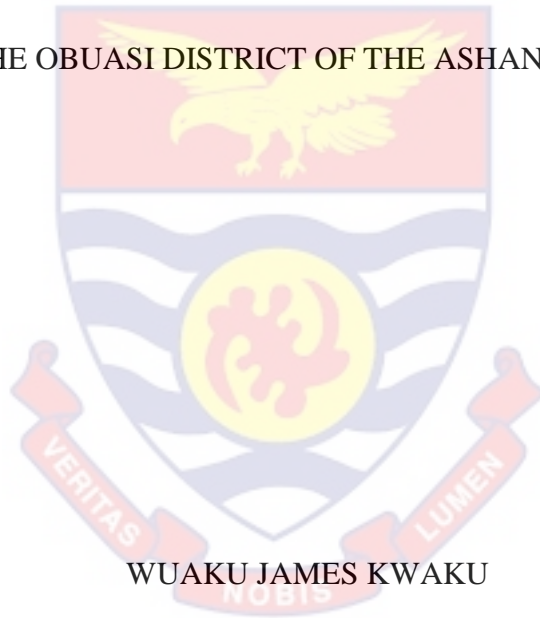


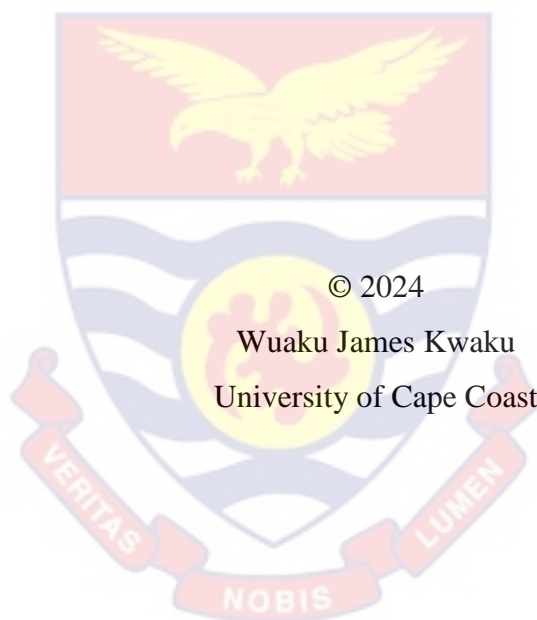
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE YOUTH LEAVING THE
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GHANA: A STUDY OF
THE OBUASI DISTRICT OF THE ASHANTI PRESBYTERY



WUAKU JAMES KWAKU

2024



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EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GHANA: A STUDY OF
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BY

WUAKU JAMES KWAKU

Thesis submitted to the Department of Religion and Human Values, Faculty of
Art of the College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast,
in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy
degree in Religion and Human Values.

DECEMBER, 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:.....

Name: Wuaku James Kwaku

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: Date:.....

Name: Iddrissu Adam Shaibu (PhD)

ABSTRACT

The goal of the study was to identify the causes of the drop in young membership in the Obuasi District of the Ashanti Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. Employing a mixed methods design, 25 youth members were recruited conveniently from E.P. church at Obuasi District for the quantitative data collection. Additionally, purposive sampling strategy was used to collect data from eighteen E.P church officials with interviews until data saturation. A questionnaire from self-structured instruments and semi-structured interview guide were used for data collections. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were employed for quantitative data analysis while Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used for qualitative data. The lack of employment prospects within the E.P. church (72%) and financial uncertainty of the youths (62%) were cited as the main reason for the drop in church youth participation. Hence, the study recommend that the E.P. church should create policies that address the demand for youth employment while concentrating on its primary mission of spreading the gospel.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Great things that God has accomplished, to His glory. In His time, He makes all things beautiful. I thank my supervisor Iddrissu A. Shaibu (PhD) for his encouragement, suggestions and direction for finishing this job and for taking time to read painstakingly the work thoroughly. I would like to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to my parents WO1(Rtd) & Mrs. G. K. Wuaku and all my siblings for their diverse support and care both spiritually and physically. Mr & Mrs. Adjetei Sowah for their financial support, Professor & Mrs Enyam Komla Morny for their advice and unflinching financial support, and Mr Bismark Asare for his time and devotion. I also want to thank the leadership and executives of the ten congregations in the Obuasi district of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana. Also to my wife Mrs. Vida Atiase – Wuaku, for her great support to me in diverse ways, and to my children John, Aseye and Elikem, for their love and understanding. Many thanks to my course mates and loved ones who lent me their support during very difficult moments. God bless and increase you all to His Glory.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated, first of all, to God for His mercies and loving kindness. I also dedicate the work to my lovely Parents WO1 (Rtd) and Mrs. Geoffrey K. Wuaku. To my wife Mrs. Vida Afua Atiase - Wuaku and to my children John, Aseye and Elikem, to all my siblings and extended family relations, who in diverse ways provided adequate morale support for me to complete this thesis.

Also, to my Dear supervisor, Iddrissu A. Shaibu (PhD), whose scholarly scrutiny, guidance and patience have refined me and brought me this far.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BC	Before Christ
EPCG	Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana
IRB	Institutional Review Board
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Youth population is the current and future success of every church and their decline in membership is a concern for church authorities. Younger generations are commonly referred to as "youth" in this context, which encompasses children, young people, and adolescents (Gichuki, 2018). "Youth is perceived as the stage of life where there is teeming energy from a person with great motivation to discovery and experimentation" (Gichuki). At this stage of their lives, young people experience many changes. The youth also hear many voices encouraging them to follow their hearts and achieve their goals in life, but if they aren't properly guided, they end up stuck following their peers' friends (Gichuki). Young adults frequently decide to defy society's high expectations for adolescents during this stage of transition from childhood to adulthood (Gichuki).

Modernisation, a gradual shift from antiquated to contemporary methods, keeps affecting the next generation as time passes. Modernisation is an endless process of socio-cultural advancement, claims Chaudhary (2013). In 2005, Parker stated that we are modern people with high expectations for ourselves and typically negative opinions of God, acknowledging that society as a whole is progressing. The new ideas, philosophies, and methods of living that the arts, modern science, fashion, and technology have brought forth have not left the Youth behind. There has been a decline in the percentage of youths visiting churches in the last few years, likely due to their disinterest in living Christian lives.

Adopted false views that place more emphasis on humanistic traditions and the earthly foundations than on Christ have been imposed onto young people by the contemporary perspective, which is centred on accepting new society norms and values (Colossians 2:8). Reductive naturalism governs their values, ethics, and way of life, limiting what can be known with certainty to what can be seen, heard, and scientifically investigated (Hull, 1990).

Packer (2005) asserts that we are contemporary people who prioritize our sense of self-worth and generally have a negative view of God. The secularism as well as administration of our day make it harder for the church to hold onto younger generations. The younger generation is open to trying out new concepts, concentrates on the now, and rarely thinks through the effects of their decisions. As a result of the new lifestyles, concepts, and worldviews that modernisation has produced in young people, they are increasingly searching for meaning outside of the church's traditional doctrines (Guest, 2007).

Numerous research including Kirk et al. (1999), Lamb (2016), and Jones (2015) have shown that the younger churchgoers are responsible for the decline in church attendance. According to Vitisia (2016), people between the ages of 15 and 35 have left the church. Jones (2020) claims that when young people are deprived of the opportunity to use their leadership skills, they leave the church. According to Rackley (2014), the youth are partly to be blamed for the church dropout rates. Keith Porteous Wood, who is cited in Sherwood (2016), claims that only 2% of "Church of England" members consistently attend church services, which is a much lower percentage than the church's

total membership. Keith even anticipated that the number may decrease more because the majority of churchgoers were older people.

A research published in 2014 by Christianity Today in America found that 70% of young people classified as evangelicals within the ages of 14 and 30 no longer regularly attend church (Habib, 2014). The young people either go to church every Sunday or not at all as a routine, according to research conducted in East Africa by Religion News Blog in 2004. Young people are eager for the big story to explain the world to them, as Habib notes, in contrast to postmodernists.

Even within the continent of Africa, different countries have diverse results according to experts. In a qualitative study on youth's dual "denomination," for instance, according to Okwuosa, Uroko, Mokwenye, Agbo, and Ekwueme (2020), a large proportion of Nigerian youth, whose population is growing at the seventh-fastest rate in the world, are members of many faiths. Vitisia (2016) found in a comparative study of two congregations in Nairobi, Kenya, that young adults between the ages of 15 and 35 no longer attend church.

Ghana and Chad scored highly for young adults' attachment to religious activities in a global assessment which was led by the Pew Research Centre (2018), demonstrating that out of thirty countries with gaps in religious affiliation, Ghana and Chad stand out in the global pattern principle. From a Ghanaian perspective, however, Boahene (2016) considers church dropout to be alarming, with nine major factors causing a reduction in Church membership. Pew's assertion that young Ghanaians are religious is refuted by two additional Ghanaian academics. Koduah (2018) and Quartey (2016)

employed several approaches to support the idea that the younger generation is mostly to be blamed for the fall in church attendance. On the other side, Quartey and Koduah claimed in their numerous papers that the decline in young people's church attendance was the result of a negative parental influence.

After learning that the E.P. Church lacked a youth movement, Scottish missionary Rev. Benton started forming young people into what he called the Young People's Guild, which was the name of the youth movement in the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast (currently Ghana). Later, in 1958, the E.P. Church was placed under the exclusive supervision of Rev. Ian Strachan, a young, dynamic pastor sent from the Scottish Mission. The synod of the E.P. Church renamed the youth program "Christian Youth Builders" (CYB) in 1959 (Youth report Synod, 2020). Christian Youth Builders group has experienced expansion in its youth membership since its existence. However, it is bedevilled with challenges in the youth church attendance since 2021, which demand research to probe into the possible cause of this shortfall and recommend policies and strategies that could be used to retain as well as win new members.

Statement of the Problem

Attending church regularly is thought to be an important indicator of spiritual health, and a church's growth can be determined by the quantity of its membership. The importance of church attendance and a church's capacity for a healthy church cannot be overstated (Ward, 2002). A church without young people lacks a future (Howe & Straus, 2000). Young Christians' involvement is therefore essential for the maintenance and growth of

Christianity (Howe & Straus). Research literature to date provides some evidence about youth membership decline in churches. For example, Kirk et al. (1999), Lamb (2016) and Jones (2015) have shown that the younger churchgoers are responsible for the decline in church attendance. Also, studies in Ghana (Boahene, 2016; Koduah, 2018; Quartey, 2016) found that the younger generation is mostly to be blamed for the fall in church attendance.

Research undertaken in Ghana and the globe has revealed evidence of causes contributing to a drop in young membership in churches. In studies carried out in Australia and other parts of the world that used quantitative research designs, for instance, the following factors were found to be accountable for a drop in young people church attendance: a lack of youth leadership, harsh criticism from members, poor youth activities, a lack of adult motivation, romantic relationships among the youth, part-time employment and student placement, school commitments and related assignments, marriage and family commitment, poor behaviour of some adults in the congregation, love proposals from some adults, an absence of young involvement in church administration, adult influence, peer pressure, and immigration, as well as a scarcity of funding for youth initiatives. The researches (Boahene, 2016; Koduah, 2018; Quartey, 2016) conducted in Ghana that used a quantitative research design revealed that the reduction in youth church attendance can be attributed to the following factors: an uninspiring youth ministry, inadequate visitation, unfulfilled promises, migration issues, the emergence of charismatic/ Pentecostal churches, parental influences, and non-involvement in church activities, among other factors. While earlier research conducted in

Ghana alongside other regions of the world has identified certain reasons that may be responsible for the reduction in youth membership in churches, the fact that the pace of decline is continuing to rise raises the possibility that there are additional factors at play.

On February 7th, 2004, the 520 young people that make up the Obuasi District of the E.P.C.G. were organised, with Rev. A.K. Mensah served as the district pastor and nine (9) congregations, under the supervision of the Synod Moderator Rev. Dr. Amegbletor. The proportion of young people in the Church has significantly decreased, according to statistics on the youth population, with a significant increase between 2004 and 2020, from 520 to 610. However there is a sharp decrease from 2021 to the present, from 610 to 355. This means that 255 teenagers have left the Church (Youth report Synod, 2020). The underlying assumption is that the decline in youth attendance has an effect on church expansion. The departure of young people from the church and the ensuing slowdown in membership growth will cause instability in the church's finances. Additionally, the evangelism team within the church will go. Future events will also cause more souls to perish and hinder the youth's ability to take over as leaders. Given this background, the study aimed to pinpoint probable reasons for the drop in young people and offer suggestions that may be implemented to retain current members while attracting new ones.

Also, as far as the researcher is aware, there are not many studies that have used both qualitative and quantitative design in Ghana to determine the factors responsible for the youth membership decline. Hence, there was a knowledge and research design gap, and the current study sought to employ

mixed method research design to investigate the causes of the youth membership reduction at the E. P. church and identify potential church interventions to halt this trend.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study specifically, sought to:

1. Identify the causal factors contributing to youth membership decline.
2. Examine the roles the church can play in curbing this development.
3. Recommend policies and strategies that could be used to retain as well as win new members.

Research Questions

The following are the questions that this research sought to answer and use as guidelines in the collection of data.

1. What are the causal factors contributing to the decline of the youth membership in the E. P. church?
2. What roles can the church play to curb this development?
3. What policies and strategies could be employed to retain, and to win new members?

Significance of the Study

This study highlighted the decrease in young people's church attendance, and as a result, suggested strategies to help reverse the trend, and to guide the leadership of the church to have a new world view held by the youth, and to be able to strategically establish profitability channels through the environmental forces in order to enhance the youths church attendance and help the church leaders to take some measures on policies they make towards the sustainability of the youth. In addition, it will help the members of the

church to uphold and transfer the leadership mantle to the next generation, and for the nation. According to Bonde et al. (2013), while many religions encourage moral decision-making, they do not always address the whole spectrum of moral options available to us; morality is defined by God's will, and the church will then be producing a generation of young people who fear God.

Delimitation

Contently, the study covered the factors responsible for a decline in youth membership, and the strategies and policies that could be used to retain old youth members as well as to win new members. The study's geographic scope was limited to the Obuasi District's E. P. Church. The E. P church in Obuasi District since 2021 has had its youth church membership declined drastically and alarmingly (610 to 355), which demanded research to uncover the factors responsible for the decline.

Limitation

There were difficulties encountered during the process, which could limit the study in various ways. It was assumed that some of the participants answering questionnaires or responding to interviews were not truthful and complete. This may affect the validity of the result. Additionally, it was challenging to contact the target group because Sunday was the easiest day to contact them. In addition, it was a bit difficult to interview church officials and the entire youth membership due to time constraints. Consequently, the research employed a survey to gather viewpoints from 30 participants, and interview guide questions from 18 respondents. As a result, the opinions

collected might not be an accurate reflection of those held by the E. P. Church in Obuasi as a whole.

Organisation of the Study

The present thesis is structured into five parts. The first chapter provides an overview of the study, including its history, problem statement, purpose, research questions, delimitation, limitations, organization, review of relevant literature, and research techniques. Chapter two gives a quick overview of the E. P. Church. An evaluation of the E.P. Church youth policy may be found in Chapter three. The outcome and conversation are presented in Chapter four. A summary, recommendation, and conclusion are included in Chapter five.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is devoted to a review of literature pertaining to the research area. Its aim is to enable the researcher to have a better understanding of the problem, identify where gaps exist in the research area and most importantly generate relevant methods such as the design of the research and questions to elicit responses from research participants (Creswell, 2014). This offers guidance on how to confine the scope to a necessary field of study for the researcher (Creswell). These themes guided the review of the literature:

1. Theoretical Framework
2. Conceptual Base of the Study
 - i. The Concept of the Youth
 - ii. Causal factors contributing to youth decline.
 - iii. Youth's church attendance strategy.
 - iv. The role the church can play in curbing this development.

- v. Policies and strategies that could be used to retain, and win new members.
- vi. Conceptual framework

Theoretical Framework

Value Based Leadership Theory

Fairholm's (1998) Value Based Leadership Theory serves as the foundation for this study. It focuses on and addresses the acts of leaders to establish an environment with clearly defined ideals for the practice of leadership and a distinct technology with predefined approaches (Fairholm). Because of God's omniscience, omnipotence, and limitless power governed by unfathomable insight (Packer, 2013), stewardship and value-based leadership that follows Jesus' model of leadership can address the problems contributing to the decline in youth attendance. Other than logical inconsistencies, God is not constrained by any human-made standards of what is right or evil. While working with the youth through this period of change, leaders can logically and biblically work with them to strategically profit from modernisation.

Young people are readily swayed by a diverse array of worldviews and precarious lifestyles, which affect their decision-making. Young people use popular culture as a mediator between the real world and the ideal, claims Religion and Youth (2013). However, religious ideas about deity, sin, and death are mostly absent from this day-to-day perspective. Miller (2007) found that young people frequently undergo faster changes. Dr. B. J. Casey of Cornell University's Weill Medical College found in 2008 that young people, when given the opportunity to think things through, make judgments and decisions very quickly and accurately. However, they frequently let outside

circumstances affect their decisions when they have to make snap decisions or in social settings.

According to Scholastic (2016), while it can occasionally be difficult for young people to resist peer pressure, particularly when things are stressful, it can also have a positive outcome. People have the power to persuade others to make good decisions just as much as they do bad ones. According to Anyabwile (2013), youth are a generation that has grown up immersed in the digital age. They are the first to have grown up with computers in the family, mobile phones as hand extensions, texting to the point of "texting thumb" injuries, and iPods perched on their heads. This generation's youth are drawn to lifestyles, locations, and celebrities that the church believes are detrimental for them. According to research by Nekesa (2015), technology is what defines, owns, and even manipulates youth in Kenya. They use technology to build social groups and have close relationships with one another, which shapes their identity and personalities. According to Costella (2016), young people are inundated with media that suggests defying leadership is cool; parents are ignorant, old "has-been" who are out of touch; and immoral behaviour, lust, and sex are permitted as long as one is morally upright and responsible. According to Howard (2012), young people today are in desperate need of grand narratives to assist them find meaning from everything around them, unlike postmodern individuals. They seek purpose. They are anxious, unsafe, jaded, and urgently looking for meaning, meaning for their very existence, to make sense of all the sorrow and anguish they see around them. They are eager for a genuine purpose. The above foundation contributes to the decline

of youth church attendance, which also serves as the basis for formulating policies for addressing the decline.

Conceptual Base of the Study

Introduction

This section discusses youth as a concept, their declining membership in church, reasons contributing to this reduction, and measures aimed at slowing down this drop.

The Concept of Youth

Youth is typically thought of as the time between childhood and adulthood. Even though there are no set age restrictions, anyone can be a youth if they so choose, most people still refer to the youth as teenagers. This is in line with Fletcher (2019), who asserts that youths are defined differently by various people. A common misconception is that "youth" is not so much a chronological age as it is a mental state. For instance, it is said of past US Attorney General Robert Kennedy, "This world demands the qualities of youth; not a specific period of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease." Nonetheless, a lot of governmental bodies, non-profits, and media sources characterise youth as a certain stage of life that has beginning and ending dates.

Youth can start as early as 8 years old or as late as 16 years old. Determining when youth ends is ambiguous; for some people, it does so at age 18, 21, or 25. By referring to this age group as adolescents, juveniles, or teenagers, legal and political institutions worldwide avoid having to face this issue. A person may be executed or cut off from their family under specific

conditions; in other cases, this is done to allow for a clear cut-off for when people can start voting or joining the military. In law, youth are typically defined by their ages to achieve political goals rather than for their actual welfare or the welfare of society as a whole. Anyone between the ages of 12 and 18 is considered a youth, according to the Free Child Project. Anyone younger than 11 years old is considered a child whenever the term is used. All individuals beneath the age of 18 are considered young people when the term is used. For the purposes of this paper and in taking into account the age range that predominates in this migration, the researcher shall take the definition of "youth" as anyone between the ages of 12 and 35. The national youth policy of The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana states that a youth is someone who is under the ages of twelve and thirty-five in the District predominantly are about three hundred in number.

The Church Declining Target Group

According to a number of studies (Kirk et al., 1999; Lamb, 2016; Jones, 2015), the decrease in membership in church groups can be attributed to the younger members of the congregation. According to Vitisia (2016), people who are between the ages of 15 and 35 have left the church. Young people quit the church, according to Jones (2020), when they aren't given the chance to exercise their leadership abilities. The youth contribute to church drop figures, according to Rackley (2014). Keith Porteous Wood asserts that the "Church of England" has a two percent church attendance rate, which is far lower than the church's membership (quoted in Sherwood 2016). Since the older demographic made up the majority of churchgoers, Keith even predicted that the number might decline further. Nel (2018) interprets the church's

predicament as the younger generation's ministry being deserted in papers authored by Nel and Moser (2019). They claimed that neither the church retains nor draws in young people today.

DeVries (2010) made the comment that a church is ineffective if it cannot maintain its young ministries at this point. Their failure is a result of using up all of their resources quickly to address every issue at the expense of youth ministries. Earls found that younger people, aged 18 to 22, had fallen out of touch with the church in a Lifeway Research conducted in 2019. What interferes with this link? The sparks that keep young people in the church, according to intellectuals, seem to be missing. For instance, Brailey and Parker (2020) and Jones (2020) contend that it has an impact on their trajectories if the "spiritual formation" that propels young growth does not take place with intentional mentoring. In a systemic and relational environment, the development of faith takes precedence over individuality or self-interest. To advance, the younger group must concentrate on developing their religion; else, they will stop going to church.

Only 26% of people born between 1977 and 1994 attend church, according to a study on "formerly unchurched" (non-member) to "churched" people conducted earlier in the millennial era by Rainer (2001). This is true across 37 states in the USA. Duin (2017) referenced Barna, an enthusiastic researcher, who claimed that over one million people leave the church each year, further confirming the reduction in church attendance in the USA. According to Tiffen and Gittens (2004), in Australia, interest in church activities was 47% in the 1990s, which was 5% less than that of sports. A different Australian survey, however, reveals that church attendance has

decreased recently (Kirk et al., 1999). According to 2015 NCLS research, 23% of Australians did not find any value in religion, while 36% of them could not declare their religious membership. Over 22.3% of people in 2011 declared they had "no religion." In Australian Catholic churches in 1996, 17.9% of people attended services. Although young adults (15-44) made up 12.2% of churchgoers in 2011, this percentage has decreased since then (Wilkinson, 2012). Rackley (2014) reported that 60% of the younger generation no longer attends church, while Earls (2019) ascribed 70% of the fall in youth church attendance to it.

The Causal Factors Contributing to Youth Decline in Context

In a global survey published in 2018, the Pew Research Centre stated that Ghana and Chad scored strongly for young adults' commitment to religious activities, showing that out of a total of thirty nations with gaps in religious affiliation, Ghana and Chad stand out in the global pattern principle. However, from a Ghanaian perspective, Boahene (2016) contends that church dropout is alarming, with nine major factors to blame for dwindling Church membership. They consist of (i) an uninspiring youth ministry, (ii) insufficient visitation, (iii) insufficient evangelization, (iv) migration issues, (v) the presence of Islamic and other organisations, (vi) a lack of follow-up, (vii) the emergence of charismatic/Pentecostal churches, (viii) excessive financial demand, and (ix) unfulfilled promises. A common conclusion of Boahene's study was that the reduction in church attendance was mostly due to a lack of attention being paid to the ministry of the younger generation. Pew's claim that Ghana's younger generations are religious is refuted by two other academics in the country.

The younger generation is mostly responsible for the drift in church attendance, according to Koduah (2018) and Quartey (2016), who both employed a variety of approaches to support their findings. Comparatively, Quartey and Koduah made the case in their respective works that the fall in young people's church attendance was due to a bad parental influence. The conclusions that experts present are varied, even in various African cultures. For instance, in the qualitative research on young people's double "denomination," Okwuosa et al. (2020), found that the majority of youngsters in Nigeria, the world's seventh-fastest-growing nation, belong to several denominations. In Nairobi and Kenya, Vitisia (2016) conducted a comparison study of two churches and found that young adults between the ages of 15 and 35 had stopped attending services. In contrast to Vitisia, and Okwuosa et al. claimed that the decline in youth membership was caused by their desire for fast riches, their search for positive messages, the absence of modernization in youth programs, an absence of leadership, contemporary technology, a lack of a strong sense of belonging, their parents' influence, and outdated youth ministry policies. The drop was attributed to parental influences in a different recent study by Jones (2020). Nevertheless, supporting earlier studies by Koduah (2018) and Quartey (2016). According to Comiskey (2007), Hull (2014), and Sonksen (2018), the lack of efficient discipleship is to blame for young people's low Church attendance in the United States.

Earls (2019) and Waters (2020) gave two recent studies that offered opposing hypotheses. The latter contends that difficulties in the church's leadership and liturgy prevent it from expanding. As drivers of low Church attendance, the former, however, identified nine fundamentally distinct causes.

They include (a) absence from church, (b) dismissive or hypocritical mentality, (c) relocation to college, (d) workload, (e) moving to outskirts of the church, (f) very occupied with other obligations and unable to attend service, (g) Church not associated with members, (h) diverse opinion of church's advocate on social and political matters, (i) dangling out with friends, and (j) joining others and going to church to please them (Earls, 2019). However, Chandler's (2021) quantitative study also supported Waters' claim that ineffective leadership and inferior worship do not draw young people to church.

Awuku-Gyampoh (2021) in Academia Letters presented sixteen factors of youth church decline in Australia. They include: an absence of youth leadership; members' harsh criticism; Poor youth activities; a lack of adult motivation; romantic relationships among the youth; part-time employment and student placement; school commitments and related assignments; marriage and family commitment; poor behaviours of some adults in the congregation; love proposals from some adults; insufficient participation of adolescents in church positions of authority; insufficient funding for youth initiatives; an adult's negative influence; peer pressure; and immigration issues. These youth decline variables, according to Awuku-Gyampoh, have been compiled over the course of his ministry in Sydney for six years. The subsequent discussions detail the major youth decline factors.

