God in the word, misio dei?*	*Q18, Q19, Q20, Q32_1, Q32_2, Q32_3, Q32_4, Q32_5, Q32_6, Q32_7, Q33_1, Q33_2, Q33_3,Q33_4, Q35_1, Q35_2, Q35_3, Q35_4, Q35_5, Q35_6, Q35_7, Q35_8, Q36*

Question 1. stated that this was a confidential and anonymous questionnaire and that the respondent understood that their answers would be added to a large database and be kept confidential. 100% percent signed indicating yes, they understood the nature of the study and its confidentiality.

Section A - Demographic Variables

Questions 2 through 7 - focuses on the respondent's biographical /demographic information: gender, ethnic/racial background, marital status, denomination, level of education, and the number of years living in the area. These questions help the researcher determine if the churched emerging adults answers were consistent and could then be included in the study, for example if a respondent indicated they were both male and female or that they had reported having multiple marital statuses that questionnaire was not included in the final results. These questions also served to establish who the churched *emerging adults* were and the general characteristics of the church attendees: identity including race, gender, age, denomination, level of education, and number of years living in a particular area of the city. Some of these are considered categorical variables and others are considered continuous variables.

Question 2: What is Your Gender? 60.91% Female 39.09% Male

Question 3: Racial / Ethnic Background? 73.64% White (81) 20.00% Black (22)
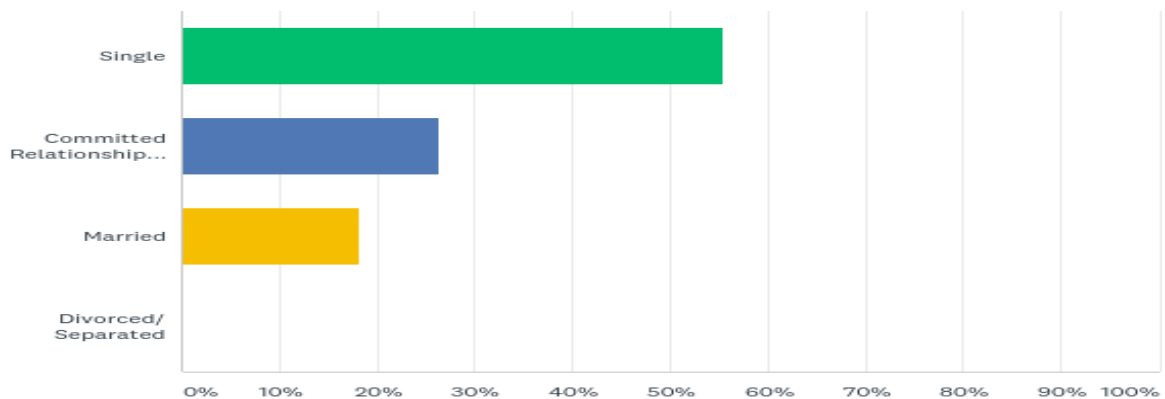
4.55% (5) Hispanic 1.82% (2) – these results are directly related to the church

demographics which are discussed again in the qualitative portion.

Table 4
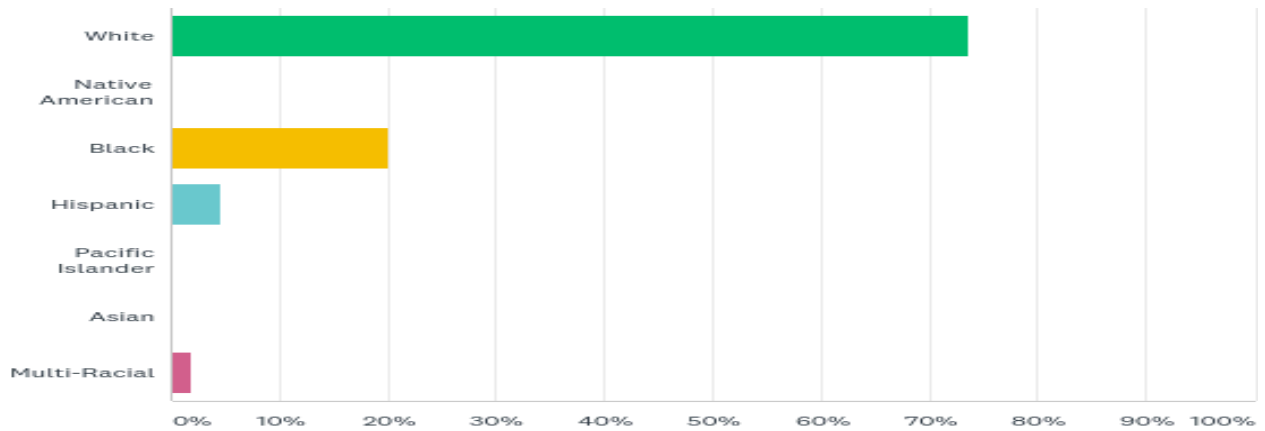
Question 4: Marital Status? Out of 110 *churched emerging adults* 55.41% (61) single,

26.36% (29) in committed relationships, 18.18% married (20), and 00.00% divorced (0).

 Table 5

Question 5: Which of the following is your Denomination? 43.64% (48) Baptist, 10.91% (12) Methodist, Episcopal 2.73% (2), Presbyterian 9.09% (10), and Community 33.64% (37). This question is directly linked to the qualitative analysis and understanding who are our churched emerging adults and how they relate to their denominational heritage.
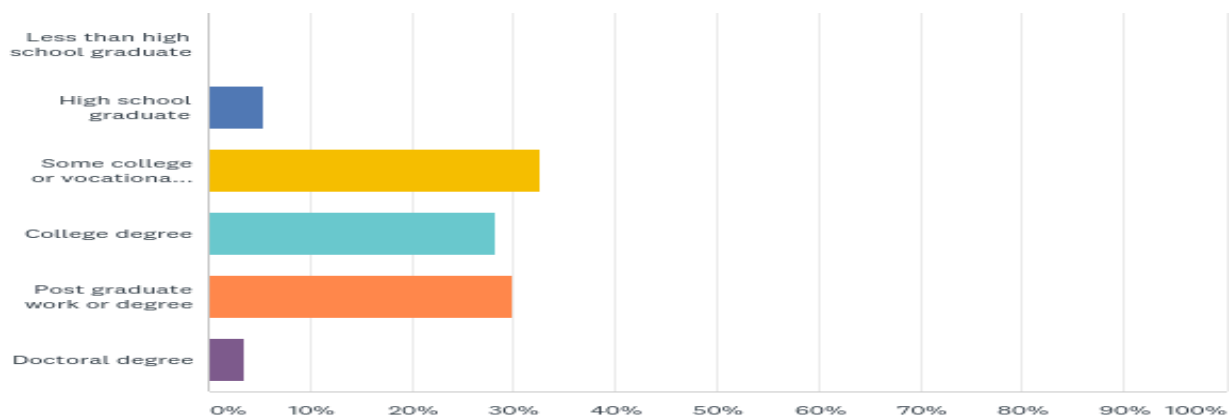
Table 6
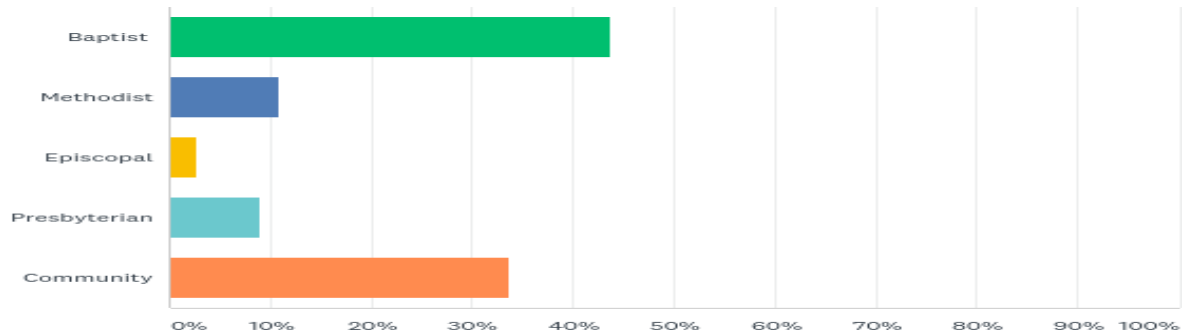
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Baptist	43.64%	48
Methodist	10.91%	12
Episcopal	2.73%	3
Presbyterian	9.09%	10
Community	33.64%	37
TOTAL		110

Question 6. What is your highest level of education? This question paints a picture of our respondent's education and the education levels of the church membership.;

Table 7

Question 7. How many years have you lived in this area? By asking this question it reveals how far our churched *emerging adults* travel to attend church on a weekly basis. It was interesting to find out that there is a fairly even split among the 30.00% (30) who had lived in the area for more than 20 years and those who have lived in the area from 2-9 years at 30.91% (34). 22.73% (25) have lived in the area between 10-19 years and 16.36% (18) have lived in the area for less than one year. Thus, it can be concluded that "churched emerging adults" are loyal and prefer to stay in a church close to their home and they remain constant for many years.

Table 8
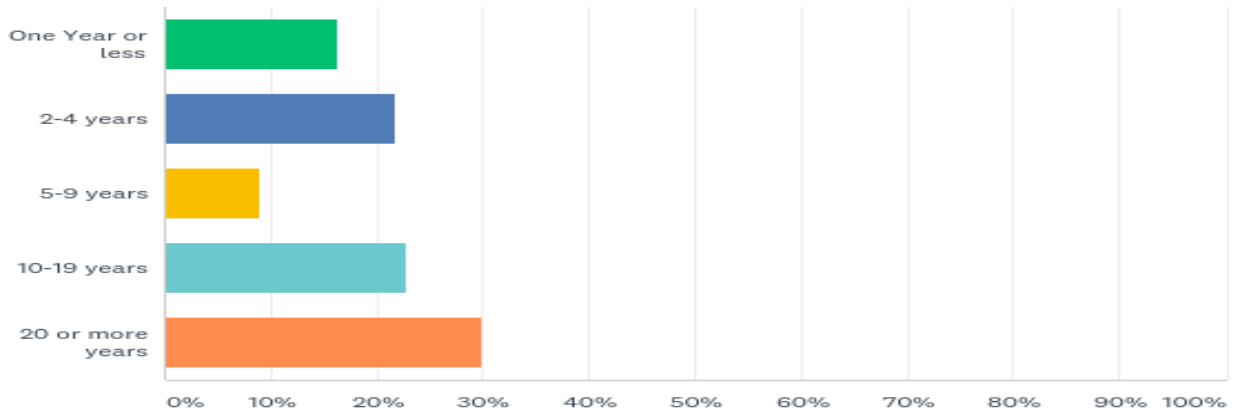
Section B – Churched *Emerging Adults*' Church Background (Tables 9 – 13)

Questions 8 and 14 are directly related to churched *emerging adults* church background. These questions are meant to establish whether or not the "churched emerging adult" was effectively "churched "or "unchurched."

Question 8: Asks "Were You Raised in Church?" This question directly established whether or not the subject was churched. 83.64% (92) said yes, they were raised in church while 16.36% (18) said no they were not raised in church. This established that the questionnaire group was predominately churched.
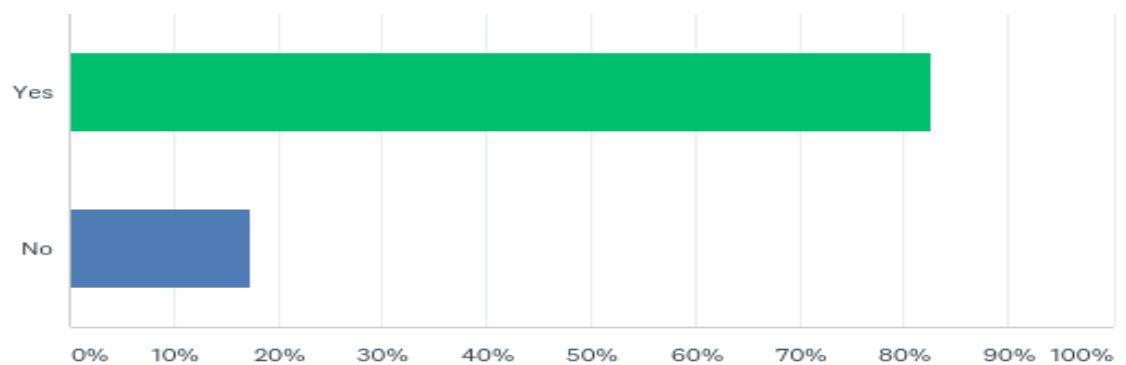
Table 9
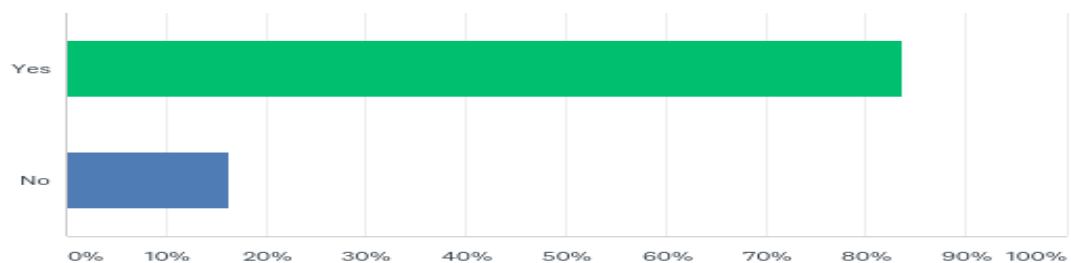
Question 9: Is your family Christian? 93.64% (103) an overwhelming number said yes, their families were Christian. Only 6.36% (7) said their families were not Christian. This established that the majority of our churched *emerging adults* came from Christian families.
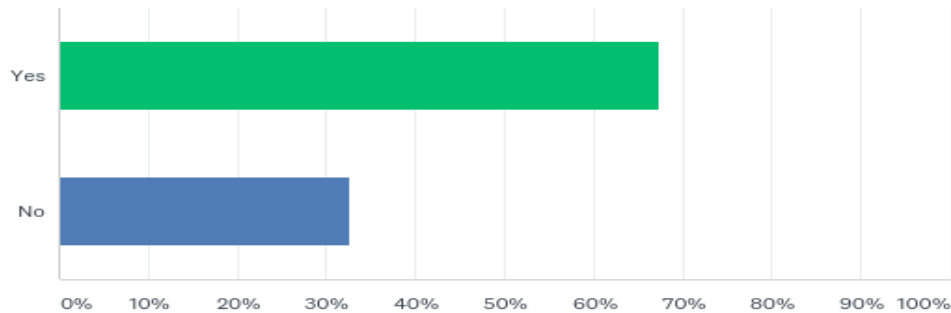
Table 10 – Familial Background
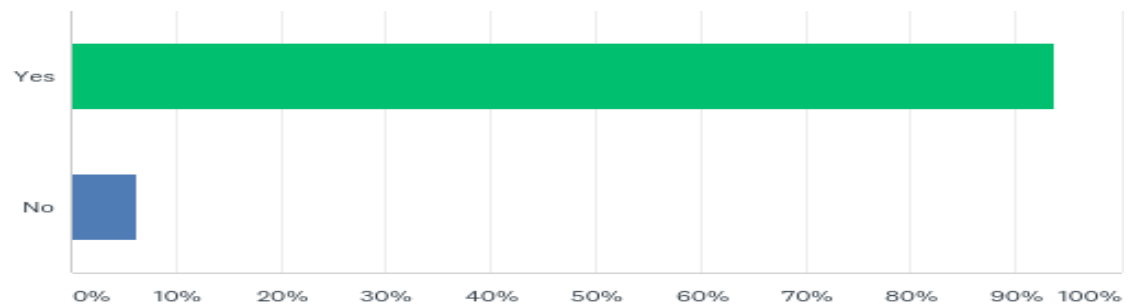
Question 10: Did you attend Sunday School or Children's Church as a Child?

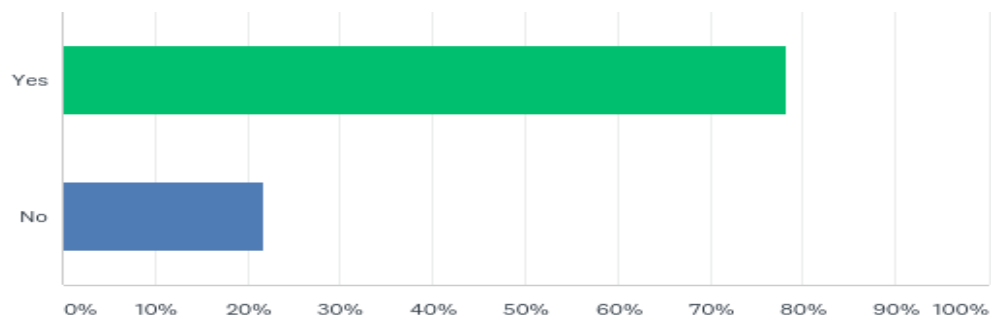82.73% (91) yes and 17.27% (19) no. **Table 11**

Question 11: Did you attend a Christian Camp? 67.27% (74) yes and 32.73 % (36) no. **Table 12**


Question 12: Did you attend a Christian Youth Group? 78.18% (86) yes 21.82% (24) no. **Table 13** -


This established that our respondent's families were dedicated to making sure that as a child and as a teenager they were raised in the church on a regular and on-going basis.

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Question 13: Have you ever participated in a mission or evangelism type event or trip? 66.06% (72) said yes and 33.94% (37) said no. This shows that emerging adults in the church are committed to participating in missions' outreach and the growth of God's Kingdom through evangelism. These numbers establish a desire within churched emerging adults for an Inclusive Missional Congregation as described in Chapter 3 of this paper. **Table 14**
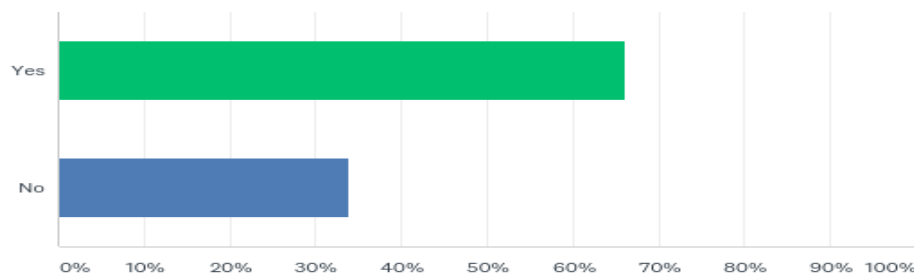
Question 14: How many years have you been a Christian? The largest number of *churched emerging adults* fell between the 16 – 20 years at 30.00% (33) and the 20 – 25 years at 25.45%(28) thus establishing that most of our participants have been Christians since childhood. 11.82% (13) fell between 0-5 years, 10.00% (11) fell between the 6 - 10 years, 9.09% (10) fell between the 11 – 15 years, and 13.64% (15)

fell in the 25+ years as a Christian. **Table 15**
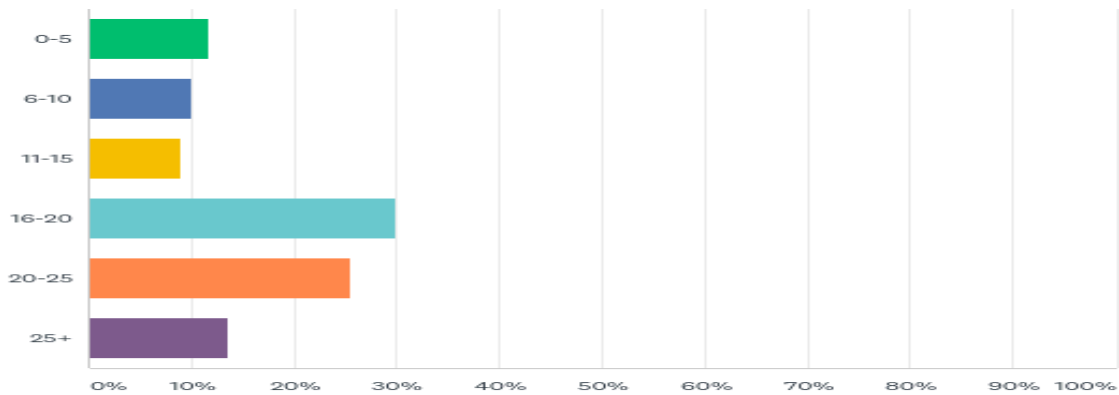
Section C – Churched Emerging Adults Current Habits and Relationships with the Church

Questions 15 through 19 are meant to establish the churched *emerging adult's* habits and relationship with the church they are currently attending.

Question 15: Is this the church you grew up in or have you transferred from another church? 86.35% (95) transferred as an adult while 13.64% (15) said they were still in the church they grew up in. This established that churched emerging adults are mobile, moving from one congregation to another based upon their spiritual needs and loyalty is not based upon growing up within a particular congregation.

Table 16
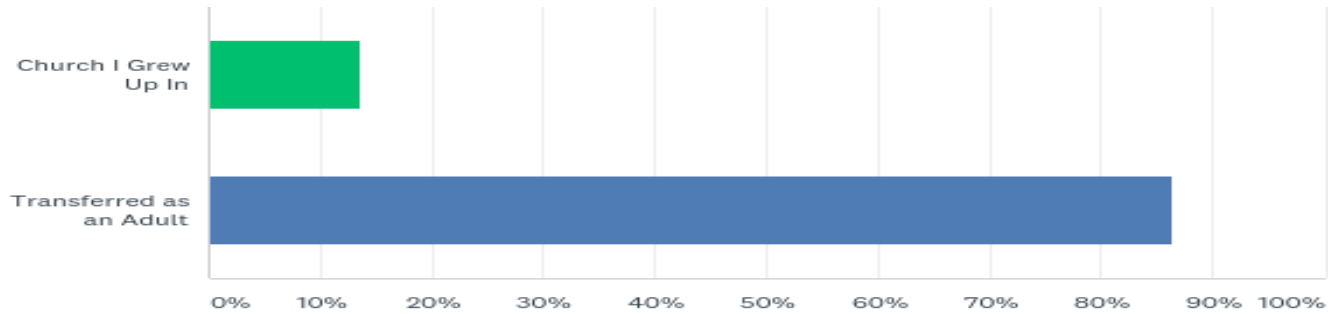
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Church I Grew Up In	13.64%	15
Transferred as an Adult	86.36%	95
TOTAL		110

Question 18: How many times have you attended church related meetings in the past year? The purpose of this question was to establish whether or not the emerging adult was placing importance on church related programs. The majority of churched *emerging adults* fell in the four times per month 30.91% (34) and six or more times per month 28.18% (31) categories indicating that churched emerging adults do place significance upon being present during church meetings. Almost 60% of the respondents attend a church related meeting more than four times a month. This indicates that most of the emerging adults in the church are actively involved in the church every week. Only 8.18% of respondents never participate in church-related meetings. These statistics are interesting in that over 90% of our churched emerging adults are still actively engaged with their local church while 8.18% are not. This

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finding is opposite to other major studies in the field but remember these findings are

based upon random demographics on a small scale.

Table 17
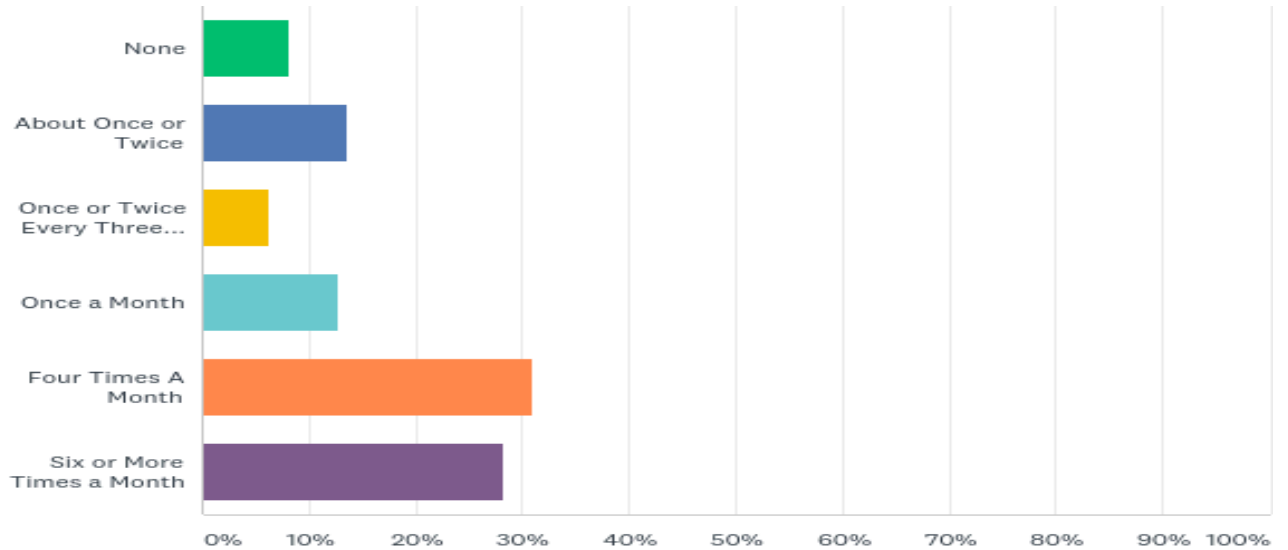
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	8.18%	9
About Once or Twice	13.64%	15
Once or Twice Every Three Months	6.36%	7
Once a Month	12.73%	14
Four Times A Month	30.91%	34
Six or More Times a Month	28.18%	31
TOTAL		110

Question 19: How many church groups do you attend? – this includes: Sunday School, Small Groups, Bible Study, Evangelism Teams, Music Ministry, College Ministry, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, or other Ministries? The purpose of this question was to establish how often an emerging adult engages with Church related ministries as part of their normal routine. About 89% of respondents spend time with one or more church groups. Only 10.91% of churched emerging adults don't spend time with church groups.

Straight Statistics show that 27.27% (30) engage in one ministry a week, 30.91% (34) engage in two ministries per week, 15.45% (17) engage in three ministries per week, and 15.45% (17) engage in four ministries per week. This established that over fifty percent engage in one or two ministries per week which is a significant investment of time but when looked at against past generations would be considered weak as their predecessor spent every Wednesday, Friday, Sunday, Sunday Night in church normally. **Table 18**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	10.91%	12
1	27.27%	30
2	30.91%	34
3	15.45%	17
4	15.45%	17
TOTAL		110

Section D –Patterns of Church Engagement by Churched E*merging Adults*

Questions 20 through 22 established the patterns of engagement by churched *emerging adults.*

Question 20: How would you rate your personal involvement in church related activities within the last few years? About 65% of the respondents rate their personal involvement as "committed" or "highly committed". Only 4.55% of the churched emerging adults are not committed to church related activities within the last few years. Straight statistics say 59.08% (65) rated their personal involvement as Committed 26.35% (29) or Highly Committed 32.73% (36) this established that the emerging adult is generally a little over 50% committed to making personal involvement an important part of their lives**.**

Table 19

	NOT AT ALL COMMITTED	SOMEWHAT COMMITTED	COMMITTED	HIGHLY COMMITTED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	4.55% 5	36.36% 40	26.36% 29	32.73% 36	110	2.87

Question 21 and Question 22: are very complex as the churched *emerging adults* **are asked to evaluate their rate of participation increase or decrease and the reasons associated with said change.** In both cases the most common reason for a change was personal availability.
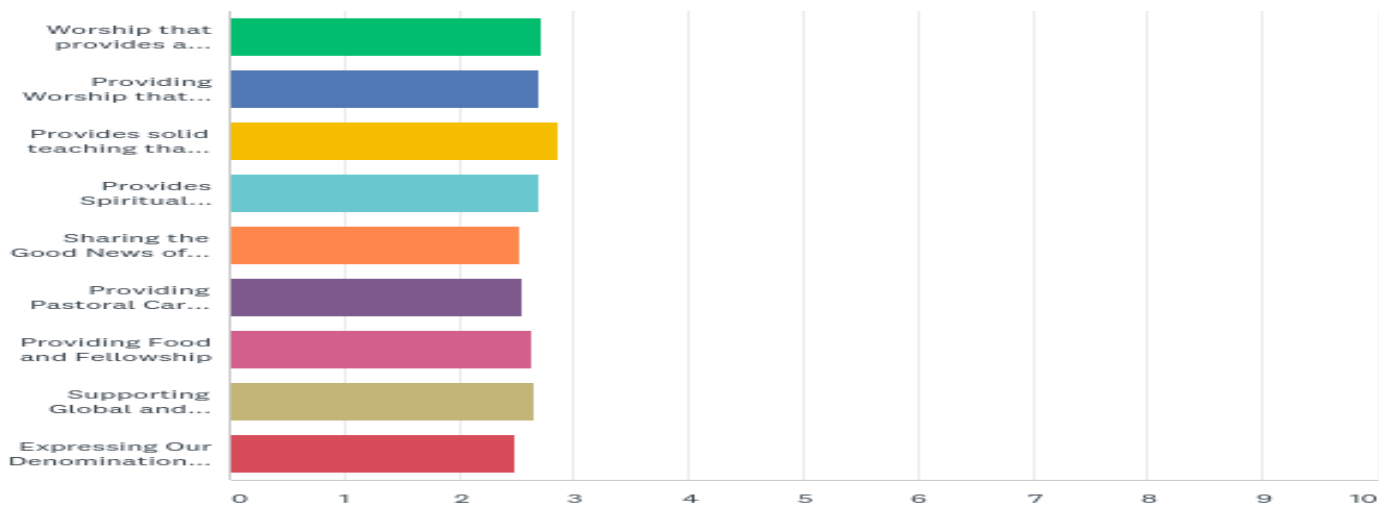
Table 20

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal Availability	37.96%	41
New Responsibility in the Church	12.04%	13
Relationships with Leaders	13.89%	15
Relationships with Peers	30.56%	33
Celebrated Diversity	5.56%	6
TOTAL		108

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal Availability	71.84%	74
Less Responsibility in the Church	6.80%	7
Relationships with Leaders	6.80%	7
Relationships with Peers	7.77%	8
Lack of Diversity	6.80%	7
TOTAL		103

Section E: Church Engagement of Churched *Emerging Adults*

Question 23: Tasks of Your Church - Below are a number of tasks your church is likely to perform… please respond to each indicating how much emphasis the congregation places upon that ministry on a scale of 1 to 4…. The goal of this question was to establish what the most important area of ministry is to the churched *emerging adults* and how their church measures up. It was found that Worship, Solid Teaching, and Spiritual Formation are the most important facets and found to score the highest amongst the churches that have a large emerging adult ministry thus we see if a church wants to continue to attract a large emerging adult ministry these are three areas of importance.

Table 21

Questions 25 through 28 ask about the use of technology and social media.

Question 25 Does your Church have a website? 98.18% (108) yes and 1.82% (2) no.

