

CHALLENGES OF DISINTEGRATING FAMILY LIFE TO YOUTH MINISTRY: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

by

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DECLARATION

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OPSOMMING

Die familie as 'n noodsaaklike sosiale instelling wat bedoel is om te dien as die eerste plek van sosialisering, versorging en spirituele opleidingsgrond vir jongmense, is besig om te verbrokkel. Verbrokkelende familieëwe is duidelik sigbaar en die tekens word bevestig deur statistieke van hoë syfers in egskeidings, huishoudelike mishandeling en geweld en jeugmisdadigheid wat veroorsaak word deur 'n gebrek aan werklike versorging van jeugdige en onopgeloste familie konflik tussen man en vrou, asook tussen ouers en kinders. Hierdie situasie het 'n globale een geword. Die studie ondersoek om hierdie redes die uitdagings van verbrokkelende familieëwe op jeugbediening vanuit 'n globale perspektief deur bronne te bestudeer van globale families en jeugbediening. Die doel van die studie is dus om 'n konseptuele verstaan van die familie te bekom, om die eise wat hedendaagse families ondervind te identifiseer, en om maniere te vind waardeur jeugbediening, met die hulp van jongmense, die uitdaging van verbrokkelende familieëwe kan aanspreek. Sodoende kan jeugbediening bydra tot die herintegrasie van huidige families, en terselfdertyd 'n goeie fondasie lê vir toekomstige families vir die glorie van God en tot voordeel van die mensdom. Aangesien die familie en jeug onskeibaar is, bestudeer hierdie navorsing die konteks van die verbrokkelende familie, identifiseer oorsake en gevolge van verbrokkelende familieëwe, asook die uitdagings wat dit bied vir jeugbediening. Osmer se vier praktiese teologie vrae is gebruik in die studie-ontwerp. Dit behels: wat gaan aan, hoekom gaan dit aan, wat moet aangaan en hoe gaan ons reageer. In die lig van die styging in familieverbrokkeling, is die hoof navorsingsvraag: Wat is die uitdagings van die verbrokkelende gesinslewe op jeugbediening?

Die doel van jeugbediening word geneem as die norm en dit behels: effektiewe evangelisasie, omvattende opleiding wat insluit Christelike opleiding, finansiële opleiding, gesondheidsopleiding, huweliks- en familieëwe opleiding, sowel as pastorale sorg. Die studie argumenteer dat jongmense wat bekeer is tot Christus, en opgelei en blootgestel is aan pastorale sorg, aktiewe agente van verandering kan wees in hulle onmiddellike en toekomstige families en daardeur aktiewe agente van verandering in die samelewing kan word. Tog is daar miljoene weeskinders, jongmense in vlugtelingskampe, kinders wat geaffekteer is deur egskeidings, en

kinders in huise wat deur kinders self beman word. Die vraag is – kan jeugwerkers die huidige en toekomstige uitdagings wat familieverbokkeling op jeugbediening plaas hanteer? Die studie stel twee benaderings voor wat die meeste geskik is om jeugbediening in staat te stel om die probleem te hanteer, naamlik die God-draer en die familie-gebaseerde jeugbediening benaderings. Opleiding in die huwelik en familielewe word voorgestel as voorvereistes vir hedendaagse ge-evangeliseerde en opgeleide jongmense om sodoende eerstens te dien as `n reaktiewe maatreël om hulle onmiddellike verbokkelende familie te help, en tweedens, om te dien as `n proaktiewe maatreël om `n soliede grondslag te lê vir die toekomstige families van hedendaagse jeug en die samelewing. Hierdeur kan die fenomeen van verbokkelende familielewe beperk word.

ABSTRACT

The family as an indispensable social institution meant to serve as the first place of socialization, nurture and spiritual training ground for young people is disintegrating. The signs for disintegrating family life are evident and supported by statistics of high rates of divorce, domestic abuse and violence, juvenile delinquency caused by a lack of genuine nurturing of youth and unresolved family conflicts between husband and wife as well as between parents and children. This has become a global issue. This study therefore investigates the challenges of disintegrating family life to youth ministry from a global perspective by studying materials on global families and youth ministry. The aim of the study is to gain a conceptual understanding of the family, to identify the challenges contemporary families are currently facing, and to find ways in which youth ministry, with the help of young people, can respond to the challenges posed by disintegrating family life to their lives and thereby contribute to the reintegration of their present families while laying a good foundation for their future family for the glory of God and benefit of humanity. Since the family and youth are inseparable, the research studies the context of the disintegrating family, identifies causes and consequences of disintegrating family life as well as the challenges posed by disintegrating family life for youth ministry. Osmer's four practical theology questions are used to design this study. These are: what is going on, why is this going on, what ought to be going on, and how might we respond. In light of the increase in family disintegration, the main research question is: What are the challenges of disintegrating family life to Youth Ministry?

The aims of youth ministry are taken as the norm and these are: effective evangelism; comprehensive education that includes Christian education; financial education; health education; marriage and family life education, as well as pastoral care. The study argues that young people converted to Christ, taught and exposed to pastoral care can be active agents of change in their immediate and future family and thus becomes active agents of change in society. However, with millions of orphans, youth in refugee camps, children affected by divorce, and youth in child-headed families, can youth workers cope with the present and future challenges of disintegrating family life to youth ministry? The study proposed the God-bearing, relational and family-based-youth-ministry approach because the three approaches

are deemed to be the most appropriate to enable youth ministry to deal with the challenges. Marriage and family life education is highly recommended as a prerequisite for contemporary evangelised and educated young people. This is to serve, firstly, as a reactive measure to help their immediate disintegrating family and secondly, to serve as a proactive measure to lay a solid foundation for the future family of contemporary youth. This, I hope, will be used by God to help curtail the vicious cycle of the disintegrating family life phenomenon and also bring relief to troubled youths, family and society.

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CHAPTER 1

Synopsis of the study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a motivation for the research and a background to the study. It describes the research problem, identifies key research questions, the aim of study and provides the research methodology. Lastly, the theological nature of the research, its significance and contribution to the field of study, limitations of the research and chapter outline are considered.

1.2 Subject of the study

The subject of this literature research is the challenges of disintegrating family life to youth ministry. These challenges will be investigated from a practical theological point of view. The investigation will be done from the point of view of the global family and the global youth ministry, rather than limiting the context to a particular continent, culture or community, since disintegration of family seems to be a global challenge. Though this is evident by the high rate of divorce, juvenile delinquency, birth outside marriage, and cohabitation, the cause for disintegration is different in different cultures and communities. For instance, modernization, as will be discussed further in subsequent chapters, may be an important factor for disintegration in developing countries, while labour migration might be cause of disintegration in third world countries, as highlighted in Chapter 3. Virtually all the continents of the world have been affected by an increase in the number of disintegrating families. While the developed countries have been able to cushion the effects of disintegrating family life on children and especially women with good health system and relatively buoyant economy, developing and under-developed countries are suffering from the effects because of the negative impact of globalization and modernization. Another reason for choosing the global perspective above a particular context is the fact that recent academic literature on global families and global youth work are increasingly placing much emphasis on broadening educators' view on family and youth issues. Ingoldsby and Smith (2006: vii), for example, stresses the importance of thinking

globally about families in new ways. The goals of their work are to increase students' recognition of and respect for cultural diversity (as it influences family life) to meet educators' needs for a comparative family text, and to contribute to the development of new ways of thinking about families by examining cultural and family diversity within families. In case of youth ministry, Aubrey (2009: 39) also states that youth work can no longer be confined to the local or national context. It needs to address the global community and the global inequalities that manifest themselves locally. Though youth work is often interchanged with youth ministry and is generally used to explain any activity directed at helping young people to navigate their journey from childhood to adulthood (adolescent period) without much scar and to help youth reach their potential in life, it is distinguished from Christian youth work. In youth ministry, Christians involved with helping youth, also carry out youth work in the form of meeting some of the needs of youth in the Church community just like secular youth workers who even work better than Christian workers in meeting the material needs of youth. Youth work in general is defined by Kate Sapin (2009: 221) as "working with young people to develop enjoyable activities that address their expressed needs and interests in a voluntary relationship based on mutual respect." Though contemporary secular youth work has some things in common with youth ministry (when viewed from a church perspective) like good activities, voluntary relationships and mutual respect, it is devoid of the gospel of Christ, without hope and it is viewed as a profession rather than a call. However, Christian youth work is different from general youth work because, according to Mark Ashton (1986: 69), "youth work is not 'Christian' if it is not true to Jesus Christ in facing young people with this gospel and warning them of the consequences of not accepting it. It is this message that distinguishes Christian youth work from secular youth work. If we abandon it, we are discarding the most important contribution that we as Christians can make". Ashton's statement was later corroborated by Pete Ward's (1999: 34) affirmation that "youth work must carry within it the essential dynamic of the gospel story. We are called to proclaim this gospel in both our words and our deeds in ways that the young people can understand." It is the non-inclusion of the gospel of Jesus Christ in youth work, as it is presently used or non-emphasis of God's love that was made manifest to all men in the Biblical record of the birth, crucifixion, death, burial and ascension of God's only begotten Son, that make general youth work different from youth ministry. In a serious tone, Ward (1999: 35) states that "it is this