Schooling and the influence on church youth attendance decline

The church turnover issue has received a lot of attention during the past few decades. In a longitudinal research, O'Connor, Hoge, and Alexander (2002) interviewed 16-year-olds at first and then again when they were 38

years old. 79% of the individuals admitted that they had stopped attending church throughout their early adult years. By the time they turned 21, most of them (61%) had already done so. The study also revealed that over fifty percent of the respondents (58%) started attending church again in their mid-twenties and continued doing so until they were approximately thirty (O'Connor et al., 2002). By the time a student graduated from college, church attendance had decreased from 52% to 29%, according to UCLA research (Wright & Graves, 2007). Following four years of college, according to David Wheaton, 50% of students gave up on their faith (Wheaton, 2005). Even worse, according to a study by Barna, 33% of teenagers believe that the church will not have an impact on their lives once they depart home (Barna, 2001). Following four years of college, according to David Wheaton, 50% of students give up on their faith (Wheaton). Even worse, according to a study by Barna, 33% of teenagers believe that the church will not have an impact on their lives once they leave home (Barna). After graduating from high school, Millennials become less involved in their churches, according to Pew and Barna Research.

Unemployment and the influence on church youth attendance decline

According to Okwuosa et al. (2020), youth are struggling with their faith as a result of unemployment. The authors hypothesized that these difficulties encouraged the youth to switch churches. According to Clemmons (2002), employment insecurity is another reason why some young people choose not to participate in church activities. According to Okulicz-Kozaryn (2010), the church has a duty to care for these people because there is a significant rate of unemployment worldwide. The church should have the

ability to hire these youngsters, according to Nickell, Nunziata, and Ochel (2005), who also suggested that doing so would lessen this difficulty. The church is consequently put under financial strain. In reality, youngsters who should have been working are now reliant on the church, which they are meant to support. One of the sixteen reasons for the fall of young churches in Australia, according to Awuku- Gyampoh (2021), is a lack of church support for individuals.

Too much doctrines

The cause of the decline in young adults' commitment, including a reduction in church attendance, was attributed to their perception that the church is overly restrictive and fails to address real-life issues as well as involvement in church ministries, according to a survey done by Simmons (2015). Hale (1977) discovered further evidence to support the idea that people quit the church because they find its principles to be constructive and stifling.

Non-involvement of the youth in major decision making

Bradley (2018) also noted that the youth's disengagement from the modern church is a contributing factor to the proliferation of myths and misconceptions about God and the Church. Furthermore, according to Jones' research (2020), 36.67% of teenagers firmly believe the church's administration does not include them in making practical decisions. Only 23.33% of respondents (a total of 40%) thought they were sufficiently involved in church administration matters. Only 23.33% of people are satisfied with their level of involvement in church affairs, which highlights the wide gap in these findings. According to Agalo (2020), the absence of young people

from the Nyaburi District from church programming and decision-making processes affected their retention, with 40 (60.6%) and 16 (24.2%) of respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing, respectively. Furthermore, two respondents six (9.1%) and four (6.1%) strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, when asked if youth stay in the Nyaburi District was impacted by low involvement. In addition, Bradley, Deighton and Selby (2004) argued that it is important to hear from young people because adults' social standing restricts what they can claim to know about young people.

Lack of engagement of the youth in church activities

Due to the fact that they are frequently given unimportant duties like ushering, youth in most African churches have minimal involvement in church events (Karanu, Koome, & Gesimba, 2020). In his survey, Njoroge (2015) also discovered that the majority of youngsters (201 out of 258) held no leadership positions in the church, accounting for 77.9% of the group.

Old ways of conducting service

According to Vitisia (2016), inadequate church structure, a lack of modernized programming, and liturgical problems are major contributors to the decline in the youth membership. As problematic as contemporary interreligious conflicts, politics, fragility, and globalization are, respectively, the position of today's youth culture where they do not wish to participate in church services (Roebben, 2012). The researcher believes that problems affecting many aspects of society also appear to be affecting how well youth succeed in churches. However, because youth in any given society are the chosen successors as the next line of generational leaders and continuity,

concerns about youth in any given society will undoubtedly raise a red flag to any culture, community, organisation, as well as any religious institution.

The researcher believes that the rationale for the drop in membership may vary taking into consideration the environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic factors as well as depending on the level of education, but that Roebben's (2012) position on young people concerning, politics, susceptibility, and globalization cuts across many institutions that may be facing issues concerning the youth. However, Roebben did not state motives or activities that were making the youth want to leave. The researcher is of the opinion that, while Roebben raised concerns about youth not wanting to be a part of the church, which he claimed cuts across many institutions, that this may be the case, but the causes, intentions, or reasons may vary with regard to the traditions and methods of doing things. Even though there may be a reduction in youth enrolment at various institutions, the causes may vary.

McIntosh (2009) claims that churches in decline frequently lose sight of their goal and vision. The majority of leaders prioritize continuing the current mission. The pastor is content with his previous successes and is not in charge of the downturn. Pastors have lost focus if they lose their mission and vision. What caused their fundamental mission to be forgotten will be the question that will follow this development. Why did the focus stray? Are they interested in anything but their primary goal? Young people will go elsewhere for change in their life if leaders do not demonstrate any commitment to retaining and having an impact on them.

Once more, the majority of churches do not accept that they have issues; they believe everything is fine, and as a result, they are unable to

pinpoint the ideal time to begin reform (Burril, 2004). Therefore, membership in these churches may eventually decline. Being concerned about this scenario suggests that the ministers no longer prioritize the church's youth. Nevertheless, if this is how things turn out, mentoring won't take place in any shape or form.

Stetzer and Dodson (2007) claim that evangelical churches have similarly been shrinking or staying the same while the number of non-churchgoers has risen in recent years. They suggest that in order for the church to expand, it must realize that its membership is declining and be willing to embrace change. Without a doubt, there is a need for evaluation to determine whether the ministry is making progress, as the trend has changed and ministry now has to do with the number of followers worldwide. Without review, fresh and creative ways to any new developmental progress, particularly in terms of numbers when it comes to kids, cannot be developed (Stetzer & Dodson). The churches must continually assess their state and trends of growth (Stetzer & Dodson). The health of the congregations in connection to the surroundings and how the youth have encountered God again depends on this ongoing evaluation process. This action, in my opinion, affects every aspect of life that aspires to development and success in its related domains.

Churches' efforts at evangelism are uneven since there is no strong socio-political system or economic-cultural framework to support them. Evangelism contributes to the church's expansion (Enegho & Enwefah, 2004). The question is why the activity of evangelism is not taken into consideration and given priority in the church's annual budget when it is essential to the

expansion of the church and without which they would not be able to sustain themselves. The church should prioritize evangelism as one of its top priorities. Due to the fact that there are so many churches today with various evangelism strategies, the researcher believes that a church that does not put much effort into evangelism will gradually lose part of its members to those that do. The researcher questioned if the church-led evangelism was genuine or sheep-stealing. According to Engel and Norton (1975), the church's harvesting machinery lost its cutting blade, hence there is little to no harvest. Churches are not expanding despite the efforts of the pastors to evangelize because the approach they use is either inappropriate or spiritually guided. The old methods of evangelism are quickly becoming obsolete, so most churches have developed new methods of evangelism to attract more people to their congregations. The question is: Why are certain churches eager to recruit new members while other churches are lax? Has evangelism vanished or is it no longer of interest to the majority of churches?

The claim is backed up by authors who claim that regardless of location or faith, church attendance is declining for all groups (Michelle et al., 2013). According to the researcher, the trend of church youth decline is something that should be taken seriously in many societies around the world. It is not specifically related to any particular region or religion, but rather is a development that is observed in numerous churches and other organizations surrounding the world.

As every aspect is interconnected, the researcher wants to ask the following question in relation to Michelle et al.'s (2013) work: Before taking into account the drop in attendance, additional variables concerning church

growth should be considered. Some factors that may have a direct effect on attendance include evangelism, opinions on organising, establishing, and implementing goals and aims, cultural significance and transparency, Bible authority, strategy, and ecclesiastical stewardship. Instead of concentrating solely on attendance, it is important to take these aspects into account because they have a direct impact on it (Jensen, 2015). In order to do this, the influence of the programs designed for youth should frequently be very youth-oriented. In addition, there is a need to maximize the youth's attendance at these events so that they will frequently feel invited to church activities. Instead of focusing solely on the decline in youth attendance, Jensen contends that leaders should pay attention to the leadership-organized activities that are contributing to it. For example, if the leadership's programs aren't fully geared toward young people, there will undoubtedly be a tendency for it to happen. As a result, even as we consider potential decline factors, leaders should also be keeping an eye out for other potential causes.

Youth membership in churches is falling as a result of accusations between the younger generation and those in authority. The ministry's efforts can always seek to involve youth in worship sessions and related activities and to disseminate lessons that illustrate spirituality for development. To convince or draw in young people and keep them in their congregations, the Church needs to proactively improve based on values leading via mentoring and teaching rather than blaming modernism. Many contemporary churches have chosen to concentrate on fundamental teachings primarily aimed at succeeding in the modern world rather than abandoning such experiential aspects of religion. For instance, despite not being intrinsically wrong, many

churches tend to emphasize generic, uplifting, and pleasant statements about God's love that frequently lack theological nuance. As a result, most youths are no longer attracted to the churches.

The issue can be solved by publicizing stories that demonstrate how putting religious principles and ideals into practice has enabled people to overcome obstacles (Riddle, 2016). In addition, while the church has been able to adopt measures to raise the youth through mentorship and discipleship in order to draw in the young people, most churches have given up on such an approach and have shifted to teachings that are primarily focused on success. The question is whether the church would retain its moral authority and foundations if it adjusted its doctrines and teachings for youth in the direction of the modern world. In other words, young people will not recognize any distinction between their faith and that of the modern world, and they will not be able to deal with life's hardships and obstacles.

Furthermore, research by other academics has revealed that several churches with traditional methods and beliefs are lacking in more modern worship styles. According to Sherwood (2016), this may be hastening the exodus of young people from these congregations. Harriet's standing on this issue is actually a current phenomenon in Ghana's mainline churches. As an example, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana is very traditional in their methods, and the leaders and elders frequently prefer to uphold customs and traditions that seem a little outmoded or outdated. One such practice is the use of the Ewe language, where leaders will speak in it whenever possible.

The church has become more multicultural, therefore this evolution is no longer the norm in many churches. The church has spread throughout Ghana's length and width, but when you attend certain churches in the Ashanti regions, you'll see that they continue to sing and converse in Ewe without any kind of translation. In this case, the teenager can have trouble inviting a friend to church due to a language barrier or their inability to understand songs that are sung at church due to conservativeness. All the same, a Canadian survey conducted in 2016 by Sherwood, looking at the perspectives of congregations and priests, found that over two thirds of youth reject traditional ideas and favour contemporary prayer styles.

The question at hand is whether or not leaders will carry on doing things the same old manner and expect to produce relevant results in their job in this era of quick development and change. The youth desire charismatic, Pentecostal, or extremely energetic worship in their age and dispensation. Since they have watched their parents or other older relatives worship in such a manner for many years and feel like they need a different approach to worship, they would like to witness their church follow this pattern in worship in the same way other churches do. This will help them feel like they belong. Harriet, however, believes that if churches keep their conventional theologies and depart from their successors, it would be more effectively for church officials to upgrade their style of worship to meet the needs of the youth, without compromising their faith and doctrines, in order to attract younger members and keep the church, given that if leadership goes on to remain perform things in traditional ways, other churches will win them over as a result of their modern forms of worship.

When encouraging young people to become involved in spiritual matters, it is crucial to look at leadership styles and the church's current role in society (Guo et al., 2013). Doing so should increase youth participation and attendance at church services. In terms of youth ministry, the development and upkeep of the youth are greatly influenced by the leadership. The importance of leadership in the growth of kids must be thought through again and again; doing so will have a significant impact on young people.

Different worship styles and cultures exist throughout the world, which might point to a number of issues and challenges in the discipline of young people's ministries. It may be challenging to engage specific young people via ministry for young people because of things like linguistic differences, for example. In this sense, the emphasis ought to be on determining the primary intercultural factors influencing the ministry as a whole together with what this could imply in terms of forthcoming changes.

The involvement of everyone who is part of the communities of Christians or churches in ministries is another essential component in fostering youth connection. The question is whether church leadership will take into account the needs and desires of the youth or if they will simply put themselves first. On the youth issue, however, leaders will have to disagree about how the church will be governed by the present generation of youth while simultaneously making efforts to meet their needs.

Regardless of this, the freedom that every human being is given by the Bible to make a decision between what is right and wrong can present yet another obstacle to ensuring that the youth are completely and utterly

involved in the ministry, as they are free to participate in it or not. Due to the fact that they don't make suitable role models, the Christian community has, to some extent, been active in deterring young people (Willard, 2006). Willard's view of the youth in terms of what is appropriate and inappropriate in terms of their decisions raises questions about role modelling. If the church community has been actively working to discourage the young for not being examples to follow, how have the elders led exemplary lives that will appeal to the youth to be examples of virtue to them? Additionally, since leadership is supposedly demonstrated by example, if the young have not set a good example, we will say that the leader was not exemplary enough. Therefore, if the leaders are going to blame the young for setting a bad example, the researcher believes that they should take the first step and take responsibility for their actions. There may be a motivating factor that encourages the younger generation to imitate the leaders because they understand its value for the future.

Vitisia (2016) states that the ministry's goal is to draw in young people without compromising its adherence to biblical principles. Because of blame-shifting between the kids and the leadership, youth church attendance is on the decline. The ministry should constantly seek to impart lessons that show spirituality for development and involve youth in church services and activities. Instead than placing the blame on modernism, the Church must strategically strengthen mentorship and mentoring with a value-driven approach to draw or convince youth and retain these individuals in their churches.

Many contemporary churches have been chosen to concentrate on fundamental teachings primarily aimed at succeeding in the modern world rather than abandoning such experiential aspects of religion. For instance, despite not being intrinsically wrong, many churches tend to emphasize generic, uplifting, and pleasant statements about God's love that frequently lack theological nuance. As a consequence, many youths are no longer attracted to the churches. The issue can be solved by publicizing stories that demonstrate how putting religious principles and ideals into practice has helped people overcome a variety of challenges in life (Riddle, 2016).

Religious coping mechanisms for overcoming obstacles in life should be a major focus of youth ministry. In order for the experiences to inspire the Millennials to create better solutions to the challenges, it should also be permitted for them to discuss their triumphs and mistakes in using the strategies. They will ultimately find the activities to be quite interesting, which will encourage them to take part in church events. It is theoretically possible to base the creation of youth-focused initiatives that increase attendees of churches' interest and commitment on important traits shared by Millennials. The concentration on the spiritual components has been used in the previous paragraphs to offer strategies for modernizing youth programs in order to make them more relevant to the life of the young people (East, & Titus, 2010).

When Jesus told his disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," he gave the church the Great Commission. As a result, go and make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and instructing them to follow all that I

have told them to do. And I will undoubtedly be by your side throughout the entire age, according to Matthew 28:18–20.

The incident recorded in Matthew's chapter 28 is merely a single of many instances where Christ dispatched his followers to redeem others and teach them to follow his instructions. Ideally, it falls on all Christians, but especially Christian parents, to see to it that the young grow spiritually so they can come to accept Jesus as Lord as they get older. However, a distinction must be made between leadership that abides by the Bible's teachings and that which aspires to satisfy the desires of the world without certainly bringing about redemption for individuals. Technology, for instance, has a significant impact on the baby boomer age, so much so that church events should be designed to include technology in order to appeal to the younger crowd. The church's leadership must understand, though, that youth could potentially abuse technology. It's critical to offer young people in a congregation sound advice so they can stay away from the possible traps of technology in order to ensure that they grow up to be responsible and devoted future churchgoers (Wimberly et al., 2013). Technology offers benefits and drawbacks, but the researcher believes it is here to stay. As a result, leadership needs to develop creative strategies to teach young people how to use technology for worship while upholding biblical principles. The church will have no choice but to embrace the use of electronic devices at church once they are taught how to do so religiously. Because youths currently utilize devices at home and school, they will adhere to it once it is taught to them.

A church that incorporates technology into its development tactics has a strong likelihood of luring and keeping the adolescents involved in their

services and activities (DeVries, 2010). In the future, the researcher believes that the church will draw a lot more young people when it embraces technology. One of the most popular technologies right now is the use of technical tools. Churches may use technologies to take advantage of this trend and draw in and keep youths because a lot of them are intrigued in it.

These technologically adept youth may experience a radical change in their life at the hands of the church, making technology a key component of their outreach to the next generation. This will stop many churches from declining. But the question is, will young people not grow dependent on these electronic devices, abuse them, and become lazy when it comes to reading their Bibles and singing hymns? And if the device malfunctions, would the young person be left without a device until a replacement is obtained? Technology is beneficial, but in order to maintain the viability and purity of church principles, a comprehensive approach to it is required. The youth are open to how technological improvements improve several elements of life, such as social interaction and world comprehension. Thus, processes designed to grab their interest can yield greater outcomes if the information and technologies are integrated into varied activities (Rainer, 2014).

The youth ministry needs to have a solid technical infrastructure in order to facilitate contact along with knowledge sharing via digital platforms. The church needs to be careful not to embrace contemporary use of technology habits that go against biblical warnings against self-importance, like boasting along with self-aggrandizing behaviours (Philippians 2:3–4). Young people should also have the chance to use technology to minister to others or include the general public in important theological discussions. They

will do this while maintaining a strong affinity for the young ministry, making the church once again pertinent in their life.

Due to the shifting times and trends, the youth ministry as a whole is essentially experiencing a mixed response and challenges. Youth participation in the church is uncertain due to a number of circumstances, including leadership, technology, world demands, motherhood, youth spiritual commitment, role modelling, cultural norms, cultures, and others.

Inquiries into the causes of participants' lapses in church attendance were investigated in a number of qualitative interview-based studies carried out in the 1970s (Hartman 1976; Savage, 1976; United Presbyterian Committee, 1976; Hale, 1977). In this research, three main causes were identified. The most often mentioned cause for contention within the church was feelings of rejection by fellow churchgoers. More precisely, Savage came to the conclusion that people frequently leave the church because they are in pain, are struggling, are furious, and feel helpless in the face of situations that seem hopeless.

Hale (1977) devised categories to characterize the reasons people leave churches in his research of the "unchurched" or those who do not claim to be members. First, he defines the Anti-Institutionalists as individuals who disassociate themselves from the church because they believe it prioritizes itself over its members. The second group of persons who quit the church are those who feel "boxed in" and constrained by its ideas. The Burned-Out group feels exploited or used by the church, to put it simply. Contrarily, the Cop-Out group had never been particularly devoted to the church in the first place. The remaining two categories are those who are less concerned with

religion and more engaged in life's pleasures (the Happy Hedonists) and those who feel locked out of the church (the Locked-Out group) due to factors like social standing, income, or other demographics.

Waggoner (2006) found in his Lifeway Research survey that disillusionment with the pastor and/or congregational leadership was the reason that 59% of former churchgoers ceased attending services. Examining the members particular justifications for skipping worship activities in greater detail, Waggoner discovered the following:

- a. According to 19% of survey participants, they became too busy to go to church.
- b. According to 17% of survey respondents, taking care of family obligations has taken precedence.
- c. According to 17% of survey respondents, they relocated excessively far beyond the location of their chapel.
- d. Fifteen percent of survey participants stated that their work duties prevented them from attending church.
- e. One third of those surveyed said that something happening in their love life, like getting divorced, was the cause why they abandoned church.

The Youth's Church Attendance Strategy

Packer (2013) asserts that the affection of God serves as proof of his benevolence for particular sinful persons because he has sent his Son to be their saviour, identified himself with their wellbeing, and is now bringing them to become acquainted with him in a covenant relationship. Through the person of Jesus Christ, the youth must establish a strong relationship with

God. According to Peters and Waterman (1982), leaders cultivate an environment that is open to creative thinking and excellent service, as well as regard for all parties involved. They emphasize both skill and ideas in their work. Leadership based on value is unique, as stated by Fairholm (2000), in that it strongly emphasizes developing each follower's capacity to lead themselves. This model's technology and context both encourage followers to achieve results, and encouraging young people to have a close relationship with Jesus will increase their church attendance. Bradford and Cohen's definition of a leader from 1984 emphasizes shared accountability, ongoing staff development, and the creation of a shared vision. They believe that the role of the leader is to alter the fundamental group ideals in order to suit a social structure that is composed of numerous political connections.

Huizing (2011) argues that Christians can no longer simply rely on broad management theories to guide them toward a Jesus-like communication among leaders. Instead, they need to understand how their trust in God is to be articulated under the sovereignty of God, with Jesus as its centre, and be provided with the knowledge of the Spirit of truth through the Bible. As stated in the *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* (2006), theology, which seeks to explain God, is less important in leadership than the leader's personality and the relationships that result in an influence between followers and leaders Ayers, (2006). In as much as business operates as a means of following God instead of a destination in and of its own identity, the concept of sanctification is not compromised, according to Hill (2008), who rectifies the conflict between ethics and ideology. Love turns into permissiveness in the absence of holiness. In the name of unholy love, almost anything can be

justified. Unforgiving perfectionism results from holiness without love. The prospects for wealth creation in the fields of fashion, technology, and education can be maximized when Love and Holiness are joined.

Reduce too many levies on the youth

According to Bawa, Ayim, and Bastimi (2022), 5% of respondents said that the church had become overly commercialized and worldly. Some felt that the church received "too much offering."

Organise fora to listen to the suggestion of the youth

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity," 1 Timothy 4:12 advises. Every child has the right to express their opinions and have them regarded seriously, according to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989). According to Morrill et al. (2000), interacting with young people in environments where their everyday lives are created for them or developed for them is necessary for researchers.

Give roles to the youth in the church

Sumpter (2019) found that millennials are almost four (4) times greater inclined to stay involved in church activities if they feel personally engaged by church leadership.

Organise more outreach programmes

In order to increase and maintain attendance at churches, many Christian churches fail to actively engage in outreach ministry (Hunter, 2003). Kinneman and Lyons (2007) state that attempting to build close, personal relationships is one strategic move church leaders can take to attract people. To draw and keep church members, Watson and Stepteau-Watson

(2015) underlined that outreach ministries should be developed to reflect, enhance, and better the quality of life in the communities. Because of this, spreading the gospel to everyone in our communities is a good definition of outreach ministry (Ford, 2012). Additionally, it entails deliberately coming up with concepts and constructive ways to engage with the community, such as developing community outreach initiatives that offer health care assistance and wellness initiatives (Ford; Osinski, 2005; Watson & Stepteau-Watson). Church organisations should develop and conduct mission initiatives as a growth technique because it is important for Christians to build relationships with people in their own areas (Hunter; Osinski).

Involve youth in decision making

What unique strategies and initiatives have you discovered to be effective in drawing in young people? was the question posed to pastors in the Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) study. after which these answers were provided: 6.9% supported Scripture study and academic endeavours; 12.1% supported physical and recreational activities (such as social gatherings or picnics); 8.7% supported outreach and gospel-preaching activities; Higher awareness and acceptance of young people's lifestyles are needed (willingness to learn and motivation), according to 6.2% of respondents; 3.7% said vital teaching; 1% indicated not anything; 19.2% of the participants mentioned choral activities and musical activities; 13.2% mentioned increased involvement in chapel decisions and leaderships; 6.2% pushed for a Scripture learning and activities for learning. Church leaders can apply these helpful recommendations from Lincoln and Mamiya's study in worship services, or they can build on what is currently in place. These recommended initiatives and methods might give

church leaders the essential tools they require to boost participation and involvement among the underrepresented young adults.

Modernisation or technology and the impact on retention and growth of church youth attendance.

The youth in the church also play a part in the introduction and modernisation of creative methods for enhancing church worship. Youth in the twenty-first century are constantly investigating, and technology has become commonplace. In order to draw people to church and help them feel more at home, it is now the role of the young to come up with creative methods to make church worship and other activities contemporary. It was discovered that the retention and growth of youth church attendance were positively statistically correlated with the use of technology (modernisation) in service delivery (Jones, 2020).

Arthur and Rensleigh (2015) suggested using the web to establish a location where people of the faith could find materials like the pastor's thoughts, church-related activities, and every day devotion in order to inspire existing and future believers to get engaged with the community of faith. Wilson (2000) presented the idea that religious institutions should try to leverage technological improvements to help bring churches into the 21st century in Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009). Thus, connecting with people who want to grow spiritually can be facilitated by using the Internet as a communication medium said by Arthur and Rensleigh.

The GCSA's ability to draw in and keep young adults is positively and significantly impacted by the incorporation of technology in service. This assertion is backed up by quantitative data by Karanu, Koome, and Gesimba

(2020), who looked into how the church's technology use policies were impacted by things like musical instruments, projectors, videos, broadcast, and social media. To assess this issue, respondents were asked to judge the extent to which their church has embraced the use of modern technology. A majority of the respondents (57.1%) reported that their church uses modern technology extensively, followed by 28.6% who said they use it moderately and 14.3% who said they use it to a slightly lesser amount. These results indicate that the church has largely adopted the use of modern technology. The majority of the interviewees who provided information claiming their churches had invested in new technology to help their missions provided qualitative data to support this claim.

Leader 3 revealed that:

“We need to embrace new technology and we have seen the church has introduced new technologies such as WiFi, which has really shaped the youth. The church has also introduced digital cameras, which are run by youths” (Leader3, 2020).

Additionally, Leader 4 disclosed that:

“Technology has been well incorporated thus the youth ministry is impacted positively” (Leader4, 2020).

