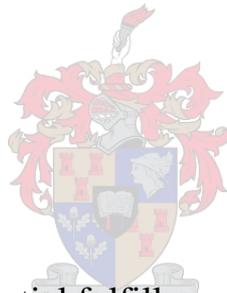# TRANS-GENERATIONAL MENTORSHIP: A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE AS LIFE CARE

JOHANNES JACOBUS OOSTHUIZEN

Assignment presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Divinity at the University of Stellenbosch

Promoter: Rev LLM MacMaster

DECEMBER 2007

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature:_____   Date: _____

Summary

In Ecclesiastes 4 the author writes that two people are better than one and that a cord of three strands is not quickly broken (NIV). The Bible is full of examples how godly men and women such as Moses, David, Ruth, Paul, Mark and many others understood this concept and surrounded them with people that could mentor them through life.

It important to notice that they were not only mentored in "spiritual matters," but in life matters. In Jesus' ministry on earth he often taught about finances (e.g. Matt 25:14-30), marriage (e.g. Matt 5:31), relationships (e.g. Matt 5:44), anxiety (e.g. Matt 6:27) etc. These 'everyday life issues' were never separated from spiritual issues such as the Kingdom, forgiveness, holiness etc in Jesus' teaching. And it would not have been, for in the Jewish culture, as well as the Hellenistic culture of the time, one's faith was interwoven with all dynamics of life (food, clothing, trade etc). To teach someone about taxes or food, was just as 'spiritual' as teaching someone about the attributes of God.

Unfortunately the Enlightment era brought a 'split' between 'spiritual' and 'life' matters, which left us with a legacy of Christians who knew their religion, yet were unequipped to live life.

In this research paper I believe that it is shown that the local congregation has all the gifts, expertise, wisdom and people from different walks of life that are needed to return to a 'system' of life mentoring.
It is one of the calls and purposes of the church and is the definition of pastoral care. With the correct informal, yet managed approach, the local congregation can serve as an incubator and network of trans-generational mentoring relationships which will mentor its members as well as non-members to live life in full.

Opsomming

Index

Chapter 1 - Introduction to research

_____

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

9: Two are better than one,

because they have a good return for their work:

10: If one falls down,

his friend can help him up.

But pity the man who falls

and has no one to help him up!

11: Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.

But how can one keep warm alone?

12: Though one may be overpowered,

two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken (NIV).

In Chapter 4 of Ecclesiastes, the author sketches a bleak picture of the world he lives in. Injustice, oppression, and envy describe the backdrop of the world of the author. Yet in the midst of this world he realizes the importance of someone to stand by one's side, to help and to care. Who is this second person? The heading the NKJV gives this passage is, *The Value of a Friend.* The NIV calls the passage "Friendliness" and the Afrikaans translation (1983) talks about *Twee vaar beter as een* (Two are better than one). And that is what the passage teaches, that one cannot live alone in this world; one needs a second person to help with everyday life. But who is this second person? When one reflects on characters found in Scripture, one realizes that none of the bible characters went through life without the wisdom of others. Even Moses who spoke directly to God, listens to the wisdom of Jethro (Ex 18) and acts according to this wisdom. For Moses the second person is Jethro and for Joshua it is Moses (Num 27:15-23). For Samuel it is Eli (1 Sam 3) and for Saul it is Samuel (1 Sam 9). David and Jonathan (1 Sam18:1-4), Abigajil and David (1 Sam 25:23-35), Nathan and David (2 Sam 12:1-14). Elija and Elihsa (2 Kings 2:9, 3:11), Jehoiada and Joash (2 Kings12:1-3), Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1- 4), Mordecai and Ester (Ester 2), Elisabeth and Maria (Luke 1:39-45). Ananias

helped Paul through a difficult time in his life (Acts 9:10-19) and in the same way does Barnabas (Acts 9:26-30). Barnabas stays loyal to John Mark (2 Tim 4:11, Kol 4:10) and Peter who possibly is one of Marks teachers (Groenewald: 1973:12), stays in contact with John Mark (2 Tim 4:11, Kol 4:10). In his letter to Titus, Paul guides and teaches him and Scripture is also clear about a special relationship between Paul and Timothy (Atcs 16:3, Phil 2:19-23, 1 & 2 Tim) (Bekker 2003:40). All of them purposefully made a decision to care, guide and help people in specific situations in life. In fact, is there a book in the Bible that does not describe a partnership between two or more people that testifies of support, love, encouragement, wisdom, experience, modeling and accountability? (Cloud 2002:29)

Is this what Jesus means when he says: "Therefore go <u>and make disciples of all nations</u>, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and <u>teaching them to obey everything I have commanded</u> you..." (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV).

This making of disciples is often understood in the light of missions (Williams 1988:15), which carries the meaning of evangelism (Williams 1988:9). Thus to disciple is to take the message of Jesus Christ to the nations. But the word disciple means to teach and speaks of a teacher-pupil relationship, something that was a common feature of the ancient world, where Greek philosophers and Jewish Rabbis gathered around themselves groups of apprentices or learners (Douglas 1974:312). One needs to understand that the science/religion split only came in the Enlightment era; before that, religion was a part of everyday life. People lived according to the beliefs of the time. Thus Rabbis and Greek Philosophers taught their pupils about life, which would include the spiritual dynamic.

This is clearly seen in the teaching of Jesus. Jesus did not only exegete the Torah or taught on spiritual matters, he shared and modelled life. From taxes to forgiveness, government to salvation, Jesus' module of discipleship spreads wider than the idea of teaching people the Gospel message. When we look at Jesus as the ultimate role model, we see that he teaches life. Something that is better summarized today by the word, *mentorship.*

"Mentoring is a relational experience through which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources" (Stanley 1992:12).

Once again one needs to ask the question: "Who is the second person in one's own Ecclesiastes 4:9-12?" Personally I yearn for guidance, for wisdom and for a person who can listen to my heart. My wife is not objective enough and my peers lack life experience. My pastor is my colleague, thus he is way to close for comfort and my parents know me too well. In the last 20 months of my life, it felt as if everything I knew and held onto fell apart. Yet there is no one to pick me up, to keep me warm and to defend me. I have listened to the ungodly wisdom of the psychologist, the non-understanding remarks of my parents. I've listened to the cures and remedies of my friends, the sympathy from my pastors and the cries and sadness of my wife.

Who will be the second person in my Ecclesiastes 4:9-12? Who will be my Jesus, guiding and nurturing me through all aspects of life?

In my local congregation, there are members with so much life experience. Some have struggled through the same issues I face, several times in their lives. Is it not within one's local congregation where one will find someone to mentor one? Paul told Titus to ""διδασκαλια" his congregation; the word meaning more than formally teaching others, but rather teaching others in an informal way (Fee, 1988:186)…maybe a 'way of life' way…or a Jesus way?

If mentoring relationships should be present in one's local church, then why is it not my, nor people I interviewed in my pilot study from my congregation or from any of the people I interviewed from other congregations' experience? Has mentorship disappeared from the pews with the paradigm shift of our era? Can the local church be the network of mentorship that can change communities and ultimately, the nations? How can we, who are called to disciple, disciple in a meaningful way?

2. Research question

From my personal experiences, observations and those I interviewed in a pilot study as well as some reading, I would like to pose the following question for research:

"How can the local congregation be a working network and incubator of trans-generational mentorship relationships?"

3. Its place within Practical Theology

The issue of mentorship and discipleship forms part of *pastoral care.* "Pastoral care is the practical outworking of the church's concern for everyday and ultimate needs of its members and the wider community" (Atkinson 1995:78). If pastoral care is concerned with everyday and the ultimate needs of members, it means that it is not only concerned with spiritual matters, but addresses the needs of its members holistically.

It is impossible for one or even two pastors to effectively minister to a congregation of a thousand to a thousand five hundred members in a holistic way. How then can the church be effective and practical in its concern for everyday and ultimate needs of its members and the wider community?

The intension of the research is to determine whether trans-generational mentorship is an answer to this problem of pastoral care.

For this reason I would like to suggest the following title for this thesis: *Trans-generational mentorship: a challenge to pastoral care as life care.*

4. Conceptualization

The research question calls for many concepts to be defined and clarified. What is the nature and purpose of the local congregation? Is it a place and should it be a place where mentor relationships can be found? Why do we not see effective mentoring relationships in our local congregations? What is trans-generational mentorship and is it practical? What are the dangers of trans-generational mentorship? What kind of leadership is needed for the local congregation to serve as a working network and incubator for trans-generational mentorship relationships? These are all relevant questions that will be thoroughly addressed within the thesis.

Because the concept and terminology, *'trans-generational-mentorship-relationships'* is not an existing concept, I would briefly clarify it's meaning.