commitment to the role of the gospel as the story within which our other commitments are understood and have meaning that brings an identity to the Christian youth minister/youth worker. When the relationship between the gospel and other theories of working with young people is reversed, the youth worker ceases to be a Christian youth worker and becomes a youth worker or a community worker who happens to be Christian.” Youth ministry is used in this study because youth ministry is identified with the mission of God through Christians to youth and by extension to the world. I have found Global Youth Ministry appealing to study at this time because according to Linhart and Livermore (2011: 35), Global Youth Ministry is a new movement made up of youth workers all over the world who asserts that global youth ministry must move from the programmatic and information-dispensing moorings and move toward a more holistic and incarnational presence in communities and the youth and families who live there. Incarnational presence is vital in contemporary youth ministry. It signifies manifestation of God’s presence, power, and activities through Christian youth workers in every place where they are found working in the world. The places in which Christian youth workers are found includes the families of young people which this study also seek to attend to.

1.3 Motivation

This study is motivated by the current state of affairs regarding disintegrating family life and the influence this has on youth and their spiritual well-being. From the perspective of a youth minister, it is important for me to ask what the church and youth ministers can do about disintegrating family life. Furthermore, literature suggests that there is a link between family instability and divorce rates and the absence of marriage between parents which need to be investigated.

1.4 Background of the study

The disintegration of family life is not a new phenomenon and its impact on youth ministry should not be underestimated. Literature supports the notion that contemporary families are facing unprecedented challenges, that family life is indeed disintegrating and that it is in dire need of resuscitation (Hagman, 1983:36; Browning, 2003: 31; Popenoe, 1993: A48; Van der Walt, 1995: ii; Wilson, 1985: 82; Walsh, 2003: 3). These challenges include a high rate of divorce, the HIV/Aids

epidemic, economic hardship, women and child abuse, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, labour migrancy, modernization, and urbanisation. All of these challenges are discussed further in Chapter 4. Many sociologists (Popenoe, 1994; Karraker and Grochowski, 2006; Cheal, 2005; Walsh, 2003) and theologians (Strommen and Hardel, 2001; Browning, 2003) have done extensive work in the area of the family but none have investigated the challenges disintegrating families pose to youth ministry - hence this literature study.

At the advent of the 21st century, renowned theologians Strommen & Hardel (2000: 157) assert that we live in a time when families are disintegrating and that there will continue to be people who hurt, more psychologically scarred youth and more fragmented families in the future of every congregation. This statement entails that fewer youth will know close family life and the security of being loved and cared for. Research reports have shown that disintegrating family life is top on the list of the causes of problems associated with contemporary youth (Alvi, Shahid et al., 2010; Root, 2007: 15). Despite the recent outcry by academics clerics for the salvation of family life from disintegrating forces, some scholars believe that the disintegrating family life should be welcomed and supported (Connell, Mitten & Bumberry, 1999: 27-28; Coontz, 2000; Stacey, 1998; Skolnick, 1993). These academics urge the world to move beyond “the myth of family decline”, learn to live with a high divorce rate, and celebrate alternative lifestyles. Consequently, the definition of family has become relative to the social and cultural environments of people.

Popenoe (1993:A48), an erudite sociologist, called scholars’ attention to this trend in his article entitled, “*Scholars should worry about the Disintegration of the American Family*” and by extension to the universal family. He claims that “the child-centred, two-parent family shows growing signs of disintegration, reflected most clearly in the continued high rate of divorce and the steady growth in the number of unwed parents.” According to Popenoe, there is a steady stream of new empirical evidence indicating that the disintegration of the well-functioning, two-parent family over the past three decades poses a serious national (and global) threat to children and youth who are less well-off, psychologically, socially, economically, and morally, than their parents were at the same age.

Likewise, in the medical profession, Erik Hagman (1983: 36) challenged his colleagues to carry out research on his medical hypothesis: *“The Disintegrating Family: What will be the medical consequences.”* He expressed his concern following recent sobering changes observed by medics on the high rate of divorce, departure from formerly conventional social norms and decline in marriage rate. Hagman and his colleagues were wondering how this would influence the disease pattern in the community, among the young adults, and among their children.

Theologically, the fall of man in the Garden of Eden brought disorder to all human relationships and societies and the consequence was the manifestation of unfaithfulness, greed, hatred, jealousy, bitterness and favouritism in different human relationships. Drane (2004:494), citing a biblical example, writes that Isaac’s family disintegrated as Jacob cheated his brother Esau (Gen 27:1-45), and his sons in turn sold their brother Joseph into slavery (Gen 37:1-36). It is to be noted that human dignity cannot be separated from disintegrating family life phenomenon because most of the actions that precedes family disintegration violates the dignity of humiliated family members. Statistics revealed that oppression, domestic violence, physical, emotional and sex abuse among other evil deeds often characterize disintegrating families with women and children high on the receiving end of the negative short and long term effects. All these vices put the dignity of affected family members at risk as their dignity is violated. In the Journal of Human Dignity and Humiliation studies, Morton Deutsch (2006) writes that, “Oppressive-humiliating relations exist at all levels – among and within nations, among and within religious and ethnic groups, between the sexes and within our various institutions (the family, school, workplace, political, healthcare, etc.). It need not be extreme and involve the legal system (as in slavery, apartheid or the lack of a right to vote), nor violent (as in tyrannical societies). It may take the form of “civilized” oppressive-humiliating relationships. Such “civilized” humiliations occur as a consequence of unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions that result from unquestioned norms, habits, symbols and the embedded rules and stereotypes that exist in various institutions.”¹

¹Deutsch, Morton. 2006. <http://www.humiliationstudies.org/publications/journal.php>

As a result of the velocity at which the family is disintegrating, the family life ministry was identified as an antidote to family disintegration and established by churches to address this trend. One of the practitioners of family life ministry, Hebbar (1995:6) defined family life ministry as a ministry of the church through preventive and therapeutic efforts designed to strengthen all forms of families in the church and the community. In corroborating this definition, DeVries (2001: 151) adds that the focus of family ministry is on supporting parents and families with classes, counselling, and support. Despite the inauguration of family life ministry, more families are still experiencing the disintegrating force, hence the need to investigate the role to be played by the Church especially through their youth ministry to address this issue.

1.5 Research problem

According to Babbie and Mouton (2011:73), a research problem is often formulated in the form either of a research question or a research hypothesis. In this literature study, one main question is asked and other five related research questions.

1.5.1 Research questions

The study addresses one main question: What are the challenges of disintegrated family life to Youth Ministry? The other related questions are as follows:

- To what extent is the family disintegrating?
- Does the disintegration of family life pose any challenges to youth ministry, and if so, what are these challenges?
- Does youth ministry have any transforming role to play with regards to the challenges that disintegrating family life pose to its aims?
- What are the roles of youth ministry in meeting challenges?
- Can youth be empowered through youth ministry to be used by God to help in the restoration of their immediate family and future family?

I prefer to use word 'challenge' to 'problems' in this study, since challenges can be positive or negative. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2005: 231) defines the word 'challenge' as "a new or difficult task that tests somebody's ability and skill". A problem, on the other hand, is defined in the same dictionary (2005: 1157) as "a thing that is difficult to deal with or understand". Disintegrating family life is both a

new and difficult task that is testing youth ministry's ability and skill to be an agent of hope in a seemingly hopeless situation.

1.5.2 Aims of the study

The study is aimed at a conceptual understanding of the family. It seeks to identify the challenges contemporary families are currently facing. Due to the link between families and youth, this literature study also aims to identify the challenges of disintegrating family life to youth ministry. Finally, this study aims to find ways in which youth ministry, with the help of young people, can respond to the challenges posed by disintegrating family life and contribute to the reintegration of their present families and lay a good foundation for their future family.