The likelihood that a church will draw and keep young people involved in its services and activities increases when it incorporates technology into its growth strategy (Campbell, 2021). The youth are open to how technological improvements improve several elements of life, such as social connection and world comprehension. As a result, if the knowledge and technology are included into different practices, methods aimed to catch

their attention may result in improved results (Rainer, 2014). The youngsters' ministries need to have a robust related-to-technology infrastructure in order to facilitate contact and knowledge sharing via digital platforms. The church needs to be careful not to imitate worldly technological practices that contradict biblical cautions against vanity, particularly arrogant along with self-aggrandizing behaviours (Philippians 2:3–4). The youngsters should also have the chance to minister to others or include the general public in important religious discussions through the use of technology. They will do this while maintaining a strong affinity for the young ministry, making the church once more relevant in their life.

Mentorship of youths.

Initiate a mentoring service for teens and younger adults prior to their college departure. Study indicates that 59% of Millennials who regularly attend church have a close contact with an older churchgoer, which can lead to the development of mentorship connections. Among the several mentorship programs that are offered are formal gatherings, among peers mentorship, inverse mentorship, team mentorship, and sponsorships. According to Meister and Willyerd (2010), organized mentoring activities in congregations are linked to greater numbers of millennial persistence.

Interactions with senior citizens can also help Millennials learn how to give back to their communities and make contributions to society. As an illustration, participating in community-oriented activities can help people comprehend their role in both the local and wider society as well as their place within the church (Barna Research Group, 2023). Additionally, mentoring benefits both generations since it fosters interaction between

generations by educating both the older cohorts and the younger cohorts (Hernandez, Poole, & Grys, 2018).

Mentorship ought to be the primary focus in the church if it is to continue to be a resilient one. Investment in young people is what mentoring is. Churches that don't mentor and support Millennials are probably going to struggle to draw in and keep this generation. The church must decide whether to invest in young people or risk losing them entirely (Hernandez et al., 2018).

This conclusion was consistent with those made in publications by Barna Group (2013) and Sumpter (2019), namely that churches ought to run mentorship programs for teenagers and young adults to help them navigate the challenges of daily life and teach them about God. Additionally, Barna and Sumpter discovered that Millennials who took part in a mentoring program had a twofold higher likelihood of sticking with their churches.

Meister and Willyerd (2010) found that 59 percent of Millennials that continued to be involved in churches kept in close contact with a veteran churchgoer, which could lead to mentoring relationships. That suggested that formal mentoring programs in place at churches are likely to have greater rates of retention among Millennials.

Black (2006) conducted a long-term study known as the Faith Journey of Young Adults (FJYA), which was cited by Kaiser (2015). Black conducted individual and group interviews with 1,362 young adults. Respondents were youngsters that had been active in the community but not connected to a local church. Finding out more about the variables influencing young adults' decisions to remain in or leave their churches was the aim of the study. The goal was to provide parents as well as leaders of churches with useful insight.

Two sections made up the study. A total of 1,362 people completed a quantitative survey in Part One. Small-group interviews with 270 participants were part of part two. Churches and campus ministries at colleges hosted the surveys. According to findings from both study components, young adults' sustained involvement in church activities can be attributed to relationships and mentoring. According to Black, which is mentioned on page 47 of the Kaiser report, there should be a greater focus on service during one's early 20s, at which time mentorship, connections, discipleship, and having students participate meaningfully should all be prioritized. Additionally, he exhilarated "young adult ministries to create accepting environments, provide legitimate and meaningful opportunities for involvement, and intergenerational opportunities for young adults to interact with older adults in a variety of settings" as indicated in Kaiser Study page 49.

In a poll of pastoral leaders from churches that have successfully reached out to young adults, 33% said that their success may be attributed to their openness and inclusivity toward one another and the culture at large (Fuller Youth Institute, 2014).

Restructure church worship

Worship is the first step in reforming young migrants because it helps them establish a spiritual connection with a supernatural person they can rely on, who they can turn to with all of their problems and goals so they may find comfort in their spirits. According to the Bible, it is impossible to please God without faith; therefore, anybody approaching him must have trust in his existence (Heb. 11:6). The youth are introduced to an invisible person through the act of worship, whom they can get to know and learn from.

According to Awuku-Gyampo (2021), a poor worship service may discourage young people from attending church. His research showed that contemporary liturgy appeals to young people because they feel at ease participating in the service. The in-depth interviews conducted in the quantitative phase contradicted the finding even if the quantitative results failed to back up it. According to Awuku-Gyampo, the younger generation is inspired and kept interested when worship is combined with more contemporary music, a good sound system, Christ-centred preaching, succinct announcements, and more interactive lessons.

Making the Youth lead church service

Nielson (2016) asserts that the youth must be actively involved in the church in order for this to be true. He went on to counsel the church to identify the young people in attendance to ensure they could be prepared for the churches of the future. Similarly, churches should be welcoming to youths in order to support their spiritual development, according to Ragira, Wepukhulu and Savala (2017). The church can more easily recognise the young as members when they feel welcomed and given the opportunity to serve with adults. The younger generations have much to offer their churches as young people, so it is their duty to infuse churches' programs with their fresh outlook and enthusiasm. Young people may display their faith via important roles, which helps them grow in their dedication to the church as their place of residence. The church must thus recognize the skills of young people and show that it cares for them by providing for their needs and giving them attentive attention.

Evangelism

Evangelism, in Ogunewu's words (2014: 67), is "the main reproductive mechanism of the church." This duty cannot be given to a select group of people. Because of this, every genuine church has a distinct section dedicated to mission and evangelism. In order to make an investment both physically and spiritually in outreach and evangelism, the church needs. Every church's true sense of purpose and identity are given by mission and evangelism.

According to Williams (2017), churches that choose to implement a culturally relevant and scripturally sound community evangelism plan are more likely to survive than those that choose not to. Lawson's (2021) interactions with pastors and other religious figures who exhibit these characteristics in their respective towns attest to the significance of this strategy for encouraging growth. Lawson discovered that preachers must use the gospel to address people's issues in order to remain pertinent. Pastors concurred, pointing out that in order to increase their membership, churches need to appeal to all demographics. In reality, an overwhelming number of study participants agreed that expanding churches actively seek out non-conformists to bring to church:

It is our responsibility to reach out and lead others to Jesus. Right now, there are some extremely wealthy and wealthy people who would not listen to me since they are in a different social circle. Some white individuals could be open to listening to me. All that's changed is the circle. Some people who identify as black will not listen to me. Therefore, when I say evangelizing, I mean proselytizing everywhere. Every member of Christ's body ought to evangelize. We can now go and win everyone over to Jesus.

Within the framework of this research, "youth ministry" designates a crucial assembly of self-professed Christians who, under the direction of a leader, come together to lay the groundwork for developing in young people Christian character, morals, values, and behaviours by enticing, inspiring, capturing, and igniting young individuals for Christ via the use of creative and innovative tactics (Heflin, 2010).

The general public faces new challenges on a daily basis as a result of political, social, cultural, and technical changes. Churches used to play a significant role in issues impacting their members' social circles. The congregation found the churches to be pertinent to their daily lives as a result. The socio-cultural issues that today's churches have decided to be selective about are those that have a big impact on young people's lives (Ward, 2013). In the past, churches have spoken out on matters that had a significant impact on youth and, to a large degree, society. However, in recent years, the church has gotten more selective in the topics on which they choose to speak. The researcher believes the writer of this article is correct in this regard. The church needs to be on top of everything so that they can have a beneficial influence on the youth, who make up a big majority in society.

The perceptions of adults and youth toward one another in the present day are yet another barrier to attracting youth to church. Based on a study conducted by a Scottish Presbyterian Church regarding the challenges faced by leaders when serving youth (Mwangi, 2015). In order for these views to be in the right direction for growth and development, the researcher believes that the perception aspect from each half the perception of the youth as opposed to that of the adult needs to be looked at anew.

There are now even more differences between younger generations and the elderly inside contemporary churches because of the differences with acceptable and unsuitable music in the church. These differences depend on the lyrics themselves, theology of the church, church growth, liturgiology, and theological subjects, in that order (Benson, 2015). These conclusions are corroborated by a study that shows that church attendance and participation have been declining since the 1960s and that technology demographics, socioeconomic, and cultural trends that have become unforeseeable and inconsistent in nature are the primary causes of this trend (Muzondiwa, 2012).

One of the potential factors could be the inability of parents to expose their kids to church-related subjects early on that could have enabled them to get acclimated to it. It may be challenging for parents to step in and ask their children to participate in church services as they become young adults since they have the flexibility to pick what they are interested in or not interested in (Chase, 2010). This leaves each individual to make their own options and choices. According to Harris (2013), *"Numerous ideologies, ranging from family leadership to personal religious experiences,"* hinder the present patterns of church development and participation.

The research showed that people tend to stay away from religious activities until after they settle down for marriage when they are still young, carefree, and exploring life. However, the author noted that the difficulty with these patterns is that these young individuals go back to their churches even though they may find the way of worshipping challenging since they are unfamiliar with the expected beliefs. This idea causes massive church emigration around the world, according to the author (Vaughn, 2016).

Youngsters also like using technology. This includes, among other things, gadgets like smartphones, PCs, and laptops. These devices provide them with the capability of accessing a vast array of internet-based materials, which also allow them to communicate with a variety of nearby and distant contacts. It provides them with a new way to forge bonds among themselves by promoting friendship among pals. But because this form of communication is characterized by hands, fingers, and eyes rather than face-to-face interactions, it has significantly changed not only how our young people interact with one another but also their expectations and personalities (Gianesin, 2009). The majority of youths' free time is spent gambling, playing games on their cell phones, or watching television (Russell & Cohn, 2012). Nowadays, both young children and teens own telephones. It is becoming harder for parents to spot the changes brought on by their kids' usage of technology when they watch over their day-to-day activities (Cowie, 2011).

It's possible that society does not hold itself to a high enough standard of moral behaviour, or that vice has grown more alluring. Even though every one of us sins in our own unique way, we are unable to avoid God's gaze since ultimately, condemnation is what awaits us. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," said Paul in Romans 3:23–24, "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." According to this statement, we today owe the responsibility to God to atone for the sins we have committed and abide by the laws since Messiah was sent to earth to bring about salvation and to atone for our iniquities. The ideal basis for this theology's provisions is the directive given by Jesus in Matthew 28:16–20,

which reads, Christ then gave his eleven followers instructions to proceed to a hilltop in Galilee. Some of them had their reservations, but shortly after they recognized Him for the first time, they worshiped. All power has been given to me in heavens and on earth, Jesus said as he approached them and spoke to them. Consequently, go and make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and instructing them to follow all of your commands. And look, I will always be by your side, even when I grow old. Christ the Messiah gave the Great Commission over as a warning to everyone who has put their faith in Him, not just a select few.

According to a review of the literature on methods for drawing individuals to churches, leaders are more likely to utilize an incarnational strategy than an attractional strategy (Powell, 2016). The classic attractional technique entails taking steps to entice nonbelievers to the church setting for proselytization, opposed to the incarnational approach, which has the church assist members as they fulfil their purpose in the greater community (Halter & Smay, 2010).

Nonetheless, in order to investigate why youths are not drawn to the church, the current study opts to talk about the tenets of attractional theology, namely developing spiritually, leading by means of interactions, missiology, and family duties, as covered in the ensuing subsections. The researcher's view that spiritual difficulties are the primary obstacle preventing youth from attending church is the basis for the choice of these theological foundations.

Love for another person should often result in an urge for others to be rescued if we value them in the same way we do ourselves. Based on this,

relational theological thought and young people's ministries connect. Nonetheless, this theological thought is based on willingness both from the pastors and from the people being reached with the gospel (Hryniuk, 2010). To spread the good news, for instance, one must be prepared to go out and find the remaining young people. The intended audience must be open to receiving ministry in a similar way. Today's biggest problem is that young people are so busy and distracted with material things that they are neglecting God's Word.

The Role the Church can play in the Reduction Decline of Youth Church Attendance.

In order to turn around a failing church, pastors and other church officials must understand they cannot carry on with ministry as normal. They need to act as though the church doesn't really exist and must start over (McIntosh, 2004). The McIntosh position's approach to ministry raises some concerns in my mind. Since society is ever-evolving, the researcher believes that ministry occasionally needs to adapt in order to stay current without compromising church doctrines. While they may change some aspects of the service or liturgy, the change must not contradict biblical principles and laws. The issue is whether the church would be governed solely by biblical principles or operate like a business. Will the Bible lose its relevance to the church if it is managed like a business?

The laity must be involved in activities related to church by the pastor. In order for pastors to be empowered, secular work needs to be separated from sacred labour and general work needs to be given to the laity (McIntosh, 2012). The pastor will have both advantages and disadvantages if

they solely engage in sacred activity and general labour for the laity. The first concern is if power will be transferred to the laity; if so, won't that lead to a future power struggle since a minister is responsible for overseeing the ministry? Despite the fact that the church stands to benefit, even though the motivations for aiding in church construction may be valid, the pros and cons must be carefully considered.

According to McIntosh (2012), many local churches start out with noble intentions but end up getting lost in the chaos. Early advantages running out of steam, the emergence of apathy and compromise habits, and the slow death of the church are all possible outcomes of this. He cites three arguments to support his conviction that struggling churches can be revitalized. First, he suggests that God intends for the church to expand (Matthew 16:18). Second, God expects His people to produce fruit and multiply (Acts 12:24), indicating that He does not desire churches to become static. Finally, he said that God is currently reviving churches. If people and churches are prepared to follow him and pay the price to ensure that it happens, God is in the habit of restoring, evaluating, and rejuvenating them (McIntosh). Pastors and church leaders need to work harder at enticing people to place their trust in the Lord and rediscover the church's mission. McIntosh (2009) emphasizes the requirement for reallocating available resources to crucial objectives. The church's budget can be streamlined to prevent unnecessary and wasteful spending by moving people to positions where they will be able to deliver more results. The congregation's trust must be upheld by the leaders. And revive a sense of purpose and direction for incoming members (McIntosh).

Malphurs (2007) recognized that many churches' pastors tending small churches lack motivation, particularly in light of big churches' continued expansion. They begin to go there in an effort to mimic their methods and replicate them in their own churches. They become upset after a while when they don't obtain the desired outcomes since they believed what had worked at the other church would also work on their own.

They fail to realize that because two churches are not located in the same location, what works in one may not work in the other. The skills and ability of the pastor who copied the strategy is different from the pastor whom the strategy is copied from. Secondly the needs and expertise of the congregation in which this new strategy is to be implemented are different from needs and expertise of this small congregation. Therefore, implementation might be different and yield different results. The recommendation is to create biblically based models that are appropriate for the area where the church is located, enhancing the pastor's leadership abilities and capabilities (Malphurs, 2007).

According to Stetzer and Dodson (2007), churches must follow the Bible. The local church must keep observing or honouring the Lord's Supper as Jesus commanded; it must accept the authority of the Bible just like the apostles did; it needs to have leaders who are firmly grounded in their faith; it needs to avoid a situation where singing takes precedence over preaching and teaching; it needs to be made up of the covenant community rather than a mix of believers and unbelievers; and it needs to have preachers in worship services.

Therefore, as Jesus Christ ordered the disciples, the church is obligated to keep evangelizing the entire world, providing for the needs of humanity, and many other things. The church in its position must be ready to serve both people within and outside of it. To reach their communities, churches must adapt, and denominations must support these efforts. Most churches operate like institutions, which causes them to place more emphasis on ministry forms and programs while neglecting the church's mission (Stetzer & Dodson, 2007). The church's leadership, which in this case includes both the priest and the laity leaders of the congregation, must be able to identify the issues because everything rises and falls with leadership. As a leader, Jesus Christ produced pastors and other leaders. The church must make an effort to follow suit; for expansion (Stetzer & Doodson), the church must train and involve people.

Growth in a church's membership should not be the only metric used to gauge its success; another important one is how successfully Christians fulfil their duty to give hope to the hopeless (Enegho, 2004). Only 2% of church members are church professionals, so 18% of the membership is required to help run the church and provide resources for the other 80% (Gibbs & Coffey, 2001). They are adamant that the approach taken must have a feeling of God's presence, be Christ-centred, and involve involvement in a relationship with God and others in order to effectively draw non-believers into God's presence for worship (Gibbs & Coffey).

According to theologian James K.A. Smith, Christian education must put a strong emphasis on the reformation of the heart if it is to foster the growth of faithful followers who yearn for and love God and his Kingdom

(Smith, 2009). Additionally, it's important to guard against the risk of only educating Christians in matters of the heart, as doing so could result in disciples who are too feeble to handle the secular world. During the charismatic revival in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s, Rob Warner describes how membership in the Evangelical Alliance and attendance at Spring Harvest conferences surged, but how this seeming infusion of spiritual fervour didn't continue (Warner, 2003).

He describes how the 1990s saw the end of the Evangelical boom and the failure of promises for renewal and restorationism. Rather than experiencing rapid development, charismatic and evangelical churches were beginning to exhibit signs of late decline, albeit more slowly than other areas of the Church. It takes more than enthusiasm and desire to develop steadfast and dependable disciples. Smith contends that Sunday liturgies are consequently insufficient. He contends that in order to produce disciples who adore Christ and long for His Kingdom, The need for education that emphasizes the growth of the heart and the head Our formation in Christ is more basically a matter of precognitive schooling of the heart than it is a matter of knowledge or belief because we are more essentially beings of affection and longing than of knowledge or beliefs (Smith, 2009).

According to Dallas Willard, he believes that what is really important is what is happening within the Church, in its members' spiritual lives. According to him, the majority of problems in contemporary religious organisations in the West are caused by the fact that many of the people they serve never officially confessed Jesus as Lord (Willard, 2006). This priority is a rising demand from pastors and researchers to church planters and

consultants. These faiths are not the only ones to come to this realisation (Warren, 2012).

South Wales urgently needs communities of followers of Jesus Christ who take seriously the call to live the way of the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as mentors who can teach others the basics of discipleship. This has the potential to change both people's lives and communities. Some Christians believe that if we can merely get people to pray the sinner's prayer, our job is done, but [the] words of Matthew's gospel cannot support this, according to Kandiah (2010), who writes about the significance of real discipleship. Like the ceremony for the wedding is a vital part of a marriage, but it can never be more than just a part, evangelism is an essential component of our mission but it is only a part. Jesus is not really concerned about whether we have prayed in the past. He is looking for commitment, mission, and allegiance. Being a Christian is about the life-changing influence of the Holy Spirit transforming us into individuals who are gaining the ability to obey all that Jesus commanded. This includes how we pray, how we treat people of different races, how we view ambition, being willing to endure suffering in the name of Christ, being willing to step outside of our comfort zone, being willing to have low social aspirations, being open to learning new things, and so much more (Kandiah).

This procedure also made sure that the artefact accurately reflected the Written Statement's conclusions. In terms of the potential for future research, one significant topic that emerged from this study is the necessity of learning how to alter communities. James D. Hunter argues that followers of Christ must be a "faithful presence" in secular culture; they must be able to endure

the "education" that secular rituals and practices provide as well as actively and compassionately share Christ with others who do not yet know Him.

Policies and Strategies that could be Used to Retain, and Win New Members.

According to Vargas-Hernandez, Noruzi and Irani (2011), the term "policies" refers to the concepts, guiding principles, standards, regulations, or legislation created to regulate the behaviour of people inside a given group, like a country or organization. Policies specify how a specific entity functions. The expectations for members' behaviour inside and outside the church are outlined in the policies that make up the framework. A structure for the congregation's behaviour, particularly the selection of leaders, is provided by the rules and regulations, the execution of various services, and the administration of church initiatives (Welch, 2011). Policies may be applicable to church operations as a whole or to particular topics like marriage, weddings, attire, money management, and staff management. Regulations can be classified as either informal or official depending on how they are conveyed. Unofficial policies are those that are merely discussed verbally. When it comes to choosing between different options under a specific set of circumstances, church rules serve as a guide for the administration of the church (Burger, 2004). They support the church's mission and vision and communicate its ideology. Welch contends that regulations aid the church in preserving stability and predictability by defining how it does activities and what is required of all its members.

Making regulations that are geared toward young people is one method of fostering such an atmosphere. Tshabalala and Patel (2010) found

that rules about worshiping and praising God had a major influence on children's assessments of how they feel spiritually at a Pentecostal organization in South Africa. The answers to this poll indicated a preference for laws that allow children and teenagers to participate in praise and worship.

Evangelism

Evangelism is the act of spreading any positive information about Jesus. Evangelism is not an initiative nor an organized ministry; rather, it is the practice of every disciple of Christ spreading the gospel about Christ by articulating what they believe. Every Christian is obligated to spread the gospel (Schrimpf, 2017). The lack of evangelism in rapidly expanding churches is related, in part, to evangelicals' inadequate comprehension of "the Great Commission." According to Matthew 28:19–20 as well as Mark 16:15–18, the Messiah made evangelism a lifelong goal for his disciples when he turned over the mission of converting the world to the Community of Christ (Pollock, 2015). Barna Research (2018) found that, despite the Great Commission being a vital activity in the Church, just 51% of evangelicals actually understand it, and up to 64% of "Bible-minded" evangelicals have forgotten what it means.

Broocks (2010) reports that a great number of emerging religious organizations want to distance themselves from evangelization because they believe it is no longer popular among Believers and that the evangelism models that are now in use are intrusive and deceptive. Some followers of Christianity feel it is rude or even improper to assertively share their convictions about God with another person of another denomination in an

attempt to win them over to their chosen faith, according to study results by Barna Research (2018), which backs up Broocks. “I was never going to convince anyone about becoming a Christian”, a church member said in a research cited by Lewis (2016). Additionally, another said “I wouldn't talk about my religion”. According to Lewis, existence is often a great deal of resistance in the West to talk about or practice evangelism, particularly in the more on a theological liberal wing of the Church. This resistance to knocking on neighbours’ doors to deliver the gospel serves as a barrier and seriously hinders the propagation of Gospel.

According to Moser, who cites Grenz (1998), this missional identity is the fundamental cornerstone of our global ministry. In order to further the spread of the gospel in service to God, one another, and the world, the evangelism ministry like other Church ministries must unite in a common purpose (Nel, 2015). Evangelism is at the core of our purpose; it is not something we do, but rather who we are, according to Armstrong (1979), who is also urging us to see this.

Churches with leadership that chooses to carry out a biblical, culturally appropriate community evangelism strategy have a higher chance of enduring than churches without such leadership (Williams-Henry, 2017). Churches can't just wait for people to show up in light of the society's growing secularism (Voas, 2016). As an alternative, churches could explicitly state their mission and work hard to both engage and recruit new members.

Strengthening the grassroots Children Service Ministry

Okolo and Chukwuemerie (2022) looked into the Anglican Church's reaction to her youth's decline. The research employed a phenomenological methodology, steering clear of causation theory (cause and effect). Sadly, they noted, several Anglican Church youth who visited the church as teenagers claimed that because they attended under parental compulsion and lacked a foundation of faith in God, God seemed to be absent from their time of church. They surmised that this might be because their parents and the church had not properly indoctrinated them at an earlier age.

Conceptual Framework

From the idea in the literature review, the conceptual framework self-organized. Predisposing factors to youth church attendance decline, and strategies as well as policies to increase youth church attendance are the independent variables. Church youth attendance (ie. Decline in church youth attendance or Maintain and increase church youth attendance) is the dependent variable. It's likely that predisposing factors will cause the drop in church youth attendance. Youth church attendance will rise as a result of the strategies and policies the church uses to attract and retain new members. Figure 1 below illustrates the conceptual structure for the research.

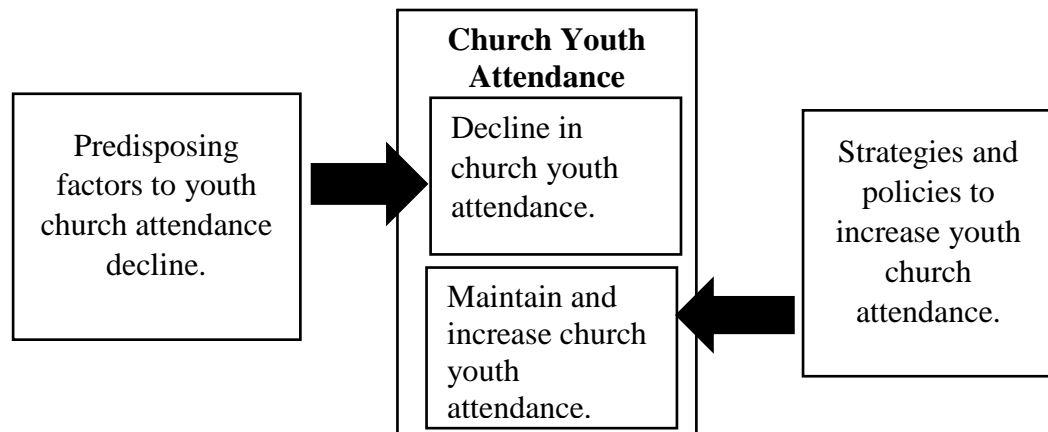


Figure 1: The Causes of the Decrease in Young People's Church Attendance as well as the Strategies and Policies Intended to Increase it.

Source: Researcher's Self-Structured

Older methods of leading church services, young people not participating in church activities, an excessive number of church doctrines, a lack of youth employment possibilities, and many other things were thought to be predisposing factors that contributed to church decline. Good policies and practices, on the other hand, were seen to be enabling elements that would enhance or maintain church attendance. Examples of these included modernizing church services, involving young in church programs, providing employment possibilities for youth inside the church, and so on.

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

Finding the causes of the youth population drop in the E. P. Church at Obuasi District was the aim of the research. This section discusses the method used in the conduct of this research. The research procedures and methodology used were presented under the following headings for discussion:

1. Research Design
2. Study Area
3. Population

4. Sampling Procedure
5. Data Collection Instruments.
6. Data Collection Procedures
7. Data Processing and Analysis
8. Summary

Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey format. Verbal descriptions of phenomena are used in descriptive research. It ascertains and documents the current state of affairs, so gathering data to verify theories or respond to inquiries about the study's subject's current condition is necessary (Osuala, 1982). This strategy will allow the researcher to investigate the reasons contributing to the fall in the young population by interviewing a sizable number of churchgoers at E. P. church.