In the phrase, *'trans-generational-mentorship-relationships'* relationship carries the meaning of *a connection or mutual link between people* (English Dictionary, 1999:363). In a mentorship relationship this connection or mutual link is the *experience through which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources" (Stanley 1992:12).* These empowering relationships should manifest across generational borders, thus being *trans-generational-mentorship-relationships.'*

In a congregation all the elements (gifted people from all generations) are present for *trans-generational-mentorship-relationships.'*

Below a very simplistic illustration of how such a module may practically function in a congregation is presented in the form of a molecule structure, implying that all congregation members are "connected" through mentoring relationships:

This figure only illustrates trans-generational and trans-social links. One needs to recognize that every congregation member is equipped with a spiritual gift (Eph 4:7) and many will have skills that can benefit those around them.
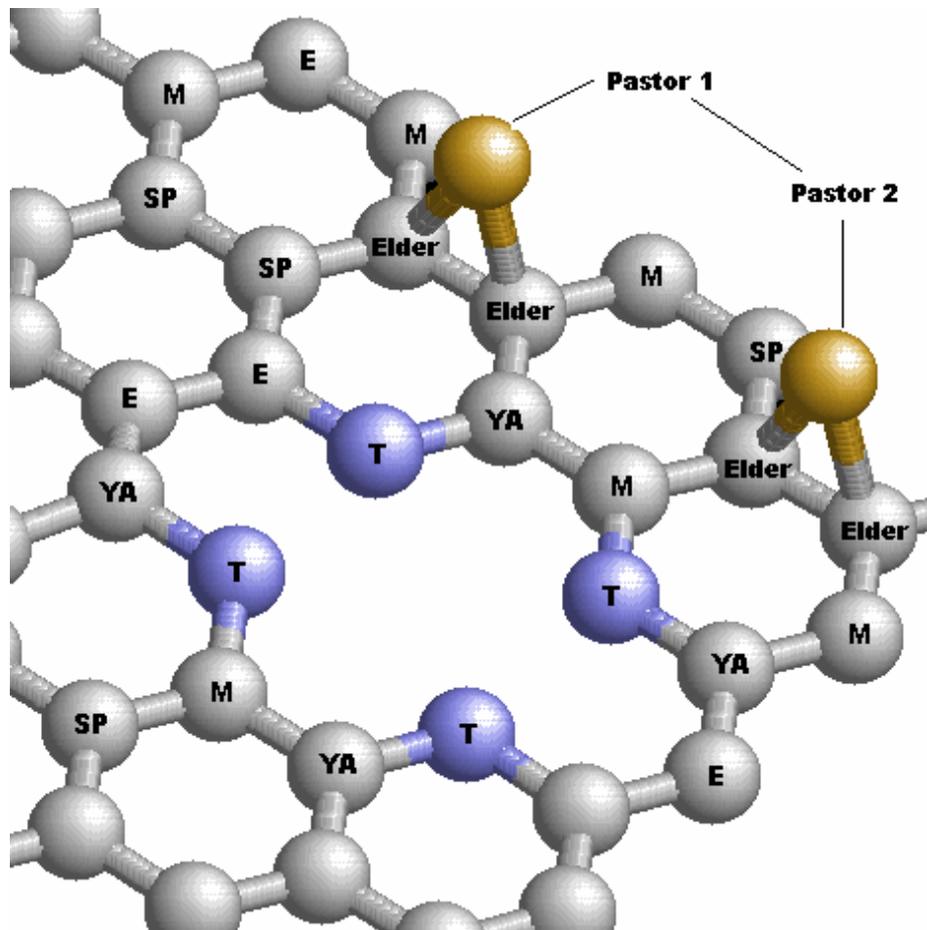
Meaning of Symbols
E - Elderly
M - Married
YA - Young Adult
T - teenager
SP - single parent

5. Research assumptions and presuppositions

The research question is based on the assumption that local congregations at present do not provide a working network for trans-generational mentoring relationships. This assumption is built on the fact that such a network does not exist in the researcher's congregation. This assumption has also been determined by informal discussions on the topic of mentorship with youth leadership, a young adults group, a pastor and through personal observation and experience.

I have also spoken to youth leaders from different denominations (Assemblies of God, Full Gospel, Valley Christian Church and a Presbyterian congregation) as well as lectured a class of +/- 50 students at the Bible Institute of South Africa on mentorship, all having the same response, namely that trans-generational mentorship is essential for healthy church life and Christian living, yet, no one knows how to successfully obtain it.

I would also like to assume that this problem is not only a South African problem, but a modern/post-modern Western problem. It seems that in some Asian and African cultures, "life mentoring" forms part of the culture. In the West however, the Enlightenment era brought a movement of individualism to the fore. This feeling of individualism has been amplified today, by the information era, globalization and the strong emphasis on human rights. I believe that all of these have a negative effect on trans-generational mentoring relationships for it places emphasis on the "self" and not on relationships.

It is also assumed that leadership will play a vital role in the implementing of a mentorship module in the local congregation thus leadership styles for effective mentoring, will also be researched.

Being aware that the outcome of this research might be invalid if based on a false assumption, an attempt will be made to validate all assumptions and presuppositions.

6. *Research Methodology and Design*

The research for this thesis will be qualitative in nature; thus more inductive (a reasoning process of generalizing from facts, instances or examples) than deductive (a reasoning process of logical reasoning from stated propositions). In other words, the research will be based on a variety of methods which will focus on interpretative and naturalistic approaches.

The research will predominantly be a mixture of the following empirical approaches:

6.1 Existing literature

Mentorship has been well researched. Several texts exist on different types of mentorship (i.e. youth mentorship, leadership mentorship, etc) and will be studied, interacted with and reported on as a means to gather useful information that will address the research question.

The interpretation and application of Scripture will also play a significant part in this process, for Scripture claims to address all the issues for healthy living (2Tim 3:16-17).

6.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires will be developed with a specific focus, and used to measure specific issues, attitudes and beliefs assumed to be relevant for the research question (Hendriks 2004:233). These questionnaires will be helpful to understand the specific context and to clarify possible assumptions.

6.3 Interviewing

"This method gains direct information on specific issues that only observations cannot accomplish" (Hendriks 2004:232).

6.4 Case studies

"A case study describes a current phenomenon in a real-life situation. As a research strategy, it focuses on a single organization, institution, event, program or group" (Hendriks 2004:233). Data collected from surveys, interviews, observation and texts will be used for case studies that will evaluate past events and programs and investigate current events and programs concerning mentoring.

6.5 Personal observation and experience

The researcher himself has been involved in ministry full time for the past five years. In his five years of experience he has observed and experienced the successes and failures concerning mentoring relationships.

7. Data analysis

The researcher is well aware that "pure" objectiveness is an ideology. This said however, the researcher will attempt not to steer the outcome of the data into a specific direction, but rather to let the outcome steer the researcher. The opinions of other people will be vital in the interpretation process of the data.

An hypothesis will develop as an outcome of the data analysis which in turn will be tested and analyzed.

8. Value of the possible outcome of research

8.1 Immediate context

In [1]Congregation X, many ministries (youth, young adults, worship etc) claim to have *mentorship* as a foundation of the ministry. It is claimed that the value of mentorship is seen in the Bible, especially through the life of Jesus and therefore it should be part of the way we "do church." Truth is however, that the practical application of a mentorship network in Congregation X's ministries have not been successful.

I hope that with the outcome of the research, one will be able to bring new wisdom to the leadership of Congregation X as to how one can use *trans-generational-mentorship-relationships* effectively in pastoral care.

8.2 Possible module development

The outcome of the research may lay the foundation for the development of a *trans-generational-mentorship-relationship-module* that can be used interdenominationally and internationally.

8.3 Other disciplines

The main focus of this thesis' research is pastoral care. I believe that if a *trans-generational-mentorship-relationship-module* functions effectively in a local congregation, there may be potential in applying such a module in other disciplines of practical theology (e.g. missions, counseling etc).There might even be potential in applying such a module in the secular business environment.

The research question is relevant and researchable. The outcome has the potential to transform individuals, congregations and communities.

9. Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 - Research proposal and methodology

Chapter 2 - The need for mentorship

Chapter 3 - Trans-generational

Chapter 4 - The local congregation

Chapter 5 - Practical considerations

Chapter 6 - Proposed mentorship model

Chapter 7 - Trans-generational mentorship: a challenge to pastoral care as life care

---

[1] In this research paper sensitive and confidential information concerning a specific congregation will be mentioned. For the protection of certain people and the overall ministry of the congregation an alias name will be used: Congregation X

Chapter 2 - The need for mentorship

_____

1. Introduction

Stephen and Bianca are a couple in Congregation X who feel called for missions (Case study B). In an interview they expressed their frustration concerning support. The mission organization asked them to raise R16 000 a month support for missions, yet their frustration was not concerned with the financial side of things.

They wanted people to "catch the vision" with them; to stand next to them and contribute there gifts and skills to the 'cause.' When were they supposed to resign from their work? When should they think about starting a family? Who would look after their assets when they were overseas? Who would guide them in medical advice?

After a few months, feeling extremely lonely in their vision, they decided not to continue with their quest at that time.

How is it possible that two active members in Congregation X can feel lonely? Congregation X has a membership of 1500 people, with dozens of medical doctors, financial advisors, mothers, legal experts, business men and six missionary couples! The resources concerning expertise and information in several (professional and social) fields are immense. If every member in Congregation X contributed only R10 a month to Stephen and Bianca's venture, the fundraising side of support raising that can take up to 5 years, would have been completed in one sitting! How is it possible for two people in a congregation to have so many unanswered questions, between people with so many answers?