Table 22

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
yes	98.18%	108
no	1.82%	2
TOTAL		110

Question 26 Does your Church website contain accurate and up to date information? 91.82% (101) yes and 8.18 % (9) no. This would be a profoundly serious situation to a churched emerging adult and therefore they would choose to attend a church with an accurate website. **Table 23**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.82%	101
No	8.18%	9
TOTAL		110

Question 27 Does the church website help you access social media? 72.73% (80)

yes and 27.27% (30) no. **Table 24**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.73%	80
No	27.27%	30
TOTAL		110

This indicates that most churched emerging adults will choose a church with an accurate or current website. Does your church use any of the following types of social media? Instagram? Snapchat? Twitter? Podcast? Live cast/Streaming? Email Lists? Wi-Fi? Facebook…. Each had a variable percentage of engaging or not engaging but what is important is the fact that most, maybe all, but one percent uses all of these social media sources to stay connected to their churched *emerging adults.*

Table 25

	NOT ENGAGING	SORT OF ENGAGING	ENGAGING	VERY ENGAGING	TOTAL
Instagram	5.56% 1	11.11% 2	16.67% 3	66.67% 12	18
Snapchat	67.65% 69	13.73% 14	10.78% 11	7.84% 8	102
Twitter	44.34% 47	11.32% 12	23.58% 25	20.75% 22	106
Podcast	34.95% 36	11.65% 12	20.39% 21	33.01% 34	103
Livecast/ Streaming Videos	14.29% 15	13.33% 14	29.52% 31	42.86% 45	105
Email Lists	4.72% 5	19.81% 21	35.85% 38	39.62% 42	106
Wifi	23.81% 25	9.52% 10	29.52% 31	37.14% 39	105
Facebook	12.84% 14	15.60% 17	33.03% 36	38.53% 42	109
Instagram	36.27% 37	12.75% 13	18.63% 19	32.35% 33	102

Questions 29 through 31 ask specific questions related to the church and churched emerging adulthood.

Question 29: How well does your church reach 18 to 32 year olds? 13.64% (15) Not very well, 21.82% (24) Not Well, 29.09% (32) Well, 35.45% (39) Very Well. This established that over 64% feel their church reaches 18- to 32-year-old churched emerging adults very well. **Table 26**

	NOT VERY WELL	NOT WELL	WELL	VERY WELL	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	13.64% 15	21.82% 24	29.09% 32	35.45% 39	110	2.86

Question 30 and 31: ask the same question. **Question 30: How much importance and energy does your congregation place on ministry to 18 to 32 year olds?** 13.64% (15) No Importance or Energy, 29.09% (32) Some Importance or Energy, 28.18% (31) Importance and Energy and 29.09% (32) A lot of Importance or Energy. **Table 27**

	NO IMPORTANCE OR ENERGY	SOME IMPORTANCE OR ENERGY	IMPORTANCE AND ENERGY	ALOT OF IMPORTANCE OR ENERGY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	13.64% 15	29.09% 32	28.18% 31	29.09% 32	110	2.73

Question 31: Are the specific ministries focusing on the 18- to 32-year-old demographics full of life? 32.73% (36) Some Life, 21.82% (94) Full of Life, 31.82% (35) Very Full of Life. Ministries which are in fact full of life. These numbers established that the congregations chosen by churched emerging adults are in fact placing a high level to a very high level of importance and energy into their 18 to 32 year old ministries.

Table 28

	NO LIFE	SOME LIFE	FULL OF LIFE	VERY FULL OF LIFE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	13.64% 15	32.73% 36	21.82% 24	31.82% 35	110	2.72

Questions 32 through 34 establish church organizational issues and identities.

These are well covered by the UGA histograms:

Question 32: How would you rate how your church deals with the following organizational issues? For all the 7 issues, we calculate the weighted average of the contingency table. Higher value of weighted average represents higher rate of the specific issue. Among all the 7 issues, "Keeping people informed about various ministries and groups'' achieves the highest rate. The second place is "Keeping people informed of community outreach". "Giving people opportunities to have input regarding decisions affecting the church" shows the lowest rate. The rates for the other issues fall into the middle range.

Question 33: Identify the importance level you believe your congregation places on each of the following ministries. Continuing the weighted average as a score to evaluate the importance level. Among all the four ministries, "Evangelism in the local community" achieved the best performance in importance level and "Training members to share their faith" shows the lowest score. The performance in importance

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level for the four ministries doesn't vary too much. Percentage of outreach and ministry to 18 to 32 year olds in the local community 20.91% (23) Important and 31.82% (35) Highly Important ; Evangelism in the local community 26.36% (29) Important and 32.73% (36) Highly Important; Training members to share their faith 30.00% (33) Important and 27.27% (30) Highly Important; and Encouraging 18 to 32 year olds to participate in ministry 35.45% (39) Important and 27.27% (30) Highly Important. These statistics established that most ministries do not place more than a 50% importance on training or helping establish an18- to 32-year-old in ministry.

Table 29
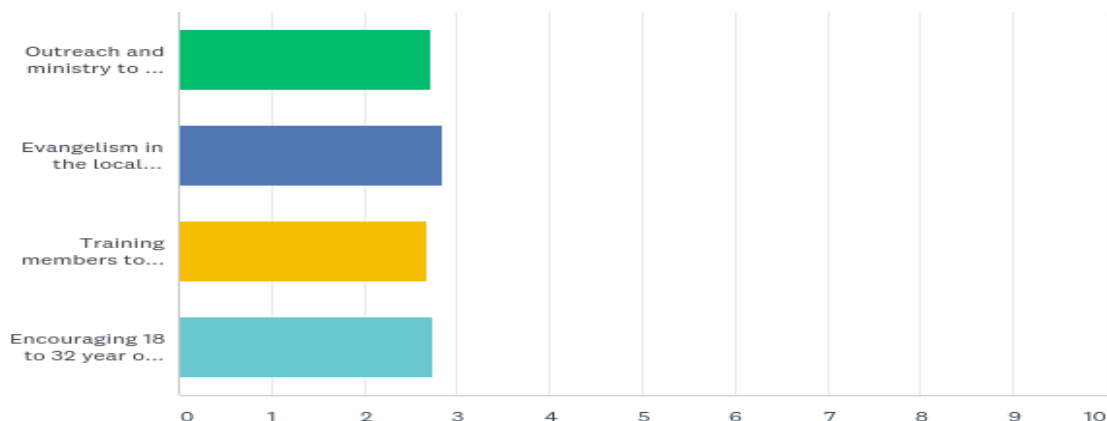
Question 34: Congregational Identity – all congregations have an identity, a sense of who they are. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements from your perspective as an individual looking at your congregation's overall identity and vision. In all categories 40+% rated their church

as excellent. But two areas of concern remain: **Sub question: Our church**

intentionally is inclusive of all ages and generations: 18.18% answered poor and

10.91% answered average. This established that over 30% of those questioned still feel

that their church lacks inclusivity in terms of mixing generations and ages. **Sub**

question: Our Church intentionally engages people between the ages of 18 and

32: 16.36% answered poor and 20.91% answered average. This established that over

37% of the churched emerging adults still feel as though they are not being

intentionally pursued within their congregation or community.

Table 30

	POOR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Our church's identity as it is in one I feel comfortable with	4.55% 5	10.91% 12	40.91% 45	43.64% 48	110	3.24
It is easy for me to tell my friends what is unique about our church	2.73% 3	13.64% 15	30.91% 34	52.73% 58	110	3.34
I have a clear understanding of what our church stands for	1.82% 2	9.09% 10	30.91% 34	58.18% 64	110	3.45
An effective effort has been make to instruct me in our church's mission and vision	6.36% 7	12.73% 14	38.18% 42	42.73% 47	110	3.17
I have a clear understanding of the theology of our congregation	5.45% 6	20.00% 22	28.18% 31	46.36% 51	110	3.15
I have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation	8.26% 9	22.94% 25	26.61% 29	42.20% 46	109	3.03
Being at this church has make a difference in my spiritual life	7.27% 8	11.82% 13	28.18% 31	52.73% 58	110	3.26
Our church is intentionally inclusive in terms of all ages and generations	18.18% 20	10.91% 12	22.73% 25	48.18% 53	110	3.01
Our church intentionally engages people between the ages of 18 and 32	16.36% 18	20.91% 23	20.91% 23	41.82% 46	110	2.88
Our church intentionally looks to the future	0.91% 1	15.45% 17	33.64% 37	50.00% 55	110	3.33

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Section F: Churched *Emerging Adult* Spiritual Motivation

Question 35: Please identify your satisfaction with the following aspects of your church? Music and Worship, Small Groups, Fellowship Opportunities, Inter-generational Mixing, Missions and Evangelism, Serving the Local Community, and Meeting my Spiritual Needs. The Goal of the question was to identify the areas in which the church was meeting the needs of the churched *emerging adult* and the areas in which they were not meeting their needs. Overall, there was a sense of their needs being met in all areas except two and that was the areas of intergenerational mixing as well as in missions and evangelism. This established again that the churches need to strive to do more intergenerational mixing and they need to work on outreach to their communities and beyond.

Table 31

	VERY DISATISFIED	DISATISFIED	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Music and Worship on Sunday	3.64% 4	6.36% 7	40.00% 44	50.00% 55	110	3.36
Music and Worship at other times	6.42% 7	9.17% 10	41.28% 45	43.12% 47	109	3.21
Small Groups	5.56% 6	18.52% 20	32.41% 35	43.52% 47	108	3.14
Fellowship Opportunities	2.73% 3	14.55% 16	43.64% 48	39.09% 43	110	3.19
Inter-generational Mixing	12.73% 14	20.00% 22	35.45% 39	31.82% 35	110	2.86
Missions and Evangelism	11.82% 13	9.09% 10	43.64% 48	35.45% 39	110	3.03
Serving the Local Community	8.18% 9	14.55% 16	39.09% 43	38.18% 42	110	3.07
Meeting my Spiritual Needs	8.18% 9	9.09% 10	36.36% 40	46.36% 51	110	3.21

Please identify your satisfaction with the following aspects of your church?

Among all the 8 aspects, "Music and Worship"and "Meeting my Spiritual Needs' ' achieve the best performance. However, "Inter-generational Mixing" shows the lowest satisfaction among churched emerging adults.

Questions 36 and 37 are linked because they ask what originally attracted the churched emerging adults to the congregation and the reason that they stay in their current congregation.

Question 36: Why were you ORIGINALLY ATTRACTED to this congregation? select from the list below: you may select more than one. "My Friends" is the first reason people may be originally attracted to the congregation. The second and third place are "The Minister/Communicator" and "My Family". Less than 5% of respondents select the reasons for "Christian Education and Discipleship", "Social Outreach / Fellowship", "Small Groups", "Free Food" and "Denominational Ties".   27.27% (30) choose my friends, 17.27% (19) choose the minister, 17.27% (19) choose my family, 11.82% (13) choose the church's reputation, 9.09% (10) choose worship style, 6.36% (7) choose location, and 2.73% (3) choose small groups.

This established that most churched emerging adults are originally attracted to a congregation based upon their friendships, the minister, their families, and the church's reputation before they are concerned with worship style, location, small groups, free food, or denomination.

Table 32
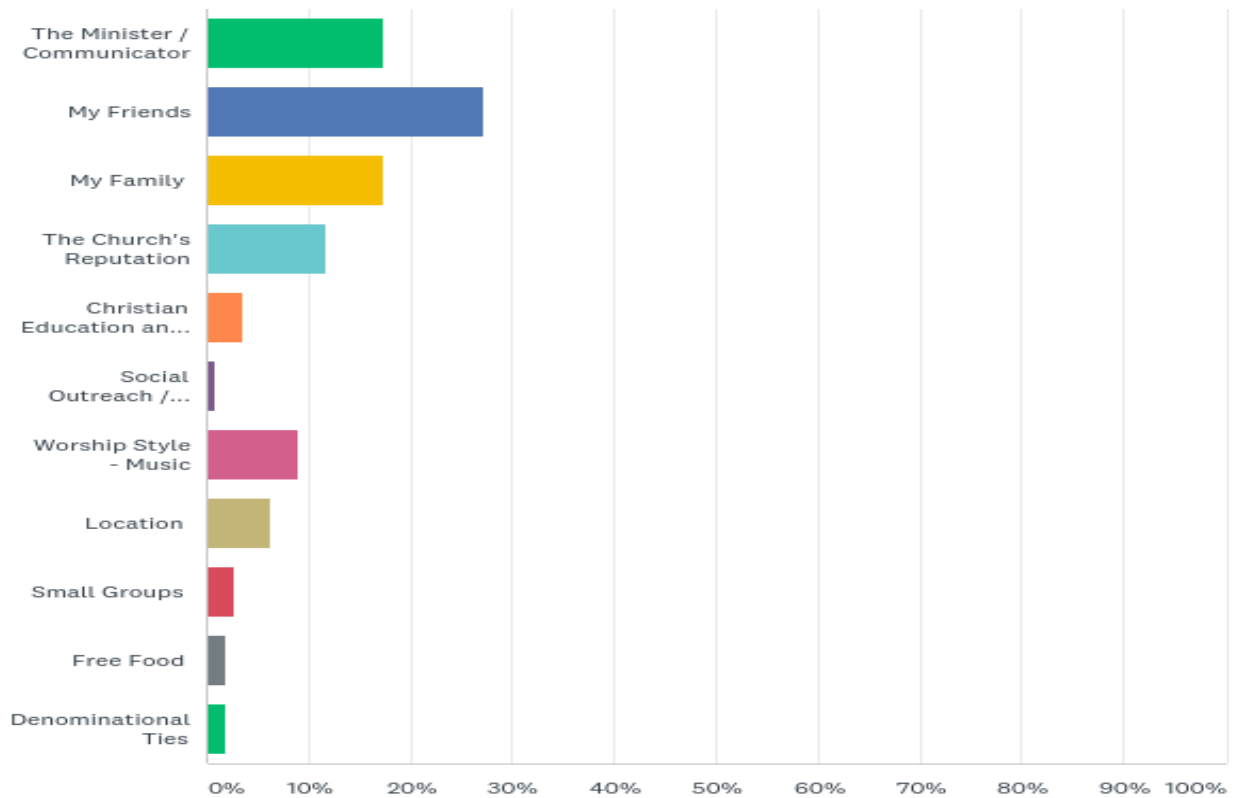
Question 37: What keeps you part of this congregation select from the list below: the minister, my family, my friends, the church's reputation, Christian education, the social outreach, worship style, location, small groups, and denomination. 25.45% (28) the minister, 17.27% (19) my friends, 12.73% (14) my family, 12.73% (14) Christian education, 10.00% (11) worship style, 8.18% (9) the social outreach, 6.36% (7) small groups, 3.64% (4) the church's reputation, 2.73% (3) location, and 0.91% (1) the denomination. This established that the main reason churched emerging adults stay in a church is the minister, their friends, their families, and the Christian education followed by worship. They are not swayed by location, reputation, or denomination.

Table 33
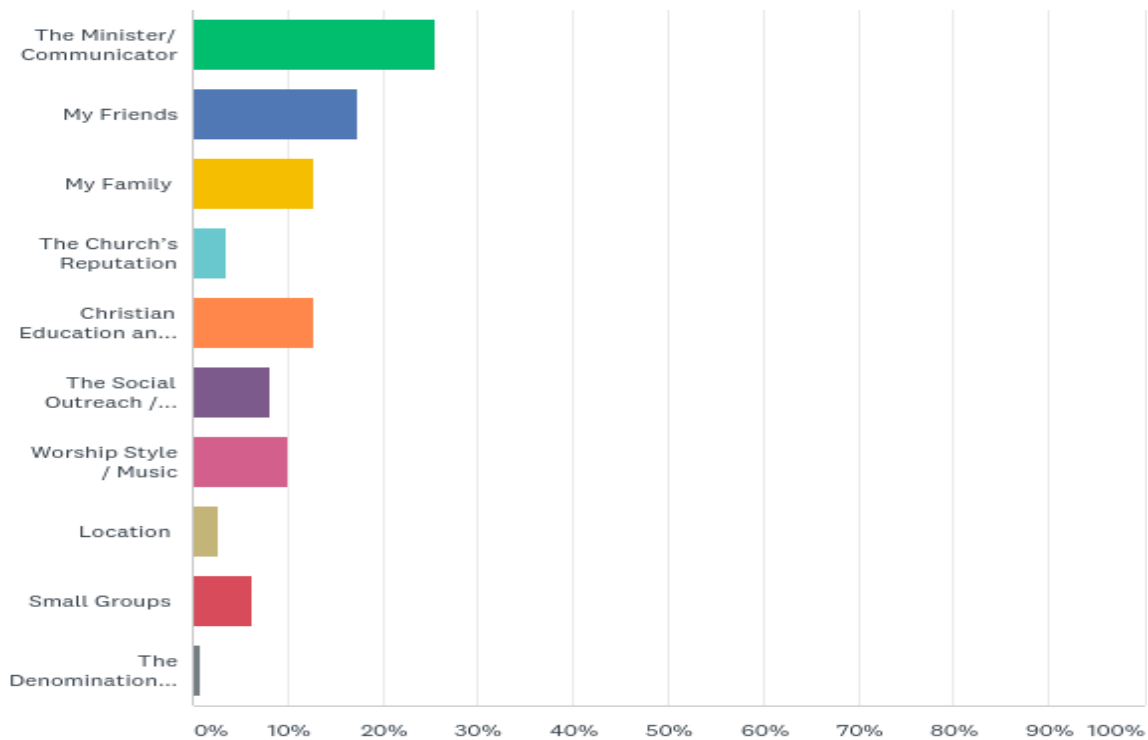
Question 38: Asks how would you rate the following aspects of your personal spiritual life and how has your spiritual life been affected by attending church?

The goal of this question is to find out what areas of the Christian walk they are strong in and what areas they are weak. It also established the importance of these three areas in the spiritual life of an emerging adult. Prayer falls in the 34.86% (38) Good and 29.36% (32) Excellent range. Worship falls in the 33.64% (37) Good and the 42.73% (47) Excellent range. And Bible Study / Scripture Reading falls in the 35.45% (39) and the 24.55% (27) Excellent range. These percentages established that worship tops the list of what churches reaching churched emerging adults do well and scripture reading / study falls at the bottom of the list.

Table 34
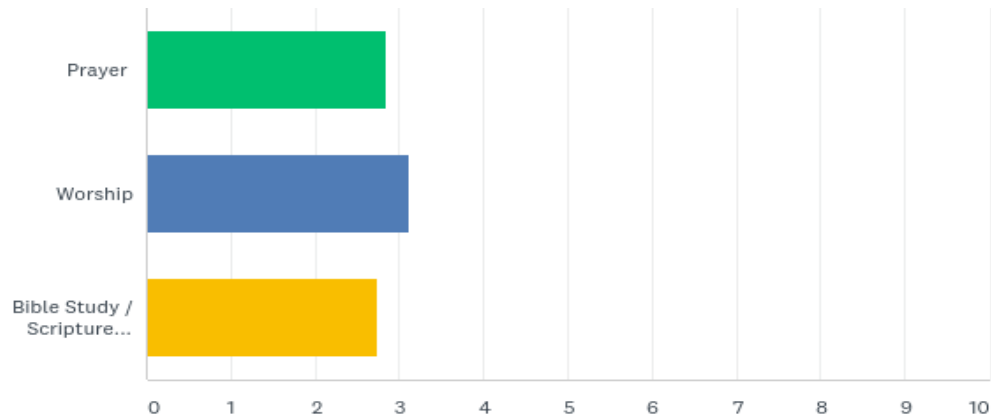
	POOR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Prayer	8.26% 9	27.52% 30	34.86% 38	29.36% 32	109	2.85
Worship	8.18% 9	15.45% 17	33.64% 37	42.73% 47	110	3.11
Bible Study / Scripture Reading	10.00% 11	30.00% 33	35.45% 39	24.55% 27	110	2.75

Questions 39 and 40 are both qualitative in nature and will appear in the third part of this chapter.

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4.3.2.2 Statistical Analysis and Conclusion

We first created the histogram plots for all related questions listed in Table 1. Histogram plot shows the graphical representation of the distribution of the data. The height of each vertical bar tells us how many values fall into each category. Figure 1 – Figure 11 shows all the related histogram plots.

Figure 1: Histogram Plot for Question 14 & 15

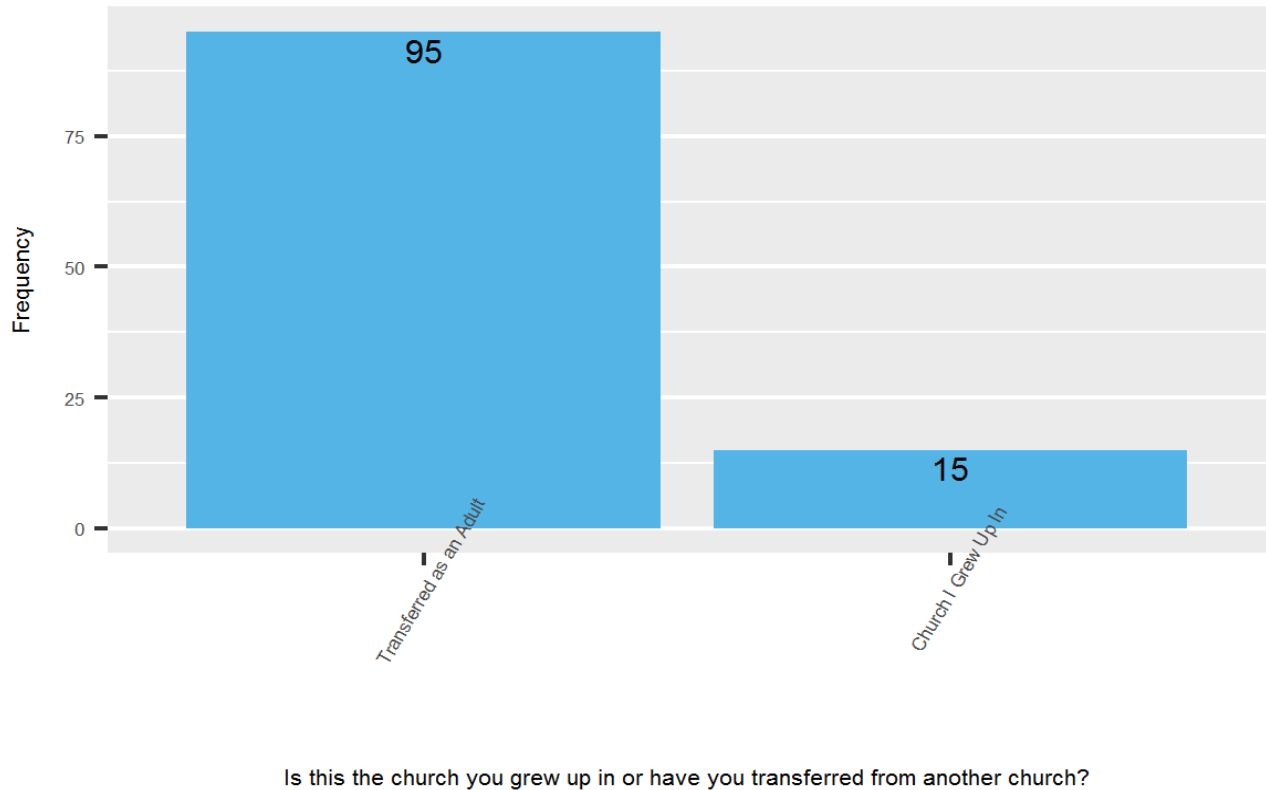Is this the church you grew up in or have you transferred from another church?
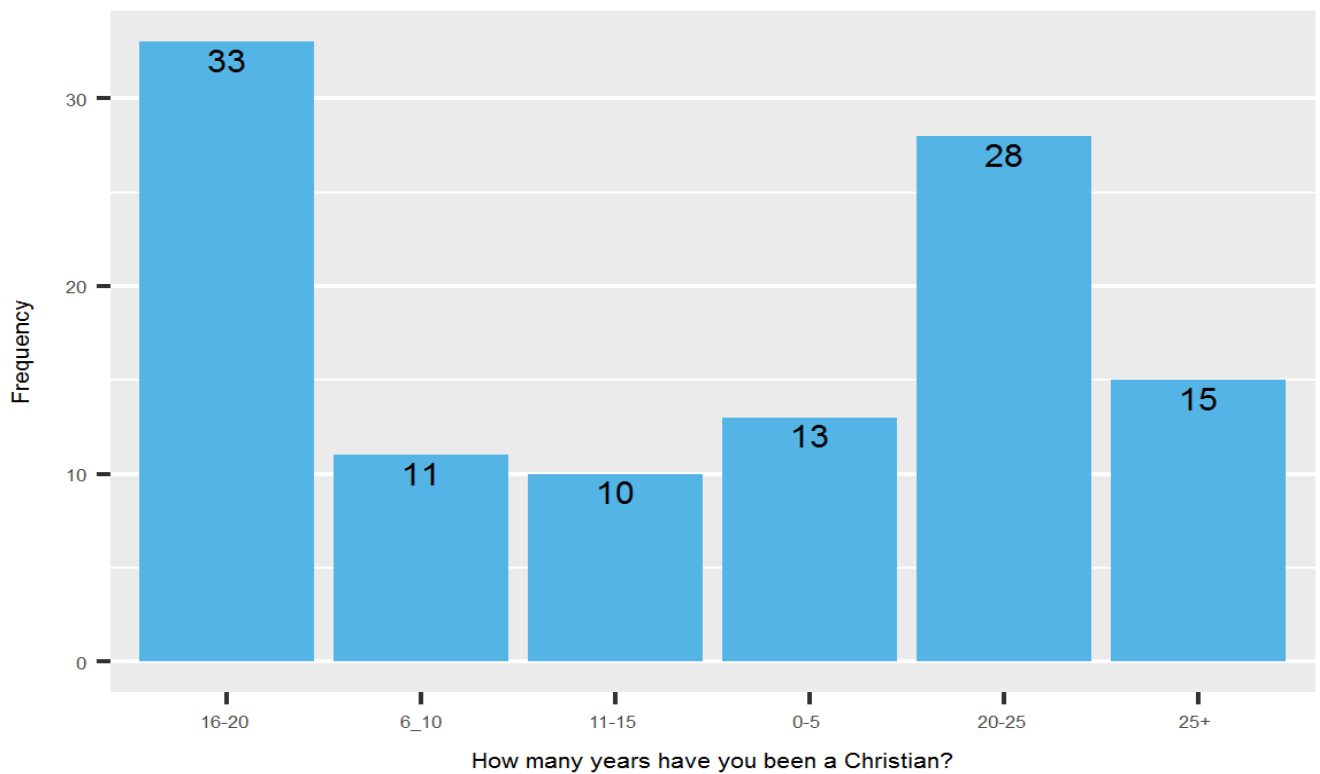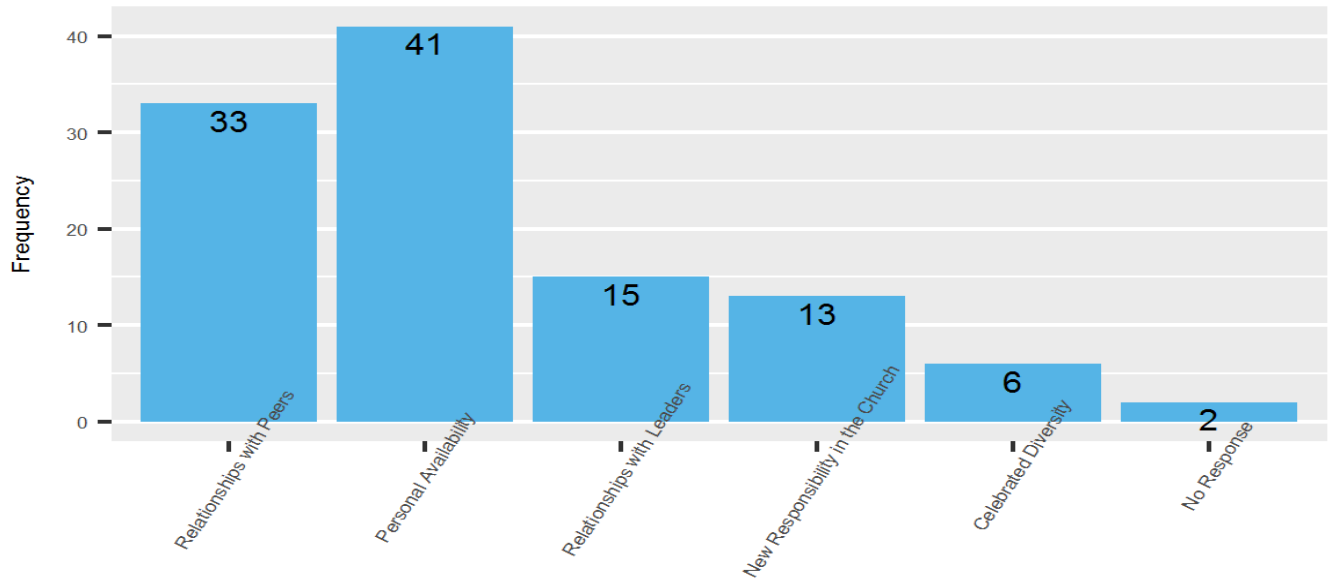
Figure 1 Histogram Plot for Questions 14 & 15 represents the data answering the

questions: How many years have you been a Christian? And is this the church you grew

up in or have you transferred from another church?

The survey showed the 16 to 20 year olds outnumbered the other age groups in

response to the question. The second largest group of young people were in the 20 to

25 age group, and the third age group of 25 years old plus, this question was open

ended as to the definition of Christian and the responses were individual. The vast

majority of people indicated that they have transferred from another church. Only a small number remain in the church of their earlier years.