A combination of approaches (mixed methods) was used in the investigation. The mixed methods study, according to Creswell (2014), is a research design incorporating both philosophical presumptions and methodologies of investigation. In a single research study or set of studies, the focus is on gathering, analysing, and combining quantitative and qualitative data. Its main argument is that combining quantitative and qualitative methods yields a greater grasp of study issues than either method by itself (Creswell).

In the researcher's view, the quantitative means of collecting data allowed for making meaningful generalisation with respect to the numerical relationships which existed in the data, and which reflected the attributes of the entire population. The quantitative technique described the numerical

relationships which existed in the data, while the qualitative techniques give the data of people's experiences as well as opinions.

Study Area

The study area was Obuasi District of the Ashanti Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana. The Obuasi District of the Ashanti Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana was established on the 7th February, 2004 with congregations namely Dzobokrom, Konkromanso, Kyeremebabi, Odumase, Achiasewa, Assin-Praso, Dunkwa-on-Offin and Assin Fosu. Currently, the total number of members is seven hundred and thirty six members. Many of the members come from the Volta and Oti Regions. As a result of work and community living they also developed an interest in the Akan language in addition to their mother tongue.

Some members who migrated to the Obuasi for greener pastures decided to form the newly established Ghanaian chapter of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The district has steadily grown and has a bright future for the upcoming youth. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, has fifteen presbyteries, fifty-two districts and about eight hundred congregations and counting but the researcher decided to conduct the research within the Ashanti Presbytery in the Obuasi district.

Population

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the population is the entire group of subjects who will be examined and from whom the sample will be taken. All the members including Pastors, Catechists, Presbyters and the youths in the E. P. church in Obuasi District constituted the population of the study. The E. P. church has 255 youth members who have stopped attending

church service between 2020 and 2023, which was considered as the accessible population for the quantitative analysis. The E. P. church also has 35 officials or elders, which was considered as the accessible population for the qualitative analysis. Consequently, the study used a total population of 290 for both the qualitative and the quantitative analysis.

Sampling Procedure

The most crucial stage of the research process is identifying the target audience and choosing a sample. The study conducted by Asiamah, Mensah, and Oteng-Abayie (2017) found that the sample's quality impacts the validity of the results and their applicability and generalizability to the whole demographic. Using the Kish (1965) method, the sample size for analysing quantitative data was established. The strategy is predicated on the sample frame's accessibility. Given the population being studied or the sampling frame is known, the Kish technique is the most accurate way to determine the sample size, as stated by Puopiel (2014).

The general formula used in this method is;

$$n = N / [1 + N (\alpha)^2]$$

Where:

n = sample size,

N = sampling frame and

α = margin of error or confidence level.

Given the population size [N] of 255 youth members who have stopped attending church service, the margin of error [α] of 5% (ie. $\alpha = 0.05$), and a 95% confidence interval, a sample size of 155 inactive youth members was used for the quantitative analysis. The inactive youth members were

considered because of their experience and knowledge of the causal factors to their decline in attending church service, and can best articulate these experiences in the study.

The youth members who have stopped attending church service were difficult to be located in the study area, hence the study employed snowball sampling technique. After persistent search and calls during the period of the data collection, 30 of these youth members were selected for the survey. The purpose of this number was to get responses that informed and define the general basis for the analysis of the problem identified. Additionally, the data collected was used as the foundation to finding solutions to the problem found in the District.

Moreover, all the church officials (35) from the nine branches of the E. P. Churches were conveniently selected for the qualitative analysis. However, upon reaching saturation point, 18 Church officials (Pastors, Catechists, and Presbyters) were interviewed, with the following breakdown: Four (4) from Obuasi, and two (2) each from Konkronmanso, Kyeremebabi, Odumase, Acheasowah, Dunkwa, Praso, and Dzobokrom. In each of the eight congregations, any church officials (2 or 3) that were present and consented were selected to interview. The variation in the sample was to get views from all the church officials of the E. P. Churches in the study area on the causes of the decline in the youth membership, and the policies and strategies to curb the development.

Data Collection Instruments

The research instruments used were questionnaires and interviews. An open and closed ended questionnaire was self-structured and administered to

the youth members who were inactive in the church. The primary sources for this research were the interview and the questionnaires, and the secondary sources were books, magazines and articles consulted in relation to the research work. The reason for the choice was that it is conclusive in nature as opposed to exploratory in respect to the research work.

The questionnaire contains both open and closed ended questions. The closed ended questions constitute section A of the questionnaire. It contains items that ask demographic characteristics of the participants. The open ended questions asks participants to provide their own responses. It is divided into four sections. In Section B, participants are asked to list specific circumstances that have led to the reduction in young people membership at E. P. Church. Section C also asks participants to provide strategies the church can use to win new members to the church. Section D asks participants to provide policies the church can use to maintain the youth population. Section E asks participants to provide recommendations for improving the youth church attendance.

Consequently, interviews were conducted among the respondents to help better define and measure the significance of the outcome of responses and give a vivid picture of the research outcome. The structured interview guide contains three items that explore the reason for the decline of the E. P. church youth attendance, policies to win more new members to the church, and strategies to maintain the church members.

Validity and Reliability

My supervisor ensured the face and content validity of the instrument. The process of doing a thematic analysis included member checking was

ensured. In this step, participants were given the chance to examine and validate the themes that were discovered via their individual interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

The study started in January 2022 and completed in August 2023. The data collection started after approval was sought from the administrative body of E. P. church in Obuasi District with the introductory letter received from the head of department (HOD). The data collection was done in Ewe language because fortunately all the respondents understood the language. It covered a period of one month, from 1st to 30th September, 2022. A Data Collection Assistant from the University of Cape Coast received one day of training to acquaint himself with the instrument's content, observe ethical protocols, and develop the ability to translate the instrument's content into the languages understood by the respondents (Twi and Ewe). Also, through this training, the research assistant had the opportunity to understand the objective of the study.

Regarding the administration of the instruments to the research participants, the study's purpose was communicated to the individuals who participated in a language they could understand. This was followed by seeking both verbal and written consent of the participants. Those who gave consent to participate and opt for self-administered questionnaires were offered the chance to do so. For those who could not read and write, the researcher and the assistant read and interpreted the questions to them. The research assistance then recorded the responses of the respondents accordingly. Between 25 and 30 minutes were allocated for each participant to complete a questionnaire, whereas between 30 and 50 minutes were allocated for each interview.

Ethical Consideration

A letter of introduction was obtained from the researcher's head of department, which was used to seek approval from the authorities of E. P. Church at Obuasi. Also, the privacy and confidentiality of participants were protected. Specifically, before the administration of the study instrument, a document stating the study objectives, anonymity, confidentiality, merits, and demerits of the study was explained to the respondents, and the respondents were made aware that the information provided was purely for academic work and that their identities would not be revealed to the public. Respondents were also informed about their right to opt out of the study at any given time if they so desired. Informed consent was sought from the respondents. Here, an informed consent form was given to respondents who could read and write in English to allow them to give their formal consent by signing. For those who could not read and write, when they chose to take part in the research, they were required to thumbprint on the consent form.

Data Processing and Analysis

According to Shamoo and Resnik (2002) various analytic procedures provide a way of drawing inductive inferences from data and distinguishing the signal (the phenomenon of interest) from the noise (statistical fluctuations) present in the data. Before starting an analysis, it is essential to organise the acquired data and place it in the proper order. The data were manually screened following collection. The analysis was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Windows Version 20.0 predictive analysis program. Also, each study question was analysed separately.

Descriptive statistics like percentages and frequency counts were used to analyse the three research questions. Second, the qualitative answers elicited by the open-ended questions were examined using the descriptive-narrative approach. The data were painstakingly transcribed, coded, and analysed before being narratively presented.

Conflict of Interest / Reflexibility

This section is about how the researcher checked conflict of interest and reflexibility in the data collection especially as a leader in the E. P. Church, Ghana, in the Obuasi District of the Ashanti Presbytery. Checking for conflicts of interest in data collection was crucial to maintaining professionalism, integrity and credibility of the study in the Obuasi District, especially in a sensitive setting like that of the researcher. Particularly as one of the leaders in the district under study, and to ensure transparency and minimize biases:

The researcher identified potential conflicts of interest to personal connections and relationships with members that could influence data collection with congregation members, which could affect objectivity, of which the researcher made statements in clear terms as to the impact of the result to leadership and others interested in that line of study to these members before the commencements of the study. In order to prevent financial incentives from influencing the act of gathering data, the researcher also made sure that none existed.

Funding was provided entirely by the investigator; it was not obtained from the congregations. Again, to put the researcher's professional biases to check, the researcher made sure the role and beliefs did not affect the

researcher's interpretation of data in order that the study would reflect the opinions and mind-set of the people.

The researcher was neutral in the data collection by using self-structured instruments and methods to ensure that data collection is impartial and consistent. This includes structured surveys or interviews with set questions. The researcher engaged his peers who are not connected to the church to peer review the work in order to provide an objective perspective on any potential biases and validity of the data collection.

Specifically, in checking for conflict of interest or flexibility in the data collection, in one of the interviews in Acheasowah one participant when asked about what can be done to improve church services, the participant was so emotional in her response. She began to lament why all these years, things had remained the same and no progress, especially with how she has faithfully given willingly and on times when she was approached during harvest and other fundraising events. I tapped her shoulders and drew her mind onto the purpose of the study. After a while she was able to touch on the issue on board. Also in Adansi-Odumase, there was an instance where the researcher asked one participant about, why the youth are not interested in church services, and he was trying to compare the state of art instruments in the other surrounding churches around and how their sound, sounds so good when they attend programmes and other occasions with them. At one point, it was becoming too much. So the researcher stepped in to bring him on board. The researcher paused the process for the next Sunday for it to be continued. Interestingly, when the researcher interviewed him again, he objectively touched on the issues raised.

Summary

In sum, the youth represents the present and the future of the church. In this bracket, there are the married and the singles. Those who are married and have children after playing their role well in the socialisation of their children by grounding them in the word of God so that they may not depart will ensure the chain continues. The singles who get grounded will also remain. These said have not been easy and not an easy task as other factors seem to antagonize the goals of the church. The youth have now become difficult to deal with amidst modernisation. Jesus himself mentored the twelve disciples by demonstrating what he wanted them to learn and become so the leadership of churches must shift their attention to.

The church can demonstrate what they want the youth to do. Most of the youth move from one church to another because they can't find fulfilment or they are influenced to. A deep depth of the word that is practically given to such youth would prevent the fore-mentioned. There are a lot of outdated doctrines that need to be reviewed, especially those that do not directly bear root from the word of God. The word of God is a truth that penetrates and gives direction. Mentoring is not merely a passing fad, but tools that the church can use to discipline and bring transformation to the youth hence enhancing youth attendance. The life of Jesus was an example to the disciples so when the church leaders choose to emulate Jesus as servants leading the youth through modernization and the challenges it brings, it will enhance church youth attendance. Change is the law of nature. For that matter, the E. P. Church, Ghana, has to renew its mind and join the train of change as the

light and salt of the world and biblically help the youth to balance modernisation as a resource.

The chapter further highlighted and discussed the relevant theories that underpin the study. Value Based Leadership Theory propounded by Fairholm (1998) underpinned the study. The chapter also reports the history and policies of the E. P. Church. It also discusses the idea of youth, the factors contributing to their declining attending church, the measures aimed at slowing down that drop, and the concept of declining church membership. The next chapter reports the research methods that were used for data collection, and analysis to arrive at the problem and recommendation thereof.

The study used descriptive mixed method research design. The population of the study included all of the pastors, catechists, presbyters, and youth members who were not actively involved in ministry in the Obuasi District. A total of 190 people made up of 35 church executives in the Obuasi District and 155 young members of the E. P. Church who are no longer active. Convenient sampling technique was used to select 18 officials in the E.P. Church. The snowball sampling technique was used to select 30 of the youth members of the Church who were inactive. My supervisor ensured the face and content validity of the instrument. The process of doing a thematic analysis included member checking. In this step, participants were given the chance to examine and validate the themes that were discovered via their individual interviews.

The data collection began after following all ethical guidelines. Following the collection of the surveys, the data were cleaned before being coded and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

version 20.0. The nature of the research questions posed for the study determined the sort of statistic that was used for the analyses. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPCG) is briefly discussed in the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GHANA (EPCG)

Introduction

An overview of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (henceforth referred to as EPCG) and its Obuasi region, the Christian Youth Builders (here in referred to as C.Y.B.) in the Obuasi District, the EPSU in the Obuasi District are provided in this chapter. Additionally, a brief history of Evangelical Presbyterian Students Union (here referred to as EPSU) Ghana, in the Obuasi District is discussed.

The History of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana

Following a directive from Kwadzo Dei Tutu Yao II, King of the Peki, by means of his son, Rev. Lorenz Wolf landed in Peki on November 14, 1847, along with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (henceforth referred to as EPCG) and the North German Missionary Society (Bremen Mission) began their missionary work. It was the day the Church was founded (EPCG). Lorenz Wolf passed away while traveling home in April of 1851 (E. P. Church, 1965, p. 171-182).

But Quinius assumed Wolf's responsibilities in January 1852. In 1853 and 1855, Daeuble and Plessing launched a new missionary endeavor from Keta. Arriving at Adaklu-Waya on January 26, 1856, Brutschin and Steinmann established a new Mission. Station. Anyako Station opened its doors in 1857. The Mission Station was built at Ho in 1859. At Ho, a Mission Seminary opened its doors in 1864. The missionary effort was hampered by the Asante War in Eweland in 1869. With the departure of every missionary,

the fledgling church was left as an "orphan." Peki native Mr. Yohanes Ababio became the first convert and was baptized at Keta on October 29, 1880. The first African minister, Rudolf Mallet, was ordained in 1882 (E. P. Church, 1965, p. 171–182).

Nkonya-Ntsumuru was introduced to Christianity in 1888 by Rev. Peter Hall, a Basel Missionary. A number of Basel Mission Stations, including Anfoega, Kpando, Alavanyo, Jasikan, and Worawora, were moved from the Basel Mission to the Bremen Mission in 1903 due to topographical reasons. As the inaugural Bremen Missionary, Rev. Herman Schosser established himself at Akpafu-Todzi in 1905.

The Church's British Zone hosted its inaugural Synod in Ho in September 1923. The Ewe Church officially began at this point. Two German missionaries and three African pastors made up the five-person Synod Committee that was established that same year (1923). They went by the following names: Schroeder, W.M. Beveridge, John Binder, R.S. Kwami, the synod clerk, and Rev. David Bensah. The Scottish Mission assumed responsibility for the Bremen Mission's missionary operations following World War I. In the management of the churches in the Ewe territory of the Gold Coast, Mr. Wilkie and Beveridge played a significant role (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

Once more, in British Mandated Togoland (now Ghana) between 1925 and 1926, were missionaries from the North German Missionary Society. Known as "Ewe" Presbyterian Church, it changed its name in 1926. British Togoland (Volta Region) and the Gold Coast granted permission for the Bremen Mission to function as a Society. Among the most outstanding

missionaries in Ewe country was Rev. Paul Wiegrabe. The Church's constitution, or "Hamedodo," was updated in 1933.

On May 12, 1940, Rev. T. K. Afenyo received his call to the ministry. The Ghana (Gold Coast) Army commissioned the Rev. G. K. Ampofo as a chaplain in 1942, making him the first E. P. Church, Reverend Minister to do so. On 11th October, 1945, Rev. R. S. Kwami, the first Synod Clerk, who worked from 1923-1945 died. In 1947, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church celebrated her 100 years of establishment at Peki (E.P. Church, 1980, p.171-182).

In 1959, the Christian Youth Builders (CYB) started to take shape when Rev. Ian Strachan and his spouse, Moyer, arrived from the Church of Scotland as youth workers. On 24th August 1969, the Rev. E. L. Nabicha, the first indigenous Reverend Minister from the Upper-Northern Presbytery was ordained into the Holy Ministry of the Lord. The E.P. Trades Training Centre at Alavanyo was established in 1978 by the Rev. V. M. Y. Dose, who assisted the then-youth worker Rev. I. D. K. Aflakpui, in order to give young people employable skills.

The first female chaplain in the Ghanaian military, Rev. Lt. Cynthia Kunitse, was enlisted on Friday, September 8, 2006. On 3rd December, 2006, E. P. Church, Adaklu-Waya celebrated her 150th Anniversary with great success. In 2007, E. P. Church, Anyako's 150th Anniversary was celebrated. On Sunday, February 17, 2008, the Very Rev. Dr. L. K. Buama gave the first E. P. University College its official opening. It currently operates two campuses: the Ho campus and the Green Hills Campus in Peki. Rev. S. A. Amoako was called to the bar on Monday, March 31, 2008, making him the

first Reverend Minister-Lawyer of the E. P. Church. The Church achieved another historic event on Saturday, August 23, 2008, when it shut a chapter on the Synodal Concept of Church Polity and began another one on the General Assembly concept. As a result, the Church Leadership is now referred to as "The Moderator of the General Assembly" and "The Clerk of the General Assembly". On Sunday, 11th January, 2009, the Rt. Rev. Francis Amenu and the Rev. Godwin Kwaku Osiakwa were inducted into office as the 1st Moderator and the 1st Clerk of the General Assembly respectively in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Dela) Chapel at Ho-Kpodzi (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

On Friday, 15th May, 2009, the Rev. Mrs. Bridget Eli Adzo Ben-Naimah was granted a Doctor of Ministry degree by the American institution Eden Theological Seminary, thus making her the first female Reverend Doctor of the E. P. Church. On Tuesday, 3rd November, 2009, the Church received a United Nations Award for her leading role in Climate Change. The Award was presented to the Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Francis Amenu, by His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki- Moon, the UN Secretary-General, who was assisted by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, at Windsor Castle, United Kingdom (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

In November 2009, the 150th Anniversary of the E. P. Church Ho-Kpodzi was successfully celebrated to the glory of God (E. P. Church, 2010, p.171-182). The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) elected its first general secretary in June 2010. The new general secretary was the Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, a minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the first African general secretary of WARC at the time. On Saturday, 21st

August, 2010, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, during her 2nd General Assembly held at Peki, promulgated the General Assembly Constitution. When the E. P. Church of America was formally inaugurated in Silver Spring, Maryland, in September 2011, representatives from Ghana and Togo made a working visit to the United States, Maryland, Illinois, Chicago, and New York City in New York (E.P. Church, 2012, p.171-182).

On Sunday, October 9, 2011, a spectacular celebration of the 150th anniversary of the E. P. Keta took place at the Bremen Mission Grounds. To God be the glory. The 175th Anniversary Celebration of the Norddeutsche Mission: The event was launched at Kpalime-Afegame, Togo, at the 21st Joint General Assembly (Synod) and the climax of the Celebration happened at the St. Stephaney Cathedral, Bremen, Germany on 9th April, 2011. The Celebration continued in August at the 3rd General Assembly in Ho, Ghana.

On Saturday, August, 2012, Presbyter Gershon Jonas Dzodzodzi was elected by the 3rd General Assembly of the EPCG at Dzodze in the Southern Presbytery as the Presbyter Executive of the Church on 12th October 2012 (E.P. Church, 2012, p.171-182). The first female Reverend Minister-Chaplain to be appointed to the Ghana Prisons Service is The Rev. Stella Katso with the title Rev. Assistant Superintendent of Prisons (ASP) Pr. Mrs. Lydia Aku Adajawah, in November 2012, the immediate-past Presbyter Executive of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church was named Acting President of the Africa Communion of Reformed Churches.

In May 2013, the E. P. Church, Ghana and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana co-hosted the week-long Executive Committee Meeting of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in Accra (E.P. Church, 2012). The 193rd

General Assembly of the Bremen Mission took place at Kpalime- Afegame, Togo from Friday, 31st May, to Sunday, 2nd June, and it was co-hosted by the EEPT and the EPCG. It was the first time the General Assembly of the Bremen Mission happened in Africa.

On 1st December, 2013, the Moderator, Rt. Rev. Francis Amenu, was officially inducted into office as the Chairman of the Christian Council of Ghana, at the E. P. Church, Dela Cathedral, Ho-Kpodzi (E.P. Church, 2012, p.171-182). On 23rd August, 2014, the Rev. Dr. Seth Senyo Agidi, was elected Moderator of the General Assembly to succeed the Rt. Rev. Francis Amenu who successfully ended his tenure of office. On Sunday, 24th August, 2014, at the 6th General Assembly, five (5) newly-created Presbyteries were presented, accepted and mandated by the 6th General Assembly to operate as full-fledged Presbyteries, making the number of Presbyteries in the EPCG 15 (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

The Obuasi District of the Ashanti Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana.

The Obuasi District of the Ashanti Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, was established on the 7th February, 2004, under the leadership of the Synod moderator Rev. Dr. Amebletor, with Rev. A. K. Mensah as the district pastor and with congregations namely Dzobokrom, Konkromanso, Kyeremebabi, Odumase, Achiasewa, Assin-Praso, Dunkwa-on-Offin and Assin Fosu. Currently, the total number of members is seven hundred and thirty six members. Many of the members came from the Volta and Oti Regions. As a result of work and community living, they also developed an interest in the Akan language in addition to their mother tongue.

For some because they used to worship in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church way back in their villages. Evangelical Presbyterians from Ghana established a church in their various settlements after settling in the Obuasi District. There, they worshiped God in their own tongue, the Ewe language. The district is steadily growing and it has a bright future for the upcoming youth (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

The Obuasi congregation

The Obuasi congregation which is the head station of the carved district was established on the 26th June, 1982 which was led by Mr. E. W. Adehenu and Mr. Cornelius Nuxoxo who were evangelists from Amakom in Kumasi. They contacted Togbe Aguduboli, the chief of the Ewe community, who summoned the Ewe community in Obuasi at Mr. Aheto's house and they conveyed the message they had received from the evangelists (Agbesi, 1982). The message was generally received with so much joy. The first church service was held entirely in the Ewe language at the St. Joseph Primary two classroom. Twenty-seven (27) souls were in attendance. The bible verse for the sermon was from Luke 9:1-6. The congregation was later inaugurated on the 21st November, 1982 by the Amakom district pastor, Rev. A.K. Bandua. He also conducted the first baptismal service that day, which saw a total of 35 souls being baptized, comprising thirty-three (33) children and two adults. Mr. Ben Korsi Kumakpui was the Catechist in charge (Agbesi).

The church acquired a plot of land at Kwabrafosso - Anyimadukrom, and built a chapel there between 1982 and 1886. The church numerical strength grew steadily. One challenge that the church faced was the 1991 Schism occurred, when a breakaway group, now Global Evangelical Church, forcibly

drove members out of the chapel following an uprising in the church nationwide. This was inspired mainly by the opposition to the church doctrine as well as the church constitution. The bible study and Prayer fellowship group started this revolt. Despite all these, the church remains resolute, strong and focussed on the task of the great commission (E. P. Church, Obuasi, 1982).

The Assin Praso congregation

The Assin Praso congregation was established on the 28th August, 1999 under the leadership of the District pastor Rev. Dr. E. D. Newell and Catechist G. K. Dzogbenu with 6 men and 13 women and 15 children, making a total of 34 members (Agbesi 1982; Dzogbenu, 1999). The congregation continually embarked on periodic house to house evangelism activities in the vicinity to increase the numbers in the congregation, because language was barrier to the congregation, shortly the messages as well as the general liturgy for service, was now interpreted in the Akan language in other to win the Akans who were interested to join us but had a challenge with the language. This development helped in the growth of the congregation both physically and spiritual. They have been able to start and finish its chapel to the Glory of God, and plan to start the pastor's manse soon. Some challenges now have to do with dwindling membership as a result of transfers of government workers who mostly are teachers, nurses and security personnel (Agbesi; Dzogbenu).

The Kyeremebabi congregation

The Kyeremebabi congregation was established on the 5th April, 1987 under the leadership of Rev. and Catechist Hayford Tornyoy with a total number of forty-one (41) members which comprised 9 men, 20 women and 12

children. With the zeal and enthusiasm with which the church began they immediately began with evangelism in the vicinity for new members to join the congregation (Tornyó, 1987). By the close of the year, upon consultation with the chiefs in the community they were given a plot of land for building a chapel, and through communal labour they were able to complete the chapel. Appeals were made towards the purchase of instruments to enhance worship service since it became a pressing concern from the majority of the congregants. The response for the appeal for the purchase for instruments was appreciable. The women, men and the youth fellowships were formed for more teaching and evangelism drive to the congregation. The congregation succeeded in gaining more members, as well as the formation of other groups, but other challenges were language barrier, transfers of government workers and relocation of pensioners' workers (Tornyó).

The Acheasewah congregation

This congregation was founded on the 9th February, 1997 under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. E. D. Newell, Catechist Michael. K. Kavi and Mr. Jacob Adzido. They were 12 in number, comprising 8 youths and 4 children (Kavi, 1997). The congregation was situated in a farming community, so they acquired an acre of land for cocoa plantation to equip the congregation financially. Catechist Michael Kavi and Jacob Adzido were very instrumental in the acquisition of the land. The chief and elders in the community gave the church a piece of land to build their chapel for worship services in the community. Leadership also was able to start the pastor's manse to accommodate the District minister. The engagement in evangelism to win more souls for Christ continues to be a priority for the members. The use of

the 'Ewe' language only during church services continues to be a challenge to the congregation (Kavi).

The Odumase Congregation

On 10th January, 1993, the Odumase congregation was founded under the leadership of Rev. I. K. Anka and Catechist Nelson Dokpo with 10 men, 14 women and 15 children, totalling 29 members (Dorkpo, 1993). They began worship in the Odumase basic school for seven years. In the year 2000, they purchased a piece of land to raise a building to be used as a place for worship but because of financial challenges they could not complete it on time, but currently, they worship in the uncompleted building. The Sunday school children do not have a place of worship so they join the adult population in the uncompleted chapel and they worship together. The evangelism committee continually keeps engaging in evangelism activities in the communities to win more souls. They succeeded in forming the men, women, youth and the children ministries to enhance the activities of the various ministries. Challenges that the church faced, has to do with language, lack of electricity, portable water and musical instruments (Dorkpo).