Dr Henry Cloud, who suggests that mentorship is a practical way to 'cope' with life says, _"Part of God's program to make a way for you is to put good people around you who are gifted to help you get where you need to go. Some of these people will just show up in your life, sent by God at just the right time. Others you have to seek out on your own"_ (Cloud 2006:27)

Stephen and Bianca instinctively started to seek mentors. They approached a missionary family who were eager to serve as mentors yet after a while the family nor Stephen or

Bianca knew exactly what was expected from one another in this mentorship relationship.

Stephen and Bianca now struggle with the question 'how' one surrounds one with the right people, and how does one recognize the 'right' people God send upon one's path.

2. Defining mentorship

The term mentorship is often used in the business sphere. According to the Free Management Library, there are many perspectives on the definition of mentoring, especially since the relatively recent popularity of personal and professional coaching. Traditionally, mentoring might have been described as the activities conducted by a person (the mentor) for another person (the mentee) in order to help that other person to do a job more effectively and/or to progress in their career. The mentor was probably someone who had "been there, done that" before. A mentor might use a variety of approaches, eg, coaching, training, discussion, counseling, etc. Today, there seems to be much ongoing discussion and debate about the definitions and differences regarding coaching and mentoring (http://www.managementhelp.org/guiding/mentrng)

In the 'spiritual' (church or congregation) sphere, the basic principles mentioned above will apply, yet the outcome or focus will differ.

When one considers 'spiritual' mentorship or life care mentorship, the focus is the holistic wellbeing of the person. Mentorship can still be described as the activities conducted by a person (the mentor) for another person (the mentee) in order to help that other person not necessarily only to do a job more effectively and/or to progress in their career (although this might be included), but to help the person to be more effective in life and progress in their spiritual and mental growth.

Often in Christian circles, there are some confusion between the terms mentorship and discipleship.

Traditionally a disciple has been understood as someone that is open and teachable. The process of Christian discipleship is a process where a Christian (normally understood as 'young' believer) is guided in Christian teaching resulting in spiritual growth and a closer relationship with God (Francis 1984:15). Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19, to make disciples is often understood in terms of evangelizing.

In his book *Essentials of Discipleship* Francis says that the primary task of a disciple is that of witness and evangelism (1984:20). "A disciple must know how to give his or her

testimony…besides our testimony; we must also know how to present the gospel intelligently" (Francis 1984:20).

I would like to argue that Jesus never intended discipleship to mean what traditionally is understood by it; it is much more comprehensive.

In Jesus' ministry on earth he often taught about finances (e.g. Matt 25:14-30), marriage (e.g. Matt 5:31), relationships (e.g. Matt 5:44), anxiety (e.g. Matt 6:27) etc. These 'everyday life issues' where never separated from spiritual issues such as the Kingdom, forgiveness, holiness etc in Jesus' teaching. And it would not have been, for in the Jewish culture, as well as the Hellenistic culture of the time, one's faith was interwoven with all dynamics of life (food, clothing, trade etc). To teach someone about taxes or food, was just as 'spiritual' as teaching someone about the attributes of God. Disciples were not only taught in spiritual matters as we know it, but in all walks of life. Thus I believe that when Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and disciple the nations, his commission was a holistic one that addressed all spheres of life.

If one considers this understanding of discipleship, I would like to suggest that discipleship and mentorship, in a Christian context is the same.

In his book, *The mentoring relationships you need to succeed in life*, Stanley define mentorship as follows:

"Mentoring is a relational experience through which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources" (1992:12).

2.1 Essential elements of mentoring

If one considers the definition above, a few essential elements of mentorship are present:

2.1.1 Relational experience: For mentorship to function one needs people. A special relationship (bond) needs to be formed between the mentor and mentee.

2.1.2 One person empowers another: For one person (mentor) to empower another (mentee), the mentor should have 'something' to give the mentee. This 'something' can be abstract in form (e.g. comfort, acceptance, caring) or more concrete (e.g. sharing insight in a specific matter, listening, etc).

2.1.3 *God-given resources:* Dr. Henry Cloud suggests that the following God-given resources are resources all humans can use in mentoring relationships (2002:28):

➢ *Support:* Often certain events happen in one's life that requires more 'energy' than is in possession of. In times of great loss, illness, etc, one needs other people's support and strength. Even in less crucial times, support may give a person the needed assurance to make certain decisions.

➢ *Love:* "And above all things have fervent love to yourselves, for love will cover a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Love takes the 'sting' out of life and knowing that people are on one's side will make it possible for one to cope with life's challenges.

➢ *Courage:* Dr Cloud says that all people experience times of fear, and times when it feels that the challenge one faces is too big to face. In those times one needs God's people on one's side to remind one to have courage. "We also know that the mere presence of a support team adds courage in and of itself" (2002:28).

➢ *Feedback:* "Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear" (Prov 25:12)
One needs feedback from others. It helps one to measure oneself in life. "Over and over, the Bible tells us that people are one of the sources of God's correction to us" (2002:29).

➢ *Wisdom:* "We just do not possess all the knowledge and wisdom that we are going to need. God speaks those things into our lives through other wise people" (2002:29).

➢ *Modelling:* It is interesting to see how young children imitate their parents; it is part of the growing up process. I would like to argue that this process never stops. In all areas of life (marriage, work or personal growth) one needs to see how it is done. Dr Cloud says that one cannot do what one has never seen. The mentor is a role model to be imitated by the mentee.

> *Values:* Values develop in the context of community. One learns new values from others and one is supported in keeping values and refining them through the people one associates with.

> *Accountability:* Everything in life has some sort of "measuring gauge." A fuel gauge tells one if one has enough fuel, and an auditor tells one about the status of one's business. Dr Cloud says that one needs to be held accountable by others. "We need to be 'audited' by others to know how we are doing and what areas need more focus" (2002:29).

2.2. Essential Elements of Mentorship: Summary

Can all be mentors? I would like to answer that anyone has the potential or the ability to be a mentor. All can love, support and encourage. All can be a model, be an accountability partner, share values and share wisdom in an area where one as 'been there, done that." The only environment needed for mentorship is some kind of a community.

In reading the above, the local congregation sounds like the perfect place for mentoring relationships. If all the ingredients for building mentoring relationships are present in a local congregation, why is it that the 'cake' is not 'baked'?

3 Stumbling blocks of building mentoring relationships

3.1 Western Modern/Post-Modern World

According to David Bosch we are experiencing a paradigm shift from the modern era into the post-modern era. He says that such a paradigm shift does not apear over night, but takes decades and sometimes centuries to develop distinctive contours (2002:349). At the time of Bosch's first publication of *Transforming Mission* (1991) he argued that we are thinking and working in terms of two paradigms.

More than a decade later, I believe the contours of the post-modern paradigm are becoming clearer annually.

Jameson (1993:38) suggests that the following three 'phenomena' stipulate these post modern contours:

1. A new kind of superficiality" or "depthlessness", in which models which once explained people and things in terms of an "inside" and an "outside" have been rejected.

2. Second is a rejection of the modernist "Utopian gesture"
3. The fading of affect (the disappearing of emotions)

One can describe the modern/post-modern person to be an individualistic person, who questions or rejects 'truth statements.' There is very little place for ideological philosophy and individuals are prestige driven, resulting in self centeredness. This said however, it does seem as if life couching or mentoring is a 'buzz' word that accompanies the post-modern era. According to the Free Management Library, mentoring is something that is spoken about and applied in the business realms (http://www.managementhelp.org/guiding/mentrng/mentrng.htm).   One   wonders however, what the main reason is for mentoring in the business sector. Is it to ensure a 'whole' fulfilled life for the mentee, or is it to ensure better productivity for the company which results in a greater profit for the company?

This modern/post-modern paradigm shift is a stumbling block for mentoring relationships. On the one hand the modern/post-modern paradigm shift causes a time of uncertainty (Bosch 2002:349) which calls for people to lead and give advice and answers. Yet, the modern/post-modern paradigm questions advice, answers and guidance. Because 'everything goes,' no guidance is needed. Individualism needs no mentors for it decides for itself. Even when mentorship systems are put in place, it is more than often for capitalistic reasons, and necessarily for the holistic well being of the mentee.

3.2 Generation gap

In chapter 3 generations will be discussed in full.

The distance between the different generations calls for many misunderstandings. Misunderstanding and misinterpretations are stumbling block for any mentorship relationship.

3.3 Purpose and nature of local congregation

In 2.1 it was said that the local congregation seems to be the perfect environment for building mentoring relationships. This said however, one needs to ask if it is the purpose of the local congregation and what people understand the purpose and nature of the local congregation to be. The average person's understanding of the local congregation can be a stumbling block.

The purpose and nature of the local congregation will be discussed in chapter 4.

Chapter 3 - Trans-generational mentorship

_____

1. Introduction

In his book *Reclaiming our Prodigal Sons and Daughters,* Scott Larson writes about his work with troubled youth. Larson tells fascinating success stories about how troubled youth and juveniles were healed in many dimensions of their lives. Behind every success story, stands a mentor or mentors.

In Larson's concept of 'reparenting' he calls for the extended family, neighbours and teachers to act as mentors in a young persons life. According the research from the Search Institute, all children should know at least six adults who support their development through connectedness and continuity over a period of years (Larson 2000:102).

Larson's work gives testimony of the fact that trans-generational mentorship, in an adult-youth set-ups works very well.