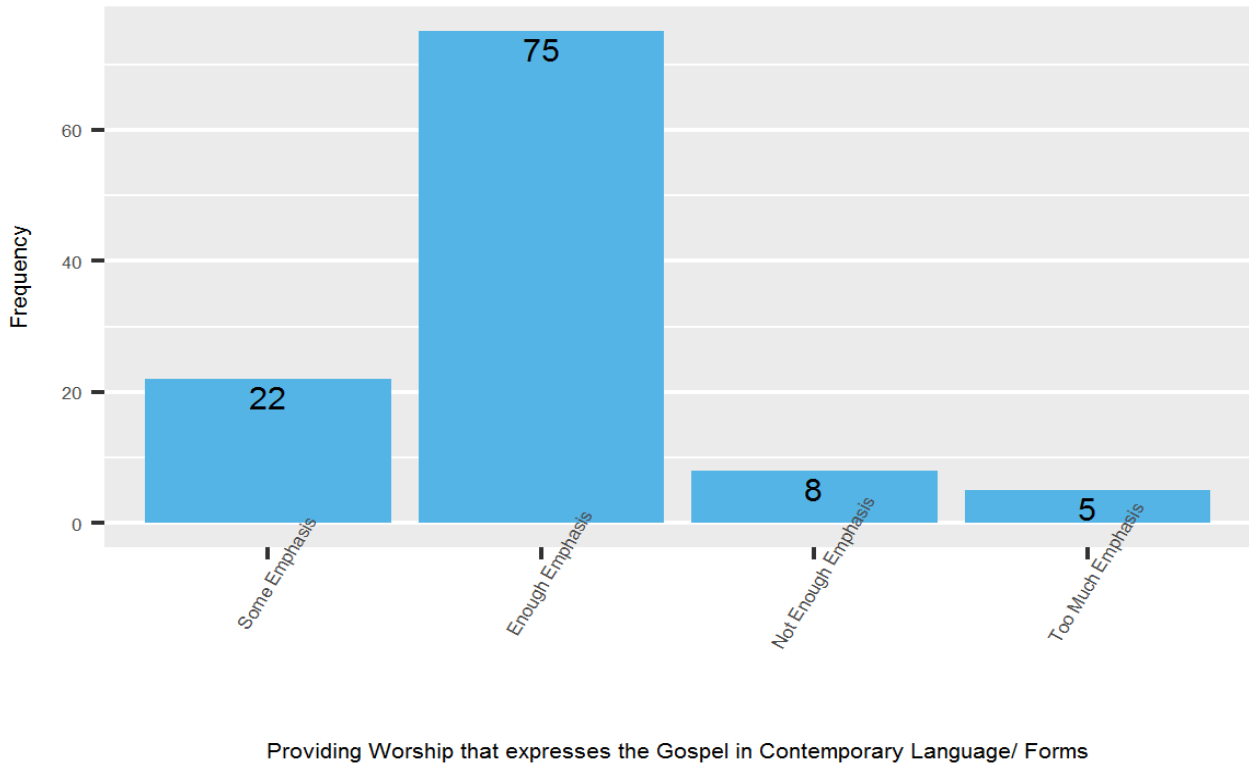**Figure 2: Histogram Plot for Question 21 & 22**
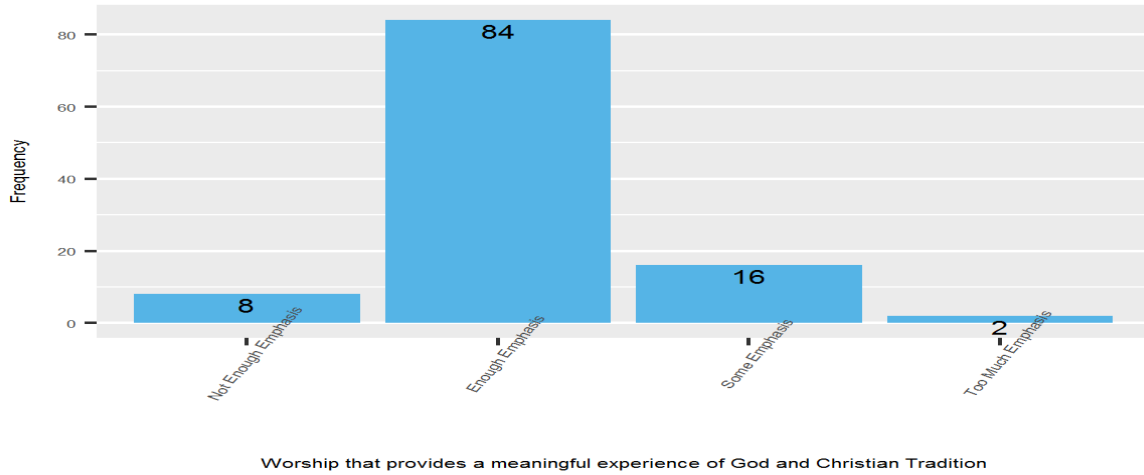
If your participation has increased which of the following are reasons for that?
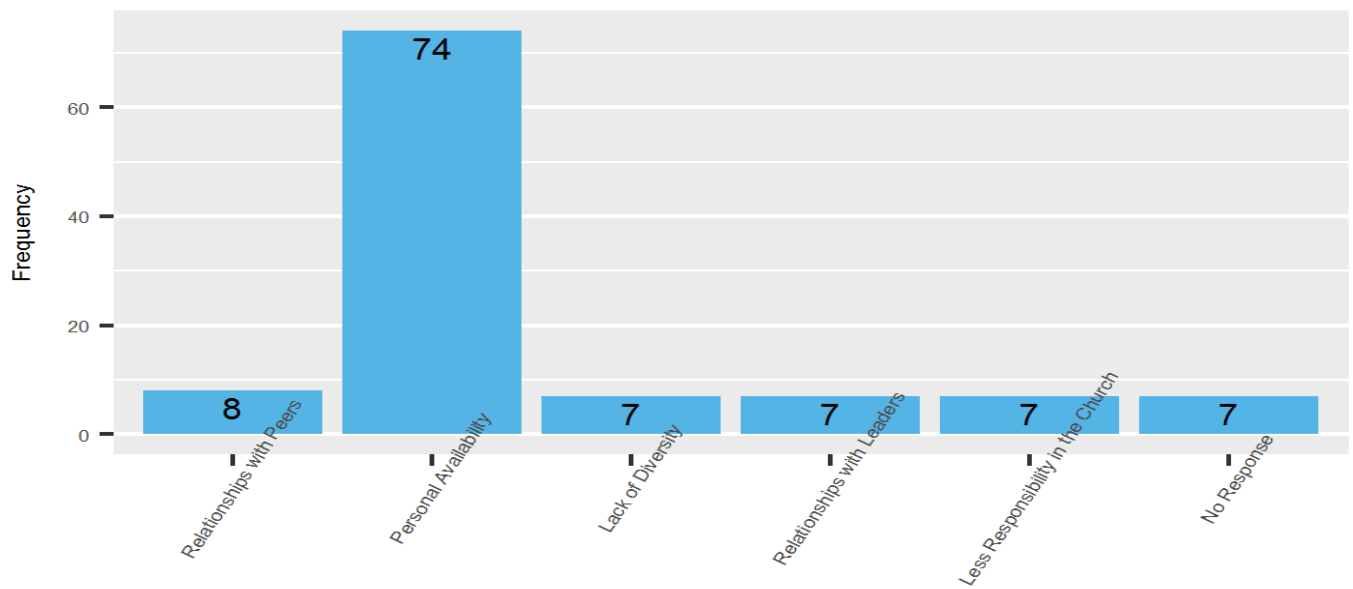
If your participation has decreased which of the following are the reasons for that?

Figure 3: Histogram Plot for Question 23

Worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition

Providing Worship that expresses the Gospel in Contemporary Language/ Forms
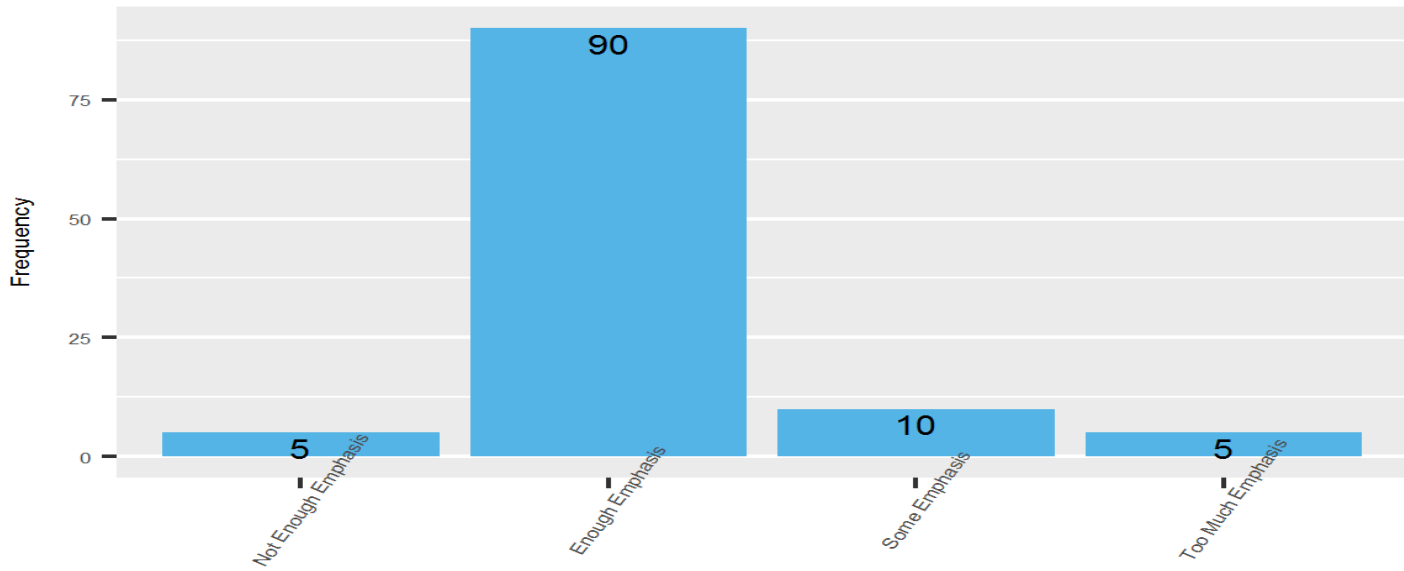
Provides solid teaching that has changed or enhanced my life
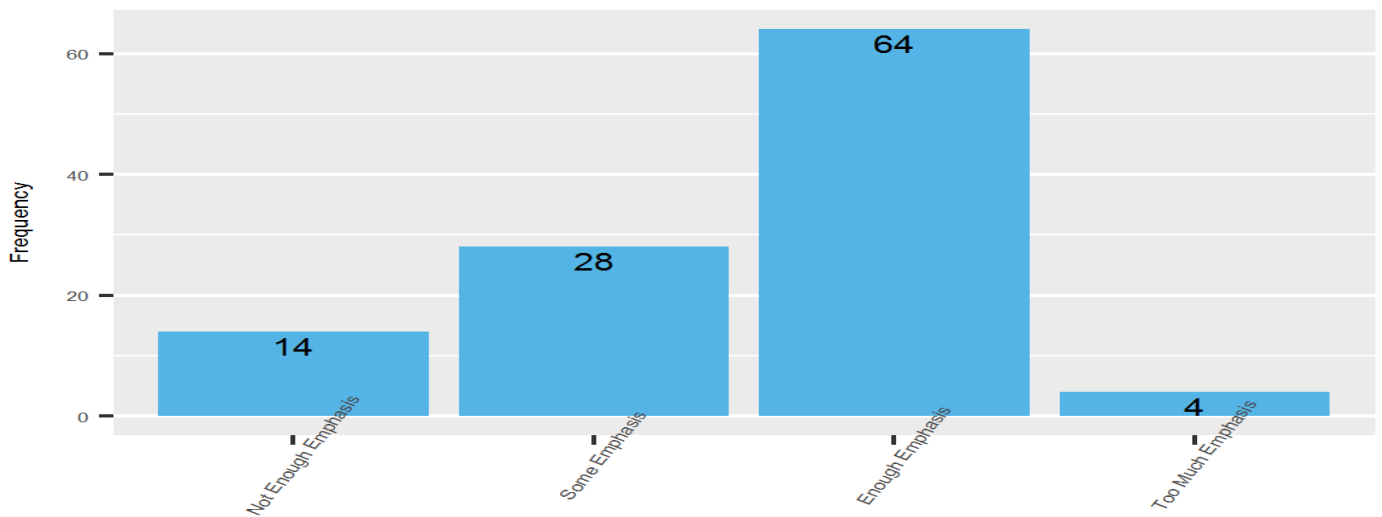
Sharing the Good News of the Gospel with the Unchurched through Evangelism
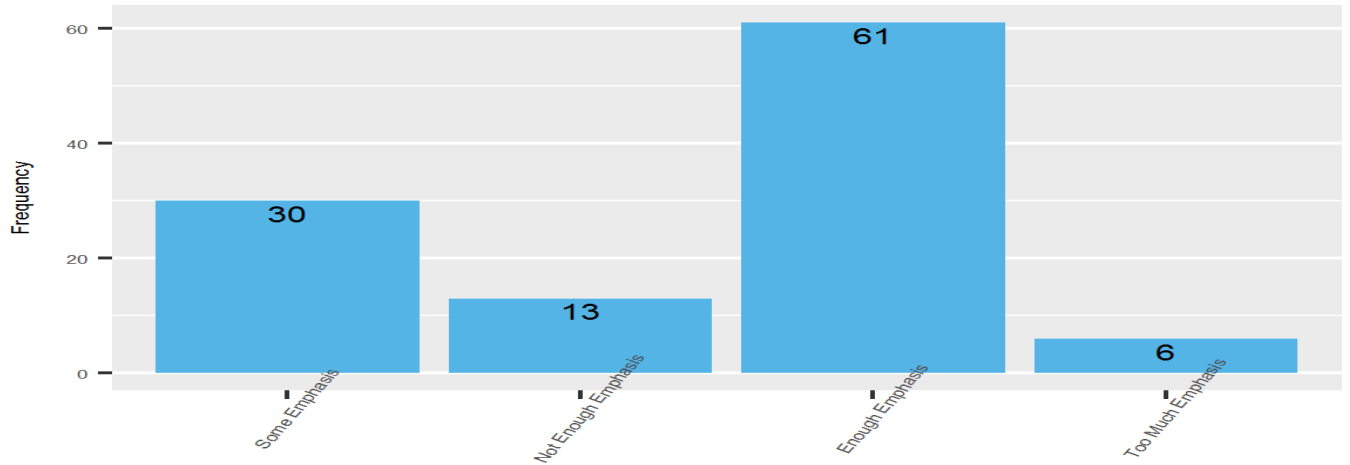
Providing Pastoral Care and Counseling
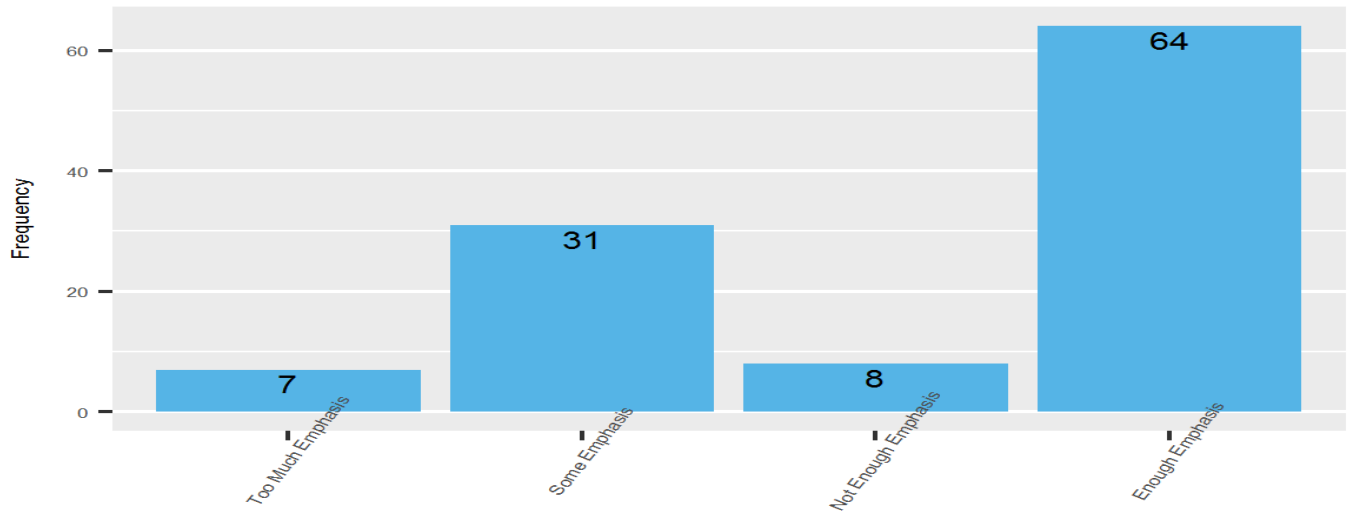
Providing Food and Fellowship

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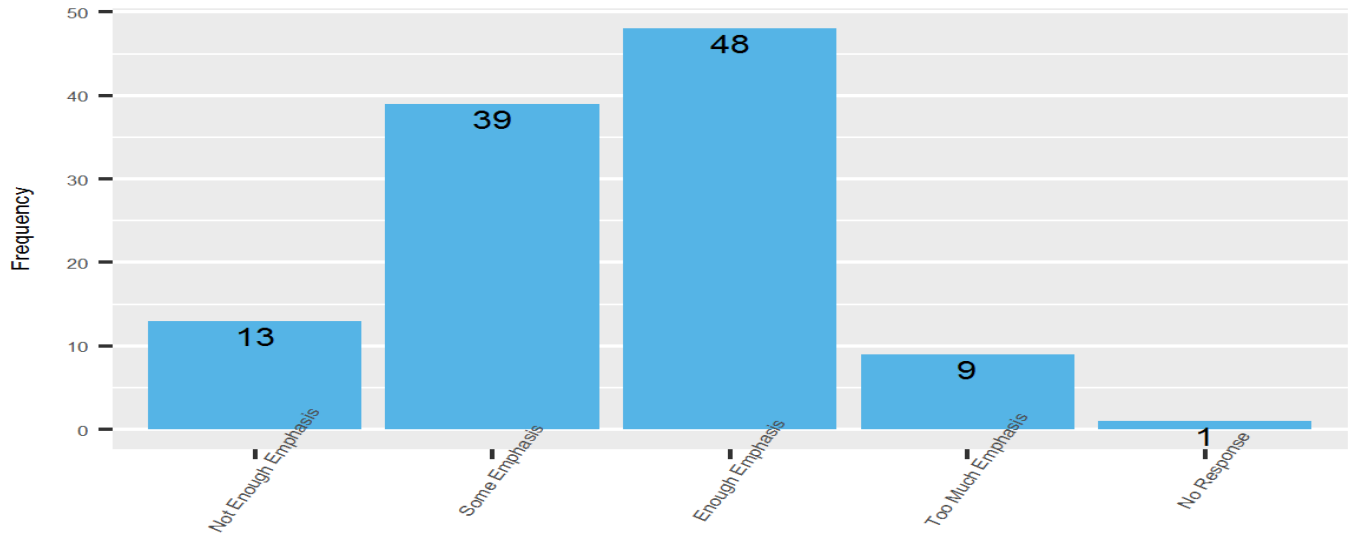
Expressing Our Denominational Heritage
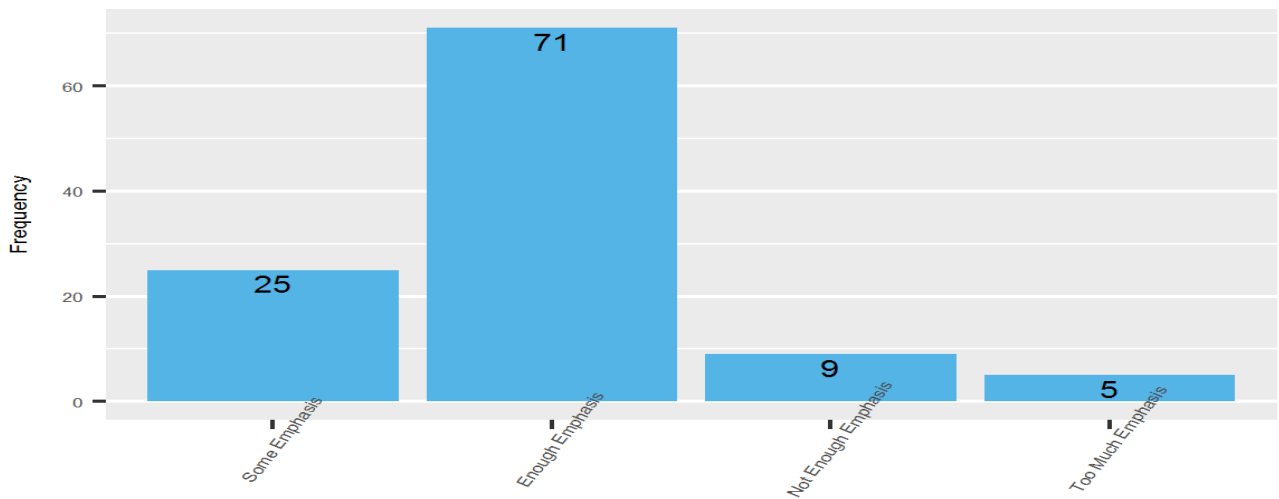
Supporting Global and Local Missions

Figure 4: Histogram Plot for Question 26 & 27

Does the church website contain accurate and up to date information?

Does the church website help you access social media?
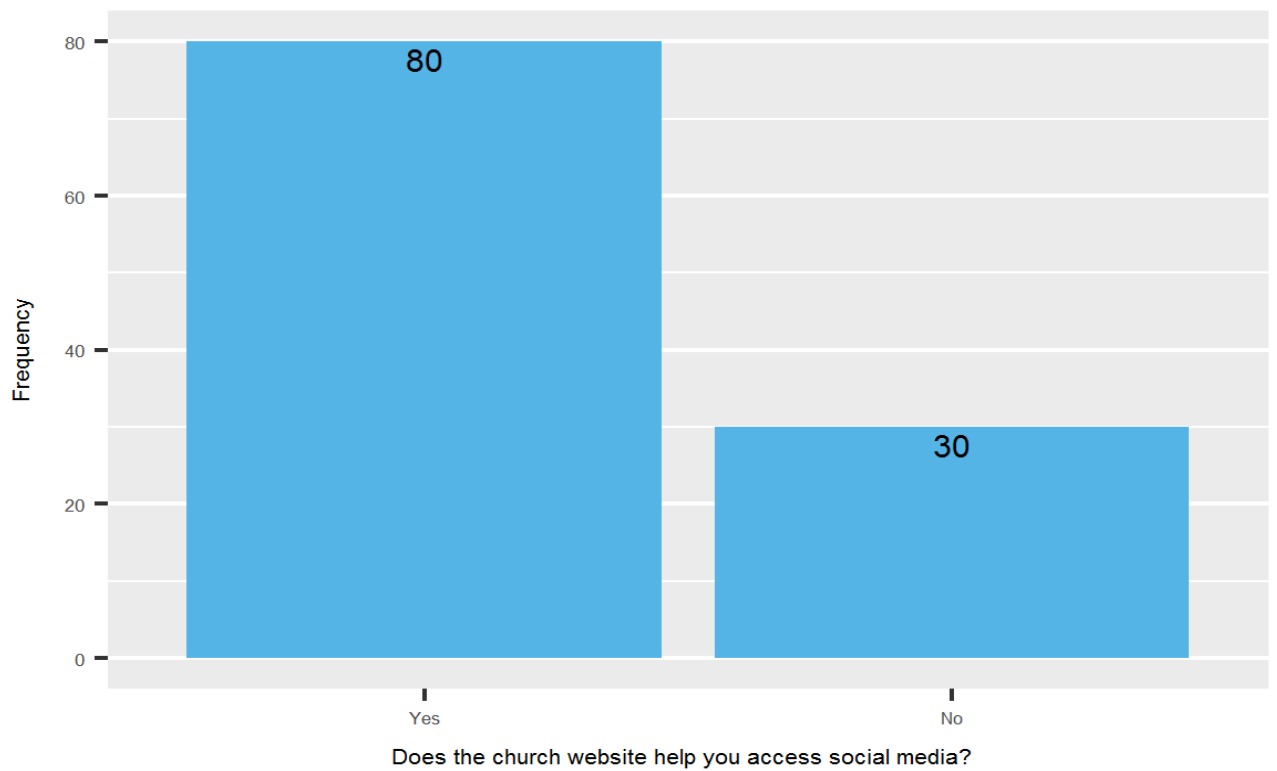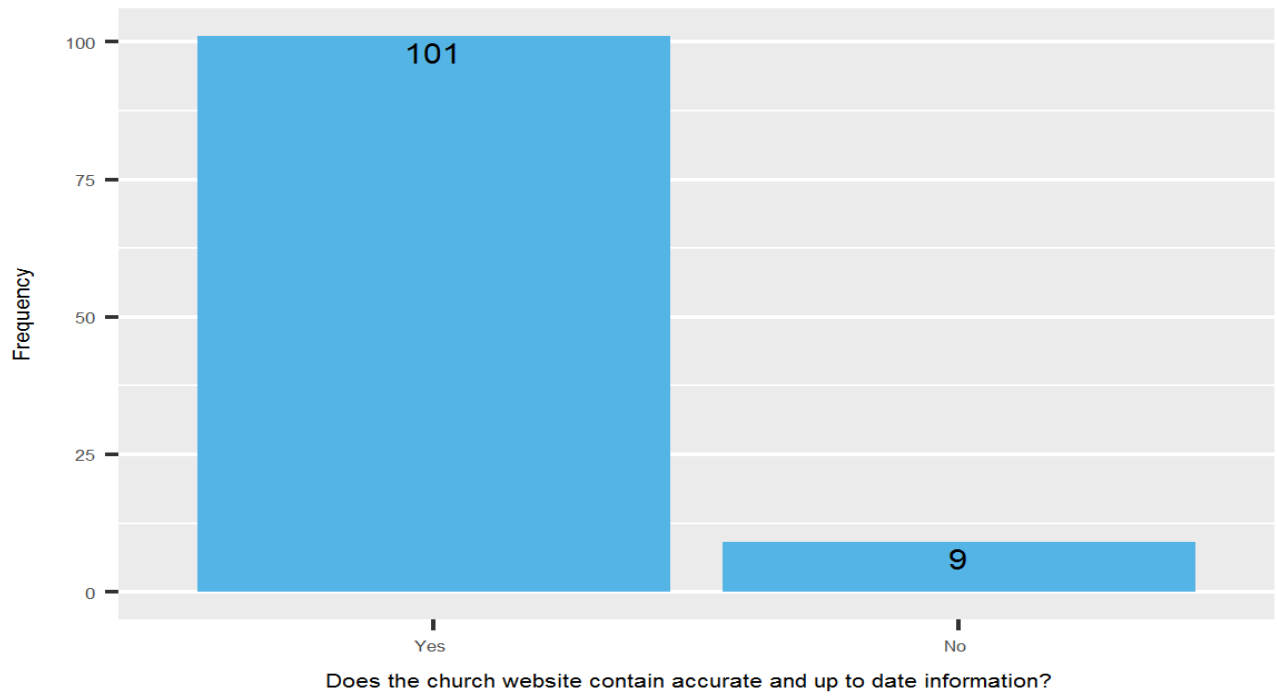
Figure 5: Histogram Plot for Question 28

social media_Email Lists

social media_Facebook

social media_Instagram

social media_Livecast/ Streaming Videos

social media_Podcast
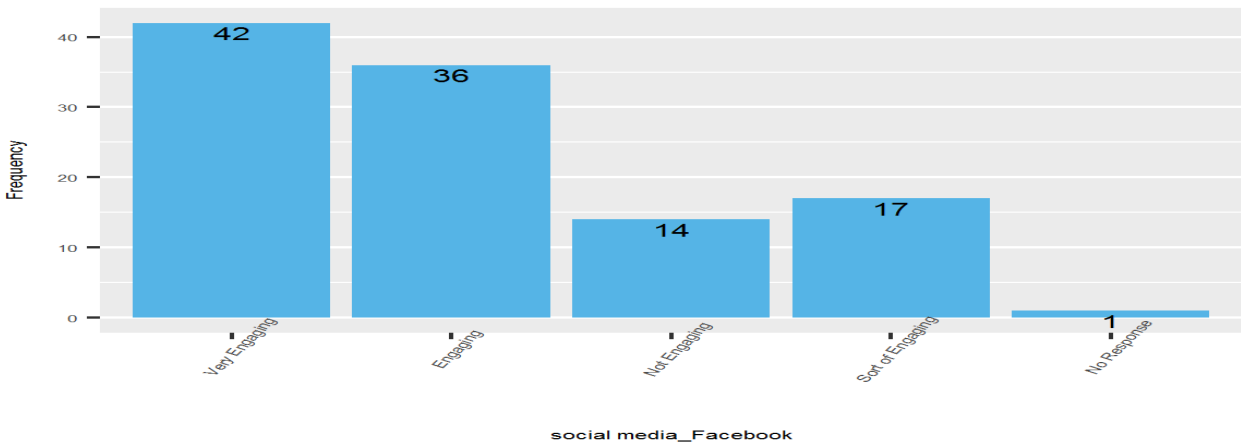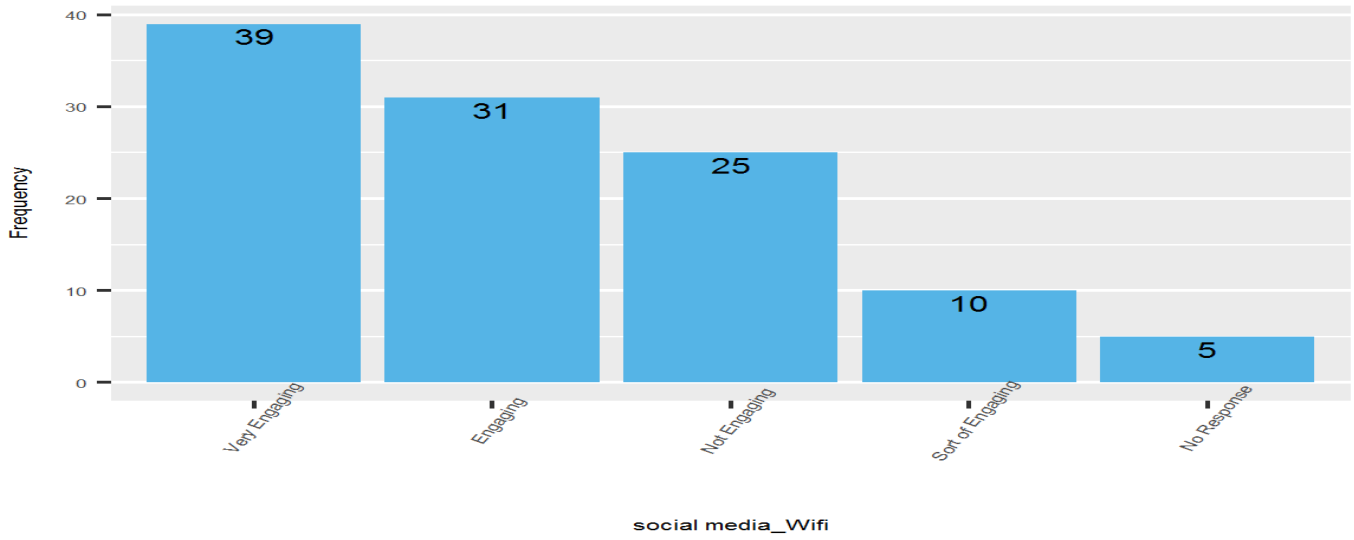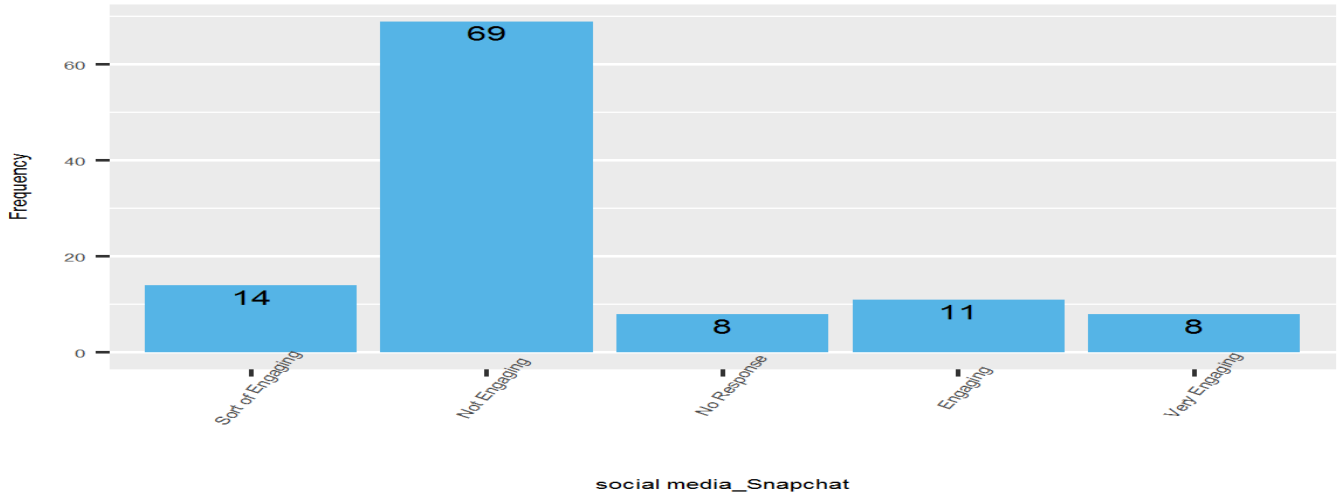
Figure 6: Histogram Plot for Question 29, 30 &31
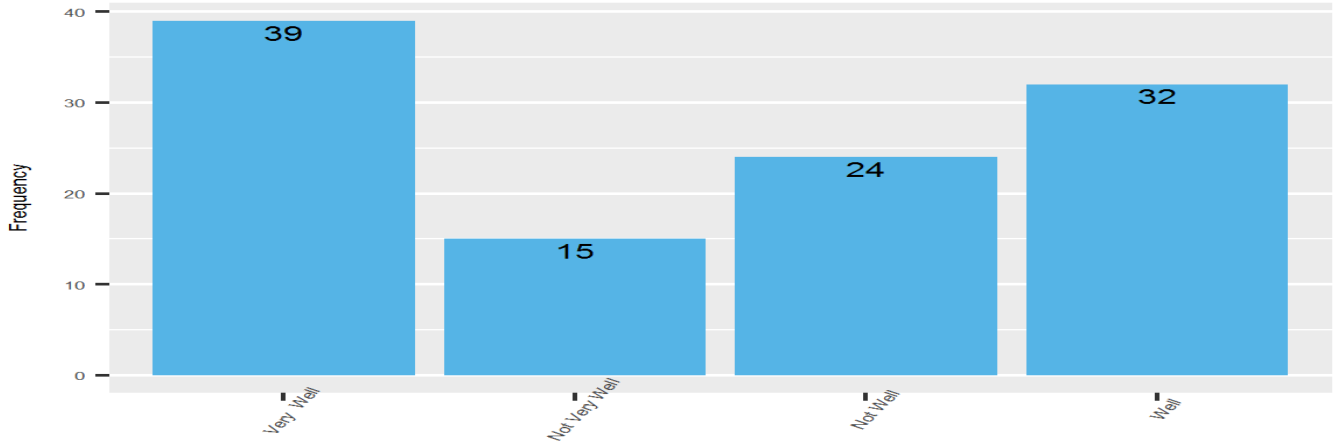
How well does your church reach 18 to 32 year olds?
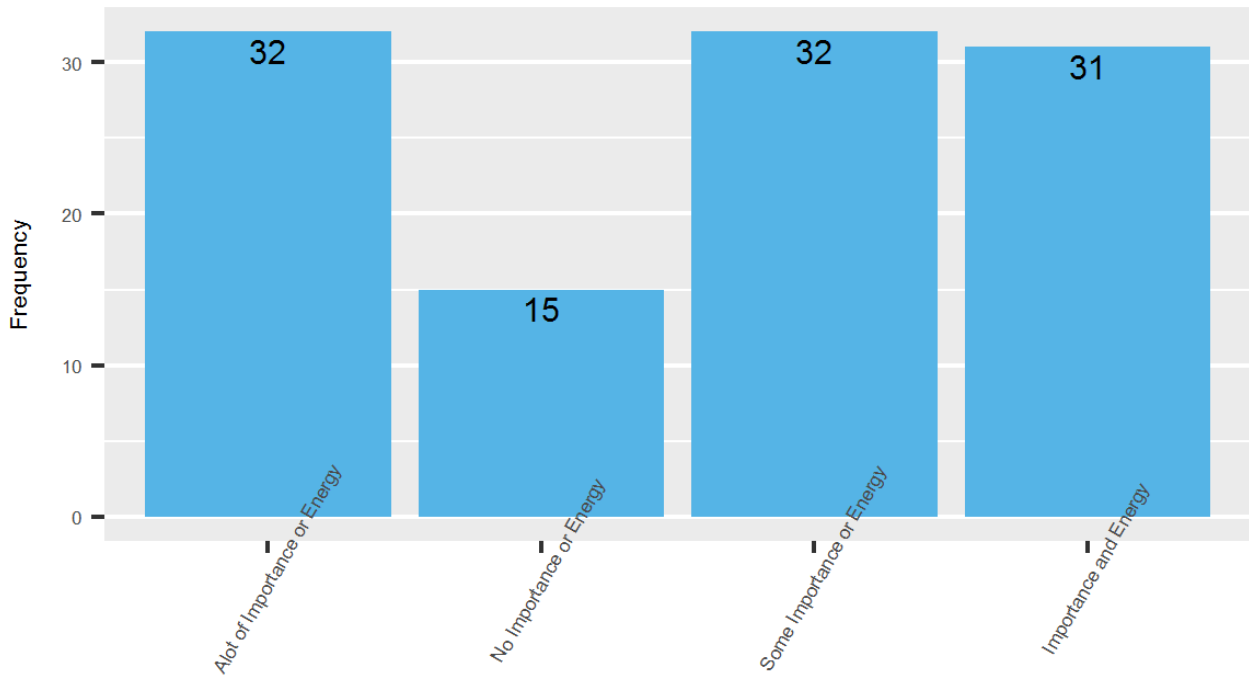
Importance and energy your congregation place on ministry to 18 to 32 year olds
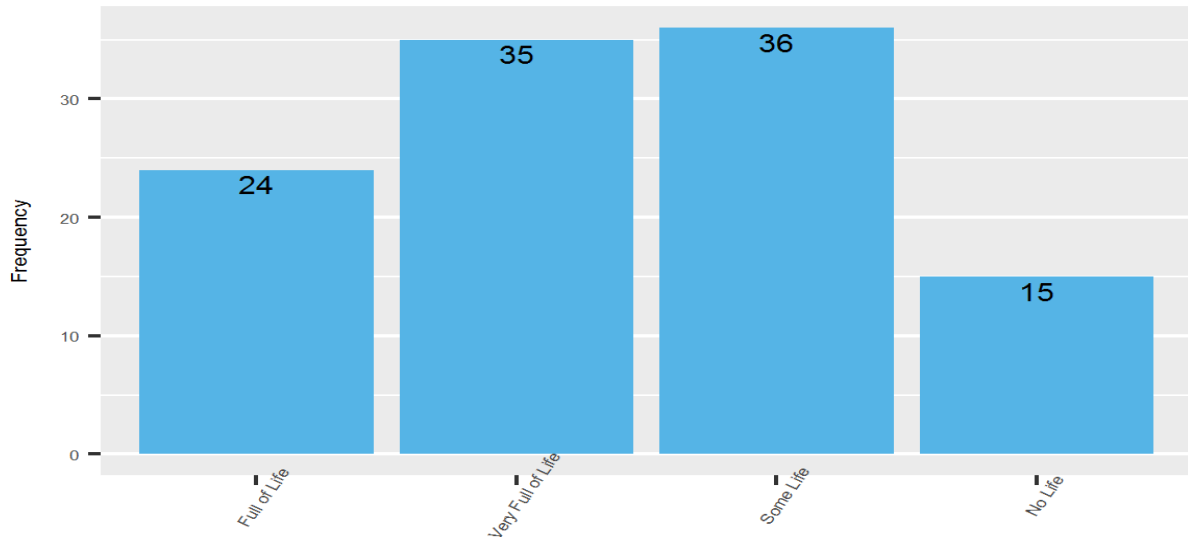
Are the specific ministries focusing on the 18 to 32 year old demographic full of life