The Dzobokrom congregation

This congregation was established on the 4th May, 1973 with the help of E. P. Church from Adutor in the Volta region which is the hometown of the Catechist, together with Mr. S. K. Dzobo, Mr Famous Gati and Godfred Dzogbenu were the founding fathers of the church in Dzobokrom under the leadership of Rev. G. K. Avorkpo and Catechist Geoffrey Yaovi Adzido. It had 33 members, which comprised of 6 men, 11 women and 16 children (Adzido, 1973). They started worship services under a canopy in the

and gradually within a space of ten years they purchased and built a place for their worship services. This was a great success to the leadership and the entire membership. This led to a significant increase in the number of members to church attendance. Leadership also purchased instruments, and hymnals for the choir as well as an organ for the organist. Most of the members were cocoa farmers and traders and a few were public servants. One challenge was about language and transfers of public servants (Adzido).

The Konkronmanso congregation

The Konkronmanso congregation was founded on the 3rd June, 1984 under the leadership of Rev. S.Y. Avorkpo and Catechist Gideon Hateka in collaboration with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Oda Presbytery, which was led by Rev. K. K. Odzafi (Hateka, 1984). Membership was 68, which comprised 18 men, 33 women and 17 children. Because of their numbers, they formed a vibrant church choir, followed by the men, women and youth fellowships. One of the church's primary goals in winning new people was evangelism. Most of the members were cocoa farmers, traders and a few public servants. Some challenges faced are about the language barrier and currently, the chapel cannot accommodate the congregants during church services (Hateka).

The Dunkwa-on-Offin Congregation

The Dunkwa-on-Offin congregation was founded on the 15th October, 2000 under the Leadership of Rev. Dr. E. D. Newell and Catechist Charles Agyeman, with a membership of 26, which comprised 6 men, 11 women and 9 children. Leadership started worship services in a classroom for many years, they purchased a piece of land in the year 2016 and raised a

church building and moved in permanently in the year 2022 officially (Agyeman, 2000). Most of the members were public servants, the number of members keeps dwindling as a result of transfers of some church members as well pensioners who relocate to their hometowns. This trend makes the church unstable in memberships even though periodically some visitors come into our midst (Agyeman).

The Assin Fosu Congregation

The Assin Fosu congregation was founded on the 28th July, 1996 under the leadership of the Ashanti Synod Moderator Rev. Rtd. Major W.A.K. Agbenya and Catechist J.B. Agbolosu, Mr Francis Agbeli, Madam Beatrice Kuma and Ms. Esther Agbebli with a membership of 50 comprising 11 men, 25 women and 16 children (Doh, 1996). The earliest church services were held in the classrooms of the old site of the Foso Railway Basic School near the National Health Insurance. In the year 1999, the church purchased two plots of land and raised a church building for church services. In the year 2000, the church choir, the women bible class and the Christian youth builders were inaugurated. In the year 2020, the church raised a structure for the children service, Pastor and Catechist manse respectively. The leadership and members were able to start the building of the chapel but could not complete it due to financial challenges so they had to use the Sunday school building as they continued with the chapel building project gradually. Some achievements are the commencement of the church building, the manse and an ultramodern washroom. Some challenges are language barriers and transfers of government workers. However, because of the current developments in the area, most

members board two or three vehicles before they get to the church premises, as well as transfers and relocation of pensioners to their hometowns (Doh).

An overview of the Evangelical Presbyterian Students' Union (EPSU) in Ghana's history.

Introduction

When the church was founded in 1847, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church did not take youth work seriously. The church did not resolve to more seriously organize the young until the late 1950s. Prior to now, the majority of church youth participated in youth activities through the Young People's Guilds (YPG) of the Presbyterian church of Ghana, Pentecost Students and Associates (PENSA), and Ghana Methodist Students' Union (GAMSU). In certain educational institutions, particularly those of higher education, the young of the E.P. Church Ghana was being drawn to the active fellowships of other churches' unions (EPSU Annual Report, 2000).

The establishment of a youth organization in the E. P. Church was suggested by church policy. Rev. Ian Strachan, a young Scottish missionary, was appointed by synod, the E. P. Church's highest decision-making body, in 1957/1958 to launch an organized youth movement within the church. The youth group was called Christian Youth Builders (CYB), and up until the 1990s, it was the only one in the church. A seasoned church youth worker named Rev. J. K. Akoto suggested starting a new youth organization in the early 1970s, calling it "Good News Clubs" in the secondary schools (EPSU Annual Report, 2000). Following a number of deliberations, the Very Rev. N. K. Dzobo, the then-moderator of the E.P. Church, Ghana (EPSU, 2000), constituted a committee to assemble a proposal for restructuring the E. P.

Church's youth movement with the aim of revitalizing and providing respite to the only officially recognized youth movement at the time, the Christian Youth Builders (henceforth referred to as C.Y.B.). The Christian Youth Builders (CYB), the only youth group in existence at the time, was obviously under stress from a number of causes at the time. One of the most significant of these was the internal conflict that existed at the time in the Church, which it appears the Christian Youth Builders (CYB) were heavily involved in.

This conflict later damaged the CYB's reputation (EPSU, 2000). In order to stop the E.P. Church of Ghana members now known as the Global Evangelical Church from illegally seizing the church's property at the time, the majority of Christian Youth Builders (CYB) members stepped in the gap. Many members were withdrawing their children because they mistook this conduct for being strident and intense. The establishment of the EPSU (EPSU, 2000) was prompted by the need for an alternate course of action to reclaim the youth who were leaving. E.P. Church students attended more schools across the board as a result of Ghana's complete implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Education (FCUBE) policy. As a result, most kids were unable to attend church with their mothers.

This obligated the church to continue its evangelistic efforts in all of the nation's universities (EPSU). There were agitations for the creation of student unions in schools due to a number of factors, including the fact that not all young people were interested in the Christian Youth Builders (CYB) and that some students who had some fellowship with other church unions on campus could no longer wait for the slow bureaucratic pace of the committee formed by the then-moderator of the E. P. Church, Very Rev. N. K. Dzobo. The desire

of some young people at different educational levels to continue engaging with the church's doctrines that is, the E. P. Church was driving them to become increasingly desperate and ready to make the long-awaited split from these other unions in their various educational institutions. Rev. C. F. K. Kakotse, Mr. Bright Anipa, Mr. Mark Tutu, Mr. Oscar Amenuku, Mr. Dickson Tsey, Mr. Prince Agbelengor, and Ms. Joyce Amegatse were a few of the brave churchgoers that fought this war (EPSU, 2000).

The movement began to take shape and gain traction in some churches in the then-West Volta, Ho, and Central presbyteries between 1989 and 1990. More specifically, it involved student youths in the churches of Tema's Lorenz Wolf congregation, Mamprobi congregation, Bubuashi congregation, Accra-Newtown congregation, Ho (Dela Cathedral), Hohoe (Reverend Seegal) congregation, and numerous others. In 1991, the synod committee leaders nominated me, Rev. Carl Kakotse, to replace Rev. F. F. K. Abotchie, who had defected to the now-splinter E.P. Church of Ghana (now known as the Global Evangelical Church) as General Youth Secretary (EPSU, 1990).

During a meeting of the central youth committee early in 1992 in the conference room of the Kekeli hotel, members of the church's youth made a proposal that was presented by the youth secretary, Rev. Carl Kakotse. In the first, second, and third cycle institutions, the proposal called for the establishment of EPSU and the Brigade movement. The committee members from CYB took this very seriously because the action might potentially destroy both the front and the young movement that is already in place. However, the general youth secretary and presbytery coordinators were aware of the state of the students at the institution (EPSU, 1992). The General Youth

Secretary submitted the request for the formation of the EPSU and Brigade to the 51st Synod through the synod committee in August of that year (1992), during the Synod that was held in Hohoe.

During the 52nd Synod in 1993, the policy writing committee headed by Rev. R. E. K. Agoka presented its written report. Evangelical Presbyterian Students' Union (EPSU), Brigade, and Christian Youth Builders (CYB) would form a three-winged youth movement within the church, according to one of the committee's most important suggestions. That year, the synod committee was tasked with reviewing and taking additional action on the problem once it was brought up.

It is imperative to mention that, at the same time that the synod committee continued to downplay the report and had not yet released any action, the new youth movement was intensifying pressure on the General Youth Secretary to host a camp gathering. With God's help, this was the first time in the E. P. Church's history that her students had united as a national fellowship for a camp gathering. Held at Kpando Secondary School from December 26 to December 31, 1993, the camp was known as Camp '93. With the theme of "Bring Them In" (John 10:16), the inaugural camp meeting was a great success, indicating that EPSU was here to stay. A group of Accra-based Brigade Officers delivered talks to the assembled crowd of more than three hundred people about the brigade movement. Nineteen pastors from the Faith Presbyterian Church were present. Dr. Dzordzormenyo of the Ho Regional Hospital and Mrs. Rose Agbola of the Christian Council of Ghana gave a presentation, which was one of several informative talks that took place (EPSU, 1993).

During that time, the synod moderator, Very Rev. J. Y. Ledo, along with his spouse, graced the program. You may describe this first youth camp as the spark that ignited the EPSU spirit. The church formally approved of the new youth policy in August 1994 during the 53rd Synod, which was held at Hohoe E. P. Secondary School. According to the policy, "Children's Brigade, Students' Movement, and Junior and Senior Christian Youth Builders (C. Y. B.) in the Church shall constitute a general youth movement." Their age grouping of twelve to thirty-five (12-35) years will be organised in accordance with internationally recognized norms. The move to establish EPSU and the brigade was carried out right away following the endorsement. Inspired by the desire to see a strong youth wing, Rev. C. F. K. Kakotse believed that the established EPSU groups needed to be divided into zones in order to facilitate the EPSUs' ability to mobilize and to improve the simple and efficient distribution of information (EPSU, 1993).

In 1994, this concept was born. Irrespective of the local union's numerical strength at the time, the delineation was carried out based on proximity. After the West Volta Presbytery expanded to include Sunyani, Cape Coast, Takoradi, Koforidua, and Kumasi, it became known as the Accra-Tema zone, which is a more polished version of the West Volta zone. The students themselves then called a meeting and chose zonal executives in 1994. According to EPSU (1993), these sessions took place at two different locations: E. P. Church in Hohoe and E. P. Church in Accra-Newtown.

Aims

The group's purpose is to promote the following goals, which are expressed in our motto, Romans 12:18 (EPSU!!! at peace with all), rather than to establish rival groups within the church as some people believe.

1. To guard against luring students into other faiths and organizations.
2. To allow the church to continue having authority over pupils attending schools in the second and third cycles.
3. To fulfil the ecumenical mandate that youth be arranged according to age groupings in order to promote relationships between peer groups.
4. The church can implement young evangelism (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

Objectives

As explicitly stated in Article II, Clause 2 of the EPSU Constitutional document; “The objective of the union shall be to bring all Evangelical Presbyterian Students in the Secondary Schools, Colleges, Tertiary Institution and Churches together wherever they may be towards the development of the church and the enhancement of her influences among students in Ghana”. It is made very clear that the widely held belief that the union was founded exclusively to function in schools is false; instead, the union was designed to function in both churches and schools. Furthermore, the misconceptions regarding membership in EPSU should be corrected because it comprises both ordinary and honorary members (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

A Brief History of the Christian Youth Builders (CYB)

Introduction

“And Jesus grew in body and in wisdom gaining favour with God and men.” - Luke 2:52. From its founding in the middle of the 1950s, the Youth Movement in the Episcopal Church has grown and gained favour with both God and people. In 1958, it was renamed the Christian Youth Builders (C.Y.B.). And like the proverbial mustard seed, to God be praised, the group, which began with a small number of members, has grown throughout the nation inside the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana congregations (CYB, 2018).

The Beginning

In 1954 a Scottish missionary called Rev. Benton was sent to work with the E.P. Church. He was initially stationed at Amedzofe Teachers' Training College but was moved to Kpando. He realized there was no Youth Movement in the E.P. Church, so he started mobilizing young people whom he referred to as the Young People's Guild- the name given to the Youth Movement in the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast (now Ghana). His work was around Kpando and Pekiareas. Mr. Benton did not stay long, but left in 1956. The gathering of the E.P. Church Young people was taken over by Mr. Richard Yaw Banibensu who later became a catechist. The mobilization of the youth could not experience much growth as expected (CYB, 2018).

It used to be extremely uncommon for young people to attend church. Most roles in the church were the sole preserve of the elderly. It was mostly the elders who became chiefs, teachers and pastors in the Ghanaian society. Only few young people penetrated into these fields of leadership. The young

ones were not permitted to interfere in decision making processes of the church or society. It was deemed a sign of disrespect for any young person to attempt to contribute in a meeting of the elderly (CYB, 2018).

Their opinions were deemed premature and lacked substance. Youth at the time were compelled to be involved in church issues because of education. It was mandatory for all pupils of mission school to attend church every Sunday. Once they completed their levels of education, their interest in church activities declined due to lack of their involvement in church issues. In some instances, others left the church to join other churches or form new churches that permitted them to follow their convictions as far as worship was concerned even after they were confirmed into the church. It was at the backdrop of this development that the Synod requested assistance from the Scottish Mission. The purpose was to whip up the interest of the youth in church activities. Rev. Ian Strachan started his work from one congregation to another in the Avatime area. He spoke to church members about the need to start a youth movement in the E.P. Church. He worked through the Headquarters and teachers of Elementary Schools to mobilise the youth in the schools of the E.P. Church, Ghana. The pupils of the schools therefore became the main target of Rev. Ian Strachan's activities. Through his organisation skills, youth movements were formed in many of the church schools in the Avatime area. In 1959, Synod accepted the name "Christian Youth Builders" (CYB) as the name for the Youth Movement of the E.P. Church. In 1959, Rev. Ian Strachan organised the first CYB Leadership Course at Mawuli School, Ho (CYB, 2018).

Purpose of Christian Youth Builders (C.Y.B)

The foundation text of CYB is Luke 2:52- “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men”. Christian Youth Builders was formed to train youths to grow in the fear of God. The organization also hopes to provide the young people a sense of community inside the Church so that they can support the growth of the Church.

Aims and Objectives of Christian Youth Builders

1. Help members accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives and to develop a personal relationship with God.
4. Help members learn to work effectively with other persons to promote social life in the group and the congregation.
5. Help members understand the Bible as the book through which God reveals Himself to men so that they may live a life of fellowship with Him in obedience to His will.
6. Help member groups to become more effective, so that their moral and spiritual influences in the community shall change institutions that degrade and destroy human personality.
7. Help members to develop a sense of Christian vocation, to become rightful witnesses to Christ in their daily work and in their civic responsibilities.
8. Help members become dedicated church men and women and understand the belief of the Christian church and to be able to defend their faith.
9. Build the Christian faith of members and other youths in the church.

10. Inculcate in members the spirit of evangelism and Presbyterianism (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

The Christian Youth Builders in Obuasi District

The Christian Youth Builders in the Obuasi district was inaugurated in 1982, under the leadership of Rev. Anka. Currently, the membership stands at One hundred and five (105). The youth in the district are members of the Christian youth builders, main aim is to evangelize the youth and to bring up the youth in the fear of the lord, as well as to inculcate in them fellowship with one another. Majority of the youth are students who fall within the groups of 12 to 35 years (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

The activities of the youth builders are sweeping and cleaning of the church premises, ushering on Sundays and other church programmes, reading of bible, liturgy, preaching, and evangelism. They attend presbytery and national programmes on behalf of the district. Some of the members have become pastors, catechists, choristers and executives in the district. One of the challenges with the youth builders is that when the CYB organise for programmes, they sponsor themselves without any help from the church (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

The leadership of the Christian Youth Builders has scheduled to go on evangelism at Konkromanso, Kyeremebabi and Assin Praso respectively, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, that programme is on hold for now. Currently, they plan to help the Dunkwa-on-Offin congregations. The Christian Youth Builders are doing their best to keep the youth abreast with the doctrines of Presbyterianism wherever they go (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

The Evangelical Presbyterian Students' Union (EPSU) in the Obuasi District.

In the Obuasi District, the Evangelical Presbyterian Students' Union (EPSU) was founded in 1997, under the leadership of Rev. E. D. Newell. The purpose of this union was to help propagate the good news to the youth and to maintain them in the church. They fall within the ages of 15 to 35 years. The aim was to maintain the youth in the church and the target group was students, apprentices and those who are in vocational training institutions, so that they are taught the word of God and well established in the word of God (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

Their activities include evangelism in schools, to maintain the church doctrines and teaching members in the secondary schools and tertiary institutions. So that when the students are in school, they will still have access to the word of God. Their activities and programmes are usually sponsored by the church to get things running smoothly (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

Conclusion

German missionaries established the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana on November 14, 1847, at Peki. Together with the Basel Mission, these missionaries from the North German Mission Society (Norddeutsche Mission, Bremen) began their work among the Ewe people in what is now Ghana's Volta Region in 1847. They had set up two mission stations in the British colony of the Gold Coast and seven in German-occupied Togoland by the start of World War I. The first mission station was located in modern-day Togo and was called Mission-Tove (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

Togoland was split into two areas following the conflict, the western one being governed by the British and the eastern one by the French. Despite Togoland's separation, the first synod of the mission stations proclaimed itself the head of the "Ewe Church" in May 1922. The congregation took up the Bremen Mission's congregational order. British Togo (Transvolta Togoland), the current Volta Region of Ghana, was where Scottish missionaries first started their work in 1923. The Paris Mission was responsible for managing the church in French Togoland (now Togo). Even though both faiths had the same constitution, developments took place differentially in the two territories as a result. Once every four years, they have a common synod (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

CHAPTER THREE

THE ASSESSMENT OF THE YOUTH POLICY OF EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GHANA (EPCG)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana's youth policy. It looks at all the areas captured by the policy in line with the growth, maintenance and development of the youth. These areas are the definitions of youth, Christian Education for the Youth, Platform for Christian Education, Youth Development, Youth Participation, Youth Administration, and the Funding policies respectively.

The youth constitute the true wealth and future of the church addressing their hopes and aspirations, and could be an integral part of our socio-religious and economic development efforts. The church leadership over the years realised the need for policies that would empower the youth for effective participation in the church's development agenda. For this reason, the church Youth policy provides the opportunity for the church to engage the youth in meaningful partnership to develop appropriate interventions and services for youth development.

Consequently, youth empowerment shall involve the process of preparing young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a series of activities and experiences which help and motivate them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically and economically independent and competent as well. The Youth Policy is intended to provide guidelines and direction for youth development. It is also intended to help the

church demonstrate its commitment to the progress of the youth (10th Synod Agenda, 2020).

Contents of the Youth Policy Guidelines

The Youth Policy Guidelines for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, centres on the following (10th Synod Agenda, 2020):

1. Definitions of youth in the E.P. Church, Ghana.
2. Christian Education for the Youth.
3. Youth Development.
4. Youth Leadership empowerment.
5. Youth Participation in Church Activities.
6. Youth Administration
7. Funding.
8. Conclusion.

Definition of the Youth / Categorization

Generally, the period between childhood and adulthood is called ‘Youth’. To ensure effective programming of teaching and learning processes, the following categories of youth have been identified (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

12 - 17 years	-	Teenagers
18 - 24 years	-	Adolescent
25 - 35 years	-	Young Adult

However, recognition will be given to people between 35 and 50 years as affiliate or Associate members for the following reasons:

- ✓ They will remain active members but cannot hold any executive position.

- ✓ They will be expected to use their rich experiences to support the youth in their activities.
- ✓ They will guide and direct the youth in their spiritual, financial and any other aspects of their life.

From the time the church was founded in 1847, The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana has had a youth policy. The youth has been classified into three areas, the first one being the teenage group from ages 12 to 17 years, these groupings of the youth, will focus mainly on their level of understanding and knowing God. Programmes drawn out for these groups of youth will be to nurture them into adolescent age groups. This policy is crucial to their formation in Christianity as well as to prepare and equip them into the future (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

The group of teenagers who are ready to transition into young adulthood differs from all others in terms of their education and programs. Many of their activities and programmes are based much on how to be able to overcome the issues they tend to face in these stages. Furthermore, the third group of youth are classified as young adults whose ages fall between 24 to 35 years. The young adults are also prepared into full adulthood. They are engaged in programmes and activities which will prepare them and equip them for the task of becoming responsible adults. In sum, this categorisation is rightfully placed to enhance growth and harness the hidden potentials in the individual to be able to be a good contributor and benefit to the congregation and society (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

Bleakly (1983) says the need to develop the youth cannot be overemphasised. Creating employment opportunities to enable the youth to

engage themselves productively as well as to prepare for their future security should be the priority of all especially the Church; for by doing so the churches' own growth and development would be enhanced (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

The youth need opportunities to achieve and accomplish their desires and ambitions in life spiritually, economically and socially respectively. The researcher thinks the categorisation of the youth based on their ages, is rightly placed and seeks to serve the contemporary and future needs and societal needs of the youth as they are nurtured gradually to take up leadership roles and responsibilities in the Church. However, considering the grouping of the youth, it makes it easier for the teachers to be able to teach to the levels of understanding of the youth and to easily identify their gifts and talents as well as their strengths and weaknesses, and to inform remedies for the youth when the need arises (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

Bleakly (1983) gave recommendations for sustaining the youth membership of E. P. church. According to Bleakly, **the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana will apply the following tools:**

1. **Inculcate in the youth the fear of God through effective worship, Bible study and prayer.** The church is of the view that through effective worship the youth will grow physically and spiritually to attain and to demonstrate their full God given potentials at any given place or time. Bible study, in this regard, will equip the youth more to know the word of God and apply them in their daily lives, this furthermore, will prepare them into spiritual warfare and also to develop a serious prayer lifestyle and become mentors to the upcoming generation. In evaluating

this policy, it has not been very effective in some of the congregations of the church due to factors of distance to church week-day programmes, as a result of laziness, economic hardships, and lack of interest to study the word of God and to pray together as one family (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

2. **Develop the youth with Christian commitment that will help them to live up-right lives in the Church and society.** This development, will enhance the youth to be more committed and responsible to their calling, and to be good citizens as well as congregants. The programmes essentially based on the word of God will shape their thought and lifestyle as well as their family and their immediate environment. Conclusively, the youth currently, hardly come for youth programmes to come and learn and take precautionary measures in their lives. They seem to be more occupied with other things, more than the things that will define and guide their conscience in a holistic way (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).
3. **Help the youth establish Christian homes which will positively impact the Church, community and the nation by providing them with relevant training to use the head, heart and hands for the service of others and to the glory of God.** To train the youth to establish Christian homes is a way that will transform society. Activities and programmes laid down by the church will have a positive and a lifelong effect on the youth, to be able to use the head, the heart and hand. This means that every action taken by the youth at any point in his life, will be well thought about and will affect the three

domains comprising the head, heart and hand. The Church hierarchy has laid down programmes to train the youth in skills that can help them to be more equipped. But not all the presbyteries have had this opportunity to bring up the youth in this manner, as most of the skills to be acquired are either not too relevant or are cost effective (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

4. **Promote individual acquaintances and friendship through local congregations which will bind the youth into a united fellowship for their spiritual and wellbeing. In other words, promote networking for building synergy among the groups.** This tool will bring together youths from different backgrounds and with different talents as well as gifting, which will be harnessed for spiritual wellbeing and development, as well as helping to place the youth at places and positions to be able to perform and affect lives. This policy is still on course to date hence the formation of the Christian Youth Builders and Evangelical Presbyterian Students Union (C.Y.B and E.P.S.U), which are all youth groups in the churches whether a youth is in church or at school. This is coupled with periodic youth camps and retreats that brings the youth together to perform many activities together and to get to know each other better from their various congregations in the districts (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).
5. **Involve the youth in meeting the needs of the evangelised, the poor, the lonely, needy, sick, or handicapped, elderly and the marginalised, and through voluntary services.** This is to inculcate into the youth the act of giving and gaining the experiences in

evangelism, the poor, lonely needy, handicapped elderly, marginalised and voluntary services. By these experiences, the youth will gain much experience in all these activities of the church and grow and be accustomed to all these. As well as to develop and come out with new ideas and strategies in the future (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

6. **Unite all the youth at all levels to make positive contributions towards the development of the Church.** Unity is key in every social setting. The youth by uniting will be able to work in unity and to bring about massive growth and development to the congregation and the society. Unity is key in and towards growth and development. This development will help to sustain the unity of the church and will make progress be swift in many instances. Consequently, some of the youths are not contributing towards the growth of the Church due to lack of understanding of giving, non-payment of tithe, and lack of employment, these and many more factors is making the growth of some of the congregations come to a standstill or growing at a very slow pace (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).
7. **Check the drift of E.P. Church youth into other churches and unethical groups and associations.** The youth are the future of the church, and for that matter, must be made to appreciate and value the principles of the church. The church will take action in this way to stop the young people from joining other immoral organizations and associations and leave behind their church. So the church will implement other programmes that other churches are doing to increase membership drive. The leadership has adopted some of the charismatic

style of worship into our church services, even though most of my congregations don't have the state of the art musical instruments, those who have them are on course, the drift is a problem because as the style or ways of doing things may differ from one congregations from another (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

8. **Liaise with the Christian Education Theology and research department for effective Christian Education.** The intensity of Christian education theology for effective Christian education, will equip the youth to be more abreast with issues of and in the bible and to be able to make correct inferences in their daily lives and decision making processes. The studies will equip them more to be well vexed in the things of God. There has been periodic educational and workshops training for Church leaders as to how to continually improve their teachings in the various congregations. But some of the challenges in some of the congregations are that most of the leaders are having challenges to read and write, and yet they remain elders of the church (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).
9. **Promote the process of learning among the youth of Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana through conferences, rallies, camp meetings, retreats and other relevant activities. According to the Scripture, *education* is to train (instruct) the child in ways that they can never forget as they grow.** The concept of the Scripture implies that all instructions must be disciplinary, that is, by directing the child to do the right things. The organisations of all the programmes stated above, will enhance in the growth of the youth,

into responsible adulthood, as well as to be always occupied with Christian programmes and activities, in order to be able to maximise their God given potentials.