In the research question, "how can the local congregation be a working network and incubator of trans-generational mentorship relationships," trans-generational mentorship means a relational experience through which one person from one generation empowers another from a different generation by sharing God-given resource.

In Congregation X, a young adult's ministry was formed to minister to youth that leaves school and enter the adult world. There were no age restrictions placed on the ministry which, after several years resulted in a group of people that ranges between the ages 19 and 40 years of age; one group compiled out of three generation groups. The result of questionnaire 1A (Addendum A) shows that although generally the young adults group is not structured to promote mentorship, indirectly mentoring relationships do form. Some suggest that the trans-generational nature of the group is a 'God-given resource.' Others feel that if the group is correctly structured to promote mentorship, much more can be learned from one another.

A *generation* is a whole body of persons born about the same time (Hawkins, 2002:266).

There are several debates about the correct dating for the different generations. "Sociologists have, sometimes fairly arbitrarily, decided on dates for a generation's

beginning and end points because they feel it is so critical to mark these exactly. Events such as world wars the Vietnam war, the great depression, etc are events that influence such beginning and end points. In South Africa, the National Youth Commission, categorizes youth between the ages of 0 and 35 because of the Apartheid system for it is believed that those between the ages of 25 and 35 have been robbed of their youth (Rudi Buys - National Youth Commission). Every country has its own events that would serve as beginning and end points. It seems however as if the United State of America has definitely set some trends and as if other countries followed the trends a few years after the USA has set them.

In his book *Mind the Gap*, Graeme Codrington suggests the following *generational table* as a rough guide to categorize the different generations (2004:19):

Generations	USA	Europe/UK	Japan	*South Africa*
GI's	1900-1923	1900-1918	1900-1925	*1900-1929*
Silents	1923-1942	1918-1945	1925-1945	*1930-1949*
Boomers	1943-1962	1946-1965	1945-1966	*1950-1969*
Xers	1963-1983	1966-1965	1966-1985	*1970-1989*
Millennials	1984-2001	1985-2001	1986-2001	*1990-2005*

2. Every generation has much to give the other:

2.1 GI (Hero) Generation

GI's characteristics are described as gallantry and civic minded. GI's were born in the time when the first transatlantic radio signal was sent. The Wright brothers became the first to fly an aircraft. The Titanic sank, World War I broke out the Russian Revolution erupted and Henry Ford provided the first motor car for mass production. Albert Einstein developed his Special Theory of Relativity and the Panama Canal was opened.

What can anyone gain today by being in a mentorship relationship with a GI?
In any mentorship relationship, the mentee can learn from the mentor's life experiences. The world of the GI is so vastly different from that of 2007. How does one cope with change? How does one cope with war? What is important in life? What is unimportant in life? Should one be afraid of ageing? These are questions only GIs can answer.

One of the pre-requisites for mentoring relationships is time investment and time is something GIs have in abundance (Codrington 2004:25-29).

2.2 Silent Generation

The Silent generation is benchmarked by the Great Depression, discovery of Penicillin, Television, World War II and the Pearl Habour bombings. The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, the D-Day invasion in Normandy took place and the Nazi concentration camps were exposed.

People from this generation is characterized by their reserved, stoic, clean living and gentlemanly nature. They dislike debt and borrowing, enjoy security and stability and have an attitude of hard work.

Codrington says that the Silents' hardworking frugal lives pay off. Most of them are home owners, and are financially stable enough to retire and enjoy life. Silents are recognized by the new ventures they embark on at old age (Codrington 2004:34).

In South Africa (and world wide) today, debt is one of the greatest socio economic challenges one faces. Younger generations are often accused of laziness. Much can be learned from the Silents concerning work ethic, financial management and the benefits of financial planning. The Silents also faced one of the most war torn decades in history and can share immense wisdom and character in building one up from nothing.

2.3 Baby Boomer Generation

"If you have it, flash it!" This is the attitude triad that depicts the Baby Boomer generation (Codrington 2004:36). They dislike paying of debts and ageing, but love winning, leading and shopping. They are characterized by their talkative, bossy, inquisitive and competitive nature.

It is important to note that today the Boomers occupy the political, governmental and business arenas in the world. They are the legislators who attempt to maintain morals and values.
They 'Botox' their age away and call sixties middle age. Boomers are optimistic and view everything in life 'half full' (Codrington 2004:36-45).

Because of their influence in political, social and economic realm the Boomers is a resource of information and experience. Mentee's (older or younger) will benefit greatly from a mentorship relationship with a Boomer.

In most of Larson's work concerning 'problem youth,' it was Boomers who stepped forward as mentors.

2.4 Xer Generation

Pragmatic, individualistic, arrogant and risk-takers are those born between 1960 and 1980. With an attitude of 'whatever' the Xer's enjoy change, being with friends and sharing. Bossiness and corporate culture are taboo's.

They grew up in the era of the first microchip, the evacuating of troops from Vietnam, the Soweto school children riot (16 June 1976), the first test-tube baby, Prince Charles and Lady Diana, AIDS is named, the Challenger shuttle explosions and Nelson Mandela's release from prison.

Although Xers have the highest suicide rate amongst themselves, they can claim the most interesting extreme lives; they invented extreme sports! The jobs they take are often not recognized by the traditional business sector. In fact, the Xers challenge traditions.

The Xers are willing to work long hours, and they either 'make it' big, or they move back home with their parents at the age of 31.

They marry later than the previous generations, and have children later in their lives. The Xers have a seeking in the spiritual sphere and a belief in the supernatural. One can summarize the Xers life as extreme, confusing, yet passionate about life!

As mentors Xers can contribute excitement to young and old. In Congregation X, a Xer once challenged a peer, someone younger as well as a Silent couple to participate in an extreme water adventure. All participated and all did not only enjoy it, but grew in life experience. Xers push the boundaries and can help people to get to know themselves.

Larson says that the four elements *generosity, mastery, belonging* and *independence* are the qualities youngsters need to develop (2000:73). These four qualities are qualities synonymous with generation X, and because of their sharing culture, they make great mentors who can impart these qualities.

2.5 Millennial Generation

Labels, shopping, friends, family and a love for the environment serve as a yardstick that identifies Millennials. Millenials believe that they can make the world a better place. Typical characteristics describing Millennials are tolerances, honesty, optimism, independence and a caring nature.
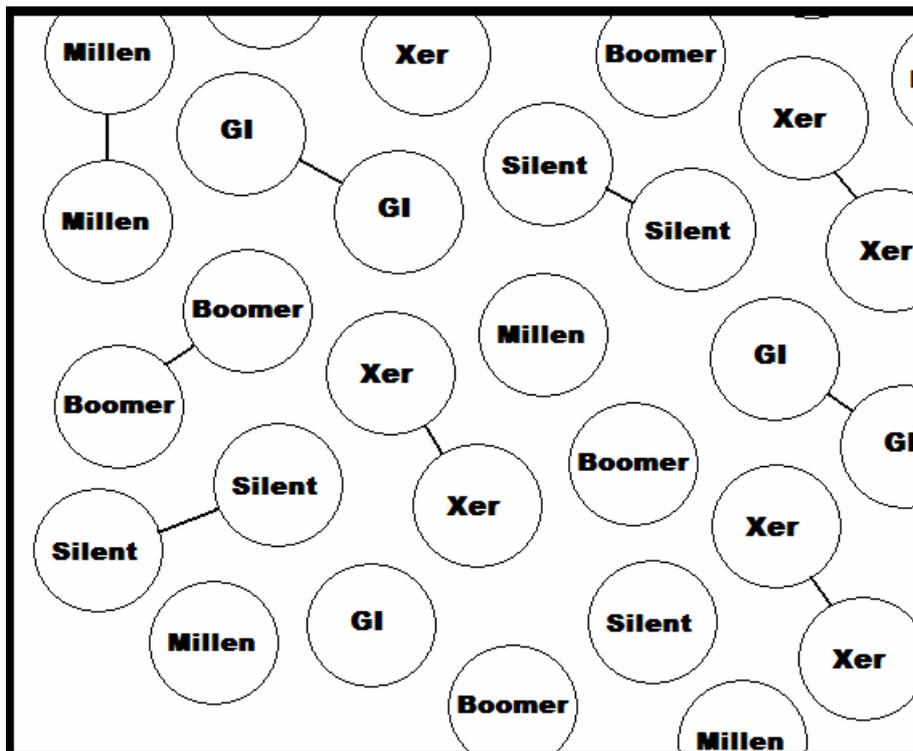
They dislike dishonesty and unbalanced lives.

They grew up in a time of SMS, GPS, 3G and email. Understanding technology comes natural to them. Cloning is a reality and terrorism a threat. Millennials are entering the workplace at a much earlier rate than their predecessors. Some suggests that the Millennials might be the wisest of all the generations (Codrington 2004:63).

3. Generation Gap

Each and every generation has tremendous positive character traits and time specific experiences that can benefit young and old.

If one can surround a person with the skills, wisdom and God-given resources found within each generation one will establish a strong working mentoring network. In the figure below the circles represents an individual from a generation. Each individual is surrounded by one mentor from every generation group as well as a mentor from the individual's peer group.