Figure 7: Histogram Plot for Question 32
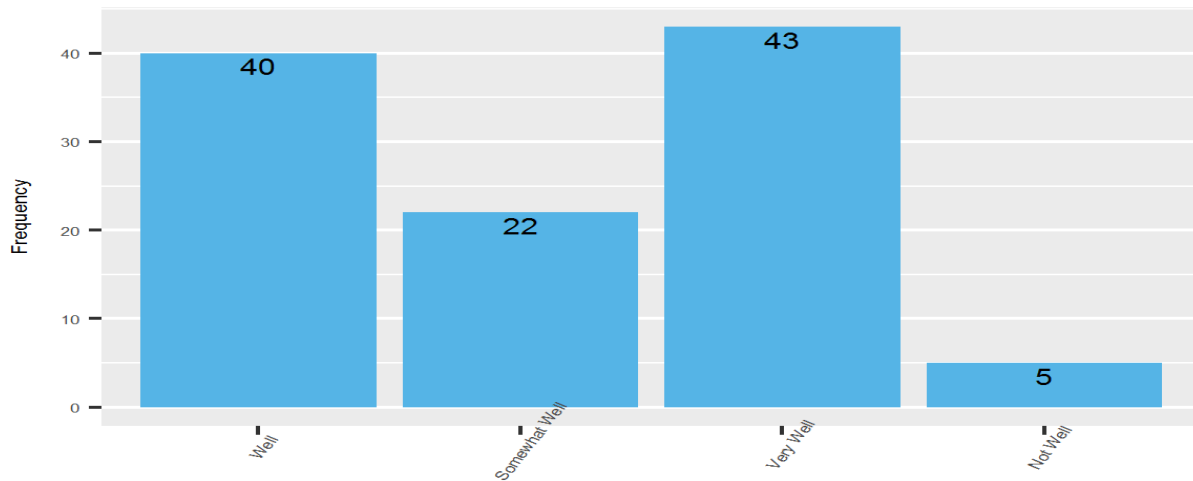
Keeping people informed about various ministries and groups?
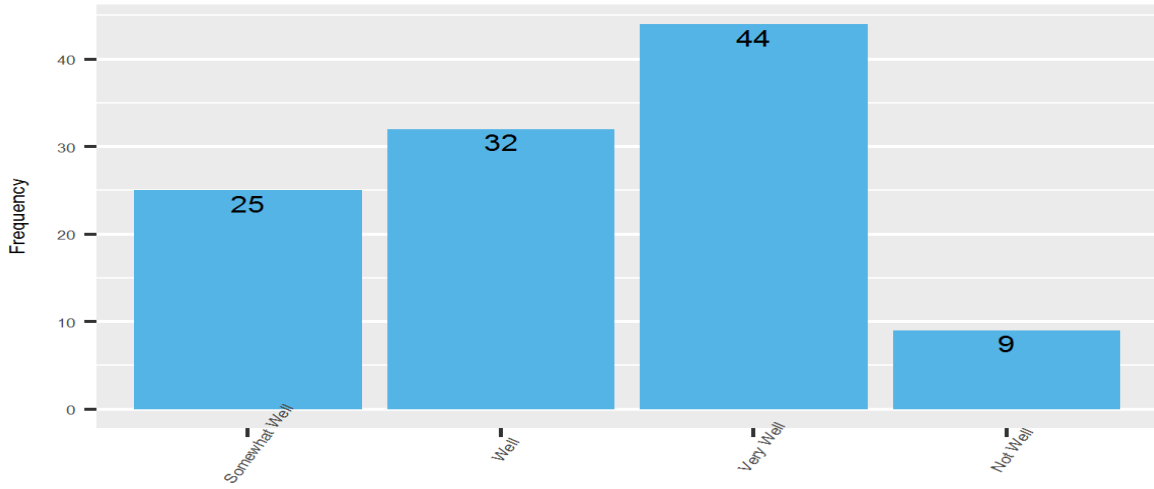
Keeping people informed of community outreach
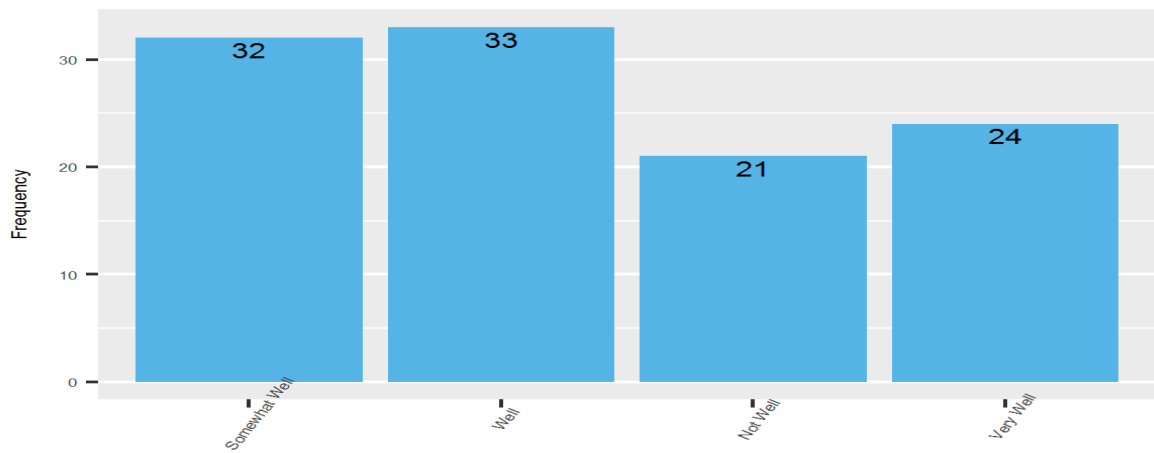
Giving people opportunities to have imput about decisions affecting the church
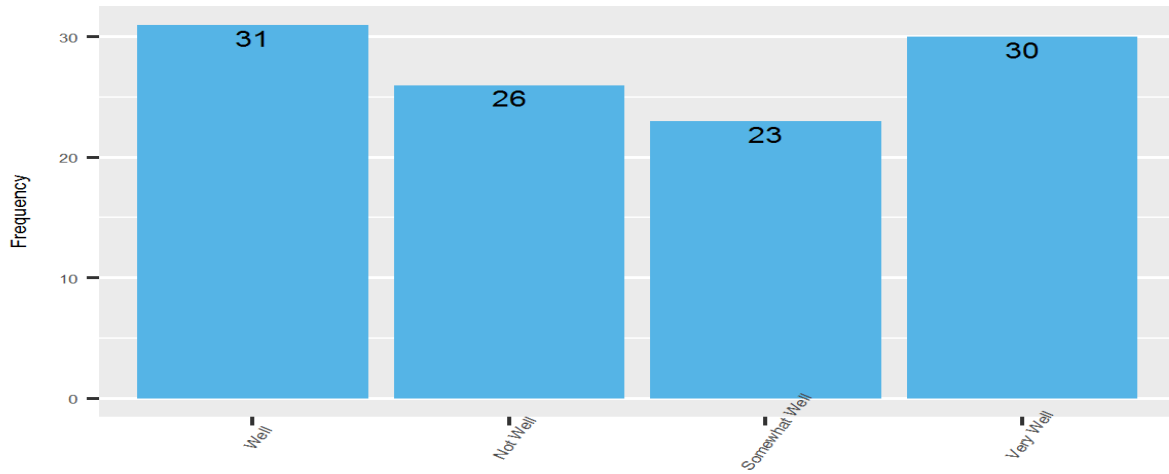
Cultivating 18 to 32 year old people for leadership positions
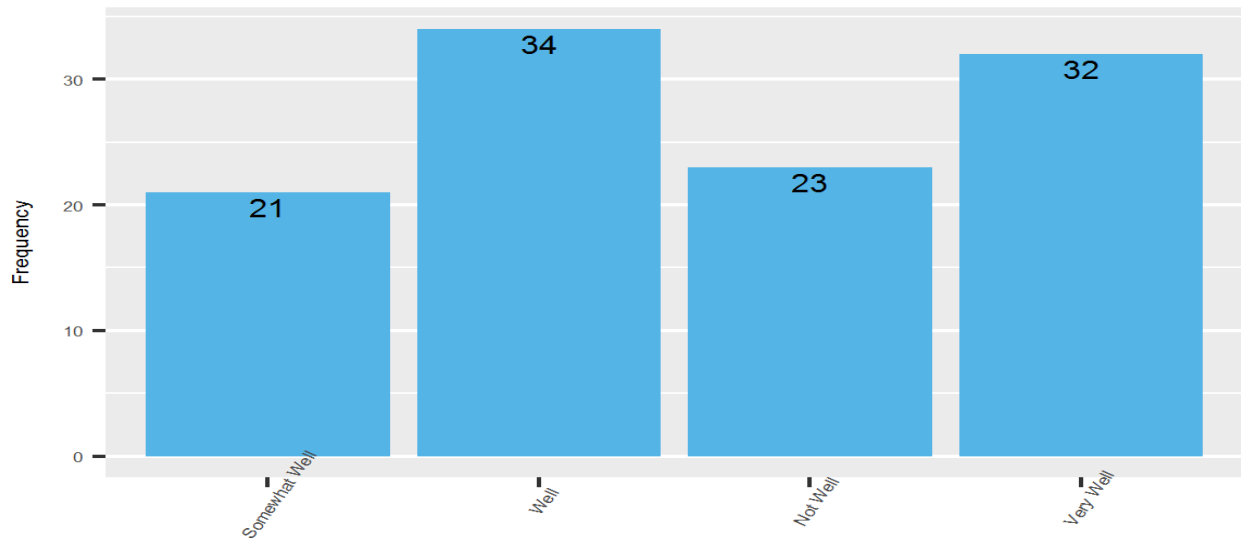
Encouraging 18 to 32 year old members to identify ministry opportunities
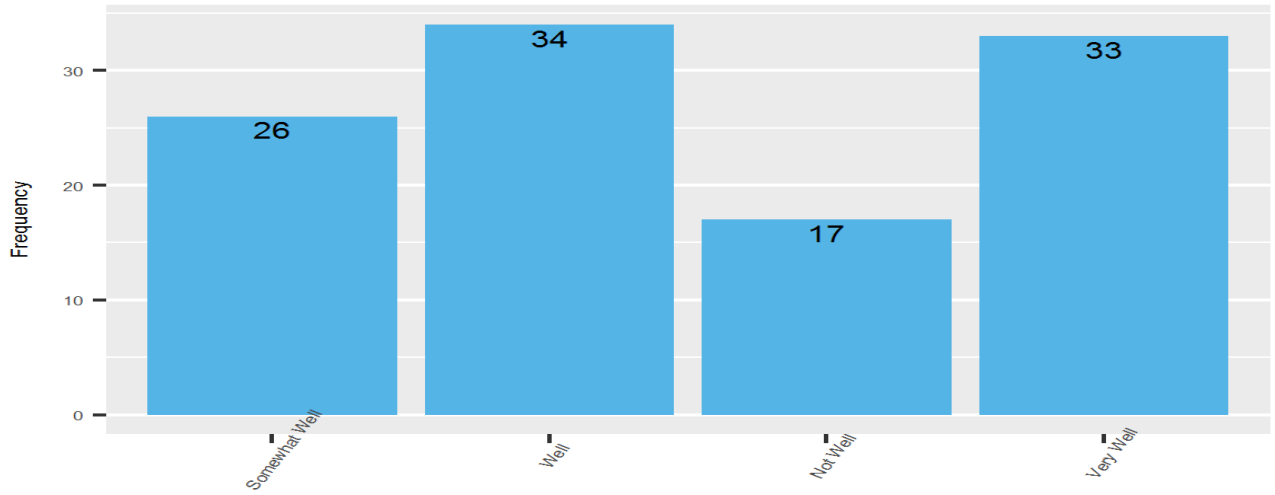
Involving 18 to 32 year old people in the churches ministries

Figure 8: Histogram Plot for Question 33

Outreach and ministry to 18 to 32 year olds in the community

Evangelism in the local community
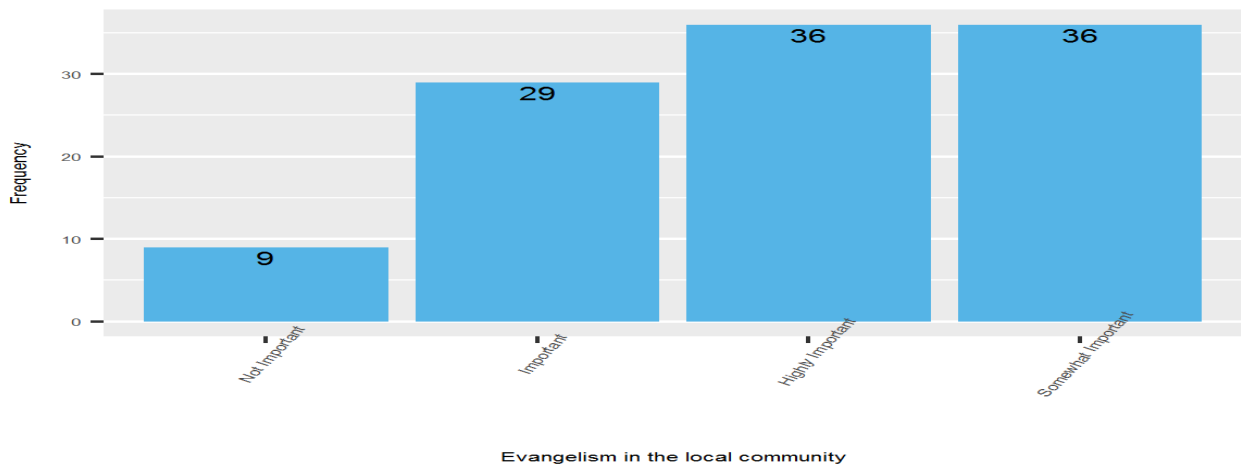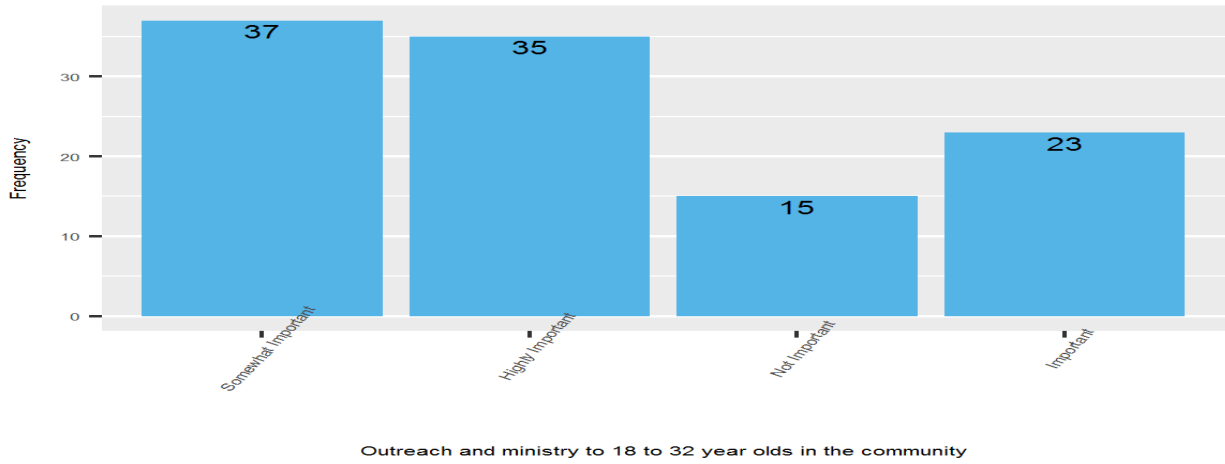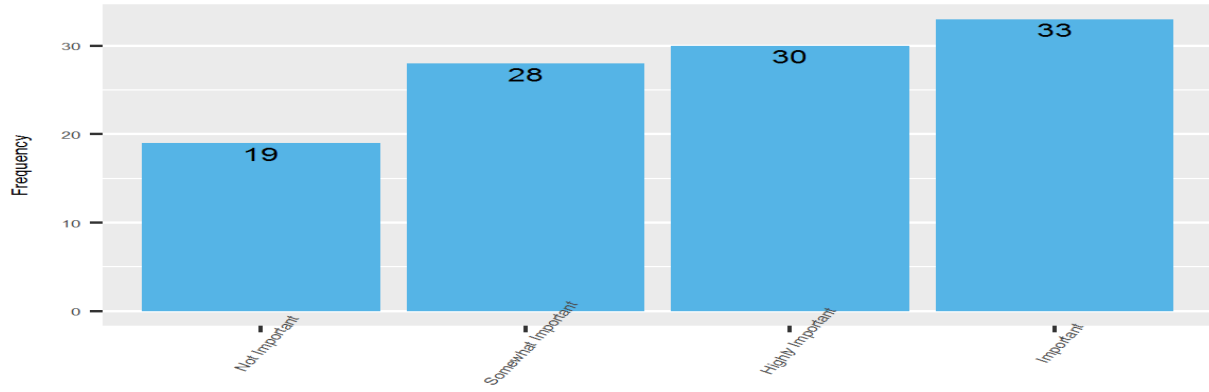
Training members to share their faith?
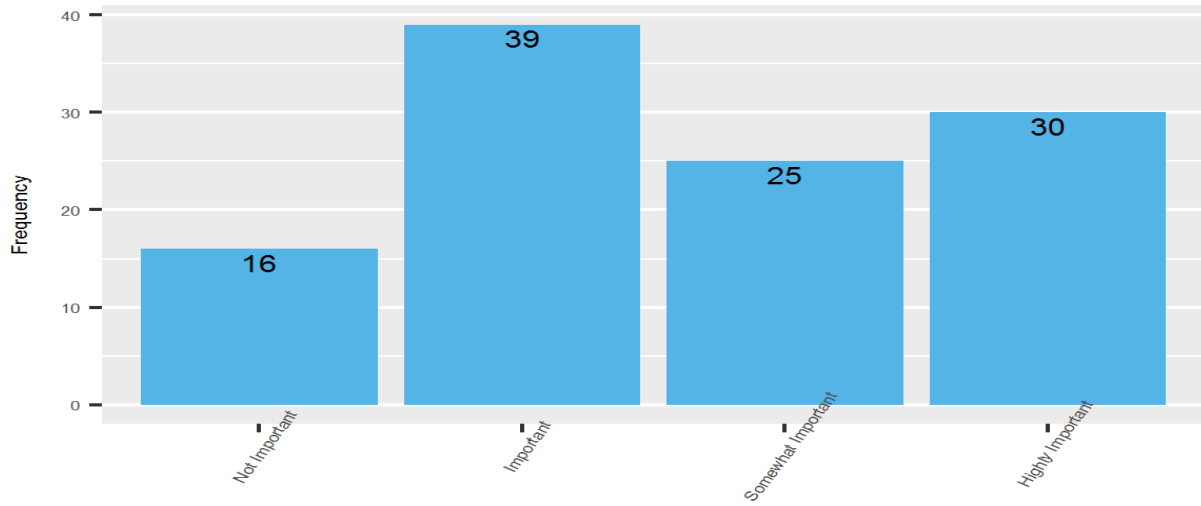
Encouraging 18 to 32 year old members to participate in local and short term ministries

Figure 9: Histogram Plot for Question 34
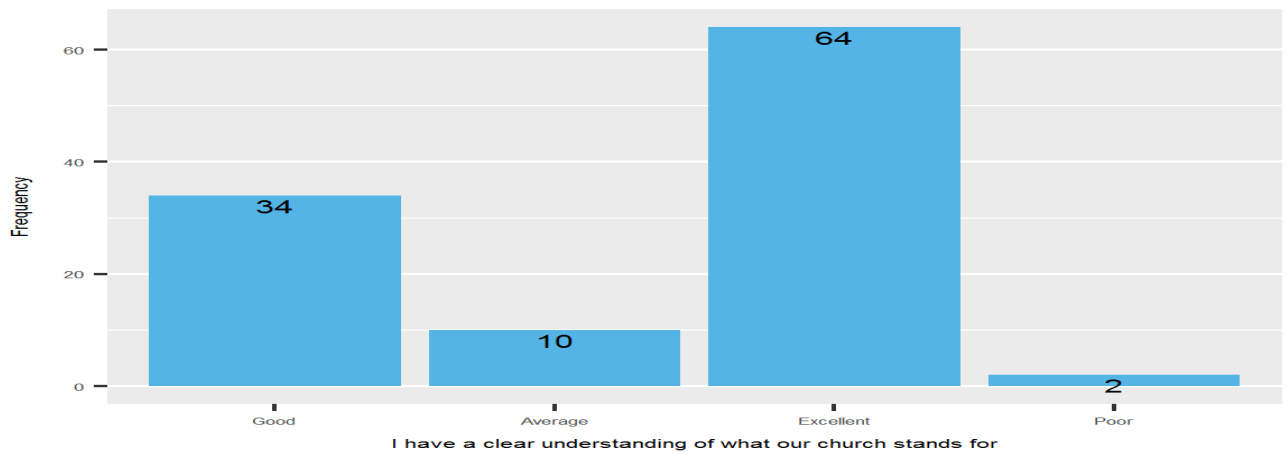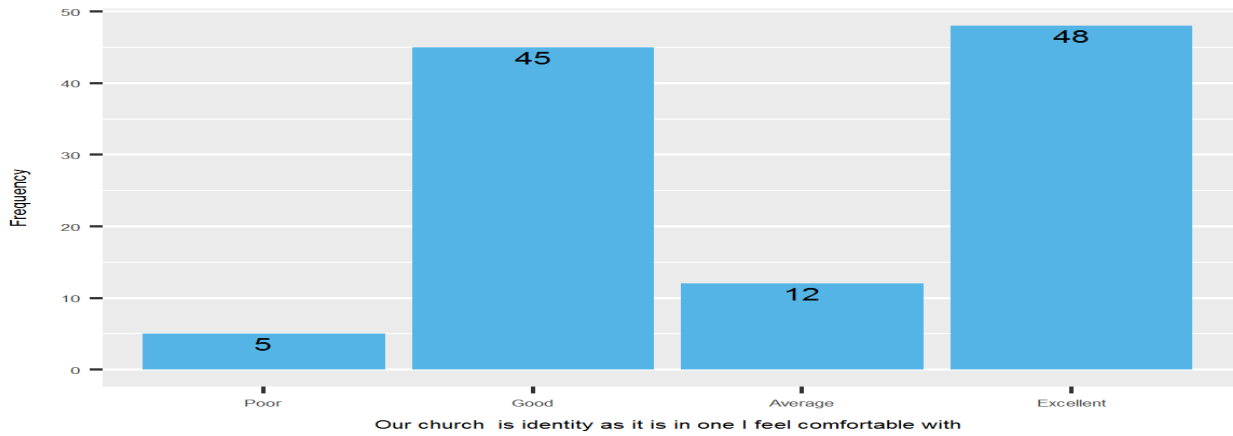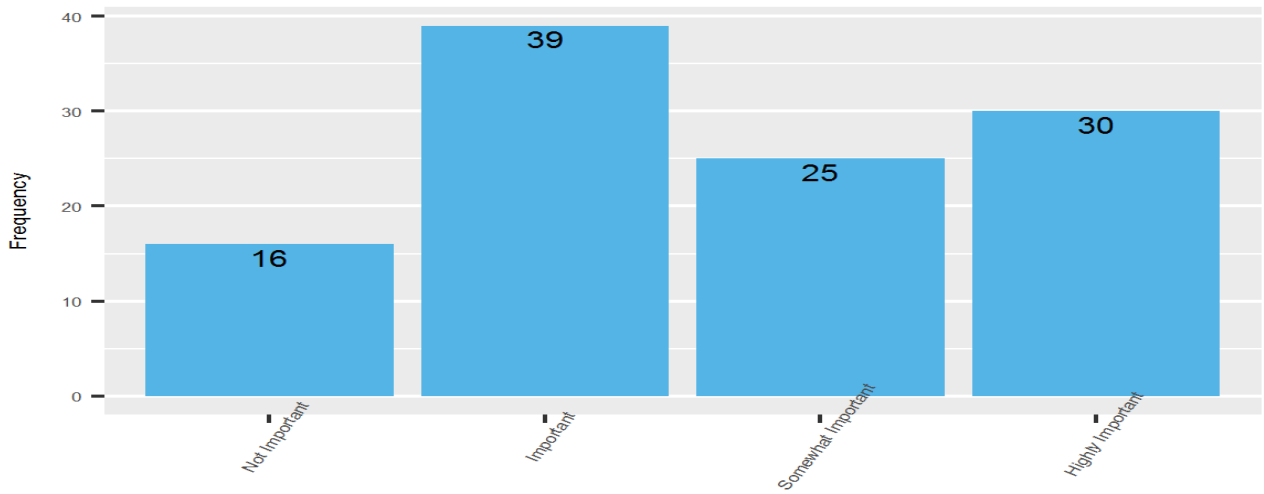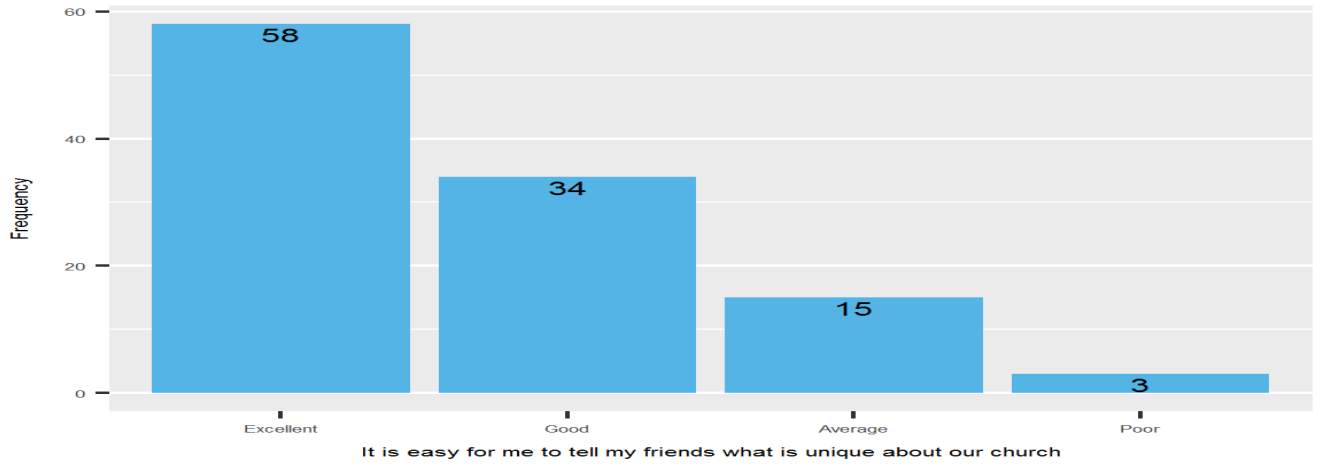
Frequency