This is an activity which is organised at the local level, to national level as well as the international levels, where all youth across all parts of the country are brought together. This meeting offers the leadership the opportunity to interact with the youth to know more about their current issues and challenges they face and how possibly the leaders can be of adequate help to them (Bleakly, 1981).

Youth Development

The E.P. Church philosophy in the education and character formation of the youth is based on the mission statement of the Church. There is therefore the need to recognise that the youth are equally a gift of God and that they should be assisted to grow fully, physically, intellectually, socially, politically and spiritually to enable them realise their full potential in the church and society. Consequently, the E.P. Church will provide holistic programmes and employ the following measures to enhance the full development of the youth services (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

1. The E.P. Church in collaboration with other Christian organisations like the Christian Council of Ghana, All African conferences of churches, World council of churches, CEVAA- Communuated Eglisenen Mission our sister Church Eglise evangelique Presbyterienne du Togo and partner churches overseas like the Bremen Mission, Church of Scotland, United Reformed Church (UK), Presbyterian Churches, Global ministries, (USA) and other local NGO as development partners who will provide resources

and other support for entrepreneurial development to enable them go into self-employment (Youth Policy, 2015).

This collaboration has enhanced good religious relations amongst the church, ecumenical institutions and other international communities. This has bound them together as one people and also created more foreign exchange programmes as well as scholarships to some youths and furthermore brought developmental projects to the church and created employment opportunities for some of the youth. This development has also given much exposure to most church members across the breadth and length of the country. However, much still needs to be done, especially about bringing more youths on board to be able to have this new exposure with many of their colleagues in the near future (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

2. The youth will be encouraged to develop interest in information and communication Technology at all levels to make them active participants in the information and knowledge based economy. This policy will equip the youth to be more literate in terms of information, communication and technology. These developments have become so essential because they now play a major role in the everyday affairs of the individual and it will be very much good to embrace, use and develop it into the youth as it has become an indispensable factor in today's world. However, the Church hierarchy has not been able to do enough to make this a reality in the lives of the youth, perhaps due to financial challenges and sponsorship, since the researcher's district has not been a beneficiary of this unique programme (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

3. The church will equally motivate the youth to invest in education, agriculture, health services, climate change issues etc. to create employment opportunities for their communities. In equipping the youth to invest in these arrears, the church will be creating job opportunities for the youth, now that employment issues in our part of the world is becoming a growing phenomenon, the church deems it right to make the youth self-reliant and dependent financially and to be well resourced to be able to solve and alleviate the Church from financial difficulties. The idea from the church is a very good one, but this move or plan has not touched most of the districts including the district of the researcher as well. The researcher thinks the Church leadership must decentralise this project of empowerment in the various presbyteries so that the districts can benefit (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

4. The church will encourage the youth to undertake health education programmes. The aim of improving the knowledge of other youth about preventive health care and to assist them avoid practices such as engaging in early and irresponsible sexual activities and exposing themselves to STDs such as HIV/AIDS. Through evangelism and other yearly activities, the youth will be encouraged to be ambassadors of good healthy practices, through symposiums and education to the youth and the society about the deadly viruses that has plagued the world, so that the youth will be more responsible and health conscious in all that they do, even as they abide in the word of God. Most congregations have always engaged the youth in workshops and seminars about their sexuality and how to be responsible adults as they age into adulthood. Also, most of the youth talk shows are organised

on most public holidays to make the youth express their views on very pressing issues they might be going through, so they are helped and guided to overcome them. But going forward, the congregations must also make these meetings a bit livelier and must have some positive side attractions (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

5. The E.P. Church in collaboration with the National Youth Authority will provide development programmes and self-help projects that will improve the resources of the youth. The Church in partnership with the state and other faith Groups press for eradication of all forms of discrimination, social injustice and stigmatisation against the youth in the society (Youth Policy, 2015). In partnering with the government, to equip the youth to be self-sustaining and responsible. Also, to help the government avoid discrimination and other forms of social misfits in the society, which is usually staged by the youth, are a big disadvantage to the youth and development in many cases. Furthermore, the religious beliefs of an individual have many positive effects on a person's behaviour. This is true of any person who makes that effort to give himself to good doctrines and teachings in accordance with the word of God (Bonell et al., 2016). Definitely, that person will experience a positive change in his or her lifestyle thoroughly (Bonell et al.). Again, religiosity or faith formation, according to Bonell et al. can be instrumental in Positive Youth Development, as it constitutes a 'characteristic' of Positive Youth Development.

As a characteristic of Positive Youth Development, religiosity promotes positive behaviours and ultimately positive development of young people, specifically in the area of social control by refraining from involvement in

risky behaviour. Also, religiosity is influential in five areas of the lives of the young people, namely it 'provides support, connecting the past, moral compass, promotes healthy development, and intersections between African traditional practices and Christian beliefs'. Religiosity, therefore, not only attempts to address negative issues but it also promotes positive behaviour by encouraging youth to refrain from risky behaviour in the midst of difficult circumstances (Brittian et al., 2013).

Youth Leadership Empowerment

Empowering the youth involves assisting them to unearth their capabilities and God-given talents and use them to the glory of God, the individual and society. Just as Prophet Elijah empowered Elisha, and St Paul, Timothy and Titus so the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, will empower the youth to become effective leaders of the church and society (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, will among others have the following strategic programmes for the youth Guidance and counselling services, Leadership courses, Workshops and seminars, Camp meetings and symposia, Evangelism and outreach programmes. All these activities will enhance and improve the leadership skills in the youth (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

As we can see, God chose to save the Youth of Moses' generation, Joshua and Caleb who, following Moses' death, led all the Israelites into the Promised Land. It has become apparent to us that raising the "Successors" is a monumental task that faces every ministry, church, or generation. The next generation of youth must be raised, trained, equipped, and given the mandate

in order for them to become responsible leaders who can complete the task as well as or even better than those who came before them. This requires the cooperation of God and His hand (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015). But it may also be observed in the times of Joshua, who was a great leader who feared and sincerely served God, but who fell short in raising and passing on to the next generation. If the life and character of a great and obedient leader like Joshua, who set an example for others in his day, could not pass the test of passing on what God had entrusted to him, then anybody can fall into the same trap (Joshua 24:31). Several young people are being taken and diverted away from their creator by the strong winds and terrible storms of the current, sophisticated world in which we live. Therefore, it is the duty of leaders to consider how to affect youth for Christ in a distinctive and targeted way, and to ensure that they are in a position to pass it on to the following generation (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

Leaders in the ministry are called to address the youth crisis by making a major and concrete contribution to the body of Christ. They are to influence the youth with biblical morality and values while the Lord is preparing His church to be His bride. According to 1 Timothy 4:1–15 and 2 Timothy 2:1–5, the Church has a duty to instruct, train, and entrust to others what God has obediently given to us. Not to mention, if the church fails in this noble task of educating, involving, and nurturing the youth today, it will never produce excellent and perfect families, churches, or nations in the future (Proverbs 22:6).

Youth Participation in Church Activities

The Youth of the E.P. Church shall form an integral part of the Church and will be encouraged to participate in church activities. The following measures among others will be employed, to improve the interest and participation of the youth (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

1. Lead Liturgy during church services and be involved in Bible reading and play an active role during Wednesday and Friday evening services, crusades, retreats, prayer and fasting period. This development would make the youth to have and feel a sense of belonging in the church as they are identified and are encouraged to demonstrate their God-giving talents in worship services. This will also cut across all other areas of the church laid down programmes and activities, and get them involved. This will prepare them for the future adequately, when the baton of leadership roles is fully handed down to them.

2. Encourage the youth to participate in local and district sessions and committees to contribute in decision making. This move will offer a great opportunity for the youth to expose issues and problems they are faced with, so that when church sessions meet, they will be considered in all programmes as well as budgets allocations for the youth decisively. Their participation will enhance a comprehensive development and growth as well as unity. Though this development is a good gesture towards the youth in the various congregations, not all congregations have been given much room of participation to the youth in that regard. There is still much to be done to bring some leaders to that understanding, when they meet with the youth.

3. Participate in presbytery synod meetings and have voting rights: This directive will bring the youth on board and as part of decision makers in the affairs of the Church hierarchy level. This will make them part of the churches decision making process and also educate the youth on certain issues, modalities and requirements that will be spelt out when they are at such programmes. It prepares them for the future ahead. Despite the good motive to involve the youth in the decision making process in meetings, the researcher thinks much should be done to also empower the youth desk officers in all presbyteries to be able to work effectively to be able to harness much amongst the youth.

4. Participate in the General Assembly as accredited commissioners and have voting rights: At the national levels too, this will enable the youth to be able to stand for some positions in the church if there is vacancy or the opportunity is created, they will stand the chance to be voted for and also to vote as well. This will also offer them the opportunity to disseminate information to their peers when they come from such programmes. Having said that, the researcher thinks much has not been achieved in terms of having a number of the youth in positions comparatively. More of the youths must be given the opportunity to come on board and for that matter, the number of youths that are represented must be increased to an appreciable number from each presbytery.

5. Train and equip the youth to participate in evangelism, Discipleship and outreach programmes: This will develop a lot of skills in them and also to be equipped to mentor the upcoming youth in the church. Most of the evangelist trained are mostly youth, but the researcher thinks the challenge

here is that many of the evangelists in my district and for that matter the Ashanti Presbytery have not received the needed training and accreditation. Many of them are self-motivated to do the work as an evangelist but with no training. This makes it difficult for most congregations to sponsor them or make budget allocations for them in the congregational budgets. This issue makes the work of the evangelist quite a hectic and difficult one especially considering the current economic situation in the country when it comes to moving from one place to the other.

6. Create opportunities for them to take part in ecumenical and exchange programmes at both the local and international levels in order to foster unity among Christians (Youth Policy, 2015). This will give them exposure to the outside world and to prepare them for international exchange programmes and competitions. It will lead to enhanced learning and the adaptations of new ways of doing things and ministry all in the context of the biblical standards. This programme is active and ongoing amongst ecumenical bodies. However, the researcher thinks the number from each Presbyteries each year should be increased, to give more opportunities to the youths to have exchange programmes with other fellow counterparts in other countries (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

Youth Administration

The E.P. Church Youth Ministry administrative structure shall comprise the E.P. Church Headquarters represented by the director of Youth programmes, the Presbytery youth co-coordinators at the various presbyteries and National Executives of the various youth groups in the Church (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

1. The Presbytery Synod Moderators shall organize orientation courses for the newly appointed Presbytery Youth Co-ordinators.

This will equip, and enhance the new presbytery facilitators on the current trends of their roles and responsibilities in the presbyteries. Again, the facilitator will also impact new knowledge and directives unto the various youth leaders and executives in the various districts and then, it will trickle down to the various congregations in the districts. While the facilitator serves as a guide and a supervisor on and about the activities of the youth in the various districts and congregations and gives feedback to the presbytery moderator. Furthermore, there have been workshops, seminars for presbytery facilitators yearly, which the researcher thinks should be twice in a year. Again, sometimes, some presbyteries are not able to fund the expenses of their facilitators to such important meetings due to financial challenges and other related issues. With time, these should be looked at again and also the facilitators must be well resourced to be able to play an active role in the task given him or her in the various Presbyteries (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

2. The Central Youth Council shall preside over all matters affecting the growth of the youth in the church. The youth council shall preside over all issues affecting the youth, and will present the issues of the youth to the appropriate authorities for further actions to be taken. The youth facilitator is the chairman of the youth council, who will chair all meetings of the council. Later on, the national facilitator will send new directives or information to the appropriate presbyteries for further implementations and observations, depending on the gravity and intensity of the issues.

3. **The Presbytery shall form the Executive of the Executive of the youth ministry from local to Presbytery levels to support the presbytery Coordinators.** The synod presbytery moderator, the presbytery youth facilitator and the district ministers, shall form executives in their districts as well as in their various congregations. And they shall be trained by the facilitators and their team on current trends on youth issues, and guide and direct them on how to positively impact the youth. This will equip the youth executives to be well equipped to lead the youth in their programmes and activities. Notwithstanding, there has been a lot of financial challenges for some facilitators when it comes to work delivery, because in some presbyteries, the facilitators are not resourced adequately enough to do the work (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

Funding

1. **The E. P. Church shall provide funds for the running of the youth ministry and incorporate the budget on youth activities into the general budget of the church at all levels.** The national youth facilitator will see to the administration and financing all national youth programmes and activities. Also let the various youth facilitators in the presbytery encourage all executives in the districts and congregations to put activities of the youth for every year into the church budget for onward implementation and disbursement when the time is due. This will make the youth have the confidence to be able to plan well their activities and programmes come into a reality. But, there are still a lot of financial challenges when it comes to the roles of the facilitator in the functions he or she has been assigned to (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

2. There shall be Youth week celebrations every year to raise funds to support the general budget. The main source of funding the national office is through funds raised at the various congregations and a percentage is sent to the national office for administrative work and other financial transactions on behalf of the youth. This same budget goes into funding of programmes for the youth councils, training of youth facilitators, visits, meetings and other contingencies. Furthermore, these funds, when raised, also help the youth executives to organise programmes collectively at the district level and sometimes at the presbytery level. However, in some congregations in the researcher's district, much funds are not realised in most situations to even sustain that congregations local programmes, let alone send a quota to the district or national levels (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

3. The Youth shall be encouraged to undertake projects to generate funds for the various groups. The youths are encouraged to undertake projects to generate funds, these projects are intended to equip the youth with additional skills as well as providing employment to the youth who are still unemployed. This will be another form of hope to the unemployed youths as well as to resource the youth financially. Despite this directive, the E.P. church, Obuasi district youths have not been able to raise enough funds to start a project of their own, due to financial challenges in some congregations as well as low turnout of the youth in supporting projects of their own. The District needs some level of support and guide since some of the congregations are in very remote and deprived areas in the communities. Despite the good policies, not all congregations are operating it due to some of the challenges enumerated above (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

4. **An agreed percentage of funds realized from the Youth Programmes and activities should be invested into National Youth Ministry Fiscal engagements.** This is a national policy that seeks to create an investment avenue for the national youth desk to be able to facilitate a smooth running of the desk and programmes lined up for the youth. This has become one of the main avenues of revenue mobilisation for the national youth desk office, to be able to run the affairs of the youth confidently. This policy has been in existence for many years, and the researcher thinks the percentages sent to the office has not resourced the youth desk officer adequately and this has also affected the various representatives of the facilitators in most of the presbyteries. This department should be well resourced with other funds to make the national desk officer mobile and efficient to the task given to his office (EPCG Youth Policy, 2015).

Conclusion

The Youth Policy Document is a guide to the youth desk department linking all other representatives in the various Presbyteries across the country. It is the expectation of the church that with this document the necessary awareness would be created, and that the youth would work hard to be able play effective roles and take full responsibilities as future leaders. It is however the hope of the church to caution that this is not a license to undermine anyone in the church but to serve in humility.

The Church leadership plays a pivotal role, with the necessary support for the youth, in order to be able to play their roles effectively in these contemporary times for their works, as youth to be recognised and relevant in

the ministry into which they have been called into, and as stakeholders in the church. The policy captures all that is needed to teach, learn and mentor the youth into responsible adults and future leaders.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors responsible for the decline in the youth in the Evangelical Presbyterian (E. P.) church, Obuasi district. This study addressed three research questions: (1) what are the causal factors contributing to youth decline in the E. P. church in the Obuasi district, (2) what are the roles the church can play in curbing youth decline in the E. P. church in the Obuasi district and (3) What policies and strategies could be used to retain as well as win new members in the E. P. church. This chapter presents the results and the discussion of the study's findings. The study collected two types of data using questionnaire and interview guide.

Results from Survey Data

A total number of 155 inactive youth members was initially sampled for the study. However, due to difficulties in reaching the participants, the study was able to collect data from 30 respondents using questionnaires. However, one questionnaire was rejected because it was about 90% incomplete. Therefore, the analysis was done using a sample size of 29 accounting for about 99% response rate.

The data analysis for the questionnaire was mainly descriptive based on frequencies and percentages. The results from the questionnaire are presented under the headings: demographic characteristics of respondents; causal factors contributing to youth decline in church; the roles the church can play in curbing youth decline in church and policies and strategies that could be used to retain as well as win new members in the church.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, age and how long respondents have been members of the E. P. church. The results show that, out of the 29 respondents that responded to the questionnaires, most (79.3%) of them were females. Also, the majority of the respondents were aged 15-20 (41.4%) and 21-29 (41.4%) years. In addition, most of the respondents had been members of the E. P. church in the Obuasi district for about 9-12 years (see table 1).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=29)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	6	20.7
Female	23	79.3
Age		
15-20	12	41.4
21-29	12	41.4
30-35	5	17.2
Length of being a member of E.P. Church (in years)		
1-4	3	10.3
5-8	3	10.3
9-12	13	44.8
13+	10	34.5

Source: Field survey (2022)

The results of the respondents' demographic makeup may have some influence on the reduction in the church's young membership. The majority of respondents (79%) were female, which may indicate that there are more young

women than young men attending the church and that more women than men are thought to have a natural tendency to stay devoted to their beliefs.

Regarding respondents' ages, only a small percentage (only 17%) fell within the range of 30 to 35 years, which suggests that the majority of young people who have left the church may belong to this age group. This finding is similar to Barna Group (2013a) who examined the faith development of young adults in the church. After 27,140 interviews from more than 200 studies, the result showed nearly six in 10 (59%) of these young people who grew up in Christian churches ended up leaving their faith within the first decade of adult life (21–39). This indicates that the church's policies should pay attention to this age group by addressing the potential reason for their declining participation in the church.

Additionally, most (41%) of the respondents were within the age category of 15 and 20 years, and have been members for between 9 and 12 years (45%), suggesting that the current youth membership may consist of people who were either born into the church or whose children have participated in church fellowship. This further suggests that the church focuses on the education of the children by nourishing them with the Bible, church doctrine, and practices, which will strengthen their fidelity to the church and make them robust in any challenging life circumstances.

Research Question 1. What are the Causal Factors Contributing to Youth Decline in the E.P. Church in the Obuasi District?

The purpose of this research question was to solicit the views of respondents on the factors influencing the decline in the youth population in the E.P. church. Respondents were asked to list as many factors they deemed

to be causing the decline in the number of youths in the E.P. church. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the multiple responses provided by the respondents. The results show that, majority of the respondents attributed the decline in the youth population to: Lack of job opportunities in the church (72.4%), financial instability of the youth (62.1%), old ways of conducting service (62.1%) and church leaders lack of interest in the youth (51.7%) (See table 2).

Table 2. Causal Factors Contributing to Decline of the Youth in the E.P. Church

Causal factors for youth decline in church	Frequency (N=29)	Percent	Percent of Cases
Leader's lack of interest in the Youth.	15	16.7%	51.7%
Financial instability.	18	20.0%	62.1%
Lack of engagement of the youth in church activities.	4	4.4%	13.8%
Old ways of conducting service.	18	20.0%	62.1%
Lack of visitation and check-ups.	2	2.2%	6.9%
Lack of job opportunities in the church.	21	23.3%	72.4%
Non-involvement of the youth in major decision making.	6	6.7%	20.7%
Too much doctrine.	3	3.3%	10.3%
Unstable work and transfers.	3	3.3%	10.3%
Total	90	100.0%	310.3%

Source: Field survey (2022)

Every problem has potential causes, and in order to find an effective solution, it is necessary to identify these causes broadly. As with any other issue, the declining church membership is a problem, and many opinions from church members and stakeholders have been sought in an effort to find a solution. The respondents identified the following causes: leader's lack of

interest in the youth, financial instability, lack of youth involvement in church activities, outdated methods of worship, lack of visitation and check-ups, lack of job opportunities within the church, leader's lack of involvement in major decisions, too many doctrines, unstable work and transfers.

First, the current study found that one causal factor to a decline in youth church attendance is lack of job opportunities within the church. The adolescent stage is marked by a variety of needs and goals since many young people seek to find love, success, and self-actualization. In the quest to achieve these needs, the youth look for sources of income, which may include looking for work or getting skill development. It is quite regrettable that governments in the majority of the world are unable to meet the needs of their citizens in terms of employment creation. This is due to the global economic hardship, which has repercussions on the government of the day. As a result, the youth rely on private and religious institutions for their work requirements. This is reiterated in a report (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2010) that since the unemployment rate is high globally, the church is mandated to provide for these ones. The younger generation is drawn to any organization that might meet their needs. There is little doubt that the lack of employment prospects within the E. P. church was cited as the main reason for the drop in church youth participation by the vast majority of respondents (72%). From the findings, it can be inferred that the E. P. Church in the Obuasi district may not be privy to the economic downturn in Ghana during the post-Covid-19 era, as well as the hardships experienced by the majority of Ghanaians, of which the church's youth members are a part. There is no doubt that the majority of respondents (62%) see financial uncertainty as the second most important

factor contributing to the drop in youth membership in the E.P. church. When a young person is unable to give significantly to the Lord during church service, they feel mocked by other members of the congregation. Consequently, church attendance has decreased.

Youth unemployment is a major problem worldwide including Ghana, affecting many religious and other social organisations including the EP church. Hence the church should create policies that address the demand for youth employment while concentrating on its primary mission of spreading the gospel. These policies should focus on developing youth skills as well as creating employment organizations like schools, hospitals, banks, and other institutions. These findings are similar to other studies. For instance, Nickell et al. (2005) argued that the church should be in the capacity of employing these youth, thereby reducing the challenge. This thus lays a financial burden on the church. The youth who ought to have been working are now dependent on the church, which, in actual sense, they are supposed to support. Awuku-Gyampoh (2021) also found that lack of church support for individuals was among 16 factors of youth church decline in Australia.

Second, the current study found that one causal factor to a decline in youth church attendance is old ways of conducting worship. Thanks to technological advancements, everyone can now keep up with what's happening everywhere. The youth of today can easily join any social group anywhere in the world thanks to social media, which exposes them to many ways social organisations provide services. The expansion of the young membership of a social organization will suffer if technology is not included into its programs and services because the younger population will not be

attracted by such organizations' social or religious activities. There is no question that the majority of respondents (62%) claimed that the E.P. church's declining youth membership was mostly due to "old ways of conducting worship." This finding is similar to Vitisia (2016), who reported that significant causes of youth church decline are the absence of modernised programs, liturgical issues, and poor church structure.

Third, the current study found that another causal factor to a decline in youth church attendance is leaders' lack of interest for the youth and failure to engage them in church activities. Every youth has many untapped potentials that need to be explored and tapped for their development and great impact in the church and the society at large. Otherwise, the talent of these youths will be dormant leading to a feeling of disregard and invaluableness in the Church. Subsequently, the Church youth attendance and membership declined. It is understandable why the majority of study participants cited the church leaders' lack of interest for the youth (52%) and their consequent exclusion from church activities (14%) and important decision-making (21%). This finding is similar to Njoroge (2015) who found in his study that the majority 77.9% (201 of 258) of the youth had no leadership position in the church. Youth in most African churches have little connection with church activities because they are often assigned peripheral roles such as ushering (Karanu et al., 2020).

Moreover, Bradley (2019) reported that the modern church lacks the active involvement of young people, leading to an increased assumption of various myths and misconceptions about God and the Church. Jones (2020) also found in his study that a total of 36.67% of the youth strongly believe that church leadership does not involve them in administration matters. A total of

40% remained neutral to this question, while only 23.33% believed that they are adequately involved in church administration issues. These findings show a huge gap since only 23.33% are satisfied on the level to which they are involved in church matters. This finding is similar to Agalo (2020) who assert that 40(60.6%) and 16(24.2%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that lack of involvement of youths in making decisions and in church programs affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District. Also 6(9.1%) and 4(6.1%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that lack of involvement affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District. Bradley et al. (2004) also asserted that obtaining young peoples' perspectives is necessary because the social position of adults limits what they can purport to know about youth.

Fourth, the current study found that another causal factor to a decline in the church youth attendance is too many doctrines. Every organization has guidelines that direct how it does its business. Members of an organization are defined and controlled by its rules and regulations. However, having too many rules and regulations prevents the members from acting freely, which stifles their freedom because they must abide by all of the aforementioned requirements.

Churches and other religious institutions have doctrine that establishes the church's identity and governs its officers and members. Along with rights and obligations for both church leaders and members, it incorporates rules and regulations. The primary goal of church doctrine is to provide members with guidance in leading holy lives, although some behaviours contained in the teachings of particular churches may be less conducive to encouraging

Christian living. Some religions' doctrine is created from human viewpoints bereft of the inspired word of God as a result of misinterpretations of certain passages of the holy bible. The members who must abide by these guidelines actually bear the burden. Doctrinal matters are crucial to the expansion of both the youth and adult membership. The young learn the truth about life via the study of the Holy Scriptures and cling to only morally acceptable behaviours that are revealed in the Bible. Doctrines that are not based on the Bible will be difficult for people to follow, and they will actually hinder the church's growth and development. Only 10% of respondents cited the excessive number of E. P. church doctrines as a factor in the decline in church attendance. This finding is similar to a study conducted by Simmons (2015) who found young adults identified a belief that the church is too controlling and does not deal with real-life issues as a reason for their decline in active engagement, which included a decline in church attendance and participation in church ministries. Hale (1977) also found that people leave church because they feel the doctrines of church are restrictive and smothering.