Unfortunately, although every individual is surrounded with a mentor from another generation and the imparting of skills, experience and wisdom from other generations, the gaps between the individuals on the illustration point to a great stumbling block concerning trans-generational mentoring relationships. This stumbling block is called the *generation gap.*

According to the Oxford dictionary, a *generation gap* is the "difference of opinion between those of different generations" (Hawkins, 2002:266).

These opinions, which are formed by the time, events and environment in which a person grows up, seems to be so strong that it causes a natural tendency for individuals of different generation groups not to associate with one another.

If one considers a local church congregation one will find that almost all these generation groups are present. There is also a common purpose among the generation groups (to worship God), yet trans-generational friendships do not naturally develop. Why not?

In studying the different generations, one may conclude that the different 'worlds' every generation group developed in, caused a different 'worldview' (morals, values, characteristics and attitudes) to develop. The differences or gaps result in a natural attraction of people of the same generation group.

4. Conclusion

Generation gaps can be counter productive in the trans-generational mentorship process. Ways to bridge the generation gaps are needed to let trans-generational mentoring relationships be formed.

Because trans-generational mentoring relationships are not a natural phenomena, specific actions should be taken to form such relationships. These specific action, is the 'how' in the questions "How can the local congregation be a working network and incubator of trans-generational mentorship relationships?" and will be discussed in chapter 6.

Chapter 4 - The nature of the congregation

_____

In the research question, "How can the local congregation be a working network and incubator of trans-generational mentorship relationships?" one is assuming that the local congregation <u>can</u> be a working network and incubator of trans-generational mentorship relationships. The main concern of this chapter is to establish if such an assumption can be substantiated, and if so, how the local congregation can fulfill this task.

1. Defining local congregation

I would like to differentiate between the term Church and the local congregation, and state that Church is present to a lesser or greater extent in the local congregation. In his book _The Church,_ Hans Küng says that the Church is the people of God (1973:108). John Calvin agues that Church is more than the visible, but is in act also invisible; including all of the elect, even those who has departed this life (1989:281). Wayne Grudem seems to combine Calvin and Küng's views on Church when he defines church as the "community of all true believers for all time" (1994:853). Thus the word church is a broad term not confined to a specific place and time. In this research paper, congregation describes a specific group of people at a specific place and time.

If one uses Grudem's definition for church, it is safe to say that Congregation X is not purely church, for several people within the congregation will admit that they are not believers.

I believe the next word that needs clarification is that of a believer. For the sake of this research paper the term (Christian) believer will be defined as a person who believes in the 'fundamental' essentials of the Christian faith (e.g. Trinity, person and work of Christ, sacrificial atonement on the cross, everlasting life etc). The differentiation between believers and non-believers does not serve as a judgment on some or a spiritual elevation of others, but as an important fact that will have an effect on the conclusion of this research. It is just as important as the fact that all people fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23) and are thus imperfect.

Non-believers attend church services because it forms part of their spirituality even though they will oppose some fundamental essentials of the Christian faith.

The Authorized Version translates the four Hebrew words, _mo ed, qahal, aseret &_ _ekklesia_ (LXX) found in the Old Testament to congregation. Directly translated these

words mean appointed or designated, people assembled together by appointment, restrain or confine, and the gathering of people (Douglas 1962:248).

The local congregation thus is an assembly of believers and non-believers. One can also say that the local congregation consists of the church and the non-church.

The local congregation however is more than its believers for it also can be recognized by the different dimensions and the nature of the church present within it.

The local congregation is also a non governmental institution with certain rules and regulations, leadership structures, tax liabilities, electricity bills, board meetings, and 'investors.'

With the above in mind I would like to define the *local congregation* as follows:
The local congregation is a regular assembly of (imperfect) people, believers and non-believers, who can be identified by its spiritual and institutional nature.

In essence the research question is concerned with the topic whether such an environment described above is ideal for the forming of mentoring relationships and if it is the purpose of that environment (congregation)?
If it is, how should one shape or rearrange the environment for the task if necessary?

2 The nature of the local congregation
In determining the nature and purpose of the local congregation one will be able to answer the above questions.

2.1 The biblical description
In his booklet *The Local Church and Mission*, Theodore Williams (1988) discusses the following 8 biblical descriptions of the local congregation:

- It is a common wealth
In his letter to the congregation in Ephesus, a circular letter that most probably reached other congregations as well, Paul writes, "You are fellow citizens with the saints" (Eph 2:19). The local church is compared to a commonwealth whose criticizes share in common privileges. "The emphasis is here on the equality of God's people in their

privileges. All the blessings promised to God's people are inherited by everyone who belongs to this community" (1988:1).

All of God's people are equal in standing and in privileges, regardless of age, race, socio-economic class or any other barrier.

- It is a household

"You are fellow citizens with the saints and *members of the household of God*" (Eph 2:19).

The same love and care that is seen in a family (household) should be seen in the local congregation. "This is what the local congregation ought to mean to us - a place where we feel safe, can be ourselves, and have no need to be boarded up behind a façade, a place where we are cared for and care for one another" (Williams 1988:2).

- It is a building

"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (Eph 2:20).

It is clear that this is a 'spiritual' building with the emphasis on the teaching of the apostles and prophets who present the Word of God. "The local [congregation] church is the place where the Scriptures are preached and taught. The members are held together by their common allegiance to Christ" (Williams 1988:2).

- It is a temple

"The whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph 2:21-22).

The emphasis in this verse is God's presence in the local congregation and the worship that is offered to him. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 one reads, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you." The 'you' used is in the plural which implies that the congregation of God's people are his temple and His dwelling place.

"The church [congregation] is a living organism. Not only is the individual believer indwelt and led by the Spirit of Christ but the local church [congregation] is also indwelt and led by Him Spirit" (Williams 1988:2).

- It is a body

"You are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor 12:27).

The idea of the congregation being a "body" is significant when discussing mentorship. The Apostle Paul explains in 1 Cor 12 that everyone in the congregation has a purpose and that the congregation cannot function properly without al its members.

- It is a flock

"Tend the flock of God that is in your charge" (1 Pet 5:4).

Peter addresses Christians living in various parts of Asia minor. In this verse he speaks to those who are appointed to care for the believers, the congregation.

All these biblical descriptions of the church or congregations can be seen in the story of the New Testament church in Acts:

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved" (Acts 2:44-47).

Much more can be said about the biblical description of a congregation. Above only New Testament passages were mentioned. The Old Testament in its very essence is about a congregation (Israel) and how God dealt with this particular congregation.

All of Scripture speaks of the gathering of God's people as an assembly where love, respect, equality, caring, giving, guidance and leadership are present.

2.2 The Congregation as Institution

Grudem talks about the invisible yet visible church. If one agrees with Grudem's definition that the church is the "community of all true believers for all time" (1994:853), it speaks of an invisible dimension, for no man can see the heart of others. Only God knows who those are in a congregation that are true believers (2 Tim 2:19).

The visible church, according to Grudem, is the church as Christians on earth see it (1994:856). I would like to differ with Grudem's definition on 'visible' and argue that the visible church is the church as anyone would see it. Love, care, equality should be character traits anyone should see. I believe, however, that it is the assembly of believers and the structures (meetings, buildings, offices, synods etc which conducts these assemblies) that are most often most visible.

The local congregation can be identified by its institutional nature. In his book *Models of the Church*, Avery Dulles defines Church[2] primarily in terms of its visible structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers…the church of Christ could not perform its mission without some stable organizational features (1977:31).

2.3 Its fallen nature

Christians, especially evangelicals, enjoy discussing how church is supposed to be. Often Christianity is accused of a "pie-in-the-sky" ideology, and the church, or one's congregation often falls in this category. Caring, love, support etc, are the virtues strived towards and becoming a congregation as close to the New Testament church as possible, hoped for. Unfortunately, every congregation on earth is a fallen congregation.

Congregation X, has several alcoholics and woman (family) abusers. Adultery and fornication is a reality within the congregation; even some leadership is guilty. Some ministers and church council members have been caught with pornography in the past and divorce is common. Depression numbers are extremely high and suicidal attempts accrue often.

This might seem like a congregation in absolute moral degeneration. Truth is, this congregation falls in the middle to higher income group and is perceived by its community as conservative and moral. The youth are well known for good academic and sports achievements and produce great leaders. The congregation has forty active ministries, seven missionary families and does several outreaches every year.

The congregation is also brilliant in acting. Part of the Afrikaans culture is to pretend that everything is under control. Even when one greets the other by asking, "how are you," it is customary to answer, "I am well, thank you."

The church or local congregation is not an ideology. In reality it is an assembly of broken sinful people who wish for acceptance, hence they have facades to protect themselves. It is interesting how the Reformed traditions eagerly claim the doctrine of total depravity (Grudem, 1996:497) yet when assembled, 'act' as saints.

In the readings I have done, the fallen nature of the local congregation is an aspect that is often neglected in discussion about the local congregation.

---

[2] Church is used synonymous with congregation

3. The purpose of the local congregation

There are three main purposes of the local congregation (church) today:

3.1 Ministry to God: Worship

In relation to God the congregation's purpose is to worship God. Paul exhorts the congregation at Colossae, "sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col 3:16). The corporate ministry to God is the main function of the local congregation (Grudem 1994:867).