It is easy for me to tell my friends what is unique about our church

Category	Frequency
Excellent	58
Good	34
Average	15
Poor	3

Frequency

Encouraging 18 to 32 year old members to participate in local and short term ministries

Category	Frequency
Not Important	16
Important	39
Somewhat Important	25
Highly Important	30

I have a clear understanding of the theology of our congregation

Being at this church has make a difference in my spiritual life

Our church is intentionally inclusive in terms of all ages and generations
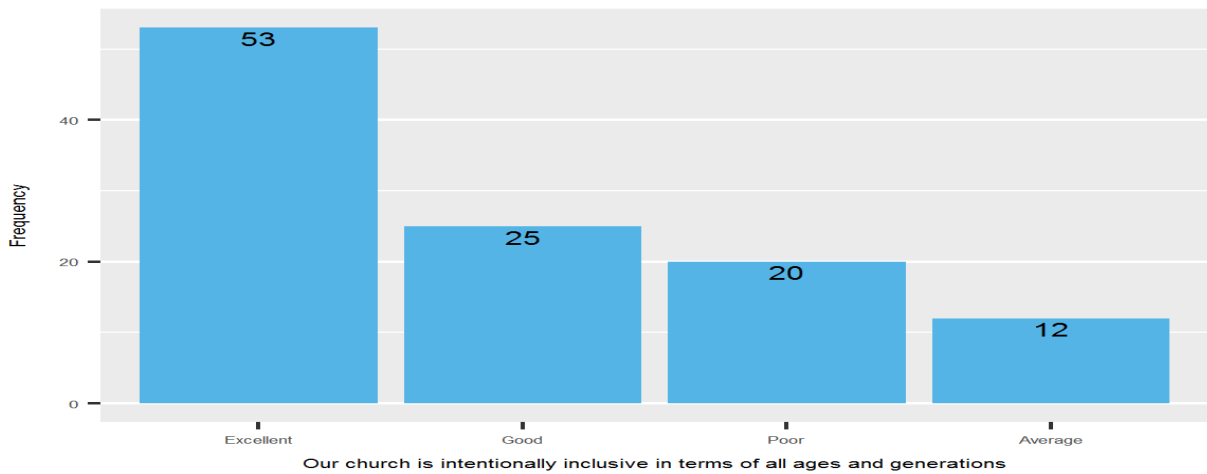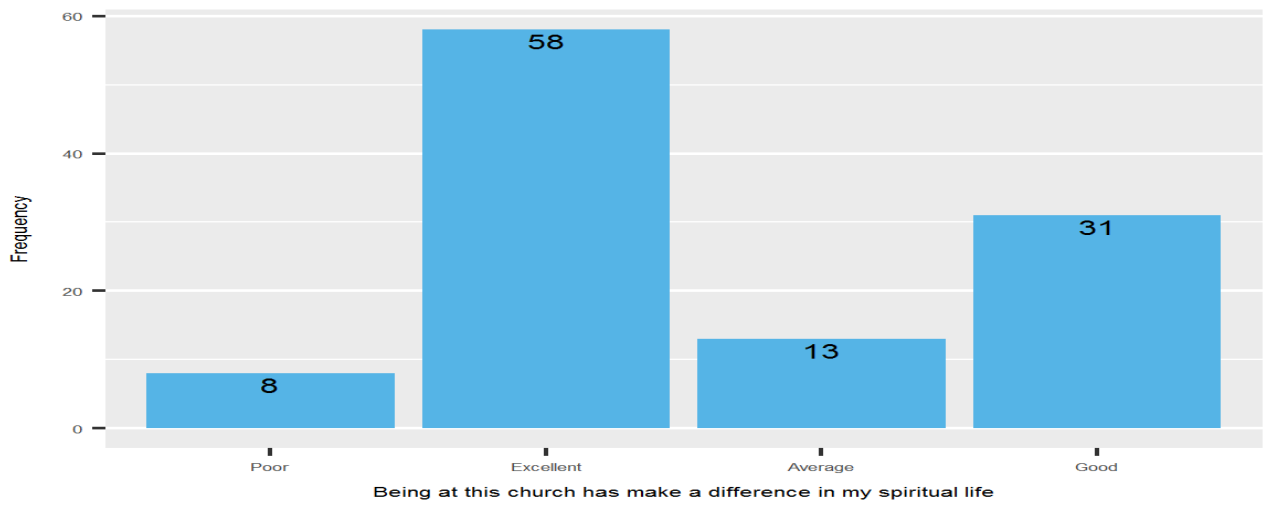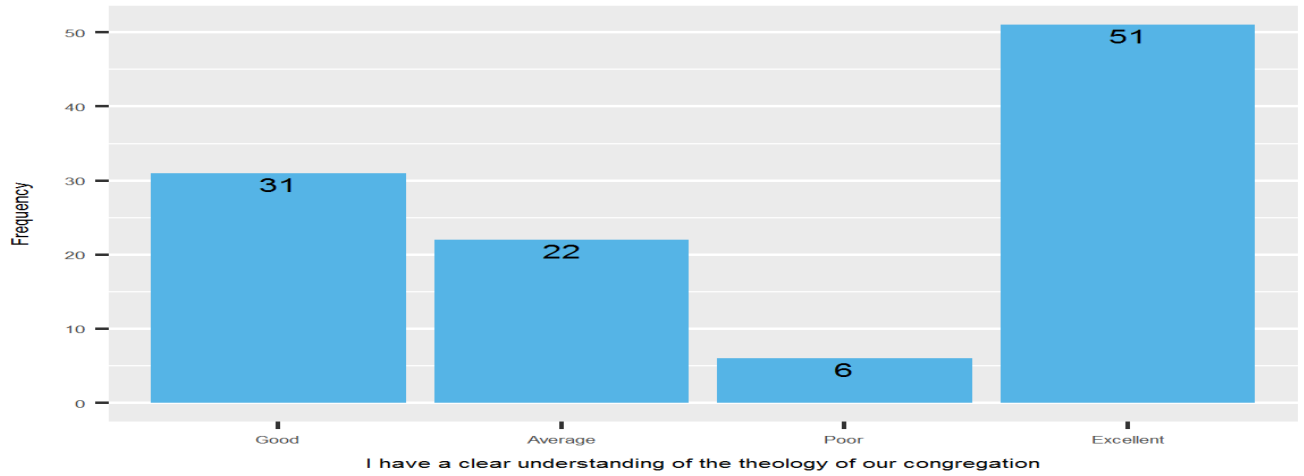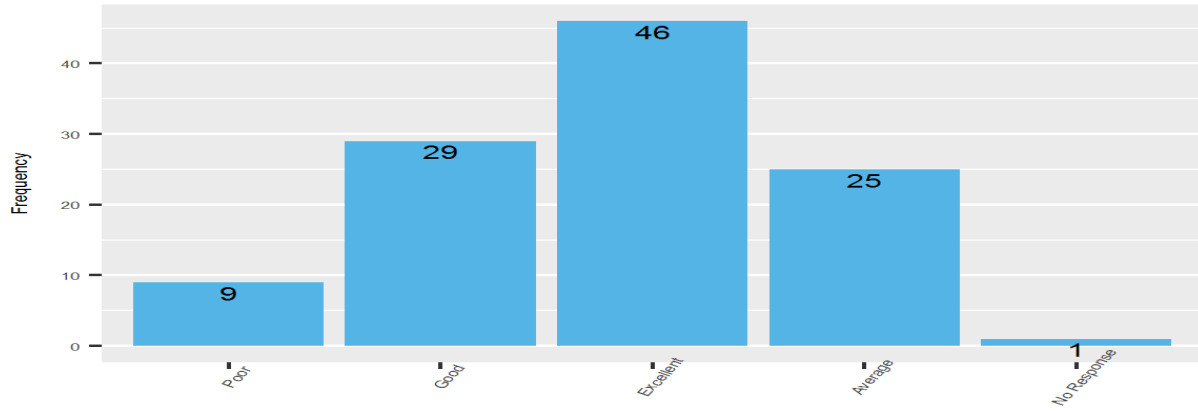
I have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation
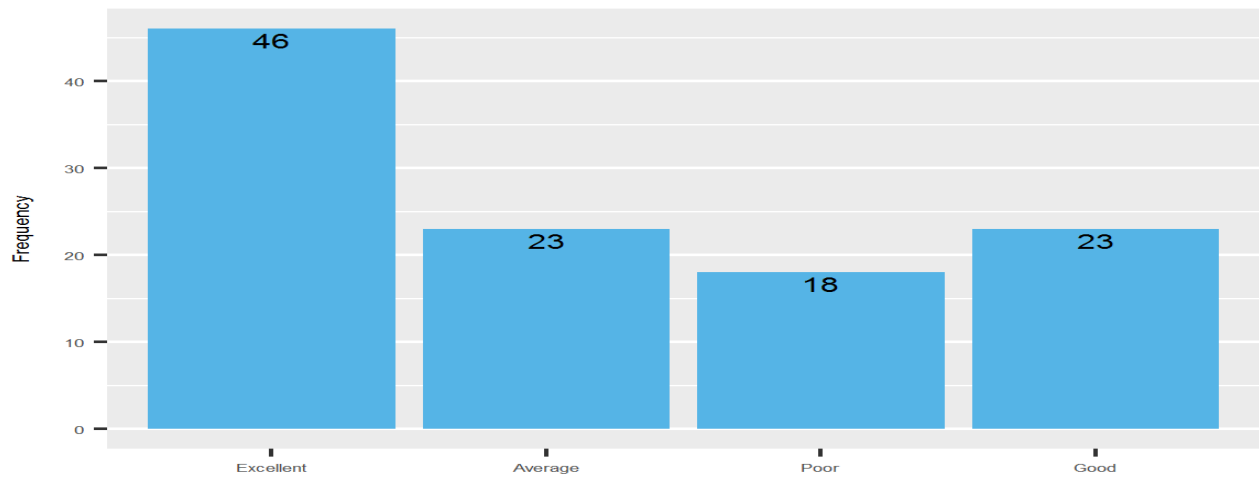
Our church intentionally engages people between the ages of 18 and 32
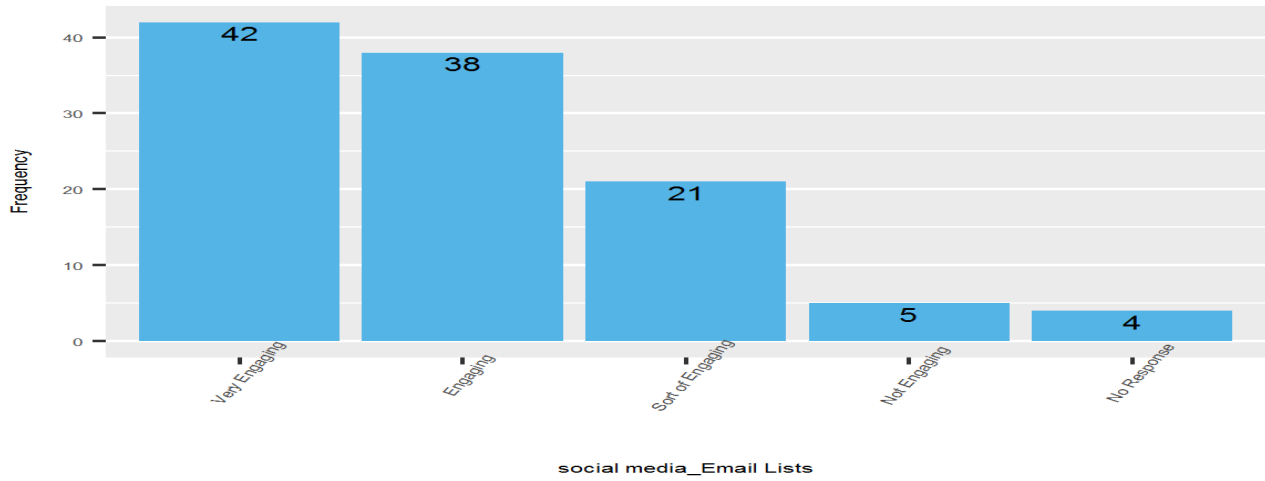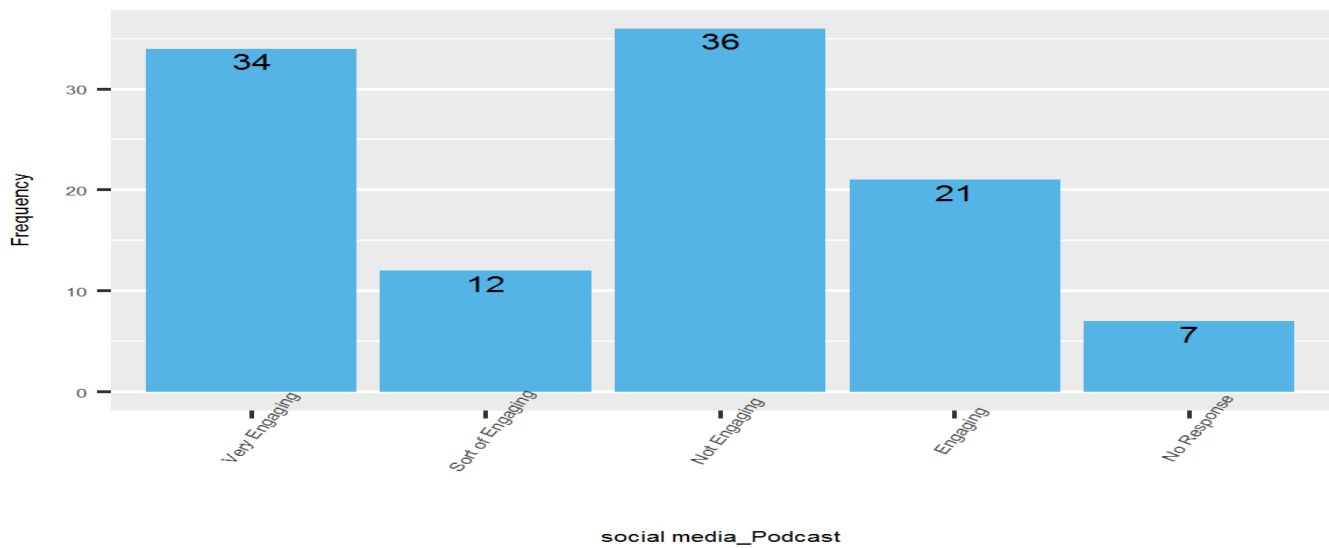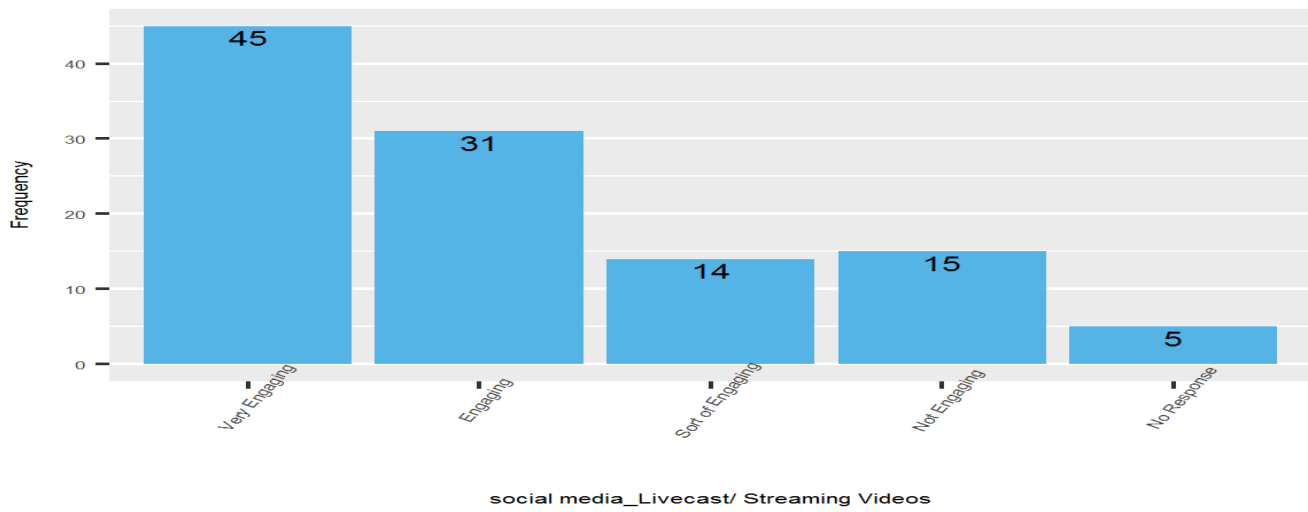

Our church intentionally looks to the future

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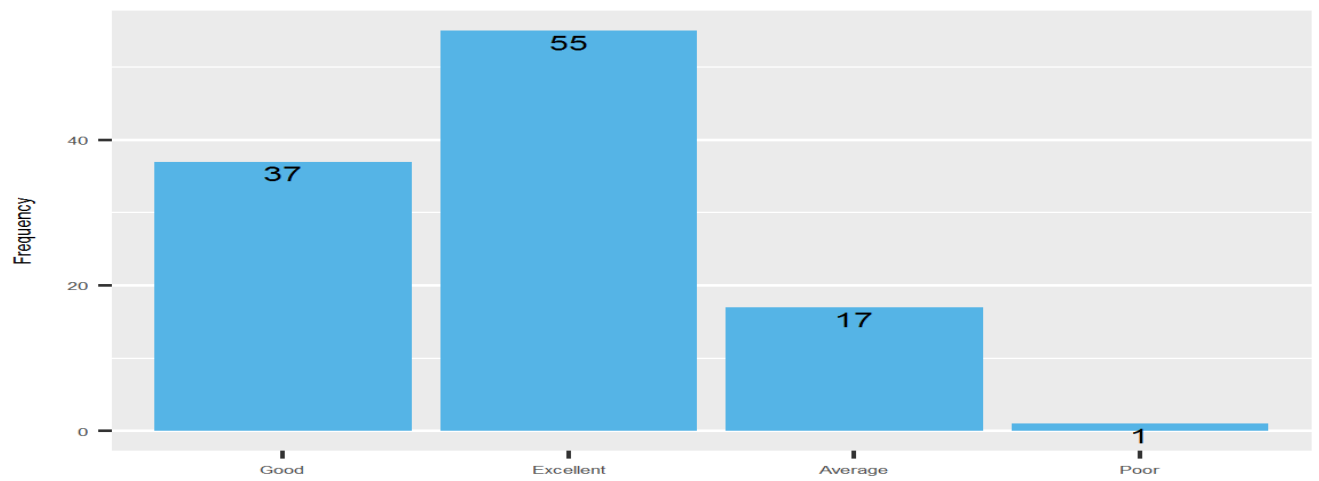
Figure 10: Histogram Plot for Question 35

Music and Worship on Sunday

Music and Worship at other times
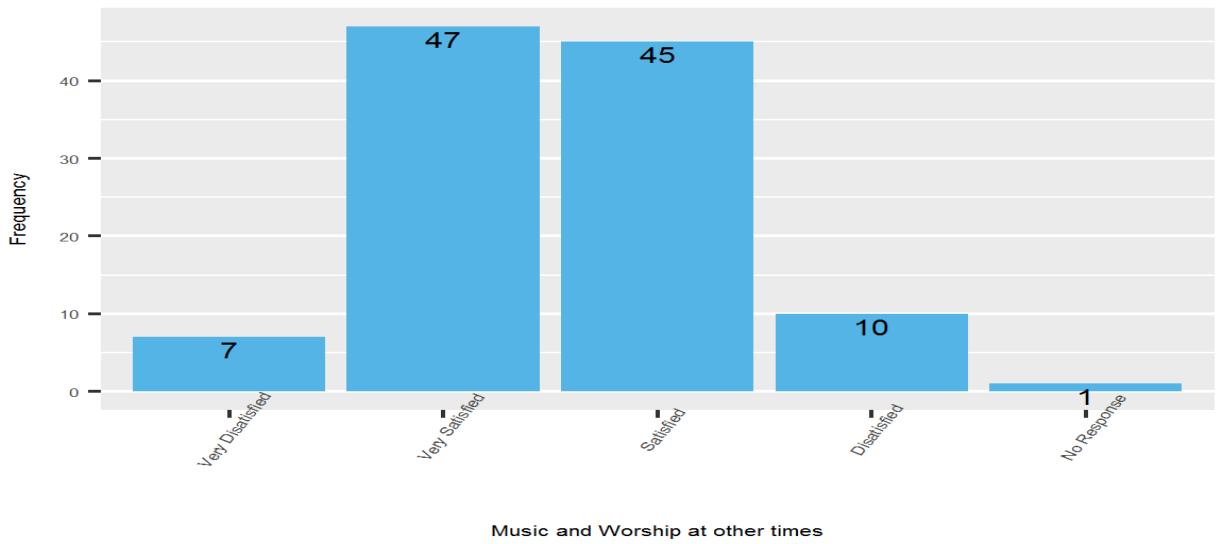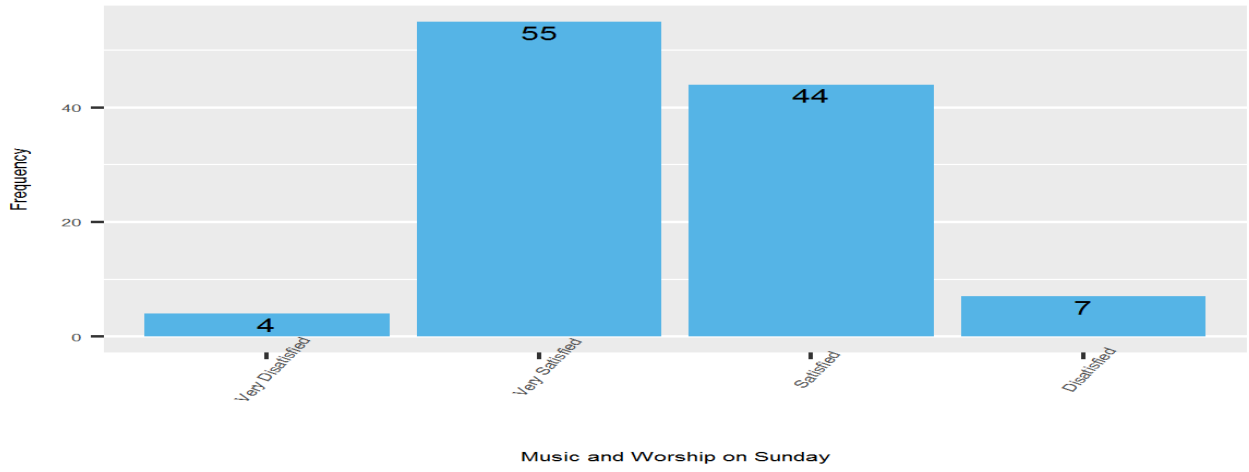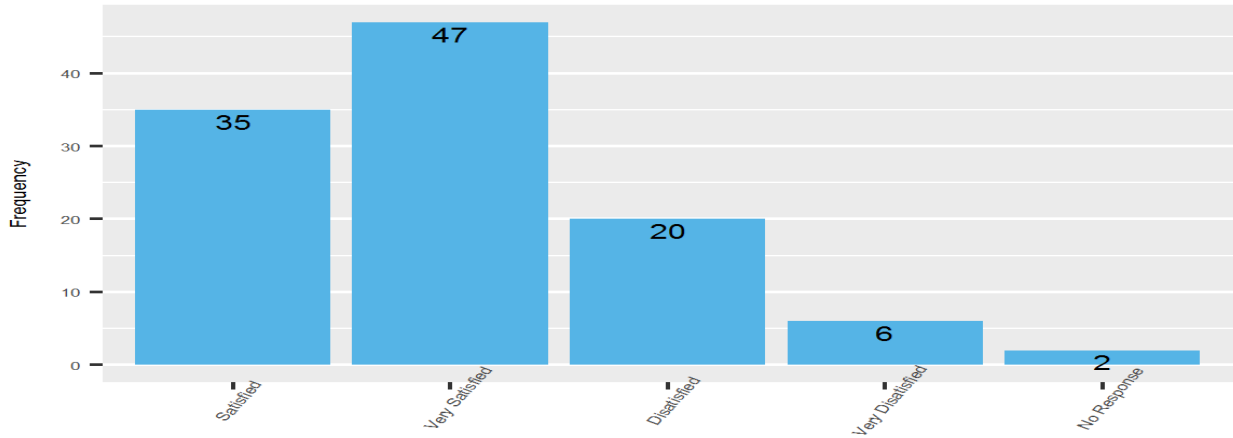
Small Groups
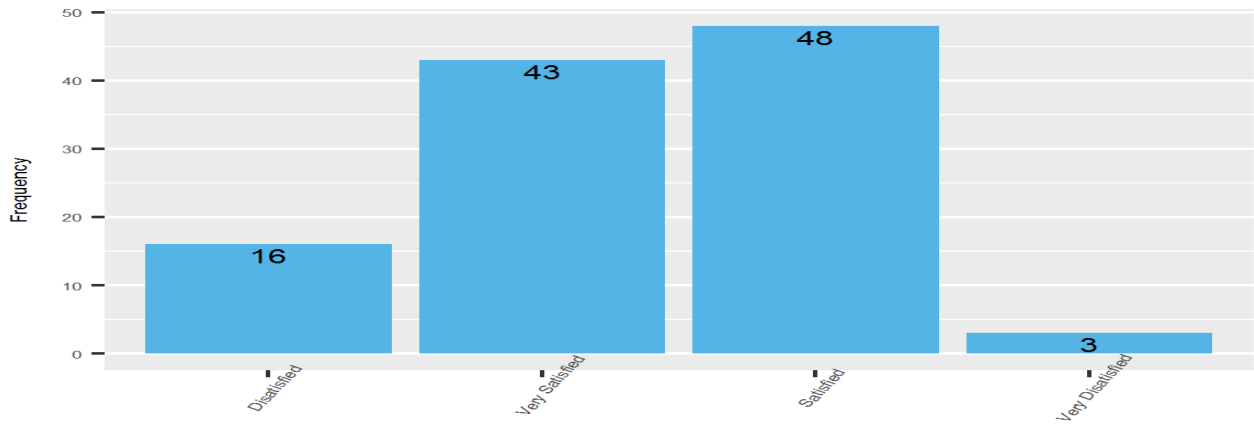
Fellowship Opportunities

I have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation

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I have a clear understanding of the theology of our congregation
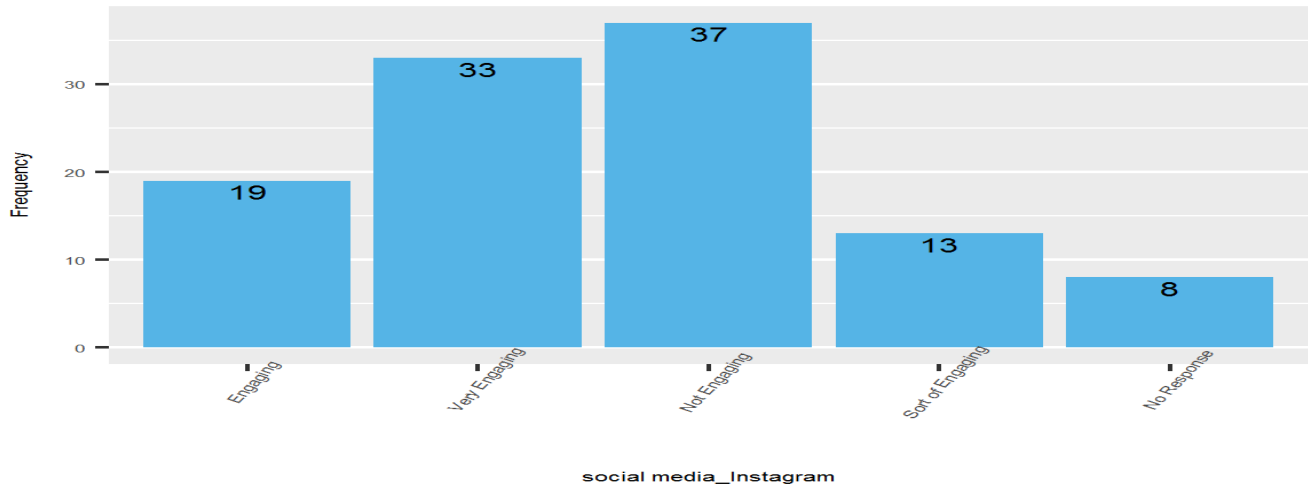

Serving the Local Community?