Fifth, the current study found that another causal factor to a decline in the church youth attendance is unstable work and transfers. Leaders have either positive or negative influence on followers as they impact them with their values, teaching, and lifestyles. Good leaders are adored and appreciated by their followers to the point where it has an impact on the members' devotion to the organisation in which they work. Since the majority of followers look up to these leaders for mentorship, growth, and development, the abrupt removal of leaders who enjoy good relations with their followers would reduce their excitement and zeal. In practice, it has an impact on a

follower's organizational loyalty. It is understandable why some respondents (3%) listed unstable work and transfers as reasons impeding the expansion of the E.P. church's youth membership. This indicates that the transfer strategy of the E.P. church does not necessarily encourage growth in the number of church members, as some people perceive it as a means of reducing their love and connection with the church leaders. Therefore, regulations regarding the transfer of E. P. leaders must be reviewed and improved in order to support the expansion of church membership in general and youth participation in particular.

Sixth, the current study found that another causal factor to a decline in the church youth attendance is the lack of follow-up and visitation from church leadership. The love and devotion members of a social organisation receive from important people in their lives has a good impact on their loyalty to the group. If handled properly, welfare concerns in social and religious organisations will encourage membership development. Visiting members to check on their well-being is an effective means to demonstrate love to them. When members of social and religious organisations are visited and shown love, they feel cherished and appreciated, which increases their devotion to the organisation. It is understandable why some study participants (7%) cited a lack of follow-up and visitation from church leadership as a contributing reason in the fall of the E. P. church's youth membership. This outcome suggests that the leadership of the E.P. church may not have visited the members to know their welfare. This finding is similar to Njoroge (2015) who found in his study that one of the key ministries that the church should develop

to attract the youth for discipleship programmes is follow up mobilization (10.1%).

Research Question 2: What Roles can the Church Play in Reducing Decline of the Youth Population in the E.P. Church?

The purpose of this research question was to solicit the views of respondents on what the church can do to prevent more youth from leaving the E.P. church. Respondents were asked to select as many options as applied in the number of options provided to them. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the results. From table 3, the majority of the respondents had the view that: the church can involve the youth in decision making (93.1%) and modernize the youth program (86.2%). Some respondents also were of the view that the church can make the youth become part of the leadership of the church (41.4%) and leaders of the church can restructure church worship (37.9%) (see table 3).

Table 3: The Roles the Church can play to Reduce Youth Decline in Church.

Roles the church can play to reduce youth decline in church	Frequency (N=29)	Percent (%)	Percent of Cases (%)
Restructure church worship.	11	11.8%	37.9%
Modernisation of youth programs.	25	26.9%	86.2%
The youth being part of the leadership.	12	12.9%	41.4%
Making the youth lead church service.	9	9.7%	31.0%
Involving the youth in decision making.	27	29.0%	93.1%
Letting the youth own the church.	9	9.7%	31.0%
Total	93	100.0%	320.7%

Source: Field survey (2022)

The current study found that to control decline in the Church youth attendance, the EP Church could consider restructuring church worship. The finding is similar to other studies. For instance, Awuku-Gyampo (2021) reported that poor worship style may discourage the youth from attending church. His study uncovered that modern liturgy attracts the youth, as they feel comfortable taking part in the service. Though his quantitative data did not support this finding, the thorough interviews at the qualitative stage refuted that result. According to Awuku-Gyampo, when worship is blended with more modern music, a good sound system, Christ-centred sermons, brief announcements, and more interactive teachings this motivates the younger generation and sustains their interest.

Second, another role identified is the introduction and modernisation of innovative ways of improving the worship in the church. In the opinion of Gary (2004) effective worship service takes seriously the mental, spiritual, relational and emotional nature of worshipers. Unfortunately, many worship services tend to focus primarily on the mind without seriously speaking to the whole person. The 21st century youth are always exploring and technology has also been the order of the day. This then has laid a responsibility on the E. P. church leaders to find modern ways of making church worship and other engagements innovative to attract others to church and make them feel more at home. Jones (2020) found a positive statistical significant relation between the use of technology (modernisation) in conducting service and the youth church attendance retention and growth. Moreover, Arthur and Rensleigh (2015) proposed the use of online technology to create an environment where the faith community can gain access to resources that include pastor's

commentary, church activities and daily devotionals, which can be utilised to incite current and potential members to become engaged in the church. Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) advanced Wilson's (2000) position that religious organisations should seek to use technological advancements to help move churches into the 21st century. As such, the internet should be used as a communication strategy to reach people seeking spiritual growth (Arthur & Rensleigh, 2015; Fischer-Nielsen, 2009; Riley, 2009).

Additionally, the use of technology in worship has a positive and significant influence in attracting and retaining the young adults in the E. P. church. This position is supported by quantitative data by Karanu et al. (2020) who investigated the church's policy on the use of technologies such as musical instruments, projectors, videos, broadcast, and social media that had an influence on youth church attendance. To assess this issue, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their church had embraced the use of modern technologies, the majority of the respondents (57.1%) reported that their church had adopted the use of modern technologies to a great extent, 28.6% said that their church had adopted the use of modern technologies to a moderate extent while 14.3% said that their church use modern technologies to a little extent. These findings suggest that the church has largely embraced the use of modern technologies.

Third, another role identified was that the youth should be part of the church leadership. The youth years are a period for exploring. According to Lawrence and Nohria (2002), humans are born with the drive to satisfy our curiosity and understand the world around us. The young people would desire to behave and imitate their leadership role models. A good leader is one who

can spot talent in the young population and encourage that skill to grow. Helping young people express and believe in their potential is one method to discover and develop their talent. Leaders can arouse youth membership interest and delegate leadership of a program or service to them since talent is improved through consistent practice. When leaders believe in their followers' potential and support the development of these abilities by handing leadership to them with caution, the younger generation feels respected and appreciated. The retention of the young population is affected by social organisations failure to recognise this need, which results in a reduction in their membership.

Finally, the roles to reduce youth decline such as making the youth become part of the leadership role, making them lead church service, involving them in decision making, and letting them own the church are similar to other studies. For instance, Bradley et al. (2004) asserted that obtaining young peoples' perspectives is necessary because the social position of adults limits what they can purport to know about youth. Also, Sumpter (2019) found that Millennials who were personally engaged by church leadership were four times as likely to remain active in the church.

Research Question 3: What Policies and Strategies could be used to Retain as well as Win New Members in the E.P. Church?

This research question intended to identify the policies and strategies that can be used to retain the youth in the E. P. church. Respondents were asked to write as many policies and strategies they think can be employed by the E.P. church to retain the youth in the church. The results show that, most of the respondents proposed that the church should involve the youth in

decision making (77.8%) and give roles to the youth (74.1%). Moreover, about 22.2% proposed that the church should reduce too many levies on the youth (see table 4).

Table 4: Policies the Church can use to retain the Youth in the Church.

Policies that can be put in place by the church to retain the youth	Frequency (N=29)	Percent	Percent of Cases
Involve youth in decision making	21	34.4%	77.8%
Give roles to the youth in the church	20	32.8%	74.1%
Organise more outreach programmes	2	3.3%	7.4%
Constant visitations to the youth	4	6.6%	14.8%
Use Twi or English during service	5	8.2%	18.5%
Organise fora to listen to the suggestion of the youth	3	4.9%	11.1%
Reduce too many levies on the youth	6	9.8%	22.2%
Total	61	100.0%	225.9%

Source: Field survey (2022)

Other studies reported similar findings. Regarding involvement of the youth in decision making as a policy to retain the youth in the church, Lincoln and Mamiya (2003) who asked clergy “What special techniques and programs have you found to be successful in attracting young people?,” found 13.2% of respondents who indicated greater participation and involvement of the youth in the leadership and decision making of the church. This study by Lincoln and Mamiya provided useful suggestions that church leaders can implement in worship services or improve upon if already established. These suggested programs and techniques may provide the key church leaders needed to increase attendance and engagement of the missing young adult population. Also, when pastoral leaders of churches that have effectively engaged young adults were surveyed, 33% reported that their success could

be accredited to their inclusive and open attitude toward other people and the overall culture (Fuller Youth Institute, 2014).

Second, giving roles to the youth in the church as a policy to retain them to the church was similar to Nielson (2016) who posited that, it is necessary for the youth to participate greatly in the church. He went further to advice the church to acknowledge the presence of the youths today so that they may learn for the church of tomorrow. In a similar vein, Ragira et al. (2017) opine that churches must be friendly to the youths in fostering their growth spiritually. When the youths are welcomed and allowed to serve alongside adults in the church, they develop a full-fledged member feeling and can be easily identified as members (Ragira et al.). The youths have a role to present their youthful vision and energy in the activities of the church since they have a great deal to offer as youth in the church (Ragira et al.). Through meaningful roles, the youths can express their faith hence develop a commitment spirit to the church as their home. The church therefore must tap the talents from the youths and be friendly to them through adequate response to their needs and carefully giving them an audience (Ragira et al.). Sumpter (2019) also found that Millennials who were personally engaged by church leadership were four times as likely to remain active in the church.

Third, organising more outreach programmes as a policy to retain the youth population to the church was similar to Watson and Steptean-Watson (2015) who emphasised that outreach ministries should be created to reflect, improve, and enhance the quality of life in the communities to attract and retain church members. The community outreach services should include health-care assistance and wellness projects (Ford, 2012; Osinski, 2005;

Watson & Stepteau-Watson). Churches should develop and implement outreach services as a membership strategy (Hunter, 2003; Osinski) as the need for Christians to connect with people in their own neighbourhoods is paramount (Johnson et al., 2008; Osinski,).

Fourth, constant visitations to the youth as a policy to retain the youth population to the church was similar to Njoroge (2015), who reported that the key ministries that the church should develop to attract the youth for discipleship programmes is follow up mobilization, which was cited by 10.1% of the respondents. The love and devotion members of a social organization receive from important people in their lives has a good impact on their loyalty to the group. If handled properly, welfare concerns in social and religious organizations will encourage membership development. Visiting youth members to check on their well-being is one method the church can show its members that it cares and that it loves them. When members of the church are visited and shown love, they feel cherished and appreciated, which increases their devotion to the church.

Fifth, using Twi or English during service as a policy to retain the youth population to the church was similar to Jones (2020) who reported that challenges such as linguistic differences, for example, can create barriers to reaching specific groups of young people through youth ministry. In this regard, the emphasis here will be to identify the overarching, cross-cultural factors affecting the ministry in general and what that might imply for potential improvements to be adopted in the future.

Sixth, organise fora to listen to the suggestion of the youth as a policy to retain the youth population to the church is supported by Article 12 of the

UN Convention of the rights of the child (UNICEF, 1989) says, “Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously”. Also, Morrill et al. (2000) argue that to legitimately comprehend a particular articulation of youth culture, researchers must meet youth in the spaces where young people make and have their lives constructed by adults daily. 1 Timothy 4: 12 also stated that “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity”. In such a forum, the youth expresses views on matters affecting and suggesting prudential measures to deal with their own problems as well as the problems of the church.

Seventh, reduce too many levies on the youth as a policy to retain the youth population to the church is similar to Bawa et al. (2022) who found that 5% of respondents were of the view that the church has become highly monetized and too materialistic. Some were of the view that the church takes ‘too much offering’. The church environment is characterised by many members, mostly the youth population who are of low socioeconomic status. Too much levies will demotivate them to continue to attend church services or programmes, since they will not be able to afford to offer to the church upon continual demands of the church.

Policies the E.P. Church can Use to Win New Members

This section collected data from participants on what policies could be adopted by the church to win new members. Respondents were provided with four options: Evangelism, visitation and rebranding youth activities. Majority

(86.2%) of the respondents had the view that rebranding the youth activities in the church will win new members to the church (see table 5).

Table 5: Policies to Win New Members.

Policies that can be put in place by the church to win more youth to the church	Frequency (N=29)	Percent (%)
Evangelism	3	10.3
Visitation	1	3.4
Rebranding youth activities	25	86.2
Total	29	100.0

Source: Field survey (2022)

As the church plans on strategies to retain the existing youth members of the church, they could likewise put up policies to win new members. The following policies were found to win new members to the church: rebranding the youth activities in the church, evangelism and visitation. Other studies have reported similar findings. Regarding evangelism as a policy for E. P. church to win new members, Williams (2017) reported that Churches, in which the leaders choose to execute a biblical, culturally-relevant community evangelism strategy, are more likely to survive than churches that do not. Also, Lawson (2021) interviewed church leaders who exhibit these qualities in their communities and found similar strategies as key to driving growth. Lawson found that, to remain relevant, pastors must employ the gospel to help solve people's problems. A pastor agreed, noting that churches must appeal to all groups of people to grow their congregation. In fact, a majority of study participants confirmed that growing churches seek out people different than them to invite to church:

We all got to approach people and draw people to Jesus. There are some rich and very wealthy people right now that would not listen to me because that's just a different circle. There are some people that are white that would listen to me. It's just a different circle. There are some people that are black, they won't listen to me. So, when I'm saying evangelizing, we have to evangelize everywhere. All people in the body of Christ should evangelize. So, we can go and get everybody for Jesus.

Re-branding the youth activities as a policy to win new members was similar to Njoroge (2015), who found that other key ministries that the church should develop to attract the youth for discipleship programmes is diversification of programmes which was cited by 16.3% of the respondents. Follow-up or visitation as a policy to win new members was supported by Njoroge, who further found that the key ministries that the church should develop to attract the youth for discipleship programmes is follow up mobilization, which was cited by 10.1% of the respondents.

Results from Interview

This section presents the results obtained from face-to-face interviews with respondents. The study solicited the views of respondents on the causal factors influencing the youth population decline in the E. P. Church, the roles the Church can play to reduce the decline of the youth population and the policies the church can put in place to retain or win new members to the church. The study purposely interviewed 18 respondents by engaging them face to face. The findings are presented below.

Theme One: Causal Factors Contributing to Decline of the Youth in the E.P. Church.

The causes of decline in the youth population in the E.P. church was attributed to eight main causes: schooling, youth unemployment, too much collection and appeal for funds, the use of Ewe for service, work, transfers, laziness and old ways of conducting service.

Schooling

Schooling was the most dominant factor or cause of respondents associated with decline in the youth population in the E. P. church. Schooling was mentioned and talked about by 11 respondents in the face-to-face interviews. Eight of these respondents asserted that most of the youth are students who spend much of their time in school. Besides, the population of the youth declines when these students leave for school. Two respondents said:

Respondent 4: The students, national service personnel and workers are the main cause, because they are not stable in the church”.

Respondent 7: most of the youth in the church are students and they are chasing after higher education so whenever they leave for school the youth group in the church becomes weak”.

One respondent also asserted that, some of the E. P. Church student unions in schools are weak and therefore students end up joining other denominations in school which they end up leaving the E. P. church to join other denominations when they return home. One respondent said this:

“....the pursuit of higher education. I also think that student church unions are not so strong on some campuses so when they go to

school, they join other denominations. I know a friend who was part of us but now when he comes back from school he attends Light House Church”

Unemployment

Unemployment was cited by seven respondents as a probable cause of decline in the youth population. The seven respondents reported that most of the youth are not employed which has caused economic hardship to the youth to contribute financially to the church, hence, preventing the youth from attending church.

Commenting on the cause of youth population decline, these are how two respondents put it:

Respondent 2: “..lack of employment after leaving a trade or after school. the youth find it difficult to get money to even pick a car to church especially those who stay far from the church...”.

Respondent 5: “Most of the youth are not employed coupled with many collections and fund-raising during church service”

Too Much Collection and Appeal for Funds

Too much collection and appeal for funds were cited by six respondents as a probable cause of decline in the youth population in the E. P. church. The respondents attributed the decline of the youth population to the many collections and funds raised during church service. Besides, respondents perceived that the youth are not able to cope with the many offertories and fund raising done by the church, hence, compelling the youth to stay at home instead of attending church. Some respondents said this:

Respondent 11: "...the constant collections and raising of funds almost every Sunday coupled with the economic hardship faced by the youth won't make them come to church. Sometimes, you feel ashamed when everybody is going to give a collection or appeal and you are sitting down..."

Respondent 14: ".... hmmm too much collection and fundraising every Sunday is killing the youth. You know most of us are not working"

The Use of Ewe Language during Service

Six of the respondents also asserted that the use of Ewe language during service is a probable factor influencing the declining youth population in the church. Three of the respondents asserted that some of the youths are not proud of their tribe (Ewe), hence, they end up leaving the church to prevent people from identifying them as "Ewes". One respondent said this:

Respondent 9: "The youth are not proud of their tribe (Ewe) and that they are not important. They look to be inferior, unlike those who were born and bred from their home (Volta) region. Especially our women"

Another respondent asserted that due to the Ewe language the youth who do not understand the language end up leaving the church. One respondent said this:

Respondent 15: "...since we are in Ashanti presbytery, Twi or English should be used during church service, if not those who do not understand the Ewe will leave the church"

Other themes on causal factors identified by this study were: laziness, transfer and work. Some respondents attributed the decline of the youth population to be caused by laziness on the part of the youth. Respondents reported that most of the current youth are too lazy to take part in any activity in the church. One respondent said this regarding the laziness attitude of the youth:

Respondent 7: "I see it as laziness. When I used to be around and when we plan to come and do labour at church premises, they will not come and when it is fundraising too, they will not come at all..."

The finding suggests four major themes for causal factors to the youth decline as faced by E. P. Church in Ghana. First, schooling or academic pursuance was described as having a major influence on the decline of the youth in E. P church. When students in the church leave for school, the youth population declines and increases when school vacates. Also, the students are exposed to other churches in schools due to weak E. P. student unions, which they later end up leaving the church when they return home. In a similar study, Wheaton (2005) reported that 50% of students quit their faith after four years of college. Barna (2001) also reported that 33% of teenagers said that the church will not play a role in their life after they leave home. Barna further reported that Millennials become less active in church upon graduating high school.

Second, unemployment was described as having a greater influence on the decline of the E. P. church. Most of the E. P. Church youth population are not employed, which have caused economic hardships to the youths and are unable to contribute financially to the church. This prevents the youths from

attending church. This finding is similar to Okwuosa et al. (2020), who observed that youth are struggling with their faith as a result of unemployment. According to the authors' theory, these difficulties encouraged young people to switch churches. According to Clemmons (2003), job uncertainty is another reason that prevents some teenagers from participating in church activities. The high percentage of unemployment is also a role in these religious organizations' poor financial condition because jobless people are unable to donate to support the work of the churches (Regnerus & Elder, 2003).

Thirdly, too much collection and appeal for funds were found as having influence on the decline of the E. P. church's youth attendance. The participants perceived that the youth are not able to cope with the many offertories and fund raising done by the church, hence, compelling the youth to stay at home instead of attending church. This finding is similar to Bawa et al. (2022), who observed that 5% of their study respondents believed that the church has become very materialistic and highly monetized. The church allegedly accepts "too much offering," according to some of their respondents.

Fourth, the use of Ewe language during service was also cited as having influence on the decline of the E. P. church's youth attendance. Some of the respondents asserted that some of the youths are not proud of their tribe (Ewe), hence, they end up leaving the church to prevent people from identifying them as "Ewes". Some youth populations do not understand the "Ewes" language, which they end up leaving the church. This finding is similar to Jones (2020), who noted that obstacles like linguistic distinctions make it difficult for youth ministries to reach particular groups of young

people. In this regard, the focus will be on identifying the major, cross-cultural variables affecting the ministry generally and what that would suggest for potential advancements to be made in the future.

Fifth, laziness was also cited as having influence on the decline of the E. P. Church's youth attendance. Humans are inherently indolent, and today's kids are no different. They don't regard the church as a place to find that truth, thus they will actively participate in activities that bring them enjoyment. They see church activities to be burdensome, and they might want to turn to social media and other secular venues in hopes of finding satisfaction instead. In a related study, for example, Njoroge (2015) discovered that 11.2% of participants (29 out of 258) admitted to being lazy.

Finally, work and transfer was also cited as having influence on the decline of the E. P. Church's youth attendance. While the Church longs and prays for its members to find work, some of the young people are choosing to accept jobs and employment opportunities that require them to move from their current residence and study area. The number of youth members in the Church has decreased as a result. In a related study (Barna, 2001), thirty-three percent of teenagers said the church would no longer be important in their lives once they moved out of their parents' house for employment or education.

Theme Two: Roles the Church can play to reduce the Decline of Youth Population in the E. P. Church.

From the interview carried out in this study, respondents perceived the church can play the following roles to reduce the decline in the youth population in the E. P. church: provide scholarships for the youth, organize

training on entrepreneurship, provide mentors for the youth, involve the youth in decision making, organize youth camps and exchange programs, adopt charismatic ways of worship, organize consistent visitations and monthly prayer revival.

Provide Scholarships for the Youth in the Church

Providing scholarship to the youth in the church was the most dominant role respondents perceived the church can play to reduce the decline in the youth population in the E.P. church. Providing scholarship opportunities was mentioned and talked about by twelve respondents in the face-to-face interviews. These respondents were of the view that the church can establish a scholarship scheme that will support the youth to pursue higher education. Moreover, the respondents perceived that providing scholarships for the youth will help educate the youth who will be committed to the church after their education. Two respondents said:

Respondent 14: "...the church can provide scholarship to the youth; they will come back to the church when they graduate".

Respondent 8: ".....financial support, giving them scholarships since most of the youth are students..."

Involve the Youth in the Church's Decision Making

Nine of the respondents had the view that the church can involve the youth in decision making. Seven of these respondents had a view that the church can involve the youth in decision making from the presbytery level to the local level. Besides, respondents are of the view that involving the youth in decision making will make the youth feel represented in all the church's decisions. One respondent said this:

Respondent 2: "...letting them partake in the local and national decision-making process. This will help so that the leaders will add programs that will favour the youth"

One respondent was of the view that involving the youth in decision making is a way of preparing the youth for leadership in the church. Below is the comment of a respondent:

Respondent 6: "...the youth need to be much involved in the church's decision making so as to gain much experience and exposure in ministry as they are prepared for leadership"

Provide Mentors for the Youth

Eight of the respondents had the view that the church can organize mentorship programs and also provide mentors for the youth. Besides, according to the respondents, the church can assign mentors to check up and prepare the youth for leadership. Some comments from respondents were:

Respondent 4: ".....mentoring the youth to rope them into leadership roles in the church.."

Respondent 6: "the youth should be given mentors who will check up on them and advise them on issues"

Some respondents had the view that the church can assign mentors to teach the youth about how to lead service and other activities in the church. One respondent said this:

Respondent 10: "... the church can assign mentors to teach the youth about liturgy and other church activities..."

Organise Training on Entrepreneurship

Seven of the respondents also think the church can organise programs that will equip the youth with entrepreneurial skills. Moreover, these respondents believed that entrepreneurial skills will equip the youth to get some source of money.

Respondent 13 said this: *"...the church hierarchy through entrepreneurial skills development programmes to give them the skills to work..."*

Other respondents also have the view that the church can organize youth camps and exchange programs, adapt charismatic ways of worship, organize consistent visitations and monthly prayer revival. These views were projected as a role the church can play to reduce the decline in the youth population in the E. P. Church.

The finding suggests eight major themes describing the role the church can play to reduce the decline of the youth population in the E. P. Church. First, involving the youth in the church's decision making has been described by most of the respondents as the role of the E. P. Church can play to reduce the decline of the youth population. Involving the youth in decision making will make them feel represented in all the church's decisions. Consistent with the finding, in the study done by Lincoln and Mamiya (2003), clergy were asked, "What special techniques and programs have you found to be successful in attracting young people?" The respondents provided the following information: More involvement in church leadership and decision-making (13.2% of respondents). Church leaders can use these helpful recommendations from Lincoln and Mamiya's study to improve their current

worship practices or introduce new ones. The crucial resources church leaders require to boost participation and engagement from the underrepresented young adult group may be offered by these proposed programs and strategies.

Second, providing mentors for the youth was cited by some of the respondents as the role of the E. P. Church can play to reduce the decline of the youth population. The church can assign mentors to check up and prepare the youth for leadership. This finding is consistent with other studies (Barna Group, 2013; Sumpter, 2019), which found that churches should run mentorship programs for teenagers and young adults to help them deal with life's challenges and learn about God. Additionally, Barna and Sumpter discovered that Millennials who took part in a mentorship program were twice as likely to stay in the church. Meister and Willyerd (2010) research also showed that 59% of Millennials who remained active in the church had a close friendship with an older church member, opening the door to a mentorship relationship. According to this, churches with formal mentorship programs tend to have higher retention rates among Millennials.

Third, organising training programmes on entrepreneurship to equip the youth with entrepreneurial skills, was likewise cited by some of the respondents as a role the E. P. Church can play to reduce the decline of the youth population. One of the areas the church is lagging behind is in creating job opportunities and employment for its members. When Paul was writing to the Galatians in chapter six verse ten, (Gal. 6:10) he encouraged them to do good to all men especially those of the same household of faith. Most of the youths move to new generation churches because they give them jobs. Sometimes they use job opportunities as means of evangelism and the youths

have no option than to go. The church should serve as a safe place, a light at the end of the tunnel and an answer to the questions that fill their minds. It should be a home and a destination for those who are lost, confused, scared and hurt. Moreover, entrepreneurial skills will equip the youth to get some source of money for their living and for supporting the E. P. church financially. Three important areas where business and ministry partnerships can become a model for the church youth population socioeconomic transformation and the entire church include: Helping people in the church and community to start businesses according to the biblical entrepreneurship model. Also, assisting those who already own businesses to become more effective in operating their businesses biblically. According to a research by Shumba (2015), a businessman from Bulawayo who owns a transport company (including cabs and haulage trucks), credits his success to both God and the guidance of his spiritual father. Additionally, the Elder at a church in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Phillip Phiri, a serial entrepreneur, is ardent about his faith and actively participates in church activities. He thinks that his church has helped him in his business endeavours.

Fourth, the role of the E.P. Church can adapt to reduce the decline in the youth church membership by adopting a charismatic way of worship. Technology and worship styles from the twenty-first century are incorporated into the charismatic form of worship. Poor worship styles have the potential to deter young people from visiting church, according to Awuku-Gyampo (2021). According to Awuku-Gyampo, young people are drawn to modern liturgy because they feel at ease participating in the service.