3.2 Ministry to believers: Nurture

The Apostle Paul often encourages Christian congregations to care for and nurture fellow believers.. In Colossians 3:16 he talks about presenting every man *mature in Christ.* And to the congregation in Ephesus he exhorts leadership to equip the saints for the work of ministry, *for building up the body of Christ*…mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (4:12-13) - (Grudem 1994:867).

3.3 Ministry to the World: Evangelism and Mercy

Jesus told his disciples to make 'disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19) which one may interpret in an evangelistic sense. The Christian is also called to be merciful ("…be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" Luke 6:36).

When reading through the New Testament, these two aspect is in particular present in the church (Acts 11:29, 2 Cor 8:4, 1 John 3:17).

4. Conclusion

If one considers the purpose and nature of the local congregation, in an idealistic sense it seems to be the perfect environment to create trans-generational mentoring relationships.

The major ingredients for such an environment is in the first place people, secondly, love, care and nurturing and in the third place structure to function. These are the nature and purpose of the local congregation. When one only considers these dynamics, of the local congregation, one can safely say that the local congregation can be a working network and incubator of trans-generational mentorship relationships.

This said however, it is important to acknowledge that the congregation is fallen, which might be seen in either a positive or extremely negative way.

In a positive sense one may argue that because of the fallen nature of the local congregation, those who made bad decisions moral, financial or social, can help and guide those who are faced with similar discussions.

When one considers James' words: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; Knowing that the proving of your faith work patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4). Those who have dealt with certain 'temptations' can guide and lead those who struggle with the same temptations.

But what if those who guide, are only under the illusion that they have dealt with their problem, and unintentionally lead their mentee into more disarray? What if those who mentor pretend to be 'qualified' in certain areas, but actually lack in the knowledge needed by the mentee? What if the mentee takes advantage of the kindness of the mentor, or if the mentor abuse his mentee? And who will mentor the mentor?

A case study about a specific situation in Congregation X supports the concern expressed above.

In Congregation X, a certain young married man became actively involved in the congregation. Very gifted in various areas of ministry he soon became involved in several ministries in the congregation. He completed his theological studies and was appointed as a full time youth worker and musical director of the congregation. His ministries were fruitful, and some of the congregation depicted him as the "icon of Congregation X."

Many young people came for 'counseling' to this young person, until one day a young lady with suicidal thoughts, and self-destructing behavior sought the advise and attention of this 'well qualified' youth worker. This lady was in desperate need for male attention because of the absence of a father in her life, and the youth worker had a desperate need to feel valued, something he did not experience in his marriage.

Soon the relationship between the mentor and mentee became unhealthy, and caused both parties to fall in a deep depression, making suicidal attempts.

Not knowing that he had a problem with feelings with not feeling valued, he soon found himself in exactly the same situation with another 'fatherless' girl.

Unfortunately the fallen nature of the congregation filters through to the very gifted, godly and qualified. The fallen nature of a congregation is problematic when one considers mentoring relationships, yet one does not need to disqualify the local congregation on grounds of its fallen nature. Its loving, caring, nurturing nature is also present!

The quest for church leadership would be to implement certain mentor and accountability structures that protect members from abuse, exploitation and hurt; that will promote spiritual growth.

Chapter 5 - Practical Considerations

_____

In the previous chapters the research question was dissected into three categories:

- Mentorship
- Trans-generational
- Local congregation

In this chapter the 'how' of the question, *how can the local congregation be a working network and incubator of trans-generational mentorship relationships* will be discussed.

1. Formal vs Informal approach

Congregation X implemented a youth mentorship system in 2006. Mentors were identified and attended a 'brainstorming' day to plan how they would engage in the task of mentoring. Before youth meetings youth were divided into groups of four or five with their youth mentor. The youth mentor who was a volanteer from the congregation and assigned to a group; the group was chosen on the basis of agen (all being the same age, exept for the mentor). 10 Minutes, at the youth meeting was given for the 'mentees' to give feedback about ther week and to ask for prayer if needed. Of the mentor it was expected to send every mentee a sms during the week and to phone the mentee on his/her birthday. The original idea of this mentorship approach was to create relationships and trust with the youth with the hope that they would confide in their mentors.

This mentorship approach did not work effectively. Mentors forgot to sms there mentees and 10 minutes was not enough time to show sufficient support, feedback, love and accountability.

Another problem this mentorship approach faced was that of feeling 'forced.' Many of the young people disliked the mentors they were assigned to. The mentors picked up on the mentee's dislikes and in turn showed less interest in the mentees. Soon the 'mentorship system' became disfunctional.

There are a few success stories as a result of this mentorship approach however, they are few and far between, and it is unsure if it could be directly linked with the mentorship approach.

I would like to argue that a formal approach to mentoring relationships does not work.

In the same congregation I asked if I could try another approach. I implemented a pilot experiment on February 2007 and continued with the experiment up to June 2007 .

I would like to call this the informal mentorship approach. In this experiment the word mentor and mentee was never used, for it caused an expectation of both parties to act in a specific way, which caused uncomfortableness.

The informal mentorship approached was based on interest. As a pilot experiment I started a youth worship band, inviting every young person in the congregation to join. Even if they could not play an instrument the invitation was to come and learn to play instruments.

What started with only 3 young people grew to 22 young people that came to practices regularly and became involved in the music ministry. Many of them would come for extra music lessons. A deep relationship developed between young musicians and me. Because they never felt force to share with me, sharing came easily. Because of the amount time spent they trusted me and related to me as a friend, yet saw me as an older person with life experience who is there for them to talk to whenever they felt doing it. At the end of two month I have met all their parents, knew what was going on in their home, how many cats they had, and even the name of the person having an affair with one of the young person's mother.

In the four month time period (Feb - June) I had ample time to answer many questions, to guide them in certain directions and share with them an interest of mine. Mentoring came natural for me, because the first contact I had with people were in an area I felt comfortable with (music).

In seeing that this approach of the mentor teaching mentees in areas of interest was so successful, I decided to see if youth will respond in teaching (mentoring) someone older than they.

I announced a general invitation for youth to teach and help me to build a skateboard ramp. Immediately four young people responded and committed to work with me on building a skateboard ramp over weekends.

The last stage of my experiment was to see if one can rise up mentors that will be willing to mentor others. I approached two matric girls whom did modern dancing. I

asked them if they were keen to start a dancing group with our youth. I explained the concept of mentorship to them; that the dance group was only a drawing card for them the build into the lives of others.

They announced that they were starting a group and immediately seven young people responded and started to spend time with the matric girls.

Other identified mentors took own initiative and took some young people to play touch rugby on the beach, mountain climbing etc.

An informal-interest based mentorship approach is effective in building mentoring relationships, trans-generationally.

Although much fruit was seen on this approach, great problems arouse. One of the mentors became involved with an unhealthy relationship with one of the mentees. Some youth had no mentors for the mentors did not have the same interests as those particular youth. Because it was so 'informal' the quite reserved children were often missed.

Concluding that one's approach to establish a mentorship network should be informal and based on interests is a great step in the right direction. This said, however, it is not a full proof system and one needs to ask what can be done to better it.

Also, it worked well in a small setup but how will one approach a congregation of about 1500 members?

2. *Contributing and restricting factors*

In the search to understand the concepts and issues in the previous three chapters many elements or factors that may contribute or restrict the process of forming working trans-generational mentoring relationships came to the fore.

If one can use the *contributing factors* as a foundation to build upon and eliminate the restricting factors, I believe one will be left with the answer as to 'how' one the local congregation can form a trans-generational mentorship network:

Contributing factor	Restricting factors
People: A mentoring system can only work when people are involved. The local	*People:* Because of the fallen nature of people, every mentorship relationship and

congregation provides a 'community' of people across generations. These people have more or less the same belief system, the same spoken and written language and confess (sincerely or not so sincerely) that they care for one another. In essence, these factors are all one needs to form a working mentoring network.	system will be fallen. The fallen or sinful nature can cause great harm to a congregation. Abusive relationships, in a minor or major sense are inevitable. The possibility also exists that some who commit to a mentorship network, my contribute very little to the system.
Local congregation - spiritual dimension: One of the purposes of the local congregation is to support and edify its members. This is done through a care and love for one another within the congregation. When one considers the nature of the local congregation one finds that God has established the church in such a way that it can fulfill its purpose. Through the Holy Spirit, all (believing) members of the congregation have been gifted with a gift of the Spirit for the edification of those around them.	*Local congregation - spiritual dimension:* Even tough one of the purposes and nature of local congregation is 'mentorship,' often the local congregation is nothing more than a traditional assembly of people on a Sunday. Mentorship demands from a person daily involvement in the lives of others. In Congregation X, only a few are involved in church life. The majority only attend services every now and then.
Local congregation - numbers: The more people one can include in a mentorship network, the more functional the network is. If one is only surrounded by three people, one can only gain from the experience, support and expertise of three people. In the case of Congregation X, there are 1500 people registered as members, thus in theory one person can gain from the expertise, support and experience of a 1500 people.	*Local congregation - numbers:* The greater the amount of people in a congregation, the more difficult becomes to manage a specific program. One can easily monitor a mentorship network of only three people however; great recourses will be needed to manage a mentorship network of 1500 people. Congregation X has 1500 registered members however, as little as 500 attend services on a regular basis and only 280

	are involved in some form of church life. The question arise, who should form part of a mentorship network? If one answers that only those active in the congregation should form part of a mentorship network, one will most probably miss those who need it most. Yet, if one includes all 1500 members, one will most probably have many uninterested in the network.
Generational nature of congregation: The majority of family based Christian congregations, have a membership who consists of all five generations. The generational nature of a congregation contributes tremendously to the idea of 'life care[3]' or 'life mentoring.' If one is surrounded by mentors of all generations, the experience is immense.	***Generational nature of congregation:*** When many generational groups function within a community, generation gaps form. Thus, a difference in understanding, morals, values and general interpretation of life exists which might lead to great misunderstandings and frustrations.
Trans-gender relationships: In their book *Captivating*, John and Stasi Eldredge writes about the 'mystery of a woman's soul.' In the book they note how an absent or passive father figure can wound a young girl (2005:65). Larson suggests that other men can fulfill the role of a passive or absent father (2000:102). The congregation is filled with families with absent or passive fathers as well as men that can fill these absences.	***Trans-gender relationships:*** The male/female dynamics of trans-gender relationships, are dangerous. According to Richard Murphy, in the USA almost forty percent of pastors said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry and fifty percent of pastors' marriages will end in divorce (2000). Because mentorship entails a close relationship with another person, the danger of extra-marital affairs might form when mentoring relationships form across gender.