Meeting my Spiritual Needs?
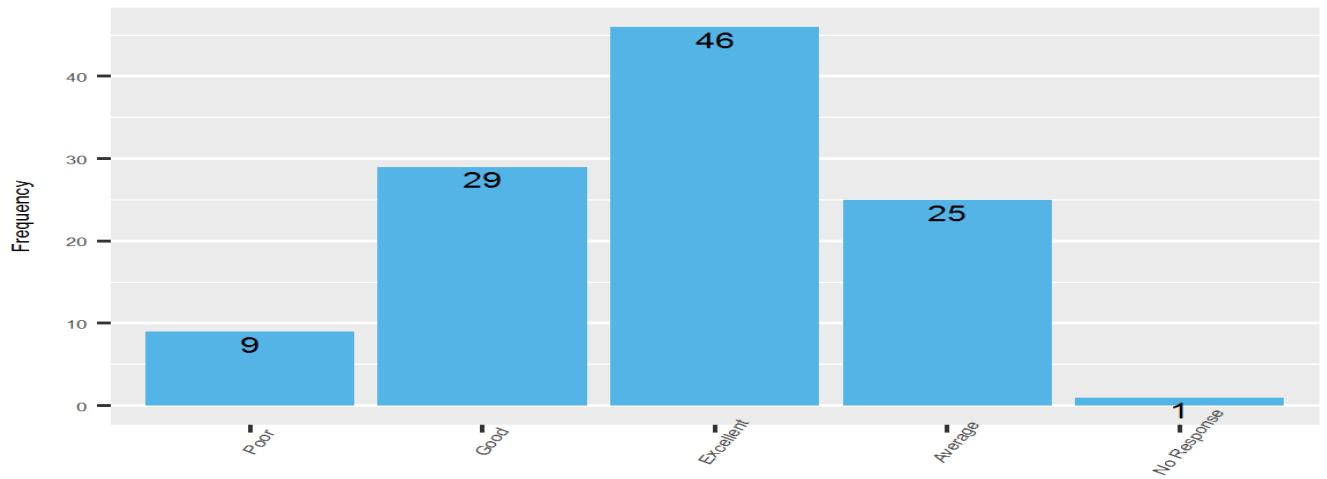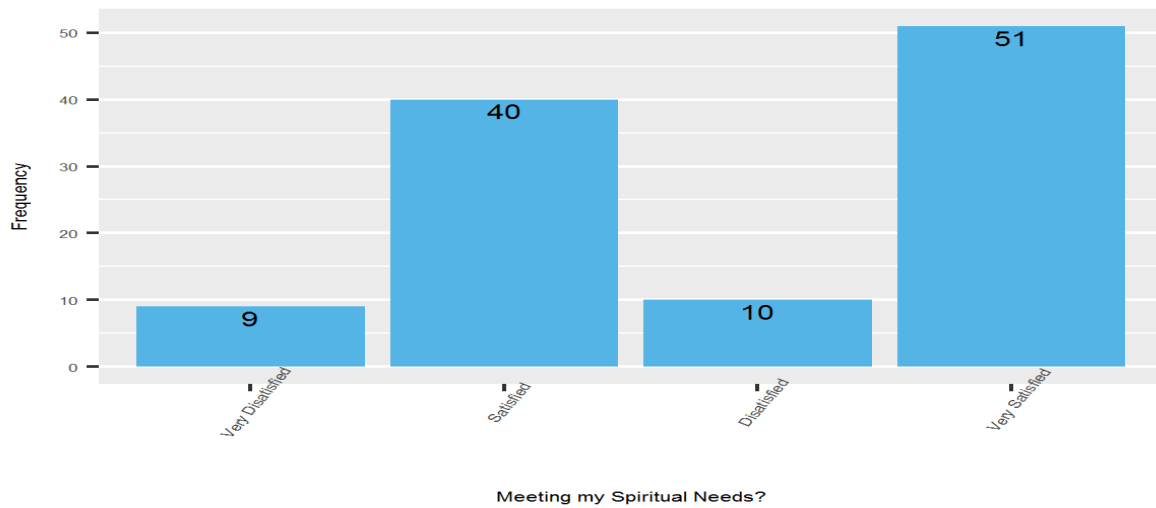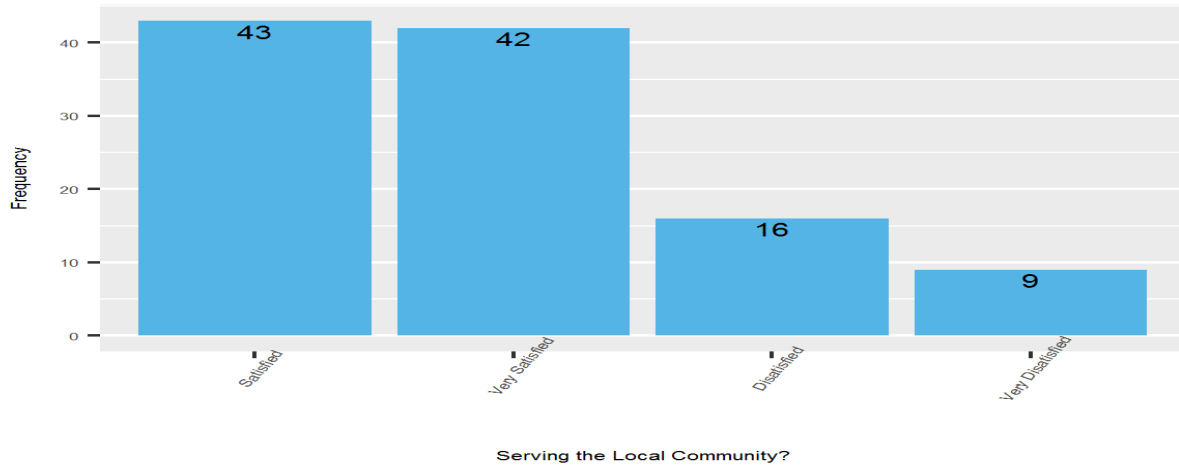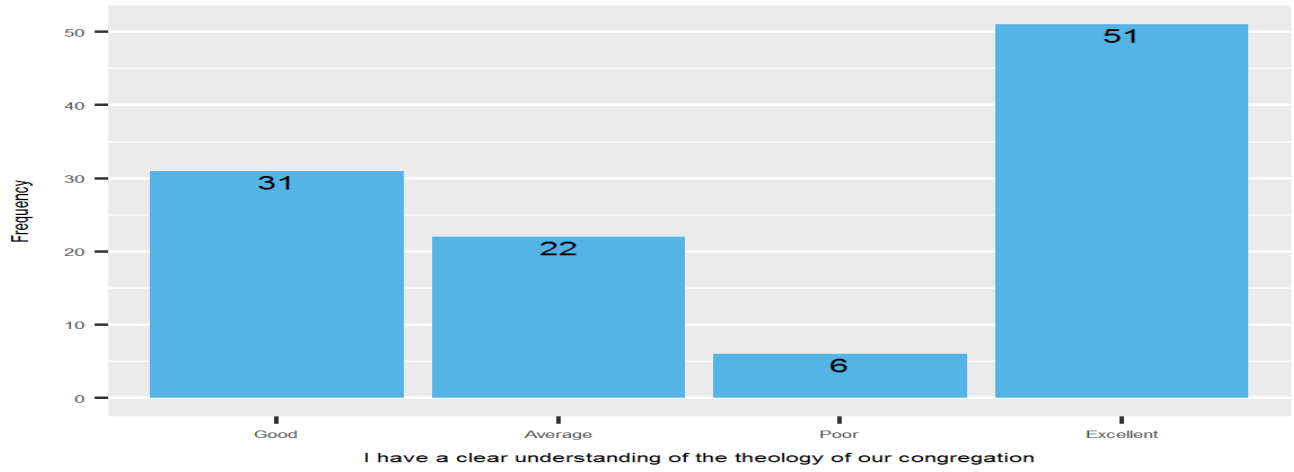
Figure 11: Histogram Plot for Question 36

Reasons_ORIGINALLY ATTRACTED to this congregation
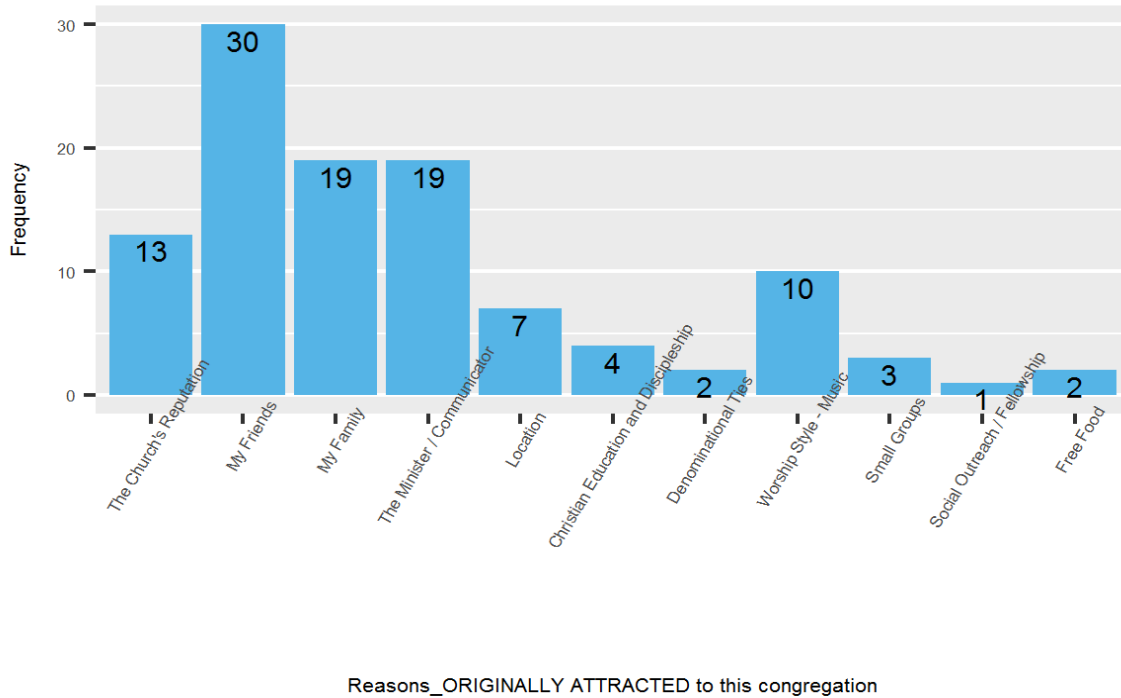
The research done by the University of Georgia ties directly to the conclusions found by the researcher. In order to answer research question 1 & 2, we should find some response variables to characterize "*the identifiable characteristics found in the local church which meaningfully engage churched emerging adults/the continuing decline in its membership*". Since we don't have any information about the churched emerging adults who have already left the church, among all the survey questions, we pick Q18, Q19 and Q20 as our response variables to describe the status of churched emerging adults' active involvement. We recode the answers of these three questions into numeric order in model analysis. Take Q18 as an example, the answers of "How many times have you attended a church related meeting in the past year?" is recoded as "0-5".

Then we create a new variable called "Active Score", which is the summation score of Q18, Q19 and Q20 for each respondent. This will characterize the overall active participation.

After defining the response variables, for research questions 1 & 2, the study will first examine the relationships between all the related survey questions with those defined response variables (Q18, Q19, Q20 and Active Score) individually. This will point to a specific factor having a significant influence on active involvement of churched emerging adults. Then all the candidate survey questions for each research question will be studied together to find out which shed light on the best contributing factors to active involvement of churched emerging adults.

4.3.2.3 Statistical Tests for Pairwise Relationship

Since we have four response variables, we consider Q18, Q19, Q20 as the categorical variables when we do the Pairwise Statistical Tests and Active Score as the continuous variable. Then we use the Fisher Exact Test for Q18, Q19 and Q20 to find out whether a candidate survey question has a significant relationship with them. Continuing to use a One-way ANOVA to check the relationship between Active Score and all the candidate survey questions. Figure 12 shows the test results, where the vertical direction represents all the candidate survey questions and the horizontal direction represents the four response variables. If the p-value of a specific pairwise

test is less than 0.05, then we say the survey question has a significant relationship

with the response variable, which is highlighted in green.

Figure 12 Summary Results of all Pairwise Tests
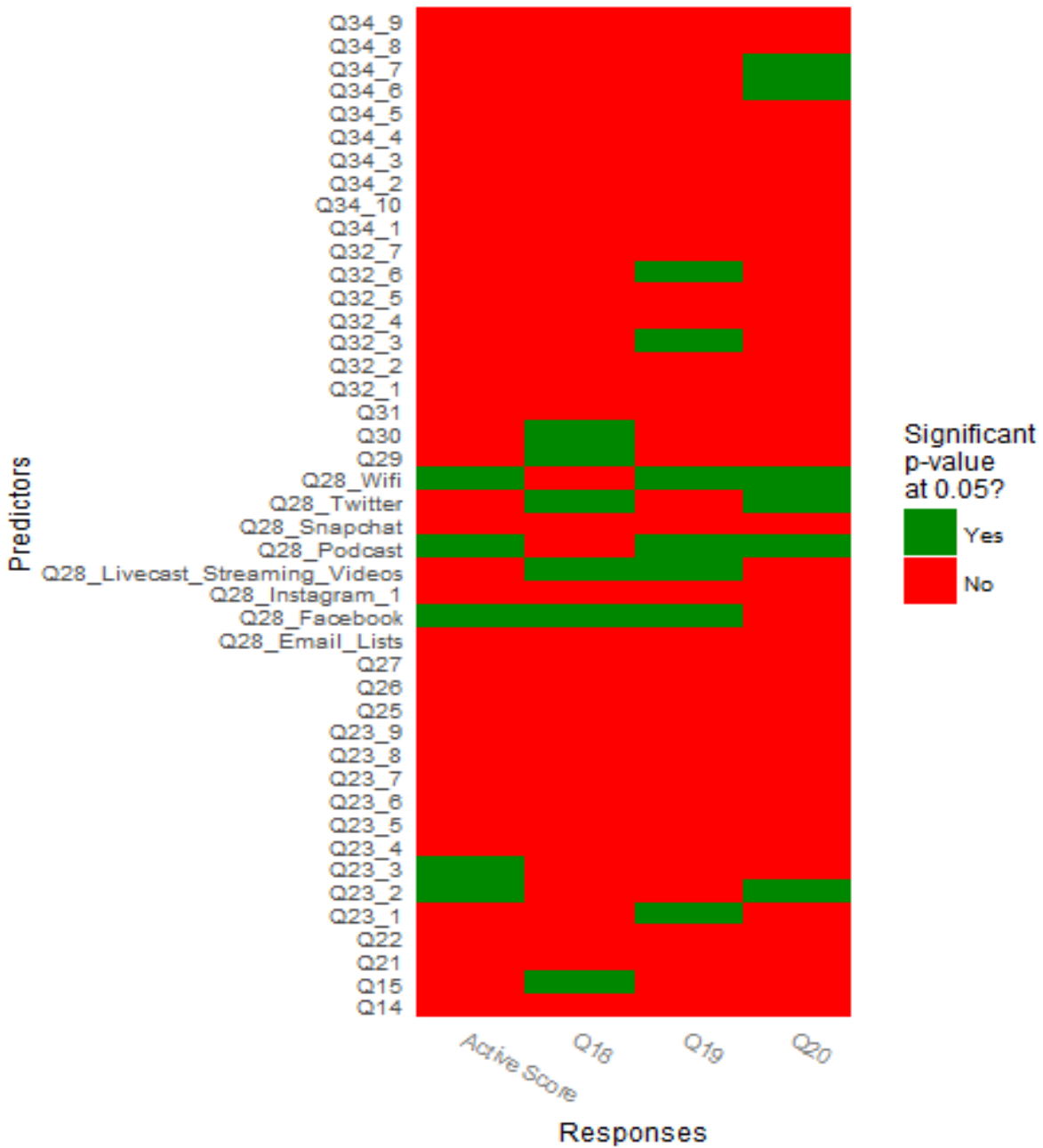
Take Q28_Facebook as an example, it has a significant relationship with Active Score, Q18 and Q19, which indicates that it is a significant factor in influencing the active participation of churched emerging adults in the church.

4.3.3 Statistical Model

In this section, the Statistical Model builds the linear model using Q18, Q19, Q20 and Active Score as the response variables, the candidate survey questions as the explanatory variables separately for different research questions. From the model perspective, to avoid the high correlations among the explanatory variables, first calculate the VIF value for each of them. VIF is used to describe how much multicollinearity (correlation between explanatory variables) exists in a linear model. Multicollinearity will cause a problem because it can increase the variance of the estimated coefficients, making them unstable and difficult to interpret. When VIF is greater than 5, we can say that this variable is highly correlated with other variables, and it will be removed. Then we build the linear model with all remaining explanatory variables and find the best model to describe which are the best contributing factors to active participation of churched emerging adults. During the model selection process, the first built is the full model (including all predictors) and then drops the predictor who has the highest p-value, which means what is the least significant. We continue by successively re-fitting reduced models and applying the same dropping process until all remaining variables are statistically significant.

Table 2 & 3 list the final results of model selection.

Table 2 Model Summary for Research Question 1

Response Variable	Significant Explanatory Variables
Q18	None
Q19	Q34_7 (p-value= 0.003) Q32_3 (p-value=0.018)
Q20	Q34_7 (p-value= 0.003) Q32_3 (p-value=0.044)
Active Score	None

According to Table 2, only the response variables Q19 and Q20 are the final selected model. Both have the same significant explanatory variables Q32_3 and Q34_7. Q32_3 was the question "How would you rate the church: Giving people opportunities to have impute about decisions affecting the church" and Q34_7 is the question "Rate of the statement: Being at this church has made a difference in my spiritual life". Q19 is the question shows that "How many church groups do you spend time with" and Q20 shows the "rate of personal involvement in church related activities in the past few years". Therefore, it means that "the opportunities to have decisions affecting the

church" and "the sense of making a difference in the church" are the key contributing factors to churched emerging adults' as active participations. From the research question perspective, we can conclude that "less opportunities to make decisions affecting the church" and "less sense of making a difference in the church" are key reasons for decline in churched emerging adult membership.

Table 3 Model Summary for Research Question 2

Response Variable	Significant Explanatory Variables
Q18	None
Q19	Q23_1 (p-value=0.009) Q23_3 (p-value=0.029) Q23_9 (p-value=0.041) Q28_Email_Lists (p-value= 0.034)
Q20	None
Active Score	Q23_1 (p-value=0.029)

According to Table 3, only the response variables Q19 and Active Score have the final selected model. For models with Q19 as the response variable, we have Q23_1, Q23_3, Q23_9 and Q28_Email_lists in the final model as the significant explanatory variables in influencing question Q19. Q23_1, Q23_3 and Q23_9 are the questions of "How much emphasis the congregation places on: Worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition; Fosters solid teaching that has changed or enhanced my life; Expressing Our Denominational Heritage". Q28_Email_lists is the question of "whether the church uses email lists and social media". Using Active Score as the response variable, only Q23_1 is significant in the model. Therefore, it means that "how the church emphasis on worship, solid teaching, expressing people's denominational heritage and using email lists" are the key contributing factors to churched emerging adults' active participation. From the research question perspective, we can conclude that the local church can improve the emphasis on "worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition", "providing solid teaching that could change or enhance people's life, "the opportunity of expression people's denominational heritage" and use email lists and social media to avoid a continuing decline in its membership specifically in terms of 18-32 year olds.

4.4 Qualitative Methods

"Because empirical research through quantitative methods has its limitations. Researchers have to restrict themselves to data that are quantifiable and can be expressed in statistics, but if one wants to penetrate the deeper level of consciousness assistance is needed from qualitative methods' ' (Heitink,199:232).

"Practical Theology is critical theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they are interact with the practices of the world, with a view of ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to, and for the world" (Swinton & Mowat, 2006: 7). Therefore by applying the principles of Practical Theology into practice we will reflect the ways in which each church interacts with its congregation. The common threads that hold the qualitative study of churched emerging adults together are each of the church's History, Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs therefore these are included as well as in depth interviews with both the leadership and a small group representative of the emerging adult members from each of the church.

4.5 Church Case Studies and Interviews

Chapter 4. continues with qualitative research wth a combination of church historical backgrounds,mission and/ or vision statements, lists of values and/or truths and interviews with both the pastors and small member groups from the core group itself are the subject of this portion of the chapter. The qualitative process consisted of case studies and interviews with both randomly selected and invited representatives of the various church families, as well as with their pastoral leadership. The interviews followed a common set of questions intended to elicit from interviewees their individual and collective understanding of the general overall character of their church, the nature and their impressions of how their church responds to the needs of churched emerging adults. The churches used for the case studies were selected based upon the number of surveys received from each church. The churches chosen for case studies are ranked according to their current ability to meet the needs of the churched emerging adults in their communities. I removed all of the names and addresses to maintain as much anonymity as possible. This goes for references as well.

4.5.1 X Ministries is made up by these churches: F Church, G Church, H Church, I Community Church, J Church, and K Church.

Ethnicity: Multi-Ethnic

Denomination: Non-Denominational, Evangelical Christian

Active Membership: 23,000 adults and 14,000 children

Attendance: 32,000

Location: Throughout Atlanta and Surrounding the Perimeter.

History:

The Senior pastor grew up attending his father's church and began preaching early. When he felt called to something different, in his own words: "Atlanta does not need another church. What Atlanta does need is a safe environment where the unchurched can come and hear the life-changing truth that Jesus Christ cares for them and died for their sin." Soon he founded Church F, the flagship church which houses the headquarters of X Ministries. Today X Ministries has grown to six large satellite campuses including the main campus Church F in Alpharetta, Church G in Buckhead, Church H in Cumming, Church I in Woodstock, Church J in Gwinnett, and Church K in Decatur. The pastor's biography includes graduating from Georgia State University in Journalism and a master's degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. He and five others founded Church F in 1995 which was later changed to X ministries.

Church F was founded in 1995. It has grown to six total campuses, with 32,000 attendees each week. The six churches have their own worship teams and receive the message via green screen and the highly innovative high-definition video in place of a live speaker. The pastor is casually dressed, in front of a background that looks like the stage. The attendees widely accept it. The pastor preaches most often from the Main Church F campus the message is broadcasted to the other campuses. The pastor says that his strategy beyond the

pulpit is to create environments where people are encouraged and equipped to pursue intimacy with God, community with insiders and influence with outsiders."

The Sunday service hours provide Sunday school for youth through the 12th grade. Adults are encouraged to attend small home groups of 5-8 people during the week in private homes. These groups study scripture and discuss issues. These meetings are the "Sunday school" for adults interested in more in-depth study.

Four of the satellite campuses have weekly meetings on their location called, "The Living Room." These meetings are designed for churched emerging adults. The young people are provided with transportation (a shuttle bus) from their university campuses or a bus stop for the meeting in their area. Dinner is ready when they arrive (at all but one site). The food is designed to attract this age group and allows the guys to "fill up." The stage is set with colored lights, background skein, a band, microphones and casually dressed musicians and the leader. The leader circulates during dinner making personal contact with the attendees. They move into the auditorium which is darkened for the music to begin. There are lots of couples, but primarily young people who have come by bus or car all talking and waiting just a few minutes and the music begins. The songs are up to date Christian songs the youth know and sing along with. Sometimes the words are projected on the screen in front. My estimate is that

an average of 200 youths gather for this meeting. The music comes to a stop and the leader may have a teaching unique to their season of life and what scriptures say regarding the particular topic and how it applies to their personal life. They may have a high-profile Christian guest speak or discuss with the leader or have a panel present a subject. They vary the themes and method of approach to please everyone's taste. The youth are friendly and really receive the message with a positive attitude and appreciation. The purpose of these meetings is to provide a location to lead this age group in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ through worship, teaching, and community. I found each location attracted a slightly different genre of churched emerging adults. Some had been more "churched in the past;" and others did not have a church vocabulary at all. The groups mingle with each other and discuss questions. The "Living Room" attendees also have available a weekly discussion/study group (small groups of 5-8 people of the same gender or 4 to 5 couples) at another location. This allows them to have an experienced Christian adult to meet individually and with the group to answer questions, study and be available to the churched emerging adults. One of the campuses has these group meetings after their regular meetings as many have a long distance to travel to the church and this allows them to have personal contact with a leader. Everyone attends as a norm for this venue.

X Ministry churches proclaim that numbers do not tell the story. Changed lives are what drive the leadership, "Our real mission is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ." X Ministry Churches attempt to meet the needs of every age group. They do have an organized evangelism program as noted on the questioner and they do have a ministry to children 0-5th grade; 6-8th grades; 9-12th grades; 18-26 years old which is "The Living Room;" 26-32 years old; Young Married 20-35 years old; Married 35 and older; Divorcees, Women's groups, Men's groups, Men and Women's Middle aged groups and Men and Women 60 plus years old. They report about 50% to 60% of the total congregation is engaged in the ministries mentioned. Their Sunday service is contemporary, yet a few circled "stagnate" regarding the format. The Director described the services as "authentic, strategic, excellent, relevant (helpful) and relational. He was super enthusiastic, mindful of details and alert to the participants. This is surprising as the contemporary service lends itself to innovation. The comment of one pastor said,"The decision-making Ministry members need to be flexible and realize that the 18-32 year old needs a long term commitment. They (churched emerging adults) need to know they are cared for and wanted. They will be available for a place that values them and makes them feel safe. They need a refuge, and it is tough." Church F has the largest outreach to churched emerging adults and a contemporary approach that reaches about 1,000 churched emerging adults a week. The ministry is sincere and growing.

The Sunday services are exceptionally large, this is a mega church, all age groups attend, and Sunday school meets during the service, for the children through middle school. Churched emerging adults meet with everyone else and the service is really geared toward them rather than the older adult. The X Ministry system is very organized, planned and directed; dividing people by age groups. Individuals are expected to attend their group meetings, Sunday school, and church services. The family groups have a flavor of this being their social status (club). The churched emerging adults have a refuge and a place to find the answers, the children are ecstatic to be in interesting and Christian based classes and worship. There is a large number of volunteers who make the Church Book Store run, give directions, sweep up the sanctuary, and perform other tasks. There is a spirit of willingness. "The Living Room" is run by energetic and enthusiastic churched emerging adults whose lives have been changed by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and they now in turn want to help others find the way, the truth, and the life. They are a beautiful group of young volunteers who serve the food, direct people where to go, set up the meeting spaces, serve the coffee, break down the spaces, run the sound systems, the lighting systems, do the music, and clean up.

4.5.2 Church A
Ethnicity: White
Denomination: Evangelical Anglican
Active Membership: 3200
Attendance: 2800
Location: Urban Atlanta

History and Background: Church A in 1987 by its current Senior Pastor with a group of about 40 adults. The mission to "Equip the Saints and Seek the Lost." (Page 1, Our Leadership) The Senior Pastor, proclaims" the word of God without compromise, believing in the absolute authority of the scripture." Evangelism is the goal of the Church A, Leading the Way was started by the church 's international ministry; "passionately proclaiming the uncompromising Truth through radio and television programs, the Internet, and through books, periodicals, and other resources. Programs are translated and broadcast into 20 languages covering more than 200 countries. This Atlanta-based organization partners with internationally in-country follow-up teams to encourage believers in their faith."

4.5.3 Church B

Ethnicity: White
Denomination: Southern Baptist (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship)
Active Membership: 1,000
Attendance: 450 – 600
Location: Stone Mountain GA

Church B, Stone Mountain is located in a suburb of Atlanta. The senior pastor graduated from Sanford University and Harvard Divinity School and has a Doctor of Ministry from the Methodist School of Ohio. The church was constituted in September of 1969 with 157 charter members; the multipurpose center was built in 1972. The church has flourished since its inception. Mission: "We are a moderate, free and faithful Baptist Church for all people of our community where everyone can grow spiritually and be involved in the world of the kingdom."

Church B was instrumental in the founding of the James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University in 1995. Church B saw the nurturing and training of pastors/ministers as one of their callings and thus they have remained supportive by serving as a church for ministers in training through the school's mentoring program. They hold events for the school on their beautiful campus and they serve as a homechurch to many of the students who are far away from their home churches throughout their three to five years

of MDiv and DMin degrees. They have a thriving elementary school and Arts Center.

The "Ideas and Actions" class is designed for twenty year and older young adults. The name suggests the purpose centers around ideas based on Christian experience and implementation. They explore life and faith together under the direction of the Vansant's and many of the students are from McAfee School of Theology thus the church meets a need in the community for a place where churched emerging adults who are doing graduate work have a place to worship on Sunday, a class to attend and a community to be part of.

4.5.4 Church C

Ethnicity: Afro American
Denomination: United Methodist
Active Membership: 2000
Attendance:1,100
History:

Church C is part of Methodist history which covers more than two hundred years. It goes back to 1735 when John and Charles Wesley came from England to America and worked in Savannah, Georgia as missionaries. December 24, 1784, the Methodist Episcopal Church was officially organized. Church C carries the history, and vision of the whole Methodist Church Family. On October 3, 1926, eighteen or twenty people met in the home of Mrs. F. Jones at

1454 Beecher Street where the first worship service of Church C was held. Dr. W.T Hunnicutt was the presiding elder. The church grew by December to 120 and the first pastor Reverend S.A.F. Wagner led the congregation in erecting the first church on Richland Road which opened April 1, 1927.

The church continued to grow and in 1939 the Cascade church, the Methodist Episcopal Church (North), the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) and the Methodist Protestant Church merged. The Reverend W. T. Hunnicutt was assigned as pastor of Church C. The crowded conditions in the Church prompted Reverend Hunnicutt to launch a movement to build a larger church. A lack of building supplies due to World War II slowed their efforts. Reverend J.J. Sneed was appointed pastor in 1942, during the war. On February 10, 1947, materials were becoming available and the building program started again. The new sanctuary seated 425 and the first service was on July 4, 1948.

In 1963, Reverend Charles T. Gray was senior pastor and served eloquently. In 1968, William B. Ridgeway became the fourteenth pastor and during his term the youth activities were moved to a house at 887 Cascade venues. In 1970 the process of racial transition started with the family of Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Allen.

In 1971 Reverend Charles B. Wells became the fifteenth pastor. People were moving from this area and the congregation was shrinking. Reverend Marcus Booker served well and was able to revise the church membership roll

and it facilitated understanding the church's situation which was better than they anticipated.

In 1974 Revered Walter L. Kimbrough, a young minister, soon found they needed to have two services to accommodate the growing membership. In 1986 Reverend Joseph E. Lowery took the reins and the church continued to grow. Thus, the church grew to 1000 members, the building was too small. The church launched a large building program. The "Cathedral" would house the 2,600 members. The groundbreaking took place September 29, 1990. Dr. Lowery's term of service ended in his retirement. Reverend Walter L. Kimbrough was assigned to Church C in June 1992. Notably Church C was the first predominately Black United Methodist church to build a structure of such magnitude.

In the 1980's the church established scholarships and incentives to be given to the high school graduating seniors with highest overall grade point averages. First place receives a $1,000 scholarship and a $500 incentive award.

June 2006, the previous pastor was assigned to Church C and under his service all debts for properties were paid off. He increased youth participation in worship, effective communication, collaboration, cooperation and making Church C a place of ministry and service. The current pastor took the pulpit in 2017.

The church Young People's Division is committed to developing respectful, disciplined, compassionate young people who know and love the Lord and seek to share the love of Jesus Christ with others through worship, spiritual growth and development and commitment to serving others.

The Acolyte Ministry fosters commitment and devotion to God by training youth to be servant leaders through active participation in the worship service. The Children's ministry is to provide age-appropriate Christian education enrichment and fellowship opportunities for children ages 0-12.

4.5.5 Church D

Ethnicity: African American
Denomination: Baptist
Active membership: 16,800
Attendance: 600
Location: Urban Atlanta - 4 more campuses one in Fairburn, GA., one in Smyrna, GA., one in Douglasville, GA., and one in Conyers, GA. A span of 100 miles encompasses these congregations.

History: Church D, The Senior pastor was called to the ministry at the age of 16. In 1993 He was called to Church D where Reverend James ordained him. E. Hightower Sr. Two years later he was called to the full-time pastorate of Church D and continues to this day. He refocused the worship by restoring hope, empowering people, advancing the Kingdom, and leaving a legacy. In 2008

Church D expanded to a second site in Fairburn, Georgia. Since then, they have opened three additional sites, one in Smyrna (2009), another in Douglasville (2011) and a third in Conyers (2014) this multi-site model not only expanded the physical outreach but also allowed them to have nine worship services every weekend. The Senior pastor has created a Collaborative Preaching Team. The group meets through the week and develops the program and sermons. He team's desire is to provide all sites access to the same message and ensure that the overall ministry vision is a cohesive body in vision mission and purpose.

The Mission Statement of Church D is "to lovingly lead lost individuals into a relationship with Jesus Christ and to develop mature believers." Because they are a multi-site church they have structured their churches with multiple personnel to support the ministry of the senior pastor, the structure includes a: Campus leader-pastor, Worship leader, band and ensemble, Technical Support Director (Audio/Visual),Facilities and Maintenance Personnel, Off-duty Officer, Children's Ministry Leader, Teen Ministry Leader, Discipleship Leader, Ministry and Fellowship Leader. Volunteers serve with the staff including: the Protocol team, the Small Group Coordinators, the Assimilation Team, the Stage Hands/Production Team, the Launch Team, the Hospitality Team, the Doorkeepers Team, Nurses, Deacons, Ministers, and other miscellaneous volunteers.