1.6 Research design and methodology

The study is a literature study informed by the method enumerated by Osmer (2008: 4), which focuses on the four core tasks of practical theology. These are the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretative task, the normative task and the pragmatic task. Since this is a theological study, the Bible will serve as primary normative source next to the rest of the data/sources described below.

The descriptive-empirical task of practical theology is pre-occupied with gathering information that helps believers discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts. Hence, the second chapter of this study embarks on gathering information that will help believers to discern patterns and dynamics in contemporary family both from sociological and theological perspectives.

The interpretive task of practical theology draws on other theories from the Arts and Social Sciences in order to deeply understand and explain the reason for prevailing patterns and dynamics of family life. For this reason, the family development theory and family system theories will be used to explain the phenomenon of disintegrating family in the third chapter.

The normative task uses theological concepts to interpret occurrences, thereby constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from "good practice". This will be described in more detail in the section on normative responses

in chapter four. Theological concepts such as grace, Holy Spirit, repentance, and hope will be used to explain what ought to be taught and experienced in youth ministry. The teaching on these concepts is subsequent to the conversion of young people to Christ where the Word of God is highly valued and observed in pastoral care.

The pragmatic task of practical theology determines strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable. The strategies of action that will influence the research problem are recorded in chapter five. The data used in this study is of a secondary nature in the form of scholarly books and journals, internet sources, theses and dissertations.

1.7 Significance of the study to the field of Practical Theology

This study offers a possible response to a social problem the disintegration of family life, which Christians are called to address. As Graaf (1995: 9) asserts, many Christian families find themselves in the midst of a crisis, namely that they are defenceless against the disintegration of family life, that they have surrendered themselves to a secular way of life and are now experiencing the breakdown of their family life. The greatest impact of disintegrating family life, according to Graaf, is that it renders parents impotent in the upbringing of their children, especially their teenagers. Due to Graaf's assertion, churches have a role in addressing such a state of affairs, especially by way of its youth ministry. Because youth, who are mostly affected by family disintegration, are inseparable from the family, this study fits into the field of youth ministry. It addresses the three key people in youth ministry, namely, youth, parents/guardians and the youth worker. God is working in and through these three agents to fulfil His purpose in the life of youth.

According to Heitink (1999: 8), practical theology concerns the mediation of the Christian faith (praxis 1) in the praxis of modern society (praxis 2). Praxis 1 refers to God's coming to humanity in the world He created so that humankind may experience Him daily through others. The praxis of modern society (praxis 2) which is broader than the popular meaning of 'practice', describes modern society as a domain of action. In order to mediate the Christian faith in the praxis² of our modern

²Daily intentional human actions (Heitink, 1999:9).

society, this literature study seeks to present ways in which Christian faith can be used to bring restoration to disintegrating families in which contemporary youth are raised. This study is significant for practical theology because it is expected that youth ministry will become a channel through which the disintegrating family life phenomenon will be curtailed. A further possible contribution of this study to the field of practical theology is that it may empower young people to speak in and to their present families with a view to keep their own future families from disintegrating. According to Dean and Foster (1998: 26), “God needs their [young people] prophetic voices in the church, in the culture, and in the families they call their own.”

Though research have been carried out on how family ministry can aid spiritual formation of youth (see Chapter 4), few have addressed the challenges of disintegrating family life to youth ministry, nor the potential opportunities available to youth in making an impact on family life. The importance of this research is that it will, hopefully, expose the causes of disintegrating family life, the challenges it pose to youth ministry and explore how the challenges can be overcome by young people in order to avert the negative impact it has on their spiritual development. This research is also important because it hopes to raise awareness of the inherent potential in youth which can be tapped to help bring restoration and dignity to families. This will help society to combat the many social problems it is confronted with resulting from disintegrating family life.

1.8 Definition of central concepts in the study

1.8.1 Family

The concept of family has become problematic for scholars and religious leaders due to the constant changes in the form and structure of contemporary families. The question being asked now is whether scholars should define the concept of family or ‘families’. Despite the rapid changes in the structure and forms of families, families have defied all odds and remain the hope of sustaining and maintaining any society. Strommen & Hardel (2000: 17) defined family as “those people with whom we share our faith, values, and purpose as they relate to a life of hope and love”. These include our mentors, friends and relatives, as in parents, guardians, extended family and children.

From an African perspective, Soungalo (2006: 1178) writes that “The African family is defined in very broad terms and embraces far more than the nuclear family of parents and children because anyone, with whom we share blood ties, whether close or distant, is regarded as part of one’s family”. Soungalo concludes that a family includes brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins and nephews, and even in some cultures in Africa, every adult who associates with one’s parents is one’s parent, and everyone in the same generation as oneself, is a brother or sister.

1.8.2 Family Life

Cheal (2002: 156) defined ‘family life’ as a way of living in which individuals seek to achieve personal goals they believe are important for their happiness and sense of well-being by actively participating in family relationships. A healthy relationship between family members is vital for keeping any family integrated and helping integrated family perform their roles in their family and society. Cheal (2002: 38) highlights some positive features of family relationships in the standard model of family life. These include:

- helping individuals to meet their needs by redistributing resources from those family members who have more to those who have less;
- providing emotional and social support to family members in times of difficulty;
- shielding family members from some of the pressures exerted by powerful external groups; and
- in modern industrial societies, family may provide a haven in a heartless world.

According to Balswick and Balswick (1989: 52, 53), family life comes after marriage, yet everyone has already experienced family life prior to marriage. However, they conclude that marriage is the foundation of family life. This conclusion has generated a lot of arguments among sociological and theological scholars and will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

1.8.3 Disintegrating family life

Family life disintegrate when unresolved conflicts are allowed to degenerate to the point of seeking for divorce or when parents fail to keep and maintain divine law and

order of God for the family that enables children to grow up to become spiritually mature, economically free, physically healthy and socially responsible members of society. The negative aspects of family life in the standard model of family life are present in a disintegrating family. According to Cheal (2002: 38), these include domestic violence, sexual abuse, inequality and conflicts in family relationships.

1.8.4 Youth

The term 'youth' varies from culture to culture and continent to continent. Youth is a term used to describe the transition period between dependence of childhood and adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community³. It is a delicate period as young people struggle to balance the idea of freedom which they yearn for with the idea of forming their own identity and accepting responsibility for their actions. While the United Nations has pegged the age frame for youth between 15 and 24, the African Union has declared that the age range for African youth is between 15 and 35. For the purpose of this study, the term youth and children will be used interchangeably because children, in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child⁴, are considered to be any people from 0-18 years of age, which falls within the age range of youth.

1.8.5 Youth ministry

Youth ministry is theologically defined by Nel (2000) as, "the mediation of the coming of God through his Word and through people, by means of all modes of ministry, and in a differentiated and focussed way, with and through youth as an integral part of the local church." The modes of ministry by which God comes to, through and with youth, are preaching, teaching, worship service, pastoral care, service, witness, and administration. Because of young people's need for assistance to manage their delicate passage into adulthood, youth ministry stands as God's ministry to assist young people in this regard so that they will become mature people, parent and practitioners of all they have learnt during their teen-age. Further definitions are furnished in Chapter 4.

³ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/>

⁴ http://www.africa-union.org/official_documents/Treaties_%20Conventions_%20Protocols/a.%20C.%20ON%20THE%20RIGHT%20AND%20WELF%20OF%20CHILD.pdf

1.9 Limitations of the research

This study will be viewing disintegrating family life and its challenges to youth ministry only from two major perspectives, namely theological and sociological perspectives. Although efforts have been made to use the most recent literature relevant to the topic of the study, the fact that literature forms the source of data used, means the study will be limited to the dates the literature appeared rather than reflect the latest or present conditions.

1.10 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 Synopsis of the study gives an overview of the content of the study and how to navigate through the five chapters.

Chapter 2 Conceptual understanding of family

The concept of family is unpacked from the sociological and theological perspectives in order to give a better understanding of what constitute contemporary families.

Chapter 3 Disintegrating family life

In this chapter, disintegrating family life is discussed from the sociological and theological perspectives. The context of the family, and causes and consequences of disintegrating family life are also highlighted. The link between disintegrating family life and the concept of human dignity from theological point of view is also explained.

Chapter 4 Youth ministry and disintegrating family life:

Challenges and Opportunities

This chapter defines youth ministry and the challenges posed to it by disintegrating family life. At the same time, it looks at how youth can be empowered through evangelism, teaching and exposure to pastoral care. Four theological topics deemed necessary in the teaching of contemporary youth are included in this chapter. These are grace, Holy Spirit, repentance and hope. The opportunities available to turn the negative effects of disintegrating family life phenomenon to avenue to penetrate disintegrating family and extend the kingdom of God through youth ministry are also highlighted.