---

[3] Mentoring in all aspects of life; holistic mentoring

	Confidentiality & counseling skills: In mentoring relationships the advice given to a mentee can be life changing in a positive or negative sense. Average congregation members aren't qualified in counseling. In mentorship relationship confidentiality also plays an important part however, a mentorship network, can easily become a gossip network, causing a total collapse of a mentorship system.

If one considers the contributing factors above it seems that all the major elements to start and maintain a mentorship networks are in place. The local congregation has numerous of people that can contribute skills and experience into the 'mentee pool.' This is also part of the purpose of church thus one would expect God's blessing on such an endeavor. Although we live in a post-modern individualistic time, the need for mentorship is evident.

Unfortunately every contributing factor lies dormant because of a counter restricting factor.

In chapter six a possible way on emphasizing and shaping contributing factors and eliminating restricting factors will be attempt, leaving one with a possible model to use to implement trans-generational mentorship networks in the local congregation that will grow and maintain itself.

Chapter 6 - Proposed mentorship model

_____

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will attempt to use all of the information in this research paper to construct a possible model that will serve as the answer to the research question:

"How can the local congregation be a working network and incubator of trans-generational mentorship relationships?"

As mentioned in chapter five, the emphasis in this chapter will be to eliminate those 'things' that restricts the forming of mentoring relationships, and enhances the elements that contributes towards that. We also concluded that the approach taken will not be forced upon anyone or 'sold' as a mentorship system, but will be very informal.

In previous chapters we also concluded that the mentorship network will not just start by itself, it will need a catalyst to get the mentorship network started.

The following actions need to be taken as pre-mentorship preparation, mentorship network implementation, and maintenance.

2. The mentorship ministry

The pre-mentorship preparation, mentorship network implementation, and maintenance of such a network are a ministry to the members of the congregation and the church as a whole.

Initially, as seen below, great volumes of administration will need to be done as well as, training, organizing, brainstorming and monitoring.
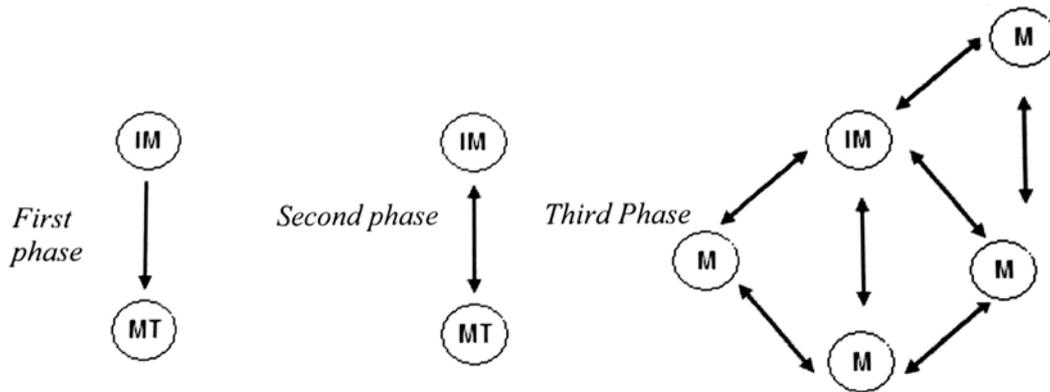
Running the mentorship ministry can potentially become a full time ministry within a congregation with full time staff.

2.1 Identifying mentors

Potential mentors must be identified. Initially one will find a hierarchical system, with mentors, mentoring others. Very soon, the flow of mentoring will change for the mentee will become the mentor's mentor in certain environments.

In Congregation X, a retired pastor started working in the church office as a mission's secretary. The pastor from the Silent generation needs to work on a personal computer (PC) which is foreign to him. He often asks two young generation Xer's who works at

the church to help, who testifies that they in return gain from the insights of the retired pastor. If the retired pastor was identified as a mentor, he will in the initial stages mentor his mentees but in a short time period, the mentees will contribute to the growth of the pastor's life.

First phase IM → MT   *Second phase* IM ↔ MT   *Third Phase* (M, IM, M, M, M interconnected)

In the first phase the initial mentor (IM) will be identified and trained to mentor a mentee (MT). While in the process of mentoring, the mentor (or mentee) might find that that mentee (or mentor) can contribute towards the well being of the initial mentor. In that case, the mentee takes on the role of mentoring in a specific area (second phase). The mentee learns from the mentor what it means to care, support, listen etc and take that role in someone else's life (this is phase three). The person now mentoring someone else is still in a mentoring relationship with the initial mentor, thus communicating the initial mentor's skills to the new mentee as well as falling back on the wisdom of the initial mentee in times when the new mentor is uncertain in his/her new mentorship relationship.

Personal experience has shown that when phase one is implemented, phase two follows shortly and phase three over a longer period of time.

It is evident that the success of such a mentorship system will rely on the initial mentor. Thus, the identifying of the initial mentor is crucial.

The following criteria will be used in the identifying stage:

- Must be an active member in the congregation
- Must have people skills (communicating well with people)
- Must have a learning sprit an willing to engage and spend time with other people.
- Must have a 'reasonable' stable household and show some maturity in his/her faith.

2.2 Training initial mentors

Those identified as initial mentors will embark on a mentorship training course to learn all the do's and don'ts of mentorship. This course will also help the initial mentor to set up specific boundaries to protect him/her. Finally, they will be introduced to people (most probably pastors and elders) who will be willing to mentor them. They will not be forced to asked to be mentored, however, I believe that at the end of the course they will respond to the invitation of the pastors and elders.

2.3 Data capturing and profiling

This will probably be the most tedious job, but will show the greatest result.

A demographic as well as skills and interest profile of every member in the congregation must be compiled. History, as well as confidential information (criminal records, troubled marriage etc) also needs to be in this profile document.

With a simple computer program (such as Excel) data can be imported and easily recovered according to any category (skills, hobbies, interests, favorite movies etc).

The data capturing process will start with those who regularly attend worship services however, the aim is to profile every member of the congregation.

2.4 First contact

Initially the profiles will be used for first contact between a trained mentor and potential mentee. On the profiles on will be able to see what needs a potential mentee has and how a trained mentor can help.

After the initial contact has been made, I predict that by word of mouth the mentorship network will grow. This said however, the profiles will always be used for fisrt contact sessions.

For example: If a person becomes a new member of the congregation and one sees in his profile that he is interested in scuba diving, one can easily introduce him to a mentor (either a trained mentor or someone being mentored - phase three)

The profiles will always be updated and used to monitor the network. Persons with 'troubled' background will be closely monitored as to protect the mentor.

2.5 Mentorship teaching

Changing form a selfish individualistic post modern paradigm to a caring 'ubuntu' mentality seems impossible. If one considers that the whole congregation gathers as a captive audience on a Sunday, the onus rest on the pastor (and Sunday school teachers) to teach and promote a mentorship paradigm.

It will also be the task of the church council, elders and initial mentors to live a live of mentorship so that those around them will be pulled towards the network.

Consider the following example to see how the above mentioned six aspects are integrated:

The mentorship ministry identified Jack as a potential mentor. He is from the GI generation and a II World War veteran. He responds to the call to serve as mentor (for he is at a time where he feels useless to society) and embarks on the training.

In a profile study, one finds that four young boys (friends) only watch war movies. Two of these boys are fatherless. Through the mentor ministry, the war veteran invites these four boys to come and listen to his war stories…first contact is made.

Being a trained mentor Jack starts building relationship, supporting, caring, listening etc and in the process 'fathers' the boys. In return the boys help Jack to sms, email and skype his family oversees. After a year or two (phase three) these boys have learned so much (life skills, communication, mathematics, history etc) that they share what they have learned with those around them (becoming mentors).

In time the greater part of the congregation can be a network of mentoring relationships encouraging new mentoring relationships.

Chapter 7 - Trans-generational mentorship: a challenge to pastoral care as life care

_____

Conclusion

Ecclesiastes 4 was reflected on as an introduction to this research paper. The author of Ecclesiastes concludes that two persons are better than one, for when there are two, the one person can always be of assistance to the other.