The Senior Pastor has scheduled services so that he can attend each church on Saturday and Sunday. This study took place at the Atlanta venue with the Minister to the 18 -25-year-olds. They allowed me to interview the churched emerging adults and their minister. The majority of these young people were at the church service prior to their meeting. This church has a children's program known as the Greenhouse representing 1 month through 25 years. The S.E.E.D.S.- "Spiritual Essential Ensuring Disciples Sprout" which engages children from the Nursery through the 5th grade. The youth in grades 6th through 8th is called, D.I.G. which stands for Deeper in God. The 9th through 12th grade group is called T.H.R.I.V.E.-"Together Harvesting a Righteous International Vigilant Experience. There are numerous ministries for men, women, elderly, in addition to the young people. The mission of the clergy is" to partner with parents in lovingly leading their child in coming to know Jesus as Savior, growing in knowledge of Him, and making Him known to others." Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:4-9 and 11:18-21.

4.5.6 Church E
 Ethnicity: White
Denomination: Baptist
Active Membership: 15,000
Attendance: 10,000

History: Church E was founded in 1848 by David Gonto Daniell, the congregation met where they could find space, usually a small one room schoolhouse. The first actual church building was severely damaged during the Civil War and many members were wounded or killed. In 1869 the congregation dedicated a new building. In 1971 the current pastor was called to be the senior pastor of the church, in 1989 the church had outgrown the city church and they purchased 55 acres in the Dunwoody area of North Atlanta. The congregation moved to this location in April 1997. It is a high middle-class church where 50 – 60% of the congregants come weekly. They are a strong Baptist church. He received a clear call to the ministry when only 14 years old, he attended the University of Richmond in Richmond Virginia. He earned his Bachelor of Divinity from the Theological Seminary in Fort Worth Texas and his Master of Theology and Doctorate from Luther Rice Seminary in Atlanta. He steers the wheel well as the church continues to grow and meet community needs. He is recognized throughout the world for his ministry, books, sermons, and television teaching. Sunday school classes meet the needs of all ages, from Nursery through the elderly. The goal is to be a teaching church and prepare each age group to grow in the knowledge of scripture and Christian living.

Vision: Until He returns, God has chosen to carry out His purposes through His Church. He has ordained no other organization or structure for this purpose. We exist to joyfully worship God and make Him known. He is building His Church (advancing His Kingdom here on earth) and we have the privilege of being His co-laborers in this great work. (see Matthew 28:18-20) We do so by enjoying and joyfully declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ. We desire and are committed to building a healthy church for the glory of God. In order to be a healthy church body, however, we must have members with healthy hearts. This means we must be Christ-centered and others-centered, but not self-centered. We must seek to honor, obey and represent Christ truly in all our thoughts, words, and actions. We hope to see the membership Church E 1. Treasure Christ above everything else in our life, 2. to delight in His power over all things, 3. to love one another faithfully and sacrificially, as well as our friends and neighbors and 4. likewise to joyfully display and declare His gospel to our family, friends, and on to the nations.

4.6 Pastoral Interviews:

4.6.1 Question 1. What category of liturgical service do you feel suits your congregation the best?

X Ministries: "We offer a modern contemporary type of worship service. This is a church where the worship service includes a band, singers, loud modern Christian music, a light show, and a televised presentation by our senior pastor."

Church D: "We have a traditional service; the congregation is all ages, due to our television ministry. Thus, every age is represented, although the scale tips more in focus of the 55 and older age group. We have an outstanding choir and orchestra that focuses on traditional music. The old hymns are never out of style."

Church C: "Our congregation follows the tradition of the African American Church. Music is important to us, and we have an internationally renowned music department and visitors come from far and near to experience our choirs during our worship services. We have eight separate choirs: The Chancel Choir which specializes in anthems and spirituals, The Gospel's choir which specializes in traditional gospel music, The New Advent Choir which specializes in contemporary gospel music, The Praise Team which is dedicated

to giving the glory to God, The Hand Bell Choir which is composed of reading musicians who play spirituals, anthems, and hymns, The Women's Chorus, who sing contemporary Christian music, The Men's Chorus which sings anthems, gospels and spirituals, and The Children's choir which is for children 5-12 years old, and they learn a diverse repertoire of songs. One might say we have traditional services. Worship, music, and a sermon are customary. It is a very unified congregation."

4.6.2 Question 2: Who attends your church? What attracts them to your venue?

Church A: "Everybody attends our church. Our pastor is broadcast all over the world and particularly the mid-east, so it is not unusual for us to see head scarves on a few women. We have Africans, African Americans, and Caucasians, old, young, families, middle aged empty nesters, and elderly. We freely worship, some with hands raised, others more conservative. The church is large and sits beside highway 75, it is an advertisement – "This house of God welcomes you." The music and excellent Biblical teaching attracts people. Word of mouth brings people in, families, friends, relatives; work associates, and schoolmates fill the sanctuary.

Church C: "We have many visitors of all ethnic groups. Primarily we are an African American church. Old and young are attracted to our congregation and commitment to God and the church. Nearly everyone is committed to

family and the church family. We work as a well-tuned machine. Everyone is welcomed."

4.6.3 Question 3:

What is the population of the church and what percentage of those attend regularly?

Church B: "The congregation is about 1000 strong and about 40 percent attend regularly and participate in church activities. As pastor I feel well supported." "We recently began to remodel our children and youth areas; this would not have been possible without the support and labor of my congregation."

X Ministries: "All of the venues account for about 30,000 members; 50-60 percent of the congregation attend regularly and contribute by volunteering their service in the production of the meeting. There is camaraderie among the people that is rarely seen today."

4.6.4. Question 4. What are the primary ministries of the church on Sundays and throughout the week?

Church E; "We have a ministry to the children, S.E.E.D.S. from nursery through the 12th grade. We have a new ministry for the 18–26-year-olds and a regular ministry to the 26–32-year-olds. We have classes for divorcees, women's

groups, men's groups, mixed groups of middle aged people, and men and women's groups of 60 and above. About 20 percent of the congregation is involved with these teaching ministries."

Church D: "Our buildings host many Christian groups; our weekly programs include choir practice, orchestra practice, Sunday school from the nursery through high school. We have a new program for churched emerging adults. Our youth facility called "the warehouse" is arranged for every youth age group and is an up-to-date facility, with a coffee shop, a gym, a climbing wall, table games and more. Wednesday nights we have prayer meetings, Christian training programs. The needs of the congregation are met at every level. Traditional Sunday school classes meet the desires of everyone."

4.6.5 Question 5. What is the focus of your sermons?

Church A: "New Christians, mature Christians, or Seekers? Our pastor's sermons are Bible based. He uses both the Old and New Testament to teach how Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament's introduction to Christ. He has the ability to add stories, humor, and truth to flavor his sermons and relate to his audience. "Church E: "My sermons are a combination of Scripture and dealing with life. I am a theology scholar as well as a visionary. I carry my dreams to the pulpit just as Jesus did."

4.6.6 Question 6. How would you categorize your participants as new Christians, seekers, mature Christians?

Church B congregation is primarily from a solid Christian background. They very often bring seekers from the community or work. Therefore, the individuals bringing in new families or students not only introduce them to the church but host them and guide them as they seek to explore church."

Church E: "New Christians, mature Christians, or Seekers? "The congregation is a mixture of all three of these groups. We serve the community where we are located, and our tradition of Sunday church is strong. The music and the word draw people who have never been to church and are new to Atlanta, we have the elderly who never miss a service and are mature Christians and we have new Christians that have accepted the Lord here at our Church. We are ready to meet the needs of each person who comes to our place of worship."

4.6.7 Question 7. What kind of social media does the church use?

X Ministries: "We use all the social media we can. We announce meetings, work groups, and policies. In addition, we have a web page, we use email and telephone. This is our primary outreach; social media announces us and brings in young people. It is the way to interest folks."

Church A: "The church has a web site for each congregation. We have a calendar with the monthly services, planned activities and group meetings, we use FaceBook, and Smartphone's. This is a technologically up to date church that attracts visitors as well as keeps our congregations up to date.

4.6.8 Question 8: Do you have a specific program for churched emerging adults?

Church C: "Yes, we work with this age group in a mixed approach. We have a group for those in higher education and we have a group for this age group who do not want to attend school but want to work. We have activities and service projects for them. We seek to be well rounded in our approach and include everyone in this age group. They are all searching for security and a home."

Church D: "Yes, we do. The young adults are called the C-2, they meet in the Warehouse, and have a Sunday class. In addition, they plan social events and service projects. The class worships together and then participates in a guided Bible Study. The churched emerging adults are encouraged to want to know God, own their faith, and make Christ known in the world.

Church E: " Yes, it is a relatively new program, it is growing and I am still identifying ways to engage the 18-32 year old population. The group is small, but the news will travel fast. Young people this age need a home where they can

ask questions, learn to contribute to society and have fellowship. We answer the tough questions from the Bible and life."

Church B: "Yes, we work closely with McAfee School of Theology, many of their students represent churches, but others are international or come from other states. We have a leadership program for them. They meet weekly as well as participate in activities, classes and Vacation Bible School throughout the year."

X Ministries: "We certainly do, it is a large part of our ministry throughout the week for College Students and anyone in this age group who wants to join us at one of our Living Room meetings. We send a bus to the various colleges to pick up the younger churched emerging adults and others come by car. It is a large ministry with an average of 1,000 churched emerging adults per week seeking worship and fellowship. Briefly we have a time of socializing and dinner before the "meeting," we have music and a transparent message on Christ and what Christ expects in their lives. No subject is barred. The attempt is to scripturally guide the young people with their choices and how to include Christ in their decisions."

Church A: "Yes, we have a group for College Students and one for 20 & 30's professionals. They meet on Thursday evenings after school or work at the church. The participants are eager and look forward to the social and spiritual fellowship. They are a lively group committed to each other and the church."

4.6.9 Question 9. How do your small groups function?

Church D, Church C, Church E: "The small groups for each age are led by leaders who are called to their position and work with each group meeting their needs."

X Ministries: "The churched emerging adult small groups meet weekly, one group meets after the meeting as they live out and it is difficult for them to get together. They have a mature Christian leader who again presents Christ and brings them into the young people's lives. In turn they can ask questions and believe me they are looking for answers. They talk to me about things they would never discuss with parents. The group also interacts with their own experiences and suggestions."

Church A: "Small groups meet on weeknights in the church and in homes across the city."

4.6.10 Question 10: Do you have any personal thoughts you would like to add?

Church E: "Churches are imperfect, despite our best efforts. We are like the tide; things ebb and flow. As a result, we need time and prayer to progress and meet the needs of our churched emerging adults all over the Atlanta area. We have started another emerging adult program that has the interest of young people not interested in higher education. They meet Sundays during the week

to study, worship, have fellowship, work with the ministry in service projects and missions. This group is very enthusiastic and busy. Their aims are to prepare for life with Christ and to make good decisions. The intergenerational factor helps them world with adults on projects and have mentors willing to talk, listen, and encourage these youth that Christ makes a difference throughout life."

X Ministries: "The most important thing when working with this age group of churched emerging adults is to be real and authentic. Empower them to join in on what God is doing, the church is not dead. Ministry needs to be flexible, have a long-term commitment for 18-32 year olds is tough. They need to know that they are cared for and wanted. They will make time for a place that values them and makes them feel safe. They need a refuge. I go to the college campuses to promote our ministry, one on one conversations and invitations, posters, and social media. Transportation and a free dinner makes all the difference. The young ones do respond to security and the word."

Church B: "This is a very intellectual group of parishioners; they enjoy a challenge and they enjoy church and family life. I feel honored to work with these folks."

4.7.1 Conclusions – Quotations from Interviews with *Churched Emerging Adults:*

The churches were studied using interviews, focus groups, visits to Sunday school classes, and worship services. Each within their tradition presents Jesus as Savior / Redeemer. Question 39 of the Survey asked: Is there anything you would like to share with the researcher about being an 18- to 32-year-old churched emerging adult believer that would help them understand the needs of your age bracket? Here are their answers.

"In church I like to have the combination of community, fun, good worship, deep conversation about the Word." "We want real, heartfelt teaching instead of scripted theme-based programs with shallow discussion questions." "I think there should be more emphasis and care for our age group because I feel like this is a time period where we need God the most, we're trying to figure out our lives and we could go/stay on the right path if we have God, but it may not be communicated well if we don't have good leader." "I feel like this age group is often missed by the church. They focus on school aged through college and then they stop pursuing the young people. They need to make it clear how *churched emerging adults* fit into the church and the church community." "We need community. My church is too focused on politics in a negative way. They are not trying to solve the problems, just complaining about them. I totally agree with their assessment of the problems, but they should stop complaining and do

something to fix the problems. One thing my church does well is that it stands on the whole word of God and taking a stand is a great start."

"Our church does a wonderful job in reaching millennials. They have a specific ministry with dedicated volunteers and staff members who plan services and outreach activities specifically for 18- to 32-year-olds." "Engage us, take our voices seriously, give us space to speak honestly and openly." "My church focuses on international mission instead of the needs of our community which often go unnoticed." "I wish older members would try to be leaders for this age group." "Having a thriving 18–32-year-old ministry, with a separate ministry for the college age and the young professionals, is so important for fellowship, bonding, spiritual growth, and fun hangout time."

"We need authenticity. We do not need a copy of the world because we can see through a fake sense of it fast. We need the Gospel and fellowship." "The young people of 18 to 32 years of age are the dynamic motor of a nation. So, it is good to seek them and motivate them to follow Christ and serve God, being agents of change in the nation." "I believe our church focuses on the love and messages of Jesus rather than the 'if you don't believe you'll go to hell' approach which I feel turns people off to the idea of going to church. Focus on the love of Christ. That is what people my age are looking for." "We are a very accepting age group therefore ministry needs to begin with and focus on Jesus' love for everyone." "Accept more diversity and volunteer outreach in the community." "We aren't all married with kids."

"We would like to be part of more mission trips." "We need to be challenged, to be held accountable for the gospel and our role in the church. Too many times churches try to attract young adults without ever making true disciples. Jesus obviously had a clear message to go and make disciples. He did not say bring everyone in and create a specific atmosphere, the churches I have seen that relate to young people do well by empowering them to be a disciple and make other disciples. No matter what the atmosphere is like. If we focus on making disciples in the comfort of our church, then that is as far as our outreach will go. Jesus said, 'to the ends of the earth,' he did not say, 'as far as you are comfortable going.' I challenge my friends not to come and receive a message only for themselves but to go out and be like Jesus, because they are just as responsible as I when we hear the same message."

"The biggest reason that I left the church I grew up in (a large Baptist Church) was because it had little to no ministry opportunities for someone in my age bracket. I had just graduated from college (I was 21) and moved home to live with my parents while looking for a job. Your 20's and 30's are such a transitional stage of life, and you truly need a good community of your peers around you during that time, as it can be a depressing one full of emotion, heartache, and restlessness. The Baptist Church I returned to was theologically sound, had good worship, and I knew a lot of people there, but there were hardly any other individuals my age with whom I could have a thriving community. So, I left in search of that. I wanted a solid, Bible-believing congregation that was

not afraid to stand for truth, but I also needed a community of people my age to come alongside me- I needed friends! I found fellowship at my current church.

This church is one of the VERY few who offer a thriving ministry for 20s and 30s in the Atlanta area, or even in the South in general. It is astounding to me that more groups like this don't exist. We are balanced in that we offer Bible teaching, small group opportunities, mentoring options, and social gatherings within our one ministry-that is rare. No church is perfect, of course, and there are some things that I would like to improve about our ministry, but at this point, I am vastly thankful that our group exists at all. God has used it in tremendous ways in my life and in the lives of many others in the ministry. Glory to Him!"

From these quotations you can read that the churched emerging adults have a need for community, for the gospel, for mentoring, for a sense of being part of the whole, for the love of the greater church. Talking to these *churched emerging adults* was very enlightening, sad at times but hopeful as we press forward in Practical Theology finding new ways to best serve our next generations.

4.7.2 Further Conclusions

The statistical study revealed the identifiable characteristics found in the local church which meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults.* The characteristics known to influence the continuing decline of the local church's on-site attendance/ membership can be broken down into these seven areas:

1. Worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition. Worship that is Holy Spirit inspired.

2. Solid Teaching that can change or enhance a person's life from both the pulpit and throughout Sunday school and all instruction.

3. Churches giving people the opportunity to have input about decisions that affect change in the church.

4. Opportunity for the expression of a person's Denominational Heritage. emerging adults in church want to be connected to the greater sense of church, in other words, how do I connect to Church History as a whole.

5. The church's use of effective and up-to-date websites, email, and social media are paramount.

6. Sense of making a difference in church and beyond.

7. Sanctification – the issue of holiness in leadership.

These seven areas are at the core the heart of the personhood of each emerging adult. They want to know that they are valued as a member of the congregation, that their opinion matters yes but more importantly is the leadership thinking through the most important things: worship, teaching,

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leadership, church heritage/ denomination, outreach, service, sanctification, and are they up to date on their communication. These are the things that matter to the churched emerging adults and without them they are leaving the church and finding a church that takes them into account.

　　　To reiterate, church emerging adults are leaving in record numbers this has been established by Pew Research in 2008 where they state that 25% or 1 in 4 Americans claim no religious affiliation (Pew Research, 2008). They confirmed their findings in 2016 stating that the decline of church membership is at the rate of 20% plus annually (Pew Research, 2016). According to the new study by GreatOpportunity.org we are losing "one million *churched emerging adults* per year and will continue to do so for the next 35 years.... They are not just leaving their church they are leaving the faith entirely" (greatopportunity.org, 2021). Therefore, this study is in response to the continuing decline. The quantitative statistics provided by this study came from churched emerging adults who responded to the questionnaire, 86% of which had left childhood church seeking something that met their needs and many of which are obviously still unsatisfied, denomination was not a factor in their search, but it is important when it comes to satisfaction.

Chapter 5 - Cradle to Grave

5.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 completes the final movement in Practical Theology, the one which excites me as a scholar and the reason I set off to ask the questions in the first place. Having read amazing research by David Kinnamen (2011) *You Lost Me*, Chap Clark and Kara Powell's (2011) book *Sticky Faith* (a project coordinated by the Fuller Theological Institute) and Kara Powell, Jake Miller, and Brad Griffen's (2016) paper entitled: *Churches Engaging Young People Project Overview and Research Method*, I gleaned the following four findings from their massive study: 1. A shift from a "behavior-based gospel" to a "grace based gospel," we need to shift away from the idea that when a person falls short of the standards or expectations that they are not good enough to be a Christian. 2. "A shift from separating the children and the young people to integrating them into the life of the church" they found that the intergenerational community strengthened faith. 3. A shift from a "dry-cleaner view" to a "parental partnership" where children are not dropped off and picked up "clean and neatly ironed Christians" but rather the ministry partners with parents. And 4. Shifting away from "social action tourism" from short mission trips abroad to long-term, relational, everyday service that happens serving in their own church or community thus strengthening the bond within the community (Clark, C & Powell, K. 2011. *Sticky Faith*). I was determined to find out if we

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would have similar outcomes or I could indeed add something new to the conversation.

Initially we asked the questions: "What new knowledge will be brought to the table?" And stated that hypothetically the research should discover: What identifiable characteristics found in the local church meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults*? What can the local church do about the continuing decline in its on-site attendance / membership specifically in terms of the 18 to 32 year old age group? And how does the Christian community find its way back to being Christ-centered and focused upon the mission of God in the world, *missio dei?*

Unquestionably, it is trenchant that previously "churched" people who fall in the eighteen to thirty-two age demographic, which is also identified by Arnett (1998) as "churched emerging adults," are leaving the church in increasing numbers (c.f. Barna Group, 2011; Barber, Setran and Kiesling, 2013; Pew Research Group, 2008; Malan Nel, 2015; Rainer, 2011; and Olson, 2008). What was less evident were the reasons for the continuing decline in its on-site attendance /membership, specifically in terms of eighteen to thirty-two year olds. Therefore this study was written in response to the previously completed research and statistical numbers set forth by the Barna Group, Kinnamen, Barber, Setran and Keisling, the Pew Research Group, Powell, Smith, Nel, Rainer, and Olson. Thus, by means of quantitative and qualitative methodology, the contributing factors for their decline were surveyed, in the belief that such

knowledge would provide key information to understand the relationship between churched emerging adults and the local church (c.f. Barna Group, 2011; Barber, Setran and Kiesling, 2013; Pew Research Group, 2008; Malan Nel, 2015; Rainer, 2011; and Olson, 2008). That we could ask what identifiable characteristics found in the local church are known to meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults?* And consider how the Christian community could find its way back to being Christ-centered and focused upon the mission of God in the world, *mission dei.* This propensity has made it important to develop strategies to slow, stop, and perhaps reverse, the trend while proposing a *cradle to grave paradigm* to help churches regardless of denomination to better carry out "missio dei" within their church communities and neighborhoods and to find answers to build lasting relationships with those *churched emerging adults* whose absence could ultimately spell out the demise of the local church.

The following questions were considered: has the local church heard the call to their communities? Do "programs" disciple and foster spiritual growth and deeper understandings of faith? Does the church train, support, and encourage its members to practice their faith not just in church but at the grocery store or in the movie theater, or at the laundry? Do youth groups prepare their members for the next steps in life as *churched emerging adults*? The answers are more than just a no or maybe they lie in the foundations of theology and mission as set forth and practiced by the church in America.

The research specifically isolated the dormancy of the Christian Church in the United States of America, focusing on the characteristics that underlie the age fragmentation of the congregation, particularly the mitigating factors behind its continued decline. I literally sat down with hundreds of *churched emerging adults* and interviewed them asking questions about their spiritual needs. I spoke with Pastors and Youth Pastors who oversaw both large ministries and small ministries; I asked them, "What are the needs of the *churched emerging adult*s in your church community?" The responses were very eye opening (a synopsis is included in chapter 4). If the church wants to survive, a radical change must take place. Pastors, youth pastors, and parents will be encouraged to take a serious look at their ministry and the specific needs of their eighteen to thirty-two year olds.

I found that *churched emerging adults* fall into three categories: "the seekers," "the moderates," and "the zealous." I categorize students looking for refuge, friends, and fellowship with their age group as "the seekers." The second group are "the Moderates" some know Jesus as their personal Savior and others pretend to act Christian to be accepted in the group, or they just keep quiet. Finally, the third group are "Zealous" for the Lord, they want to be on mission, help with camps, go on retreats and Bible studies. The problem for leaders is their personal experience with the Lord and how to guide these three groups of *churched emerging adults* all jumbled together. Although with this age group there is a small percentage that have attended Sunday school in the past. The

language/ stories of Scriptures are foreign to many of them, and they lack foundation, this is one of the things they have indicated they desire wholeheartedly to understand.

5.1   7 Key Identifiable Characteristics Found in a Church Meaningfully Engaging Churched Emerging Adults

Churches are experiencing a decline, this has been confirmed by the U.S. Census Bureau (2016) and contemporary scholars including Barna Group's Update *The Faith that Lasts Project (2011), Pew Research on Religion and the Public Life* (2008) as well as Nigel Barber, David Setran & Chris Kiesling (2013), Malan Nel (2000) and David Kinnamen(2006). Many churches are also faced with a sense of defeat caused by the high percentage rate which is dropping anywhere between 20 to 25% per year, thus a congregation of 100 in five years will be a congregation of 34 and this does not account for deaths (Pew Research, 2008). The census bureau records that there are less than ½ of the number of churches today than there were one hundred years ago. 4,000 churches close their doors annually and over 7,400 people leave the church every single day (Hout, Fisher, Chaves, March 7th, 2013.).   But the question is WHY? Why do 20% of American adults say they have no religious affiliation?

My research found that there are in fact seven key identifiable characteristics, for the decline of churched emerging adults. The statistical study showed us that the key are the following seven areas:

1. *Worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition. Worship that is Holy Spirit inspired.*

2. *Solid teaching that can change or enhance a person's life from both the pulpit, throughout Sunday school, and all teaching.*

3. *Giving people the opportunity to have input regarding decisions that affect change in the church.*

4. *Opportunity for the expression of a person's Denominational Heritage. Churched emerging adults want to be connected to the greater sense of church, in other words, how do I connect to Church history?*

5. *The use of effective and up-to-date websites, email, and social media are paramount.*

6. *Personal sense of making a difference in the church and beyond.*

7. *Sanctification – the issue of holiness in the leadership*

These seven areas are at the core the heart of the personhood of each churched emerging adult. They want to know that they are valued as a member of the congregation, that their opinion matters, but more importantly is the leadership's thinking through the most important things: Worship, Teaching, Prayer, Leadership, Church Heritage/Denomination, Outreach, Service, Sanctification, and Communication. These are the things that matter to the

churched emerging adults, and without them churched emerging adults are leaving the church and finding themselves a church that takes them into account.

In Chapter 4 my quantitative study found that 82.73% of churched emerging adults attended children's church, while 78.18 % of emerging adults in the church attended an organized youth group. And 67.27% went to a Christian camp during their teenage years. But by the time they became adults their attendance had dropped dramatically. This tells us that most churched emerging adults come from a very religiously active background. And it backs up the statements made by David Kinnamen in his book *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving and Rethinking Church* (2011) where he says there are two simple facts to understand about the loss of young people. One, teenagers between the ages of 13 and 16 are some of the most religiously active Americans, in contrast American twenty somethings are the least religiously active, they are the black hole of church attendance, with a documented 43% drop-off we could say churched emerging adults are "missing in action" (Kinnamen, 2011: 24).

Further quantitative research done by Tim Thornborough (2011) shows that 89% of former "postmodern" youth group members are lost forever and that the Christian Church in the United States will eventually see its demise if this trend continues. *USA Today* found that 70% of those who leave the church do so between the ages of eighteen and thirty-two leading scholars to believe

that college, new vocations, relationships, and entertainment are the main

factors in church decline; subsequently painting the university, sports, movies,

jobs, love interests etc. as devilish adversaries (Thornborough, 2011).

All of this to say we have a major situation, but we cannot say that it is a

lack of going to church as children, they are attending but what are we offering?

Program? Babysitting? Or are we actually introducing our children and youth to

Jesus? Are we offering them a relationship with Jesus or a coloring book? Are we

teaching parents how to build a Christian home and be a Christian example for

their family? Is the entire church involved in "missio dei"? Does your church

foster intergenerational mentoring?

Chart 4 - Graphically these 7 Areas Look Like this:

1	Worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition. Worship that is Holy Spirit Insipred.
2	Solid Teaching that can change or enhance a person's life from both the pulpit and throughout all teaching.
3	Giving people the opportunity to have input regarding decisions that affect change in the church.
4	Opportunity for the expression of a person's Denominational Heritage. Churched emerging adults want to be connected to a greater sense of church. How do I connect to Church History? Use this as a teaching moment on your website for example and in Sunday School
5	The Use of effective and up to date websites, email, and social media are para mount.
6	Personal Sense of Making a Difference in the Church and Beyond.
7	Sanctification - the isssue of Holiness in the leadership

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5. 2 - What can the local church do about the continuing decline in its membership; specifically in terms of eighteen to thirty-two year olds?

Practical theology emerged out of the vestiges of a church in crisis due to the loss of any authority including parental, political, and spiritual. This led to an "emancipation" of sorts and with-it church attendance dropped, and new groups or "movements" were born. Heitink states these new "movements/ groups" formed because the church was not satisfying the religious needs of its members. Thus, it is easy to see how practical theology is crucial to reversing the trends set forth by an outdated understanding of theology that set aside the centrality of Jesus in the life of the congregation (Heitink and Newbigin, 1993).

Kinneman asks, "What is being outwardly exhibited? Is there a lack of meaningful engagement between God and the congregation? How can this be organic to the work of the/ mission of the (*missio dei*) church (Kinnamen 2011)?" While losses are spread throughout all age groups, further groundbreaking research by the Lifeway Research Group (2007) found that the church attrition rate is predominantly within the eighteen- to thirty-two-year-old category. The phenomenon is statistically and theologically compelling (Osmer, 2008: 4).

Every generation is distinct from the generation before, thus sociologists attempt to gather a generalized set of characteristics and behaviors reflective of their lives and times. Adults born between 1927 – 1945 are considered the "silent

generation." The "silent generation" values marriage, the military, reading, church and discipline. Transitioning to the "me" generation which were born between 1946 – 1973; also known as Baby Boomers. They championed individuality, tolerance, free love and are extremely self-centered. The birth of Generation X in 1974 through 1980 finds a generation stereotyped as technologically savvy, money conscious, suspicious, unimpressed with authority, and self-reliant (McSaine, 2013). Moving to the generation of children born between 1981- 1998; they are known as Generation Y or the "millennial generation." They are known for a dependence upon, increased use of, and familiarity with communication, media, and digital technologies and an increase in a neoliberal approach to politics and economics. The Pew Research Center states that "Millennials are confident, connected, and open to change (2012-2013)." Charles Shelton (1995) set forth a definition of adolescents and their spirituality: "development begins with puberty and stretches throughout the years spent in college or pursuing their vocation" (Shelton, 1995: 3).

Qualitative research by Arnett uncovers the idea of a "quiet revolution" among "churched emerging adults" (1998). The revolution has taken place so quietly in fact that it almost went unnoticed by the church and brought with it a sense of being "transparent," unseen, not needed or wanted by the church (Arnett, 2014). Steve McSwain of *the Huffington Post* (2014) suggests the following factors have precipitated the disconnect from the church either permanently, for an extended period of time, or the churched emerging adults never thought of themselves as members in the first place. They include: the demographic remapping of America, technology, a leadership

crisis, competition with other activities and cultures, religious pluralism, a "contemporary" worship experience, and false promises/phony advertising (McSwain, 2014).

Chris Brooks (2013) in his article entitled, *Is Youth Ministry Subtly Sabotaging the Church,* a college minister at the University of Alabama, states that there are three major factors related to generalized church statistics. Beginning with current and historical church attitudes toward children and youth, the contextualization and communication of the gospel, and ending with true life-changing discipleship. There is also an underlying CRISIS as youth are rarely prepared for a spiritual life outside of the quintessential "youth bubble." These churched emerging adults are not "ready" for their next steps (Brooks, 2013).

David Kinnamen (2012: 12) in his book *Unchristian* reports "the university setting does not usually cause the disconnect, it *exposes* and magnifies the shallow-faith problem of our young adults." According to Dr. Malan Nel (2000: 8), "One of the greatest defects of youth ministry is often the absence of a sound theological foundation." Without these foundations a genuine, holistic, contextual, and relational outreach to the "transparent ones" and retention seems impossible.

But today's churches must be ready for a radical and "new normal." And David Kinneman (2011) says that churches are not prepared to handle the "new normal." He goes on (p8) to say, "Cultivating intergenerational relationships are one of the most important ways in which effective faith communities can bring about the change they

so deeply desire." I would agree that there must be a new normal and a return to intergenerational relationships within the church in order to bring about key changes.

I found the following changes are needed to create an atmosphere ready to foster *churched emerging adults*: 1. Understand that churched emerging adults are highly relational especially when it comes to their peers but they frequently feel isolated from their parents and other adults when it comes to faith and spirituality thus they worry we will not understand their doubts and concerns. According to Kinneman's research (2011, 29) the young people epitomize the *me and we contradiction*. *Churched emerging adults* are remarkably self-centered and extraordinarily relational at the same time. Again, we must as a Christian community speak into the relational-individual dissonance and help our up-and-coming generations serve others for the sake of the gospel

2. Creativity and Leadership is left to the church administration, and we are not giving churched emerging adults the opportunity to use their creativity (right-brained gifts) within the church and are thus missing an incredible teaching and learning moment. Generations past have always seen the church as a place to use their talents but now many feel that it is uncreative, overprotective, and stifling. They do not feel they can participate as musicians, Sunday school teachers, decision makers, not to mention missionaries or future ministers.