Chapter 5 Conclusion, findings and recommendations

This chapter gives a summary of the study, presents findings, answers to the research questions and provides useful recommendations.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the subject of this study, namely the challenges of disintegrating family life for youth ministry: a practical theological investigation. The impetus for this study is the concern for contemporary youth family life which poses a hindrance to the fulfilment of God's plan for their lives and a concern for their own future families which may follow the pattern experienced in their present families. The problem identified from the literature review is that contemporary families are disintegrating and the youth who are part of the family components are facing a bleak future. Disintegrating family life should therefore be addressed. As a church ministry, the main question is, "what are the challenges of disintegrating family life to youth ministry? In order to answer this question, Osmer's four core tasks of practical theology is chosen to be used to find a possible means by which the problem can be addressed through youth ministry. Though this study is literature based, its significance include the identification of the challenges of disintegrating family life and finding ways by which youth can be empowered and used by God in the integration of their disintegrating family life and also prepare youth for their future families.

This chapter also touched on the positive and negative aspects of family life in the standard model of family life as well as succinct definitions of key concepts in the study such as youth, youth ministry, family, family life, and disintegrating family life. The next chapter will reflect in more detail on the concept of family.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptual understanding of family

2.1 Introduction

Many scholars are unanimous in their conviction that the phenomenon of family is essential for the building of human society and that it is a cornerstone of society (Van der Walt, 1995: I; Moynihan, 2004: xvi; Shobola, 2010: 221). However, some researchers (Horn, 2004:181; Cahill, 2000: ix; Van der Walt, 1995: iii; Spykman, 1995: 38) believe that societal changes have brought about a tremendous change into what constitutes family as well. However, according to scholars like Karraker & Grochowski (2006: 14), the family holds the promise of stability for communities and nations in a rapidly changing world. This chapter therefore seeks to carry out the descriptive-empirical task of practical theological investigation, to explore and explain the concept of family from both the sociological and theological perspective.

Descriptive-empirical task of practical theological investigation

Descriptive-empirical task of practical theological investigation is used as guide in this chapter. According to Osmer (2004:34, 35), the descriptive-empirical task of practical theological interpretation is grounded in a spirituality of presence⁵ which is a matter of attending to what is going on in the lives of individuals, families, and communities by priestly listening⁶. He argues that unless we first learn to attend, we cannot really lead. As an educator, I intend to attend to what is going on in contemporary family from which youth are raised. Three forms of attending to what is going on in the lives of individuals, families and communities are outlined in Osmer's

⁵ Spirituality of presence describes a spiritual orientation of attending to others in their particularity and otherness within the presence of God (Osmer 2004:33, 34).

⁶ Priestly listening is an activity of the entire Christian community, not just its leaders because believers are called royal priesthood (1 Peter 2: 5; Rev. 1: 6: 5: 10). Priestly listening is manifest in intercessory prayer by a leader who empathises with the people he is leading because of his involvement and identification with their diverse situation. Priestly listening can also be manifest in the preaching ministry as the leader/Pastor goes to the Bible with his congregations' need in order to receive God's message for God's people. According to Osmer (2004:36), preachers must learn to use "methods for 'exegeting' the congregation in all its sociocultural particularity" just as they explore the meaning of scriptural texts with the methods of biblical exegesis.

continuum. These are the informal, semi-formal and formal attending which are explained by Osmer (2004: 37-39).

The informal attending deals with the quality of attending in everyday life. These include active listening and attentiveness in interpersonal communication as well as our openness to the beauty and tragedy we encounter day by day. Semi-formal attending involves the use of specific methods and activities that provide structure and regularity to our attending in which many people find journaling to be helpful for this purpose. Formal attending is investigating particular episodes, situations, and contexts through empirical research. For the purpose of this study, informal attending based on my experience with youth and the semiformal attending, using journals, books and internet sources will be used to find out what is going on.

2.2 Concept of family

Researchers and theorists on family have been careful and reluctant to define the concept because of the constant changes to family structure and family life (Chibucos, Leite and Weis, 2005:8-9; Thatcher, 2007:4-5; Karraker & Grochowski, 2006:7). This is due to, amongst others, the fact that different forms of families are evolving, thereby extending the definition of family to include not only nuclear families but also “one-parent families”, “the extended families”, “blended families”, cohabiting couples, couples without children, other homes and families in transition (Thatcher, 2007: 5). Changes in the forms of family have led to two schools of thought. These two schools of thought on the family are explained here because they also inform and are reflected in the definitions of family used by researchers.

2.2.1 Family Pessimists

The first school of thought is called “family pessimists” who, according to Thatcher (2007: 13), interprets family breakdown as a major causal, but preventable, contribution to human misery, and in particular to the diminution of the happiness and life-chances of children. Writers calling for a solution to the increasing changes in family structure are classified as family pessimists and they include theologians as B.J. Der Walt (1995: i), Strommen and Hardel (2000: 157), and sociologist David Popenoe (1993: A48).

2.2.2 Family Optimists

Popenoe (1993: A48) describes the “family optimists” as academics who stress that changes in contemporary families are really nothing to be concerned about. This school of thought includes an historian Stephanie Coontz (2000) who wrote *The way we never were*, a sociologist Judith Stacey (1998) who wrote *Brave New Families* and a psychologist Arlene Skolnick (1993) who wrote *Embattled Families*. This school believes that the new form of families are not new and that they are good for society because it is not binding or permanent and it does not interfere with individual human rights. With this background, the study now proceeds to view family from a sociological and theological perspective.

2.3 Family from a sociological perspective

2.3.1 Early definitions of family

According to Ingoldsby (2006: 67), Mike Murdock was the first modern professional to attempt defining the concept of family. Murdock (1949) defined the family as:

“a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction which includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults” (quoted in Ingoldsby, 2006: 67).

Murdock formulated this definition of family after surveying 250 ethnographic reports, all written from a Western perspective and by anthropologists from different centuries based on fieldwork they had done on different societies. Murdock claims that the nuclear family is a universal human social grouping that fulfils the following essential functions: sexual (control), reproduction, socialization of children, and economic. However, in 1963, William Stephen rejected Murdock’s view on strength of new evidence. Stephen defines family as:

“a social arrangement based on marriage and the marriage contract, including recognition of the rights and duties of parenthood, common residence for husband, wife, and children, and reciprocal economic obligations between husband and wife-“ (quoted in Ingoldsby, 2006: 68).

After the discovery of three communities that were antithetical to the above definitions, Ingoldsby (2006: 72-75) also writes that researchers over the years have accumulated data on some cultures that appear to contradict Murdock's claim. Researchers identified three communities with characteristics distinct from families elsewhere in the world. These communities are the Jamaican poor, the Israeli Kibbutz, and the Nayar in India. As for the Jamaican poor, Edith Clarke (as quoted in Ingoldsby, 2006:73) argues that their families are not nuclear, and fathers do not participate in the socialization and economic functions. Concerning the Israeli Kibbutz, Spiro (in Ingoldsby, 2006: 73) reports that couples move into a two person apartment whenever they wish, without any marriage arrangement. However, they are considered to be a "couple" until they decide to separate. Their children live separately in a special area of the community where they are socialized by an adult assigned to them. The Nayar's case is different to others in that all spouses live in the family of origin and all adult females are permitted to marry as many visiting husbands as they like. This case also proves Murdock wrong because the Nagar spouses do not live together. However, children are well taken care of. Based on these discoveries, Ira Reiss concluded in 1965 that the only common element in the three societies under investigation was the nurturing of infants by a small primary group of their kin. Reiss (1965) therefore redefined family as referring to a small kinship structured group with the key function of the nurturing socialization of the newborn. Ingoldby (2006), however, points out that the problem with Reiss's definition is that it excludes the idea of marriage, while Murdock's tendency to make family flow from marriage is the weak element in his definition. Bern (2007:87) writes that relationships that do not conform to Murdock's definition are more common today, illustrating the impact of societal change on the family system's form and function. The diversities of families in the world is recognized by all, though many of the different emerging forms are not yet accepted due to the stereotypes of the known traditional families such the nuclear family, polygamous family and extended family.