Despite the lack of evidence from his quantitative data, the comprehensive interviews conducted during the qualitative stage contradicted the findings. Awuku-Gyampo claims that worship is more motivating and engaging for the younger generation when it incorporates contemporary music, a strong sound system, Christ-centred preaching, succinct announcements, and more interactive lessons. According to Gary (2004), a good worship session also considers the cerebral, spiritual, relational, and emotional aspects of the worshipers. Sadly, a lot of worship sessions don't really address the needs of the full person; rather, they tend to concentrate mainly on the intellect. Youth in the twenty-first century are constantly experimenting, and technology has also become the norm. As a result, the E. P. Church leaders now have an obligation to come up with fresh ideas for church services and other events that will draw people in and help them feel more at home. According to Jones (2020), there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the modernization of church services through the use of technology and the growth and retention of youth church attendance. The results are also consistent with a quantitative study conducted by Karanu et al. (2020), which discovered that 57.1% of the participants said their church embraced modern technology use to a large extent, 28.6% said their church had embraced modern technology use to a moderate extent, and 14.3% said their church used modern technology to a small extent.

Fifth, the role the E.P. Church can adopt to reduce the decline in the youth church attendance is to organise consistent visitations. One way the church may show its members that it cares about them and values them is by taking the time to visit the youth members and inquire about their wellbeing.

Love and affection are provided to church members, making them feel valued and loved, a feeling that deepens their commitment to the church. The affection and devotion that young members of the church receive from other members and the officers is one method that the E. P. Church could promote membership growth. Consistent youth visits as a means of keeping young people in the church was similar to the findings of Njoroge (2015), who noted that follow-up mobilization cited by 10.1% of the respondents is one of the primary ministries that the church should cultivate to draw young people for discipleship programs.

Sixth, the role the E. P. Church can adopt to reduce the decline in the youth church attendance by organizing monthly prayers. Unquestionably, prayer is a vital component of all human endeavours, whether they be spiritual or natural. In fact, there are times when the decline in young people attending church is a devilish plot to undermine the church and diminish its influence in the near future. Nevertheless, God can prevent the youth from falling away from the church, regardless of the sincerity of their motivations. In fact, some of the youth seek out other charismatic churches' miracles, signs, and wonders in an attempt to satiate their bodily and spiritual needs. This is further supported by the scripture in which Jesus states that most people follow Him not because of the message but rather because of the miracles they experience. In other words, the E. P. Church may be open to miracles, and both members and ministers may pray for God to release them. For instance, a similar study (The Barna Group Ltd., 2009) discovered that "to worship or make a connection with God" was the greatest often stated motivation for visiting church services among youngsters (45% of the youths).

Seventh, the role the E.P. Church can adopt to reduce the decline in the youth church attendance by providing scholarships for the youth. The recent findings indicate that one area in which the E. P. Church is falling short of offering scholarship opportunities to its young members. Scripture emphasized this when Paul exhorted the Galatians in chapter six verse ten (Gal. 6:10) to treat everyone kindly, especially those who shared their beliefs. In light of this, the researcher applauds the efforts made by a few churches in this area and encourages other churches and well-positioned people to assist as well, as doing so will make the kids feel valued in the Church and keep them faithful. This will encourage young people from other churches to become members of the E. P. Church. In the future, these young members will lead fulfilling lives and contribute financially to the church's expansion. According to Thompson (2017), the church should demonstrate its love for the youth by supporting their activities and giving them resources that help them develop as responsible adults. In return for the teenagers' commitment to the church, the church can pledge to meet their needs.

Finally, the role the E.P. Church can adopt to reduce the decline in the youth church attendance is by organizing youth camps and exchange programmes. According to Okolo and Chukwuemerie (2022), leaders have a crucial role in making decisions regarding the spiritual well-being of church members, especially the youth. Different programs, such as sending teenagers to other churches to participate in mentorship programs, are to be introduced. Additionally, they are able to plan a program for youth to go camping, where they will be housed in a location for spiritual development and socialization.

The young people will be motivated to stick with the church by this act of socialization and spiritual uplift.

Theme Three: Policies and Strategies that could be used to Retain or Win New Members to the E.P. church

With regards to the policies and strategies the church can use to retain or win new members, eight main themes emerged. The themes include: youth education policies, policies to strengthen the grass root children service ministry, policies to involve the youth in decision making, assign roles and responsibilities to the youth, make the youth lead liturgy, teach church doctrines, intensify evangelism, and organise more youth programs in the church.

Majority (14) of the respondents perceived that the church should have a policy that will ensure that the youth is represented at all levels of decision taking in the church. Commenting on the church policies to retain or win new members to the church, respondents said these:

Respondent 1: "...having youth participate in local, district and national decision-making processes....". Respondent 5: "...if we want the youth to be in the church we should listen to their views when making decisions for the church..."

About twelve respondents recommended the formulation of educational policies such as provision of scholarships for the youth. Respondents perceive that instituting policies that will provide educational support for the youth will be effective in retaining the youth in the church. Also, about ten respondents proposed that the church can allow the youth to

dominate the number of people leading liturgy in the church. Below are some comments made by respondents regarding the youth leading liturgy:

Respondent 4: “the youth should be made to lead liturgy so that they will feel part of the church...”

Nine respondents perceived that; the church can formulate policies to strengthen the grass root children service ministry to help instil the church’s doctrine into them right from their childhood. Moreover, other respondents believe that the church can assign roles and responsibilities to the youth, make the youth lead liturgy, teach church doctrines, intensify evangelism and also organize more youth programs in the church.

Regarding policies and strategies that could be used to retain or win new members to the E. P. church, the current study found that the church should assign roles and responsibilities to the youth. When the youths are welcomed and allowed to serve alongside adults in the church, they develop a full-fledged member feeling and can be easily identified as members. The youths have a role to present their youthful vision and energy in the activities of the church since they have a great deal to offer as youth in the church. Through meaningful roles, the youths can express their faith hence develop a commitment spirit to the church as their home. The church therefore must tap the talents from the youths and be friendly to them through adequate response to their needs and carefully giving them an audience. Similar to this, according to Ragira et al. (2017), churches should be open to teenagers in order to support their spiritual development. Nielson (2016) asserts that the kids must be actively involved in the church in order to give credence to this. He

continued by advising the church to recognise the teenagers' presence today so they may pick up wisdom for the church of the future.

Moreover, giving roles to the youth in the church as a policy to retain them to the church was similar to Nielson (2016) who posited that, it is necessary for the youth to participate greatly in the church. He went further to advice the church to acknowledge the presence of the youths today so that they may learn for the church of tomorrow. In a similar vein, Ragira et al. (2017) opine that churches must be friendly to the youths in fostering their growth spiritually. When the youths are welcomed and allowed to serve alongside adults in the church, they develop a full-fledged member feeling and can be easily identified as members (Ragira et al.). The youths have a role to present their youthful vision and energy in the activities of the church since they have a great deal to offer as youth in the church (Ragira et al.). Through meaningful roles, the youths can express their faith hence develop a commitment spirit to the church as their home. The church therefore must tap the talents from the youths and be friendly to them through adequate response to their needs and carefully giving them an audience (Ragira et al.). Sumpter (2019) also found that Millennials who were personally engaged by church leadership were four times as likely to remain active in the church.

Second, the current study found policies and strategies that could be used to retain or win new members to the E. P. church is to introduce a youth educational policy such as provision of scholarship for the youth. Paul urged Christians to treat everyone kindly, especially those who belong to the same household of religion, as the text emphasizes (Gal. 6:10). The young will have the chance to complete their education, have fulfilling lives in the future, and

contribute financially to the church's expansion. According to Thompson (2017), the church should demonstrate its love for the youth by supporting their activities and giving them resources that help them develop as responsible adults.

Third, the current study found another policy and strategy that could be used to retain or win new members to the E.P. church, which is to teach church doctrines and introduce policies to strengthen the grassroots children service Ministry. The young and adult membership can be subjected to increased indoctrination, beginning with the children's ministry. An indoctrinated church will continue to grow numerically because its members will stick with the church through thick and thin, no matter what obstacles they face in life. It will also be difficult for the kids to quit the church if the E. P. Church gives the children ministry a lot of attention and begins to win them over to Christ and the church at a young age by teaching them the church's doctrine and the Bible. Similar to the Jehovah's Witnesses, who indoctrinated its adherents and made it difficult for them to convert to another religion, receive a blood transfusion, or even marry a non-churchgoer, the E.P. church ought to indoctrinate its members from an early age to ensure that they are deeply ingrained in church doctrine and will not waver. The church stands to gain more from having its members properly indoctrinated from an early age. Sadly, according to Okolo and Chukwuemerie (2022), some Anglican Church kids who visited the church as teenagers claimed that God seemed to be absent from their church life since they joined the church at their parents' insistence and lacked a foundational trust in God. Okolo and Chukwuemerie surmised

that this might be because the church and their parents did not give them the proper indoctrination at an early age.

Fourth, the current study found that one policy and strategy that could be used to retain or win new members to the E.P. church is to involve the youths in decision making. This is corroborated by a 2003 study by Lincoln and Mamiya, which questioned clergy members about "What unique approaches and initiatives have you found to be effective in drawing young people?" 13.2% of respondents said that young people's engagement and involvement in church leadership and decision-making had increased. Furthermore, according to a research (Fuller Youth Institute, 2014) that polled pastoral leaders of churches that had successfully involved young adults, 33% of them said that their success might be attributed to their open and accepting attitudes toward other people and the culture at large.

Fifth, the current study found that one policy and strategy that could be used to retain or win new members to the E. P. church is to make the youth lead liturgy. The young people would desire to behave and imitate their leadership role models. A good leader is one who can spot talent in the young population and encourage that skill to grow. One way to identify and nurture talent in youth is to support them in realizing it. Since talent develops with practice, leaders can spark youth interest in membership by giving them leadership responsibilities for a program or service. When leaders have faith in the potential of those who follow them and encourage the growth of these skills by exercising caution when delegating leadership, the younger generation feels valued and respected. The failure of E. P. Church to address this need lowers membership among the youth. Njoroge (2015) also found that

77.9% of youths reported that they had not previously been appointed in any leadership role within the church.

Sixth, the current study found that one policy and strategy that could be used to retain or win new members to the E. P. Church is to intensify evangelism. Churches that implement a culturally-relevant and biblical strategy for community evangelism have a higher chance of surviving than those that do not (Williams, 2017). This current finding is in line with Lawson's (2021) findings, which interviewed church officials who demonstrate evangelism in their communities and who affirm that this strategy is essential to bringing about growth. Lawson discovered that in order to stay relevant, pastors must use the gospel to offer solutions to people's problems. A pastor agreed, pointing out that churches must appeal to a wide range of people in order to increase their congregation.

Finally, the current study found that to retain or win new members to the E. P. Church, a policy and strategy such as organising more youth programmes in the Church could be formulated. Content for a youth program should be able to help the youth develop their spiritual, physical, social, and psychological makeup. A well-rounded youth program that is regularly implemented instils in young people a love for the work of God and a knowledge of the Bible. Programs for young adults without children should cater to their needs and interests (Earls, 2008). The responsibilities of youth coordinators or directors include planning more frequent events for young people, creating high-calibre programs, improving the way the church views youth, and even retaining their denominational loyalty. Good youth programs should instil a strong sense of personal religion and a source of sanctity in

young people's spiritual lives, as they are equally essential for successful service. For young people in need, the whole youth ministry offers a plethora of opportunities. Being in a church provides the youth with a sense of belonging. The programs that J. K. Finn recommends: "Bible trivia (BT), also known as Bible challenge (BC), social gatherings retreats, outreach evangelization, sports, athletics, sports, team and family programs, outreach evangelization, prayer groups, and scriptural sharing" (Finn, 2008).

Engaging in sports, dancing clubs, drama, athletes, cycling, mountain climbing, and other physical activities helps young people stay healthy by making the most of their energy. These activities also aid young adults with cardiovascular illnesses (Coleman & Hendry, 1998). A poor youth program may drive people to join other denominations since engaging and motivating church programs are essential to a flourishing youth ministry (Chong-Ho & Tameifuna, 2014). Njoroge (2015) discovered that programs such as retreats, conferences, and training sessions (19.8%), program diversity (16.3%), and Bible study mobilization and follow-up groups (10.1%) would encourage young people to become actively involved in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kajiado Presbytery, Kajiado County, Kenya. In addition, Njoroge discovered that little over a quarter (27.5%) of the elders stated that their congregation was expanding its mentorship as well as mobilizing young people's initiatives.

Conclusion

Chapter four reported the analysis and discussion of the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used for the analysis. The interview data was transcribed and reported as well. The results

show that most (79.3%) of the respondents were females. Also, the majority of the respondents were aged 15-20 (41.4%) and 21-29 (41.4%) years.

Again, the results show that, the majority of the respondents attributed the decline in the youth population to: Lack of job opportunities in the church (72.4%), financial instability of the youth (62.1%), old ways of conducting service (62.1%) and church leaders' lack of interest in the youth (51.7%). It can be concluded that lack of employment opportunities for the youth was the major factor that contributed to the decline of the E.P. church's youth membership attendance.

Regarding the role the church can play to reduce the decline of the E. P. church's youth population, the majority of the respondents had the view that: the church can involve the youth in decision making (93.1%) and modernize the youth program (86.2%). Some respondents also were of the view that the church can make the youth become part of the leadership of the church (41.4%) and leaders of the church can restructure church worship (37.9%). Regarding policies and strategies that could be used to retain members in the EP church, most of the respondents proposed that the church should involve the youth in decision making (77.8%) and give roles to the youth (74.1%). Moreover, about 22.2% proposed that the church should reduce too many levies on the youth. It can be concluded from this result that involvement of the youth in decision making among other factors is more likely to retain youth members in the E.P. church.

Regarding policies that could be used to win new members for the E. P. church, the majority (86.2%) of the respondents had the view that rebranding the youth activities in the church will win new members to the

church. It can be concluded from this result that rebranding youth services with modern technologies among other factors is more likely to win new members for the E. P. church.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the study as well as the conclusions, recommendations and directions for further research. Thus, the chapter focuses on the implications of the findings from the study for policy formulation and further research. The recommendations are made based on the key findings and major conclusions arising from the study.

Summary

A significant obstacle to the E. P. Church's expansion is the dwindling young population. With nine (9) churches and 520 total young members, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (E.P.C.G.) youth in the Obuasi District got its beginnings. This number increased from 520 to 610 significantly between 2004 and 2020. But from 2021 to the present, this number has drastically dropped from 610 to 355, which indicates that 255 young people have left the Church (10th Synod Agenda, 2020). Investigating the reasons for the decline in young people visiting church was the study's goal. To achieve this, the study was guided by three objectives: to determine (1) the causal factors contributing to youth decline, (2) examine the roles the church can play in curbing this development, and (3) recommend policies and strategies that could be used to retain as well as win new members.

The study used descriptive mixed method research design. All the Pastors, Catechists, Presbyters and the inactive youth members in the Obuasi District constituted the population of the study. The study used a sample size of 190 comprising 155 inactive youth members of the E. P. Church, and the 35

Church officials in the Obuasi District. Convenient sampling technique was used to select 18 officials in the E.P. Church, whereas snowball sampling technique was used to select 30 of the youth members of the Church who were inactive. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from the respondents using a self-structured questionnaire in the study. By the study's supervisor, the instrument's face and content were validated. Prior to the actual data gathering, ethical consideration was also guaranteed. While Nvivo was used to analyse the qualitative data, SPSS version 20.0 was used to analyse the quantitative data using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages).

Key Findings

The following findings were established for the study:

Research question one, which was to determine the causal factors contributing to youth decline in the E.P. church in the Obuasi district revealed among other things the following key factors likely to influence the decline of the E.P. church youth population: Lack of job opportunities in the church, financial instability of the youth, youth members leaving for school, too much collection and appeal for funds, the use of Ewe language during service, old ways of conducting service, church leaders lack of interest in the youth, non-involvement of the youth in major decision making, lack of engagement of the youth in church activities, too much doctrines, unstable work and transfers, and lack of visitation and check-ups (See table 2). The lack of job opportunities in the church and financial instability of the youth cited by majority of the respondents as the two major factors affecting the decline of the E.P. church population implied that the Church may not have created employment opportunities for the youth population in the church, looking at

the current economic downturn in Ghana during the post-Covid-19 era, as well as the hardships experienced by the majority of Ghanaians, of which the church's youth members are part. When a young person is unable to give significantly to the Lord during church service, they feel emotionally unstable any time they attend church service. Consequently, church attendance has decreased. Almost all the issues raised by the youths were genuine issues and that failure to factor them in the church policy will lead to more of the youth leaving the church. Therefore the researcher accepts the issues raised.

Research question two which was to assess the roles the church can play in reducing decline of the youth membership in the E. P. church revealed among other things the following roles the church can play to reduce the decline of the youth population: the church can involve the youth in decision making, modernize the youth program, make the youth become part of the leadership of the church, leaders of the church can restructure church worship, provide scholarships for the youth in the church, provide mentors for the youth, organize training on entrepreneurship, make the Youth lead church service, and let the youth own the church. Though all these roles are important as suggested by the participants, the involvement of the youth in decision making was found as the major role the E.P. church can play to reduce the decline of the youth population. When leaders believe in their followers' potential and support the development of these abilities by handing leadership to them with caution, the younger generation feels respected and appreciated. The roles to reduce youth decline such as making the youth become part of the leadership role, making them lead church service, involving them in

decision making, and letting them own the church are supported by other studies (Bradley et al., 2004; Sumpter, 2019).

Modernising the youth program was identified as the second major role the E.P. church can play to reduce the decline of the youth population. The 21st century youth are always exploring and technology has also been the order of the day. This then has laid a responsibility on the E.P. church leaders to find modern ways of making church worship and other engagements innovative to attract others to church and make the youth membership of the church feel more at home. Research has shown a strong correlation between the modernization of church services and youth population retention (Karanu et al., 2020; Jones, 2020). According to Linhart (2016), the next generation is drawn to methods and meaning that are imparted through the expert use of digital technology in the teaching of God's truths. Consequently, E.P. Church educators who possess the necessary skills and know how to use ICT can offer the youth in the Church the best possible educational opportunities.

Research question three that was to assess the policies and strategies that could be used to retain as well as win new members in the E.P. church revealed two separate policies. Regarding policies to retain the youth population, the following policies were found: involve the youth in decision making, give roles to the youth in the church, reduce too many levies on the youth, use Twi or English during service, constant visitations to the youth, organise fora to listen to the suggestion of the youth, youth education policies, policies to strengthen the grass root children service ministry, make the youth lead liturgy, teach church doctrines, and organise more outreach programmes. Though all these policies are important as suggested by the participants, the

involvement of the youth in decision making and giving roles to the youth in the church were found as the major policy the E.P. Church can use to reduce the decline of the youth population. When leaders believe in their followers' potential and support the development of these abilities by handing leadership to them with caution, the younger generation feels respected and appreciated. This policy or strategy is supported by other studies (Bradley et al., 2004; Fuller Youth Institute, 2014; Sumpter, 2019).

Regarding policies to win new members to the church, the following policies were found: rebranding the youth activities in the church, evangelism, and visitation. Regarding evangelism as a policy for E. P. church to win new members, according to Williams (2017), churches with leaders who choose to implement a biblical, culturally appropriate community evangelism plan are more likely to survive than churches without such leaders. Additionally, Lawson's (2021) interviews with church leaders who exhibit these traits in their communities support this tactic as a vital component of fostering growth. Njoroge (2015) revealed that diversity of programs, which was mentioned by 16.3% of the respondents, is one of the other important ministries that the church should create to attract the youth for discipleship programs. This finding supports the idea that rebranding youth activities is a strategy to attract new members. Njoroge discovered that the important ministries that the church should create to attract the youth for discipleship programmes is follow up mobilization, which was indicated by 10.1% of the respondents. This finding supports the use of follow-up or visitation as a strategy to win new members.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from the study, it can be concluded that the factors influencing the decline of the EP church youth population emanate from both the church leadership and the youth of the church. The youth population in the E.P. church has issues with the church leadership regarding membership welfare (Lack of job opportunities in the church, and lack of visitation and check-ups), mentorship (Non-involvement of the youth in major decision making, lack of engagement of the youth in church activities, and leader's lack of interest in the Youth), doctrines and ways services are conducted (too much doctrines, language use, old ways of doing service), financial demands from the church (too much levies on the youth), and transfer policies of the church (unstable work and transfers). Perception of the youth population concerning these issues has resulted in their withdrawal from the church. The E.P. church leadership on the other hand had issues with the youth regarding how they leave for schooling. The youth population who are students are badly influenced by their peers' denomination of worship and opt for their churches upon return from school. It can also be concluded that poor handling of welfare issues of churches such as not creating job opportunities for the youth population to make a living has the major effect on the retention of the youth population.

Second, to reduce the youth decline in church, the E. P. church could play the roles such as involvement of the youth in decision making, modernize the youth program, make the youth become part of the leadership of the church, leaders of the church can restructure church worship, provide scholarships for the youth in the church, provide mentors for the youth,

organize training on entrepreneurship, make the Youth lead church service, and let the youth own the church. It can be concluded that the involvement of the youth in decision making, and modernisation of the youth programmes are more likely to reduce youth decline in E. P. church.

Third, to retain the youth population, the E.P. church could implement the following policies: involving the youth in decision making, give roles to the youth in the church, reduce too many levies on the youth, use Twi or English during service, constant visitations to the youth, organise fora to listen to the suggestion of the youth, youth education policies, policies to strengthen the grass root children service ministry, make the youth lead liturgy, teach church doctrines, and organise more outreach programmes. However, the involvement of the youth in decision making and giving roles to the youth in the church are policies more likely to retain the youth population.

Fourth, to win new members, the E.P. church could implement the following policies: rebranding the youth activities in the church, evangelism, and visitation. However, rebranding the youth activities to make them more attractive to the youth is more likely to win new members to the church as the youth members would like to attend church and invite others to the church.

In contrast to mission churches, the majority of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches employ cutting edge technology during services, have youth-oriented programs, and have teachings that appeal to young people. In an African American Pentecostal Assembly, for example, Campbell (2021) discovered that teachers are interacting with their youth by letting them give presentations, using the Internet to research and understand Scripture, and staying in touch with them through Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, and

conference calls. A youth pastor, a youth coordinator, and two assistant youth leaders oversee the church's whole youth work program, according to Eyongakpa (2012)'s study on Mikael Agricola, Munkkiniemi, and Evangelical Lutheran churches. The Mikael Agricola Church features a television broadcasting program in addition to a music team. Through Facebook and TV broadcast programs, the youth organizers have a robust social network where increasing amounts of publicity are generated. The E.P. Church could adopt the youth policies of the above Pentecostal and Charismatic churches for the youth church attendance retention.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Most (41%) of the respondents were within the age category of 15 and 20 years, and have been members for between 9 and 12 years (45%), suggesting that the current youth membership may consist of people who were either born into the church or have participated in the children ministry. Hence the researcher recommended that the church could intensify the children's ministry education by giving the needed knowledge about the word of God, and the church doctrine, which will improve their fidelity to the church and make them robust in any challenging life circumstances.
2. The lack of employment prospects within the E.P. church (72%) and financial uncertainty of the youths (62%) were cited as the main reason for the drop in church youth participation. Hence the E.P. church could create policies that address the demand for youth

employment while concentrating on its primary mission of spreading the gospel. The policy could focus on introducing entrepreneurial programmes to educate the youth about establishing and growing business, as well as giving them capital to start these businesses. The E.P. Church could also create employment organisations like schools, hospitals, banks, and other institutions that will recruit the youth in the church as they complete schools.

3. The majority of respondents (62%) claimed that the E.P. church's declining youth membership was mostly due to "old ways of conducting worship." Hence there could be introduction and modernisation of innovative ways of improving the worship in the E.P. church. The Internet could be used as a communication strategy to reach the members, the use of technologies such as musical instruments, projectors, videos, broadcast, and social media can be adopted in the church.
4. The majority of study participants cited the church leaders' lack of concern for the youth (52%) and their consequent exclusion from church activities (14%) and important decision-making (21%) as among the factors contributing to the decline of the youth. Hence the E.P. Church officials could be much concerned about the welfare and spiritual growth of the youth by engaging them in administrative matters concerning the Church and themselves. They could also be allowed to lead programmes in the church.
5. Ten percent (10%) of respondents cited the excessive number of E.P. Church doctrines as a factor in the decline in the church youth

attendance. Hence, the E.P. Church could review or evaluate the past, present and future prospect of its doctrines for possible amendment taking into consideration the current generation and its way of worship.

6. Three percent (3%) of the study participants cited unstable work and transfers as reasons impeding the expansion of the E.P. Church's youth membership. This indicates that the transfer strategy of the E.P. Church does not necessarily encourage growth in the number of church members, as some people perceive it as a means of reducing their love and connection with the church leaders. Hence, the E.P. Church policies regarding transfer of pastors could be reviewed and improved in order to support the expansion of church membership in general and youth participation in particular.
7. Seven percent (7%) of the participants cited lack of follow-up and visitation from church leadership as a contributing reason in the fall of the E.P. church's youth membership. This outcome suggests that the leadership of the E.P. Church may not have been visiting the members to know their welfare. Hence the church officials could consistently visit the youth members and enquire about their welfare. This will make them feel cherished and appreciated, thereby increasing their devotion to the Church.

Suggestions for Future Research

The following areas are recommended for further research study.

1. Entrepreneurship and the Church Youth Attendance Growth and Development; the Case of E.P. Church at Obuasi District of the Ashanti Presbytery.
2. Secularism, Leadership, Nurturing, and their Influence on the Church youth growth and development; the Case of E.P. Church at Obuasi District of the Ashanti Presbytery.

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