3. The third way the church needs to rethink our focus is wisdom over information. *Churched emerging adults* and the next generation have access to more information and knowledge content than any other generation in human history, but they lack the ability to wisely apply it to their lives. It has always been one of the tasks of the church to teach wisdom, but today if I saw it once I saw it over and over again, what I would call "theology light." These are sermons that do not hit hard when it comes to sin, when it comes to living a sanctified life, when it comes to walking and talking with the Lord every day. Sermons that might have a difficult message and not be popular are left on the pastor's desk while sermons that are more "seeker sensitive" are used but this has an overall detrimental effect and will have to be abandoned if a church wants to thrive. I believe God's children in the next generation need more and deserve better. Making sense of and living faithfully in a rapidly changing cultural context requires enormous amounts of wisdom. We can find wisdom in the Bible, in creation, in the work of the Holy Spirit, in the practice and tradition of the church, and in our service to others (Kinnamen, 2011: 30).

Youth need to be included in every ministry of the church: the diakonia – the ministry, the koinonia – the fellowship, the didache – the teaching, the cybernesis – management & administration, the paraklesis – pastoral care, and of course the leitourgia – worship. If youth can become an integral part of everything that happens within the church community the church will experience an amazing energy that comes from being young and full of life (Dockery, 2001).

Postmodernity had a major effect upon community and culture in the 21st century. Culture is like glue that sticks a group of people (a community) together; it helps maintain belief systems, traditions, and the arts alive within a diverse and often overpowering society (Johnson, 2004). Subsequently it is critical to have a better understanding of culture, community, and postmodernism in order for the local church to use wisdom and discernment in reaching the next generation (Osmer, 2005; Barber, 2012). In the postmodern understanding interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretation of what our world means to us individually. Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will often be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal (Kellner, 2005). So where does this leave the Church, we are left being attacked because we claim Truth and are considered intolerant because we often attempt to convince others to believe in Jesus Christ (Dockery, 2001).

5.3 How Does the Christian Community Find Its Way Back to the Mission of God in the World, *Missio Dei*?

The early tenets of Christianity were quite simple: Jesus was God Incarnate in the form of a man (the Son of God). Salvation from hell and eternal life came through Christ's sacrifice upon the cross. Christ's sacrifice was the final sacrifice for eternity never again would a goat, sheep, etc. be needed to cleanse human sins. And a personal relationship with God was to be part of daily life for a believer (Hinson, 1991:109; Curtis, 2015: 2).

Hospitality was a building block at the core of the Christian fellowship taking place in New Testament home churches. Subsequently, the Apostle Paul and other church planting missionaries made tenacious efforts to convert entire households, making house churches central to the advance of Christianity (Doyle-Nelson, 2008: 11). Thus it is easy to see how house churches were expedient when used as a strategy for evangelism, and tended to be more personally encouraging to members as they journeyed through life together in community especially during times of cultural transition and / or intense persecution (Atkinson and Comiskey, 2014: 75-87). It was during the reign of Constantine that actual church buildings emerged with similar characteristics of synagogues (Hinson, 1991: 200).

The Modern Church has adopted a business model to attract parishioners and manage church affairs (Robertson, 2009: 22-34). This church model has created a wide division or chasm between the protestant churches of today and the First Century Church (Religion Facts: *Christian History,* 2015: 225; Gonzales, 1984: 20).

How do we return to the "missio dei" the Mission of God? If we look back at Boshe (1991) and Nel (2015) we see that God's work is universal, it is His desire to bring His Kingdom in the hearts of people. God's work is not limited by a worldview or a generation. The overwhelming motive for the mission of God is the love of God for His creation. That's the long and the short of it, God loves His people enough to send His only Son to the cross to die for our sins for all eternity; this is the miracle and the calling of the church. The 21st century church must renew its sense of "missio dei" in a more holistic, contextual, and complex manner because it must relate to a world that is increasingly defined by globalization, secularism, technology, urbanization, hyper-consumerism, postmodernism, and economic inequality. Why? Because God is and always has been holistic, contextual, and complex.

Culturally in the United States of America, we are facing the breakdown of the family and thus the loss of a sense of belonging. Emil Brunner (Wickeri, 2004: 187-191) once wrote "a church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." Thus, Brunner is saying that the church cannot exist if there is no mission because the Gospel's messge is central to mission and central to the church and cannot be dissected apart (Wickeri, 2004: 187-191). I think it is important to reiterate the traits of a missional and a

kingdom church because the two combined would create the radical changes needed to begin to reclaim their losses.

The Ten Missional Objectives of the Church include:

1. The missional church is committed to the authoritative, infallible, inerrant, inspired Scriptures.

2. The missional church understands the centrality of the Gospel expressed in all aspects of life – the missional church is not dependent upon programs or methods.

3. Gatherings are characterized by Christ-centered worship, preaching of the Gospel, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and Baptism.

4. A missional church understands they have been sent by God as missionaries in their own culture.

5. A missional church is boldly and intentionally promoting the Gospel through making disciples and church planting globally.

6. A missional church is dependent upon the Holy Spirit to empower and lead believers as agents for evangelizing and making disciples.

7. Missional churches utilize relationships and sacrificial love as expressions of love to others in their journey toward faith.

8. The goal of a missional church is to walk in community with others as Jesus pursues them in His own way and timing.

9. A missional church does not exist for itself; it is a hands-on training ground for Christians.

10. Godly, Biblically qualified elders are needed to lead a missional church. (Thomas, 2011: 7, Nel, 2011).

A Kingdom Church is not concerned only with growth but with every aspect of the human situation. A Kingdom Church's goal is to communicate the gospel to the present culture in order to see transformation within the lives of our community. A Kingdom Church is known for its centrifugal ministry. (Centrifugal force pushes away from itself). Thus, centrifugal ministry is focused out toward the community's needs; it considers culture and context, a community in need of the transforming power of God (Johnson, 2004: 473-495). Therefore, a church should not attempt to build the kingdom of God but rather joins God as GOD builds His Kingdom. This is crucial for the local church finding itself within post modernity trying to minister to churched emerging adults while maintaining a sense of tradition and wholeness.

Since the church exists for the sake of Jesus Christ the One who brought it into existence "then as a creation of God it is accountable to God" (Nel, 2015: 90). Thus "developing a missional church is essentially about guiding a congregation to exist in such a way that the Name of the only living God is glorified" (König, 1972:92-98).

Thus we need to take proactive steps as we remember the cautions given to us by Kinneman (2011) in *You Lost Me,* Dean (2010) in *Almost Christian* and Smith in *Soul Searching* that our children may be heading into a more "moral therapeutic deism" which is know to fail in adequately challenging our kids in discipleship. My findings are four pieces of a pie. The 1st piece is *Missio Dei* as central over programs in Christ Centered Congregations. The 2nd piece is Postmodernity – and the Missional /Kingdom Church Model as important strategic keys. The 3rd piece is Intergenerational Ministry /Mentoring where we use highly relational, right-brained giftings, wisdom over information, partner/train parents. And the 4th piece is incorporating Youth, i,e. *churched emerging adults* into every area of church life and ministry. If we take all four pieces then we can completely shift our paradigm from the current church paradigm to a "Cradle to Grave" paradigm. We can move away from programs into discipling and mentoring. And we champion the seven areas found to be crucial to meaningfully engage *churched emerging adults* while ending the continued decline and focusing upon the mission of God, *missio dei.*

5.4 Cradle to Grave Paradigm Graphically Displayed:

Missio Dei - the Mission of God in the World is God's love for us... it is enough but what are we offering our congregations a program or a relationship with Christ?

God's work is Universal

God's deepest desire is to bring His Kingdom to the people.

Diakonia - the ministry
Koinonia - the fellowship
Didache - the teaching
Cybernesis - adminstration
Paraklesis - Pastoral Care
Leitorgia- Worship
(Dockery, 2001)

Missio Dei over Programs
Christ -Centered Congregations

Youth in Every Area of Church Ministry

Postmodernity - The Missional and Kingdom Church Models are Important Keys

Intergenterational Ministry

Highly Relational

Use their Right- Brained Giftings

Wisdom over Information - hard hitting teaching leave the "theology light" sermons on your desk please.

Train Parents/ Family is key .

Postmodernity - Pastors must not under-estimate the serious effects of postmodernity on the church.

Missional Church Model - reclaims some important things:

Authoritative, Infallible, Inerrant, Inspired Scriptures.

Centrality of the Gospel with Christ-centered worship, Preach the Gospel, Lord's Supper, Baptism

Missionaries to their own culture while also bodly and intentionally church planting in all nations.

Depends on the Holy Spirit.

Relationships on the faith journey.

Realizes the church exists not for its own sake but it is a training ground for Christians.
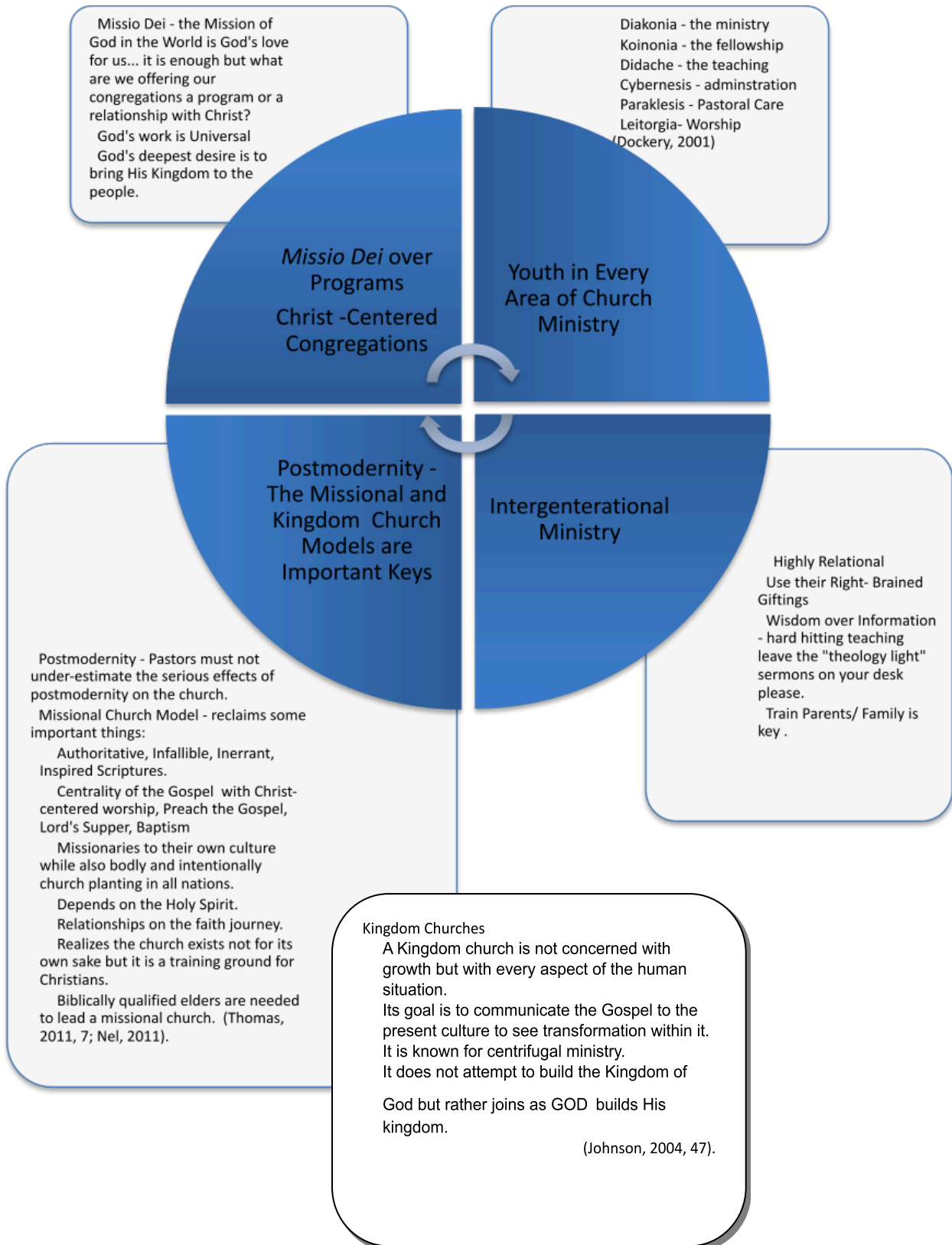
Biblically qualified elders are needed to lead a missional church. (Thomas, 2011, 7; Nel, 2011).

Kingdom Churches

A Kingdom church is not concerned with growth but with every aspect of the human situation.

Its goal is to communicate the Gospel to the present culture to see transformation within it.

It is known for centrifugal ministry.

It does not attempt to build the Kingdom of

God but rather joins as GOD builds His kingdom.

(Johnson, 2004, 47).

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Scope of the research, the church is a living, breathing organism that must take its cues from the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Cradle to Grave paradigm takes four different strands and weaves them into a tapestry of ministry, missiology, and the life of the church. I invite churches to do some soul searching asking the hard questions about their focus are they program centered or Christ-centered? Are they a ministry/ mentoring model or a business /corporate model? Do they place Scriptures at the heart of the sermon, or do they teach lightweight, feel good sermons to not step on toes? Are they investing in being intergenerational in all their ministries or do they divide up each life stage? I encourage pastors, elders, and parents to seek out the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to do the absolute best they can to love their children and teenagers in a fallen world.

Future work would include interviewing and surveying Generation Z. I am extremely concerned for the next generation as I now have a beautiful son who is turning 19 this year and as I watch his classmates around him and their apathy toward God I am concerned as they are turning away from God even faster than the generations before them. Is there any way to stop the tide of attrition and have them know the call of God upon their hearts and lives? Is there any way for them to know the amazing moment when the Holy Spirit changes your heart forever? I pray, yes is the answer to my questions.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A – Informed Consent Ethics Letter

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INFORMED CONSENT – Research Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria and its researchers, Megan Louise Beall and Dr. Malan Nel, from possible legal action upon the dissemination of research results. Researchers will uphold accordingly the code of ethics that respects the subjects' rights, facilitations communication and leaves opportunities for further research in the future.

Title of Study: Toward an Understanding of Churched Emerging Adults and Their Relationship with God and the Local Church.

Purpose of the Study: The eighteen and thirty-two age demographic, which has been identified by Jeffery Arnett as "churched emerging adults," are leaving the church in increasing numbers. What is less evident is an understanding of how congregations are or are not effectively and meaningfully engaging *churched emerging adults*, in the belief that such knowledge will provide key information to understand the relationship between *churched emerging adults* and the local church.

Procedure: Church leaders and members will be invited to complete a simple written e-mailed survey, which is then followed up with an interview.

Risks: there are no foreseeable risks,

Benefits: the benefits include giving church ministers and members the opportunity to express their thoughts regarding current membership trends, and what this means for the local church from their point of view.

Participant's Rights: all participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw from participation in the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality: the assurance that all the information is treated as confidential, and that anonymity is assured. The data will be destroyed should the subject withdraw from the study. And finally, that all persons who may have access to the research data must also be identified.

Right of Access to the Researcher: the subjects (persons involved) will have the right of access to the researcher via email at any time in order for clarity on any issue should a doubt arise. Therefore, every participant will have access to Megan Beall's email address: mlb.thesis@gmail.com.

Finally, all paperwork will include the signatures of the subjects, the researcher, the statistician, each University: The University of Pretoria and the University of Georgia or Mercer University, and each church; they will be filed and kept for 10 years.

Research Subject - Church Name: _____ .
Participant Name:
Researcher: _____ Rev. Megan Louise Beall, University of Pretoria S. Africa
Project Supervisor: _____ Dr. Malan Nel, the University of Pretoria S. Africa   .
Research Dates: _____ November 2017 through April 2023_____ .

Letter to the Churches

Dear Rev.

I am currently undertaking research through the University of Pretoria in the department of Practical Theology under the supervision of Professor Malan Nel, for the purpose of obtaining a Doctorate in Theology.

The problem that I am exploring is the following:

The eighteen and thirty-two age demographic, which has been identified by Jeffery Arnett as "churched emerging adults," are leaving the church in increasing numbers. What is less evident is an understanding of how congregations are or are not effectively and meaningfully engaging *churched emerging adults*, in the belief that such knowledge will provide key information to understand the relationship between *churched emerging adults* and the local church.

In order for me to complete my research, I surveyed and interviewed the Senior Ministry as well as the congregation's eighteen to thirty-two year old "churched emerging adults" and I have chosen your congregation because you are known in Atlanta for being a church dedicated to the discipleship and nurturing of this population. I am requesting your willingness to participate in the study.

I conducted the surveys and the interviews personally. I recorded the interviews on a device and transcribed them and will keep them in my possession for at least three years.

Please indicate whether you are willing to continue participating in my research by signing the attached document.

Sincerely,

Megan Louise Beall
404-520-0258
mlbthesis@gmail.com

Title of the Research Project:

<u>Churched Emerging Adults, Their Relationship with God and the Local Church</u>

I _____ hereby voluntarily grant my permission for participation in the project as explained to me by the researcher, Ms. Beall.

The nature, objective, possible safety and health implications have been explained to me and I understand them.

I understand my right to choose whether or not to participate in the project and that the results of the investigation will be used for the purposes of publication. Church name, history, vision, mission, and other information easily accessible online will be used along with the names of senior and founding / historical pastors but the information of all emerging adult participants will remain confidential.

Upon signature of this form, you will be provided with a copy.

Signed_____Date _____

Witness: _____Date_____

Researcher: _____Date _____

Appendix B– Questionnaires

Emerging Adult Member Questionnaires

Date_____

Questions: (Circle most appropriate answer. Leave it blank if you feel none applies)

<u>Personal Demographics:</u>

1. Do you understand that this is a Confidential Anonymous questionnaire?
2. Gender: Female   Male
3. Racial/ Ethnic Background:
   White   Native American   Black   Hispanic   Pacific Islander   Asian   Multi-Racial
4. Marital Status:
   Single   Committed Relationship   Married   Divorced/ Separated   Do You have
5. Denomination You are Affiliated with?
6. What is your highest level of formal education?
   - Less than high school graduate
   - High school graduate
   - Some college or vocational school
   - College degree
   - Post graduate work or degree
   - Doctoral degree
7. How many years have you lived in this area?
   - One Year or less
   - 2-4 years
   - 5-9 years
   - 10-19 years
   - 20 or more years
8. Were You Raised in Church? Yes or No
9. Is your family Christian? Yes or No
10. Did you attend Sunday School or Children's Church as a Child? Yes or No
11. Did you attend a Christian Camp? Yes or No
12. Did you attend a Christian Youth Group? Yes or No
13. Have you ever participated in a mission or evangelism type trip or conference? Yes or No
14. How many years have you been a Christian? 0-5 6-10 11-15   16-20   20-25   25+
15. Is this the church you grew up in or have you transferred to this church from another church?
    Church Grew Up In   or   Transferred as an Adult

Questions about Your Church Participation:

16. How long have you been a member of this local church?
    a. Not a Member
    b. One Year or Less
    c. 2-4 years
    d. 5-9 years
    e. 10-19 years
    f. 20 or more years

17. How long does it take you to travel from your home to your church
    a. 5 min or less
    b. 6-10 min
    c. 11-15 min
    d. 16-30 min
    e. 31-44 min
    f. 45 or more min

18. On average how many times have you attended worship during the past year?
    a. None
    b. About once or twice
    c. Once or twice every three months
    d. Once a month
    e. Two or three times a month
    f. Four times a month

19. How many church groups do you spend time with – includes Sunday School, Home Groups, Bible Studies, Evangelism Teams, Music Ministry, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, or other Ministries? None 1 2 3 4

20. Has your participation increased, decreased, or remained about the same in the last few years?
    Increased   Decreased   Remained the Same

21. If your participation has increased, which of the following are reasons for that?
    a. More time   b. New Responsibility in the Church   c. Relationships with Leaders
    b. d. Relationships with Peers e. New Outreach or Involvement

22. If your participation has decreased, which of the following are the reasons for that?
    a. Less Time b. Fewer Relationships with Leaders c. Fewer Relationships with Peers d. Lack of Diversity   e. Lack of Things to be Involved In d. Less Responsibility

Questions about Ministries: (1=Strong Disagree 4=Strong Agree)

23. Tasks of Your Church – Below are a number of tasks your church is likely to perform… please respond to each indicating how much emphasis the congregation places upon that ministry on a scale of 1 to 4 (one is not enough emphasis and five is too much emphasis)
    a. Worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition   1234
    b. Providing Worship that expresses the Gospel in Contemporary Language/ Forms   1234
    c. Provides Christian Education for Children and Youth   1234
    d. Provides Christian Education for Churched emerging adults   1234
    e. Provides Christian Education for Adults   1234

    f. Provides Spiritual Formation to deepen their spiritual relationship with God.   1234

    g. Sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched. Evangelism   1234

    h. Engaging in acts of charity and service to persons in the community.   1234

    i. Providing Pastoral Care and Counseling.   1234

    j. Providing Fellowship   1234

    k. Supporting Global and Local Missions   1234

    l. Expressing our denominational heritage.   1234

24. Overall which one does your church do best _____

The following questions ask about your church's virtual and social media presence/ platforms….

25. Does your church have a website? Yes or No
26. Does the church website contain accurate and up to date information? Yes or No
27. Does the church website help you access social media? Yes or No
28. Does your church use any of the following types of social media? circle all that apply
    Rate each on a scale of 1 to 4: 1 = not engaging or useful   4 = very engaging or useful

        Instagram   1234

        Snapchat   1234

        Twitter   1234

        Podcast   1234

        Live casting / Streaming Videos   1234

        Email Lists   1234

        Facebook   1234

29. How well does your church reach 18- to 32-year-olds?
        Not Well 1 2   3   4   Very Well

30. On a scale of 1 to 4 how much importance and energy does your congregation place on ministry to 18- to 32-year-olds? Not much importance or energy 1 2   3   4   a lot of importance and energy

31. On a scale of 1 to 4 are there specific ministries focusing on the 18 to 32 year old demographic full of life?
        Not Much Life 1 2   3   4 Lots of Life

32. How would you rate how your church deals with the following organizational issues?
        1 = Not Well   4 = Very Well

    a. Keeping people informed about various ministries and groups   1234

    b. Keeping people informed of community outreach   1234

    c. Giving people opportunities to make input decisions affecting the church 1234

    d. Dealing with disagreements and conflicts   1234

    e. Cultivating 18- to 32-year-old people for leadership positions   1234

    f. Encouraging 18- to 32-year-old members to identify ministry opportunities   1234

    g. Involving 18- to 32-year-old people in the church's ministries   1234

    h. Empowering 18- to 32-year-olds into leadership positions
        1234

33. Identify the priority you believe your congregation places on each of the following ministries:

1 = low priority   4 4= high priority

  a. Outreach and ministry to 18- to 32-year-olds in the community` 1234
  b. Evangelism in the local community 1234
  c. Training members to share their faith with friends 1234
  d. Encouraging 18- to 32-year-old members to participate in local and short-term ministries
      1234
  e. Networking with local non-profists, civic groups, or other churches within the same age demographic. 1234

34. Congregational Identity – all congregations have an identity a sense of who they are, that all members share in and yet any individual member stands somewhat apart from. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements from your perspective as an individual looking at your congregation's overall identity and vision. 1 = poor   4 = excellent

  a. Our church's identity as it is in one I feel comfortable with 1234
  b. It is easy for me to tell my friends what is unique about our church 1234
  c. I have a clear understanding of what our church stands for 1234
  d. An effective effort has been made to instruct me in our church's mission and vision 1234
  e. I have a clear understanding of the theology of our congregation 1234
  f. I have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation 1234
  g. Being at this church has made a difference in my spiritual life 1234
  h. Our church is intentionally inclusive in terms of all ages and generations 1234
  i. Our church intentionally engages people between the ages of 18 and 32 1234
  j. Our church intentionally looks to the future 1234

35. Please identify your satisfaction with the following aspects of your church?

    1 = not satisfied 4= very satisfied

  a. Music and Worship on Sunday 1234
  b. Music and Worship at other times 1234
  c. Christian Education and Bible Studies 1234
  d. Fellowship Opportunities 1234
  e. Intergenerational Mixing 1234
  f. Missions and Evangelism 1234
  g. Serving the Local Community 1234
  h. Meeting my Spiritual Needs 1234

36. Why were you ORIGINALLY ATTRACTED to this congregation select from the list below: you may select more than one

  a. The minister
  b. My friends
  c. The church's reputation
  d. Adult Education
  e. Child and Youth Programs
  f. The Music Program

      g.   The Social Outreach

      h.   Worship Style

      i.   Self Help Groups

      j.   The Denominational Ties

37. What KEEPS you as part of this congregation select from the list below:

    you may select more than one

      a.   The minister

      b.   My friends

      c.   The church's reputation

      d.   Adult Education

      e.   Child and Youth Programs

      f.   The Music Program

      g.   The Social Outreach

      h.   Worship Style

      i.   Self Help Groups

      j.   The Denominational Ties

      38.

39. How would you rate the following aspects of your personal spiritual life? 1 = poor 4 4= excellent

      a.   Prayer   1234

      b.   Worship   1234

      c.   Bible Study   1234

40. Is there anything you would like to share with the researcher about being an 18 to 32 year old emerging adult believer that would help them understand the needs of your age bracket?

41. Please enter the name of your Fellowship or Church.

Questionnaire for Pastors

Date_____

Name of Clergy Member_____

Name of Church _____

Address_____

Website _____

E-Mail _____

Contact Phone # _____

Questions:

<u>Church Demographics:</u>

1. What is the approximate population of your church congregation?

 • Less than 50   • 51-100   • 101-200   • 201-500   • 501-1000   • 1000+

2. Excluding the Summer Vacation Period about What Percentage of the church population attends at least one worship service per week?

1__ >20%   2 __20-30% 3_30-40% 4__40-50% 5___50-60% 6 __60 – 75% 7__ 75%+

<u>Questions about Ministries:</u>

3. Which of the following ministries does your church consistently engage in? Check all that apply.

• Taking the gospel to non-Christians through organized evangelism programs

• Some form of ministry to children, 0-5th grade

• Ministry to grades 6-8.

• Ministry to grades 9-12

• Ministry to 18-26 years old

- Ministry to 26-32 years old

- Young married 20-35 years old

 - Married 35 years old +

- Divorcees 25+ years old

- Women Groups

- Men's Groups

- Men and Women's Middle-aged Groups

- Men and Women 60+

4. About what percentage of your church congregation overall is engaged in the ministries checked above?
   __1 Less than 10%   2__ 10-20%   3 __20-30%   4__30-40% 5___40-50%
   6___50%+

5. It is easy to summarize for visitors and non-members how our congregation differs from other congregations in the area.

   Strong Disagree   1   2   3   4   Strong Agree

Questions about Church Life:

6. Below is a List of Words or Phrases that might be used to describe a church. On each line, please circle a single number from 1-4 (1 = Strong Disagree; 4 = Strong Agree)
   a. Traditional   1 2 3 4
   b. Contemporary   1 2 3 4
   c. Evangelistic   1 2 3 4
   d. Respected by Other Churches   1 2 3 4
   e. Compassionate   1 2 3 4
   f. Community Partner – Cares for People Outside the Church   1 2 3 4
   g. Growing   1 2 3 4
   h. Stagnate   1 2 3 4

7. How well does your church reach 18 to 32 year olds?

   not well   1   2   3   4   very well

8. On a scale of 1 to 4 how much importance and energy does the congregation place on ministry to 18 to 32 year olds?

   (1 = Not much importance or energy; 4 = a lot importance and energy) 1 2 3 4

9. On a scale of 1 to 4 are there specific ministries focusing on the 18 to 32 year old demographic full of life?
   Not Much Life 1 2   3   4 Lots of Life

10. Identify the priority you believe your congregation places on each of the following ministries: 1 = low priority   4 = high priority
    a. Outreach and ministry to 18 to 32 year olds in the community`
       1234
    b. Training members to share their faith with friends
       1234
    c. Encouraging 18 to 32 year old members to participate in local and short-term ministries
          1234
    d. Networking with local non-profits, civic groups, or other churches within the same 18 to 32 year old age demographic
          1234

SUMMARY

Unquestionably, it is perspicuous that previously "churched" people who fall in the eighteen to thirty-two age demographic, which is also identified by Arnett (1998) as *emerging adults*, are leaving the church in increasing numbers (Barna Group, 2011; Barber, Setran and Kiesling, 2013; Pew Research Group, 2008; Nel, 2015; Rainer, 2011; and Olson, 2008). What is less evident is an understanding of how congregations are or are not effectively and meaningfully engaging *churched emerging adults*, in the belief that such knowledge will provide key information to understand the relationship between *churched emerging adults* and the local church.

The research will potentially develop strategies to further engage eighteen- to thirty-two-year-olds; while proposing a praxis which strives to introduce and foster a personal, familial, and communal relationship to God. The research will specifically isolate the dormancy of the Christian Church in the United States of America, focusing on the characteristics that underlie the age fragmentation of the congregation particularly

Thus, we endeavor to bring about a clarification to the concept of a lived/ everyday theology, the *missio dei* "mission of God" for/through the church, and the praxis of believers (Bosch,1996; Johnson, 2004). The research isolates the life of the church and how it interconnects community and theology specifically with/for *churched emerging adults*. It is important to note that this is not about filling churches it is about the church fostering a relationship between members, specifically churched *emerging adults*, and God. What new knowledge will be brought to the table? Hypothetically, the research should discover how congregations are or are not effectively engaging churched *emerging adults*. We will then attempt to re-focus church to the centrality of Jesus not the centrality of programs.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What identifiable characteristics found in the local church meaningfully engage churched emerging adults?
2. What can the local church do about the continuing decline in its membership specifically in terms of eighteen to thirty-two year olds?
3. How does the Christian community find its way back to being Christ-centered and focused upon the mission of God in the world, *missio dei?*

In short, we found that when these seven key identifiable characteristics are missing churched emerging adults are known to go in search of them and this has led to the current and ongoing decline amongst *churched emerging adults* from most congregations.

1 Worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and Christian Tradition. Worship that is Holy Spirit inspired.
2 Solid teaching that can change or enhance a person's life from both the pulpit, throughout Sunday school, and all teaching.
3 Giving people the opportunity to have input regarding decisions that affect change in the church.

4   Opportunity for the expression of a person's Denominational Heritage. Churched emerging adults want to be connected to the greater sense of church, in other words, how do I connect to Church history?
5   The use of effective and up-to-date websites, email, and social media are paramount.
6   Personal sense of making a difference in the church and beyond.
7   Sanctification – the issue of holiness in the leadership

These seven areas are at the core the heart of the personhood of each churched emerging adult. They want to know that they are valued as a member of the congregation that their opinion matters yes but more importantly is the leadership thinking through the most important things: Worship, Teaching (i.e. Sunday School), Prayer, Leadership, Church Heritage/ Denomination, Outreach, Service, Sanctification, and are they up to date on their Communication. These are the things that matter to the churched emerging adults and without them they are leaving the church and finding them at a church that takes them into account. Thus, churches must strive to be *inclusive* and promote *missio dei,* the mission of God instead of the latest program or trying to put on the best "show."

KEY WORDS:
    Churched Emerging Adults
    Missio Dei
    Intergenerational
    Generation Y / Millennials
    Postmodernism
    Ethnographic
    Transitional
    Generation Z / Boomlets
    Parachurch Organizations
    Congregational Culture / Study
    Missional
    Kingdom Churches
    Youth Ministry Theory