2.3.2 Contemporary definitions of family

Popenoe (1988: 6) defined family sociologically as a relatively small domestic group of kin consisting of at least one adult and one dependent person - the adult (or

adults) being charged by society with carrying out the social functions of procreation and socialization of children; provision of care, affection, and companionship; sexual regulation and economic cooperation. From this definition, parents or guardians are charged by society with the duties which does not only enable parents to procreate but also to nurture, train and socialize their offspring. According to Janosik & Green (1992: 13), the family is a system whose components (members) engage in continual interaction according to rules and norms that evolve over time and make it possible for the family to survive. This definition stresses the importance of continual interaction between family members, which is indispensable for a healthy family life.

According to Cheal (2002: 4), family refers to a group consisting of people in intimate relationships that are believed to endure over time and across generations. The use of the word 'group' signifies that the family here refers to more than the nuclear family and it has a boundary. The family, in this sense, includes every one that is connected to the people that makes up a particular nuclear family. Hence, Cheal's definition may be stretched to include the extended family of parents in a family. This definition is also inclusive of other types of family such as the same-sex families.

Karraker & Grochowski (2006: 18) corroborates the above definition, as they included in their conception of family gays or lesbians who have formed civil or other committed unions, step- or non-custodial parents, adoptive and foster children as well as fictive kin⁷. These researchers fall into the "family optimist" group because they opened up their concept of family to include groups like homosexual marriage and family.

From a sociological point of view, most families, whether nuclear, extended or single-parent, have had their functions tampered with as a result of social changes in other interrelated institutions such as the educational, economic, political and religious institutions. The societal influences are discussed in Chapter 3. However, the issue of whether marriage should be regarded as a gateway into family will be addressed here as it is viewed differently by different sociologists.

⁷ Fictive kin, according to Karraker & Grochowski (2006:6), are the important people who occupy important roles in our family constellations despite the fact that there is no relationship by blood or marriage.

2.3.3 Marriage as the foundation of family or not

One of the complexities of defining contemporary families is the insistence by traditionalists that marriage is necessary for family life. Whether marriage marks the beginning of a family life or not has brought a healthy debate on how family should be defined. As noted earlier, while some writers (Browning, 2003; Strommen & Hardel, 2000; Hagman, 1983; Popenoe, 1993; Wilson, 1985), called 'pessimists', believe that marriage is significant and necessary to the start of a family life, the optimists (Coontz, 2000; Stacey, 1998; Skolnick, 1993; Connell, Mitten & Bumberry, 1999) regard the disintegrating family life signified by divorce, birth outside marriage, cohabitation as a welcomed, liberating and long-awaited development.

David Popenoe (2000: 17) defined marriage as the primary relationship with which a community socially approves and encourages sexual intercourse and the birth and rearing of children. This type of definition has been challenged by researchers like Cheal (2002: 53, 55) who argues that marriage or wedding does not necessarily initiate a family life cycle. The statistics from different continents show that many young people are cohabiting (living together) without going through the formal public witness and social approval of their relationship. This is evident in the high number of cohabiting couples and one-parent families in Australia⁸ and South Africa⁹ respectively. Cohabitation, according to Thatcher (2007: 153), occurs when two people live together and engage in sexual and economic relationships without being legally married. Family optimists and pessimists, however, share in the notion that families that do not conform to the traditional form like heterosexual, nuclear families, should not be discriminated against or looked down upon (Browning, 2000: 298; Cahill, 2003: ix).

2.4 Family from a theological perspective

Soungalo (2006: 1178), an African theologian, comments that the long genealogies in the Bible remind us that the Bible too, is a story about family which begins with a couple created by God who are the ancestors of all the human beings on the earth (Genesis 1: 27-28; 5: 1-32; 10: 1-32). Later, God formed a large family, Israel, made

⁸ <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/info/charts/familystructure/ftype.html>

⁹ <http://www.sairr.org.za/services/publications/fast-facts/fast-facts-2011/files/FF2011%20-%202004.pdf>

up of the descendants of Abraham and intended to be a model for the other families of the earth (Genesis 12: 2-3). However, this family, according to Soungalo, grows even larger because faith in the work of Christ draws Gentiles to join Jews in the 'family of God' (Acts 13: 38-39; Ephesians 2: 19). Since this study is a practical theological investigation of family life, explaining the family from a theological perspective will involve the use of practical theology viewpoint. Browning (2003: 3) states that, practical theology views major social issue firstly from the angle of the grand themes of Christian faith such as creation, the fall, redemption and sanctification. While themes like 'creation' and 'the fall' are discussed in this chapter, grace, Holy Spirit, repentance and hope will be discussed as some of the main undergirding theological rocks in youth ministry in chapter four. Family will be traced from the beginning as recorded in the Old Testament to the New Testament.

I will briefly consider family life as it was in the Old and New Testament day to buttress Browning's (1998: 295) assertion that the family patterns of any society are deeply rooted in its history.

2.4.1 Old Testament

2.4.1.1 The creation story

The creation story in Genesis 1 began with the record of the six days God used to create every living and non-living being on the earth, in the sea and the sky. As for humanity created on the sixth day, it is recorded in Genesis 1:27, 28a that, "[S]o God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them and blessed them." This text laid the foundation of understanding the value God places on men and women who are both created in his image and likeness. Herein lays the dignity of all descendants of Adam and Eve who were also blessed along them at the beginning. Pace (2000:200) states some striking elements in this text which include the fact that the dominion and rule that humanity is to have is not shown to be exploitative and that human beings should create a world of harmony for their offspring just as God created them in a universe of order and harmony. Frymer-Kensky (1998: 277) says that "there is no true human life, says the story, without family."

2.4.1.2 Marriage institution

The story moved on to reveal the foundation of the institution of marriage in the order of creation (Genesis 2: 18-24). According to Oliver (2007: 15, 16), marriage is a pre-fall institution and a covenant. As a pre-fall institution, Oliver claims that marriage is not a curse but good, and ordained by God before sin ever entered the world. Marriage as a covenant is pronounced in scripture - recorded in Proverbs 2: 16-17 and Malachi 2: 14 - which explains the marriage covenant between a man and a woman that was witnessed by God but broken by the adulterous woman in Proverbs. A covenant was part of the marriage ceremony in the Old and New Testaments. Lawler (2007: 10-12) writes that marriage is a covenant symbol in the Old Testament, depicted by Hosea's preaching about the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel within the biographical context of his own marriage to a harlot wife, Gomer. Hosea's action of redeeming Gomer (Hosea 3: 2) reveals and makes real in representation the action of Yahweh's unfailing love for Israel because of His covenant with Israel.

According to Lawler (2007: 11), "[A] sundering of the marital covenant relationship is not possible for Hosea because he recognized that his God is not a God who can abide the dissolution of a covenant, no matter what the provocation." The understanding of marriage as an agreement or pledge typifying a promise of love between God and Israel and by extension to all men is meant to keep the institutions of marriage and family from disintegrating. A lack of this understanding is one of the reasons for the high rate of divorce and family disintegration.

Lawler (2007: 12) stressed the fact that the idea of marriage as a representative image of a mutually faithful relationship changed from Yahweh-Israel to Christ-Church in the New Testament. This was well-articulated for every member of the New Testament family by Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3: 18-4:1 and 1 Peter 2: 13-3:7. The list addresses and educates husbands, wives, children, slaves and masters' roles and how they are to relate in love. Olivier comments that Genesis 2: 21-25 reports the first ever marriage that forms the basis for all family life. This implies that marriage, according to God's plan, is the foundation of family life. The importance of a covenant in the institution of marriage is indispensable for the preservation of a family from disintegrating.

Ngewa (2006: 1149) makes four important key points about Jesus' teachings on marriage and His response to the Pharisees in Matthew 19: 1-12 and Mark 10: 11, 12. Jesus made it clear that marriage, firstly, is to be between a man and a woman because God created Adam and Eve - male and female. Marriage, according to the Word of God, is between a man and a woman and not between man and man or woman and woman. Secondly, God's will and command is that the man leaves his father and mother and be united with his wife by their marriage covenant. This means that marriage is expected to be for matured men and women. Thirdly, the man and woman are joined together by God to do things as partners. Lastly, no man, according to Jesus, must put asunder those whom God has joined together. Marriage is to be "till death do us part". God declared in Malachi (2: 13-16) that He hates putting away (divorce) because He has made a man and the wife of his covenant "one", that he might seek a godly seed from their union, hence the warning to humanity not to put asunder what He has joined together.