As a conclusion to this research paper I would like to argue that the author of Ecclesiastes touched on the very principle of mentoring relationships over 2931 years ago. One can live a fuller healthier life with a support structure around one. There is no better place to find such a support structure than amongst those who have the same values and beliefs, amongst those who gather to worship together and express their faith by loving and caring.

Some would argue that caring is in fact the very calling of the Christian faith. In his book _Pastoral Care Emergencies,_ David K. Switzer tries to answer the question, why we should care, by taking the reader on a short historical biblical 'tour of caring' (1989:9). He starts with God's covenant community, and how God structured His laws so that there would be care for one another in the community (1989:10) but also to those outside the community. He continues to write about the prophets, which reminds one of the stories that reflect the caring nature of these men of God (e.g. Elijah and the widow - 1Kings 17). The ultimate caregiver is of course Jesus the Messiah, and after him the Holy Spirit who enables those in the New Testament Church to take care of the followers of Jesus (1989:12).

David Switzer concludes by saying, "what all this is saying, then, is that inherently in the coming into being of the church is its concern for persons, for alleviation of their sufferings, for their health and <u>wholeness</u>, and we today as the church of Jesus Christ are called upon to perform our ministry in these areas with the same dedication and vigor, and we are called upon to do it with competence. What we refer to as pastoral care in the church, our concrete acts of caring for one another, is one important way of acting out the ministry of Jesus in obedience to God today, a way of giving our lives to one another, of being servants. This is why we care. The church is by definition, as a result of God's initiative in caring for us, the caring community" (1989:12).

Unfortunately the practice of pastoral care was assigned to the pastors of congregations. For many years the pastor of a congregation was viewed as 'the' mentor. The pastor is the shepherd who needs to lead and feed the flock. Not only in spiritual matters, but in all walks of life the pastor was seen as an authority figure. When one considers the historical background of Congregation X, one will find that many of the reverends were in fact school teachers and doctors, caring for and guiding those in the community.

Although pastors do play a significant role in pastoral care, one agrees with Switzer that pastoral care is a congregational activity, and not only a pastoral activity.

The *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* defines pastoral care as follows:

"Pastoral care is the <u>practical outworking</u> of the <u>church</u>'s concern for the everyday and ultimate <u>needs of its members</u> and the wider <u>community</u>. That concern has its mainspring in the love that God has for his people and for the world" (1995:78).

The question one should ask is how the congregation can <u>effectively</u> participate in the task of pastoral care. In smaller, often rural congregations the task of caring for one another seems to be more natural because a sense of community already exists. Unfortunately in bigger congregations and mega congregations many members are lost amongst the masses. Often one will find that members of mega churches live demographically far apart, and live fast paced urban lives that leave little room for relationship building and genuine caring. One can easily belong to a congregation yet feel utterly alone in it.

The 'small group' initiative was a movement that was found as a counter action against the impersonal nature of large congregations. In his book *Good Things Come In Small Groups* Ron Nicholas argues that the key reason for small groups is that churches today, in general, lack the essential community that characterized churches for centuries (1985:14). Nicholas says, "We just don't get to know, really know, the people who are our brothers and sisters in Christ if we meet only in a large group that draws from a twenty-mile radius and that changes constantly. By meeting in smaller units we make intimacy at least possible" (1985:14).

Small groups (youth groups, cell groups, young adults etc) have made important contributions to the caring nature of Congregation X. All interviewees said that the small group they belonged to contributed to a sense of belonging and support.

One may argue that the *"God-given resources"* (2.2.3) needed in mentoring relationships are present in small groups and that these groups do address the needs of its members (Nicholas, 1985:13). If small groups function as a tool for pastoral care, why would anyone needs a mentoring relationship?

It is true that small groups do serve as a powerful tool for pastoral care, yet it is not an all sufficient tool. In Congregation X it is found that, in some cases, a lack of leadership contributes to non accountability, frustration by some members of the group and because of 'weak' material being used, feelings of spiritual "shrinking" instead of growth. Some groups are also limited as to the input into the group. For example, many youth groups are run by young adults (19-23 years) with very little life experience to contribute.
The general focus of small groups is more than often spiritual, and thus does not address the person holistically, but only on spiritual issues.

When one considers the definition of pastoral care above (*Pastoral care is the practical outworking … everyday and ultimate needs of its members...*) the notion of mentoring relationships seems closer to the objective of pastoral care than that of small groups.

In mentoring the individual is empowered in all spheres of life. The mentee's support structure is a compilation of people with various skills and life experiences that have been selected for the growth and benefit for a specific individual.
Pastoral care as life care comes to the full in mentoring relationship.

The era we live in, the nature and purpose of the church and general generational profiles of our local congregations all contribute to the possible construction of working trans-generational mentoring relationship networks.

I believe that the founding of this research paper is, that the concept of trans-generational mentorship relationships is a challenge to pastoral care as life care, and is a possible initiative.

Source list

ATKINSON, D.J., 1995. *New dictionary of Christian ethics and pastoral theology.* Leicester: Intervarsity Press.

BEKKER, C.J., 2003. *Die gebruik van mentorskapsisteme vir die toerusting van jeugbediening-vrywilligers in 'n tydperk van liminaliteit.* Pretoria: Universiteit van Pretoria.

BOSCH, D.J., 2002. *Transforming Mission – paradigm shifts in theology of mission.* New York: Orbis

CALVIN, J., 1989. *Institutes of the Christian religion.* Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing

CLOUD, H, TOWNSEND, J., 2002. *God gives the breakthrough. Develop a practical plan for coping with life's most difficult problems.* South African edition. Capt Town: Struik Christian book.

CODRINGTON, G. GRANT-MARSHALL, S. 2004. *Mind the gap.* Johannesburg: Penguin Books.

COSGROVE, F.M. 1988. *Essentials of Discipleship.* Dallas: Roper Press

DOUGLAS, J.D., BRUCE, F., TASKER, R., PACKER, J., WISEMAN, D. 1974. *The new bible dictionary.* London: Inter-Varsity Press.

DULLES, A. 1977. *Modules of the church.* Dublin : Gill and Macmillan

ELDREDGE, J., ELDREDGE S. 2005. *Captivating - unveiling the mystery of a woman's soul.* Nashville: Nelson Books.

FEE, G.D., 1988. *New international biblical commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus.* Massachusetts: Hendrickson publishes.

GROENEWALD, E.P. 1973. *Die evangelie van Markus.* Kaapstad: N.G. Kerk Uitgewers.

GRUDEM, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology.* Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.

HAWKINS, J.M., DELAHUNTY, A., MCDONALD, F., 2002. *Oxford school dictionary.* Great Brittan: Oxford University Press.

HENDRIKS, H.J. 2004. *Studying Congregations in Africa.* Wellington: Lux Verbi.BM

JAMESON, F. 1993. *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (in Docherty, ibid). Available from: http://www.managementhelp.org/guiding/mentrng /mentrng.htm [Accessed: 12 June 2007]

KUNG, H., 1973. *The church.* London: Search Press.

LARSON S, BRENDTO, L. 2000. *Reclaiming our Prodigal Sons and Daughters.* Indiana: National Educational Service

LOUW, D.J., 1998. *Theory of science within theology*. Study guide. Stellenbosch: Faculty of theology.

MURPHY, R.A., 2002. *Free Management Library.* Available from: http://www.MaranathaLife.com [Accessed: 17 May 2007]

NICHOLAS, R., BARKER, S., MALONE, R., WHALLON, D., 1985. *Good things come in small groups - the dynamics of good group life.* Illinois: InterVarsity Press.

ROXBURGH, A.J., 2005. *The sky is falling. Leadership lost in transition*. Minnesota: ACI Publishing.

STANLEY P.D., CLINTON, J.R., 1992. *Connecting. The mentoring relationships you need to succeed in life*. Colorado: Navpress.

SWITZER, D.K., 1989. *Pastoral care emergencies - ministering to people in crisis.* New York: Paulist press.

WILLIAMS, T., 1988. *The local church and mission*. Singapore: Overseas Missionary Fellowship

__Addendum__

Trans-generational mentorship: Research Questionnaire A1

Name
(Optional) _____

Age	<16	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 30	31 - 50	51 - 70	71<

Gender	M	F

Church membership	DRC	AOG	Full Gospel	Methodist	Presbiterian	VCC	Other

How do you define mentorship? _____

_____

According to your definition, do you have a mentor(s)? | Yes | No |

Do you need guidance in any of the following categories (mark boxes applicable):

☐ Spiritual (explain) _____

☐ Financial (explain) _____

☐ Relationships (explain) _____

☐ Encouragement (explain) _____

☐ Physical (explain) _____

☐ Emotional (explain) _____

☐ Other (explain) _____

Do you have a good support structure (people you share your needs with and people that can help with certain needs)? | Yes | No |

Do you belong to a small group (cell group, youth, young adults, etc) | Yes | No |

If yes, what is your experience of this group in general? _____

_____

_____

_____

What is your experience of the leader of the group? _____

_____

_____

_____

How does the group support you? _____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your time

Cobus Oosthuizen

(h) 021 785 - 2537 (e) cobus1@glolink.co.za