In Jesus' response to the Pharisees' question on why Moses permitted divorce contrary to God's perfect will of permanent marriage, Ngewa (2006: 1149, 1150) highlights three points that Jesus raised to convince inquisitors. Firstly, Jesus emphasized the fact that Moses permitted them to divorce because of the Jews' weakness, rather than God's perfect will. God acted in mercy because "His normal pattern is not to destroy slow learners but to give them time to learn more about His marvellous ways and eventually grow up to achieve what God desires for them." Secondly, Jesus claimed that Moses permitted divorce because of the hardness or stubbornness of the Jewish people heart. This is one of the major reasons for the high rate of divorce in the world. Lastly, Jesus declared that divorce and remarriage constitute adultery, except when divorce is caused by fornication. France (2007: 929) explained that Jesus declared that divorce, for whatever reason, was incompatible with God's purpose for marriage and in so doing, set the original intention of the Creator, expressed in Genesis 1: 27; 2: 24, above the provision of Deuteronomy 24, which was given only because *your hearts were hard*. Since the initiative to find a suitable helper for man came from the gracious, good and glorious God, it behoves men to show appreciation to God who in His wisdom, mercy and kindness gave them a fellow human being and helpmate as companion rather than leaving them with animals.

The word ‘help’ or helpmate was translated from the Hebrew word *ezer*. The roots for *ezer* are ‘rescue’ or ‘save and strength’. The other Hebrew word *kenegdo* is translated to ‘fit for him’ in English, while the Mishnaic Hebrew word *neged* means ‘equal’. *Ezer kenegdo* can thus be translated to mean “a power equal to him”.¹⁰ Bellis (2000: 203) posits that it is abundantly clear that the woman is not created as a subservient domestic servant and that the popular saying that woman was created not from Adam’s head to dominate him, not from his feet to be controlled by him, but from his rib to stand by his side is a post biblical understanding which is consistent with the meaning of the Hebrew phrase *ezer kenegdo*. Other Bible commentators write that the phrase “suitable helper” would better be translated “helper matching him” that is supplying what he likes. Wenham (2007:62) concludes that the charming tale of God creating Eve out of Adam’s rib and then presenting her to him as if at a wedding sums up beautifully many of the key biblical ideas about marriage. From the scriptural account of marriage (Genesis 2), God’s plan was to make the marriage union between a man and a woman the foundation of a family.

2.4.1.3 The fall

The thought of God and His initial plan for the first and subsequent families are thoughts of peace and not of evil as recorded in the first two chapters of Genesis. However, sin and evil entered the first family and the earth as the first parents, Adam and Eve, yielded to Satan’s temptation by disobeying God’s explicit command not to eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2: 16, 17; 3: 1-14). The consequence was spiritual death as God had warned Adam that he shall die on the day that he eats of the forbidden fruit. Wenham (2007: 63,64) states that chapter 3 shows how sin disrupts relations between God and human beings and between man and wife, while chapter four shows it destroying the bonds of brotherhood. The fall of man in the Garden of Eden sets the stage for family disintegration as it is evidenced in the first family with Cain who killed his brother Abel.

Assohoto & Ngewa (2006: 17) write that the description of the fall reveals how the perfect unity of the man and woman start to crumble as they acted independently of each other, ceased to be open with each other and blamed each other. In the biblical

¹⁰ Freedman, R. D. “Woman, a Power Equal to Man: Translation of Woman as a ‘Fit Helpmate’ for Man is Questioned”, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 9/1 (Jan/Feb 1983): 56-58.

perspective, Bloesch (2006: 168) states that sin is a state of alienation from God, universal (Romans 3: 23), and in the Reformed Theology, sin is unbelief. Hardness of heart, which Jesus gave as the reason why Moses permitted divorce, is closely related to unbelief (Mark 16: 14; Romans 2: 5). Sin is destructive and the consequence of the fall is evident in the families of the world. The high rate of divorce, domestic violence, child and women abuse, juvenile delinquency and murder are rampant in most families. From a biblical perspective, it can be concluded that sin [unbelief, hardness of heart] is the cause of family disintegration. Kostenberger (2003: 279) claims that in the rest of the Pentateuch chronicles, a whole series of ways are indicated in which sin has affected marital and family relationships ever since the fall. The effect of the fall of man was manifested in the first family by the untimely death of Abel in the hands of his brother, Cain.

2.4.1.4 Family stories from Genesis chapter 5 to 50

Family stories from Genesis chapter 5 to 50 give a vivid picture of the damaging effect of sin on families. This led to God's destruction of the earth with water with the exception of Noah's family and some animals saved by the Ark built by Noah (Genesis 7). Abraham lied and nearly lost his wife and God's promise of the Messiah through him (Genesis 20; 12: 1-3). He also succumbed to his wife's suggestion to raise a child in a jointly executed, extra-marital affair with Hagar, Sarah's maid because of sin of impatience, unbelief and lack of boldness (Genesis 16: 1-5). Lot made a choice to live in greener pasture in Sodom and Gomorrah and lost his wife and his entire asset due to carnality (Genesis 19: 26). Isaac and Rebecca's favouritism caused division and hatred in their family and nearly led to a repeat of Cain and Abel's story. Jacob's family was torn apart because of favouritism and he nearly lost Joseph, but God turned all that his brothers meant for evil to good (Genesis 50: 20). The cause of family turbulence can be traced to the beginning when Satan deceived Adam and Eve to sin against God. However, God did not stop the family from replenishing the earth because of the promise of the seed (Genesis 3:15), that is, Jesus Christ who came to save the world from sin and its' effects.

2.4.1.5 Exodus to Malachi

The book of Exodus narrates the story of the Israelites' sojourn and deliverance or escape from Egypt to Canaan. The children of Israel increased abundantly and multiplied in Egypt (Exodus 1: 7) - to the chagrin of their host. They were maltreated but God intervened and brought them out. He gave them the Decalogue to keep for their good. It was from Egypt that the family structure began to take shape. However, it never resembled the nuclear family portrayed in some religious circles.

Block (2003: 35) explains that family or kinship is understood to be made up of four levels in Israel, ranging from the house of Israel (*am*), "tribe" (*sebet matteh*), "clan" (*mispaha*) to "house of a father" (*bet 'ab*) (Gen. 31: 37; I Sam. 25: 17; Prov. 31:15 ff). According to Cahill (2003: 23), kinship in ancient Israel also consisted of three basic levels: tribe, clan, and family, which corresponds with Block's structure of tribe, clan and house of a father. Kinship, according to Cahill (2003: xi), means affiliation through reproductive lines. The children of Israel perceived themselves as one large extended kinship group but it is the 'fathers houses' or house of a father that were in reality large extended families. The fathers' houses were made up of a single living male ancestor, his wife/wives, sons and grandsons with their wife/wives and children, unmarried male and female descendants, unrelated dependents; male and female hired servants and slaves along with their families resident labourers and, on occasion, resident Levites (Block, 2003: 35-38).

The family structure in ancient Israel was articulated by Joshua (Joshua 7: 16-26) in the way Achan was detected. According to Block (2003: 38), the whole house of Israel (*am*) was examined, followed by the tribes (*sebatim*), the clans (*mispahot*), the household (*battim*) and their nuclear families.

Up until the reign of David, the husband or the male figure dominated and controlled the family, as was the case of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But King David brought a temporary relief to the Israelites by establishing a centralized state where family behaviour could be monitored. Marriage in the Old Testament was male-dominated but their excesses were limited by the Decalogue. Frymer-Kensky (1998: 279) affirms that the dominance of husband over his wife is embedded in the semantics of biblical Hebrew. Block (2003: 40) declares that Israelite families, like

most ancient Near Eastern cultures, were patrilineal (official lines of descent were traced through the father's line), patrilocal (married women joined the households of their husbands), and patriarchal (the father governed the household). The patriarchal tendency of the Old Testament men to misuse parent power makes it difficult for the church to make most of the family arrangements a model or normative for contemporary families.

2.4.2 New Testament family life

The New Testament carried on with the understanding of family as consisting of the father, mother, children, and slaves. Warren Carter (1998: 225) claims that households consist of four elements, which are the three relationships of husband-wife, father-children, master-slave and a task of acquiring wealth. The household is patriarchal and hierarchical because the husband/father/master rules over and controls his wife/children/slaves. While the father oversees the acquisition and management of wealth outside the household, his wife sees to the private sphere within the household. However, Jesus' teaching, according to Thatcher (2007: 51), emphasizes the priority of the family of God over the family of kin.

2.4.2.1 Jesus Christ's teaching on family life

Family life in New Testament time took a new turn as a result of Jesus' teaching that the family of God takes pre-eminence over convert's family of origin. According to Osiek (1998: 287), the records in the synoptic Gospels state that the family of origin cannot be trusted to support one's call to discipleship and can indeed be a definite obstacle. This is in line with Jesus' maxim that He has come to cause division in families because allegiance of believers in Jesus must shift from the family of origin to God (Luke 12:49-53). The first birth of every man into the family of origin is supposed to prepare all the people born into this world for the second birth which leads to the repentant person being reconciled with God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. Though believers are not commanded by Jesus to forsake their family of origin, the different laws and the Lord or lord governing each member often makes family life unfavourable for family members to live at peace as it was done previously before some members of the family encounter and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Secondly,

Soungalo (2006: 1178) asserts that what is born of the Spirit is of more value than what is born of the flesh and that the nature and quality of the ties that unite Christians with each other should be stronger than blood ties. The reason for stronger ties among Christians is due to the fact that they have common goals, objectives, and focus based on God's promises and prophecies in the Word of God contrary to their unbelieving family members who are still in the dark and controlled by the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). As Apostle Paul writes, the children of promise who are born of the Spirit of God will always be persecuted by children of the bondwoman who are born of the flesh (Galatian 4: 29). In families where believers and unbelievers dwell together, those who have not been born again of the Spirit of God can be an obstacle to the believing member's allegiance to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, hence the need for the extended family of God to provide succour for the persecuted believers. However, Osiek (1998: 288) explains that family bonds are not abolished, but they are reshaped and widened. While each believer keeps their connection with their family of origin to help the unbelieving family members become born again, they are expected to keep relationship with the new found family of God where the divine love of God is manifested in words and deeds. Jesus Christ demands first place in the heart of His disciples as well as their love which is the first commandment as it is written, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6: 5; 11:1; Luke 10: 27; Mark 12:30, 31). Love for, and of God, is expected by Jesus to prevail over love of man so that lovers of God might love their neighbour as themselves. This agape love is what every family needs to overcome the disintegrating family life phenomenon. Where the love of God is established in the heart of family members, no member will be an obstacle to other members who loves the Lord and is seeking to obey God's command daily.

According to Renn (2005: 365), the New Testament word for family is *oikos*, which in reference to the community of believers denotes the family or household of God (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17). *Oikos* is a common noun occurring over one hundred times with the primary meanings "house" or "home". The family is acclaimed as the best hermeneutic sphere, that is the first and the best training school for children and youth as believers have been commanded in Deuteronomy 6 (Nel, 2000: 20, 21). However, the concept of family as a theologically significant term in the New

Testament moves from the earthly realm to the heavenly realm as people are born into this family or kingdom of God by the Spirit of God (John 3: 3, 5). The family of God, a large extended family, which include children and youth, is the new humanity through which the Lord planned to bring other people to relationship with Himself, restore their dignity and give all men hope (Renn, 2005: 365). Youth are also part of God's agent to bring restoration to disintegrating families as well as bring comfort and hope to their generation. They are included in God's promise to pour His Spirit upon all flesh (people) in these last days. He said that, "our sons and daughters shall prophesy, our old men shall dream dreams and our young men shall see visions (Joel 2: 28, 29; Acts 2: 17, 18)".

Family used to be, and is still, regarded as extended, because it means the extended intergenerational network of relationships, as well as all those who share one roof, whether related by blood or legal ties, as in the case of slaves, freedmen, and freedwomen. In another sense, believers can be referred to as a family which calls for unity among all those who have repented of their sins, believe and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour.

2.4.3 Other theologians' definitions of a family

In order to define a biblical theology of the family, Anderson (2001: 259-265) expressed his own perspective of the family by suggesting that a family should be conceptualized as the image of God, a social context for identity formation, a moral context for character formation and, lastly, the domestic context of spiritual formation. Faith formation is to begin at home and not the Church.

Steven & Clapp (2001) defined family as a permanent human community that one enters by birth, covenant (marriage) or adoption. Marriage is mentioned because of the foundation laid for humanity by God in Genesis 2. According to Cahill (2003: x, xi) the family is understood as an organized network of socio-economic and reproductive interdependence and support, grounded in biological kinship and marriage. Vorster (2008: 471) also claims that the family concept is used to describe the relation between husband, wife and child on the one hand, while the same concept is used as a metaphor to describe the spiritual covenantal relation between God and His people. Cahill and Vorster's use of marriage and husband and wife

connote marriage as necessary to family. In this definition lays two significant words that describe the concept of family, which are 'covenant' and 'relationship'. Balswick & Balswick (1989: 17) buttress this assertion by saying that the emergent theology of family relationships stresses the elements of covenant, grace, empowering, and intimacy. These researchers form part of the "family pessimists" because their definition does not fully accommodate the various forms of contemporary family forms. According to Stevens & Clapps (2001: 124,125), there are four theological reasons for restricting the idea of family to the covenant community. They claim the first reason to be the fact that the family is the first community on earth and it predates the Church or the nation. Secondly, God is a family existing communally as a triune God marked by covenant love (John 17: 1), whereby every family in heaven and on earth derives its nature and dignity from God (Ephesians 3: 14, 15). Thirdly, God deals with families under the old covenant and lastly, God continues to work with families. For example, a whole household became Christians in Acts 16:32, 33, spouses are sanctified by their believing partner (I Corinthians 7: 14) and Church leaders are expected to prove their ministry first at home (I Timothy 3: 4, 5).

Strommen & Hardel (2000: 17) defined family in its broadest sense as "those people with whom we share our faith, values, and purpose as they relate to a life of hope and love". These include our mentors, friends and relatives as in parents, guardians, and children. Despite researchers' division over their views on the changes that has come upon the family, the agreement on the necessity of relationship, interaction or networking between family members as an important feature of any family, is obvious in the various definitions above.

Olson and Leonard (1996: 25-27) understand the concept of family to mean any network of two or more people linked over time - emotionally and usually biologically and legally, sharing such things as home, spiritual and material resources, interpersonal care giving, memory, common agenda, and aspirations. This concept, representing a school of thought, disregards procreation or the potential to be procreative as central to the "familyness" of a couple. This definition claims that a family can include a straight, gay, or lesbian couple or a group of unmarried people and thereby falls under the banner of "family optimists".

2.4.4 Protestant & Catholic perspectives on marriage and family

These two perspectives are chosen because they represent the main branches from which the global church is grouped.

2.4.4.1 Protestant perspectives on marriage and family

From the protestant perspective, Post (2000: 21) writes that the protestants still maintain that “the family in its essence is the culmination of marriage between man and woman and is marked by the birth (or adoption) of a child in covenant love”. Kiura (2003: 96) comments that spouses must become one. She maintains her assertion by saying that the spouses start on this process of becoming one after the wedding. “They have to leave, cleave and become one.” Ducklow (2001: 201) corroborates this important ideal by saying that, “marriage is a continual three-stage process that involves leaving, being united, and becoming one”. This view synchronizes with God’s plan from the beginning when He said that “therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2: 24). This protestant ideal is shaped by the fact that children deserve, demand and desire a mother and a father in the context of a stable two-parent family. In as much as two parents is expected, highly commended and recommended, single parents or disenfranchised families, as Mckenna (2001: 288, 289) puts it, are also special in God’s sight. Hagar and Ishmael, the first single parents in the Bible, found Grace and mercy with God (Genesis 16:10). However, Post (2000: 21) concludes that “Christians cannot accept the culture of single parents chic (ibid).” Post’s statement is directed at most people, especially, young people who are imbibing the culture of deliberately rearing children out of wedlock as a fad.

Recent events in the Anglican Communion shows that some protestant churches have changed their minds on the way marriage and family are viewed in years past. For example, the United States of America branch of the Anglican Communion (Episcopal Church) has recently approved same-sex marriage despite outcry from

“many Anglicans in Africa and other parts of the world who consider homosexual sinful”.¹¹

2.4.4.2 Catholic perspectives on marriage and family

Heaney-Hunter (1998: 24, 25) writes that the Catholic Church teachings hold that families are inherently holy because it can manifest Christ's presence in everyday life. Secondly, it states that families are Domestic Churches which serve as the first faith community with two significant implications. The first assumes that families possess the potential and authority to teach faith to spouses, children, and other family members, while the second presumes awareness that the believers, gathered in Christ, are the Church. This point is noteworthy because it corrects the misconception of believers who mistake their gathering as an embodiment of a hierarchical institution instead of seeing their gathering as an embodiment of the Church-the people of God, living members of the body of Christ. Lastly, the teaching asserts that families are called to live Gospel values. It articulates four tasks that will aid in specifying the ways that families can promote these values. The first value is that the Catholic family is to form a community of persons which begins with marriage of two believers-male and female, equally made in the image of God. This made the Catholic family reject the “survival of the fittest” mentality as couples are expected to pull their resources together to promote an attitude of moral responsibility and care for the vulnerable - from the unborn to the aged. The remaining tasks are that family's serve life, families participate in the development of society, and families share in the mission of the Church.

Recent Catholic teaching¹² still upholds and promotes the marriage of heterosexual two-parent family charged with the nurturing of their children. Catholic Church counts adultery, divorce, incest, free union and trial marriages as offenses against the dignity of marriage.

¹¹ Burke, Daniel. 2012. Reaction mixed to approval of same-sex rites. July 12, 2012
<http://www.anglicanjournal.com/nc/other/news-items/p/3/c/sliders/article/reaction-mixed-to-approval-of-same-sex-rites-10958//abp/141.html>

¹² http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm

2.5 Functions of family in society

The function of families refers here to the role families perform with regard to creating and sustaining stability within society and integrating individuals into society. Berns (2007: 89, 90) identifies the following basic functions of the family:

2.5.1 Reproduction

The first function of the family concerns reproduction which ensures that society's numbers are maintained. The world population is now at 7 billion and statistics shows that 382 351 children are born every minute all over the world. This figure includes those born within and outside of wedlock. Berns (2007: 87) points out the significance of the nuclear family structure which is that it serves as the main source of children and so provides the basis for the perpetuation of society.

2.5.2 Socialization

The second function of families is that of socialization. Lee (in Ingoldsby, 2006: 69) explain that,

“It is also necessary for a society to do more than simply produce children; they must be cared for in a physical sense and they must be trained to perform the adult roles deemed appropriate for them in their culture. This involves more than the teaching of occupational skills; it revolves around the basic processes of language development and the transmission of culture”.

Berns (2007:8 9) corroborates Lee by saying that by socializing and educating young people, the family ensures that society's values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and techniques will be transmitted to the young.

2.5.3 Assignment of social roles

According to Berns (2007: 89), the family, by assigning social roles to the children, provides identities for its offspring as are reflected in their racial, ethnic, religious, socio-economic, and gender roles. Murdock (in Ingoldsby, 2006: 69) calls this function the “economic function”, which is interpreted to mean a “division of labour”. He posits that parents have divided responsibilities according to capacities because

of men's greater physical strength and women's child-bearing ability. Boys may be socialized to become breadwinners, while girls do housework or become caregivers.

2.5.4 Economic support

All family members often work together by producing goods to ensure the survival of the family. Van de Walt (1995: i) states that in earlier times, family members had more and a greater variety of tasks, as everything that was needed in the house, such as food, clothes, furniture and implements, all had to be made by the members of the family. In modern times, however, families have become consumers rather than producers of goods.

2.5.5 Nurturance/emotional support

The family provides the child with his/her first social interaction that is intimate, nurturing and enduring. Emotional security is provided especially when a member of the family is ill, injured or deceased.

The function of families in society is to help prepare children for socialization, right from their first point of contact with the world. Children are to be acculturated and taught by words and example how to act, react and interact with other socialized and cultural people. The family is a universal body that is expected to serve the same function in all societies. Wilson (1985: 9, 10), another sociologist, mentioned the functions family perform in and for society. These are helping youth to learn the social behaviour expected of them in society, providing society with an orderly means of reproduction, and supporting the youth emotionally and economically until they are mature.

2.6 Composition of family and role of family members

2.6.1 Composition of family

There are different types of families into which human beings are born and it ranges from the traditional nuclear family comprising married parents (man and wife) and their children, to the extended family, the polygamous family, blended families, cohabiting families, lesbian and gay families as well as the single-parent family. Family composition, according to Cheal (2002: 155), refers to the number and kinds

of people who belong to a family. The composition of the contemporary family and roles of family members are diverse. Variations in family composition, as indicated by Janosik & Green (1992: 12), are highlighted below:

2.6.2 Traditional family composition

Natural or biological family is the family into which the individual is born or is related to by consanguinity. Consanguinity, from the Latin word *consanguinitas*, means “blood relation”.¹³

Adoptive family is the family to which an individual belongs through adoption, usually by legal means.

Family of origin is the family into which an individual was born.

The nuclear family is the family created by a marital or on-going relationship between two individuals and their offspring, if any. It is made up of a man who is the head of the house, a married woman with or without their own children or adopted children.

The family of procreation is the family created by individuals entering a relationship into which children are born.

Extended family is a family group that includes one or more nuclear families plus other individuals related by blood or marriage.

Polygamous family is made up of a man who is the head and two or more women with children living in a compound.

Intact family is a family that includes two parents and their natural or adopted children living in one household.

Patriarchal family

This is a family in which the father has formal authority and dominance (Berns, 2007: 88). The patriarchal family is the most popular in the world today.

¹³<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consanguinity>. Accessed August 25, 2012.

Matriarchal family

In this type of family, it is the mother who has formal authority and dominance (Berns, 2007: 88). The royal family in Great Britain headed by Queen Elizabeth II is a perfect contemporary example.

Egalitarian family

In this family, both sides of the extended family are regarded as equal (Berns, 2007:88).

2.6.3 Emergent families in the global age

Boomerang families

These families are made up of young people- post-high school or post-college children who would otherwise be on their own but are now returning home to live with their parents (Zinn and Eitzen, 2005: 15). These young people return home because they want to save money on cost of living.

Single-parent families consist of children and one parent, either a father or mother, living in one household. A married man or woman can become single due to death of spouse, separation or divorce from spouse. Likewise, a man or woman may choose to be single for various reasons. Some reasons for choosing to be single were given by Jesus: natural defect from birth, voluntary or involuntary castration by men, or for the sake of God's kingdom (Matthew 19: 12). The term 'single', according to Zinn and Eitzen (2005: 444), refers to all unmarried adults over the age of eighteen. However, it is to be noted, according to Karraker and Grochowski (2006: 216), that the single option does not only include those who have never been married but also those who are widowed and those who are divorced, some of which can be considered to be re-singled. Stein (in Zinn and Eitzen, 2005: 445) distinguish the varieties of single status in the contemporary United States of America and based his typology on a person's single state as voluntary or involuntary, stable or temporary. Stein gave examples of voluntary stable singles as, "those who have never married and are satisfied with that choice; those who have been married but

do not want to remarry; cohabitators who do not intend to marry; and those whose lifestyles preclude the possibility of marriage (e.g., priests and nuns).”

The number of singles is increasing at an alarming rate and the bulk of this number comes from women giving birth outside of wedlock. Single-parent families formally arose due to war and epidemics but recently divorce and personal choice inspired by the influence of globalization and modernization has contributed to the increase in the singles population. In the words of Zinn and Eitzen (2005: 44),

“Women’s economic independence has had a great impact on the rise of singlehood as a viable option. Many women have jobs that pay enough that the women do not require a partnership with a man to have a decent living. They need not marry for economic support for social identity. Many women with strong career aspirations have opted for singlehood because marriage and domestic demands greatly lessen their chances for career success. Other social and cultural reasons make marriage less desirable. Marriage may be less necessary for happiness now, because unmarried persons can more readily engage in sexual relationships without social stigma and because the financial security of marriage has been undermined by high rates of divorce”.

Step-parent families are created by the remarriage of one or both parents; and may include children of the present marriage as well as children from previous marriages of one or both spouses.

Heterosexual cohabitation

This term refers to the practice of a couple sharing a household in a marriage-like relationship (Zinn and Eitzen, 2005: 448, 449). Karraker and Grochowski (2006: 212) define cohabitation as living together outside the legal or religious sanctions of marriage. Though this form of living has gained global prominence and is seen by many to be a prelude and an alternative to marriage, few researchers (Smith, 2006:10; Karraker and Grochowski, 2006: 212) write that it is not a totally new trend. Many reasons have been given by cohabiting couples for their choice for cohabitation. Smith (2006: 7) posits that the couple may plan to marry, or be testing out their compatibility prior to marriage, or the couple may be living together as an

alternative to marriage. However, heterosexual cohabitation also produces children who are raised up as in other families.

Same-sex families

Same-sex families, according to Stanton (in Ingoldsby and Smith, 2006: 83) are either headed by homosexuals or lesbians who function as would a husband-wife pair. In the case of a homosexual family, one of the men assumes the role of a natural man, while the other man assumes the role of a woman. In a lesbian family made up of two women, a woman assumes the position of a man (husband) while the other woman takes the position of a natural woman (wife). In most cases, these families adopt children, bring their children from former cohabiting or heterosexual families or raise their own children through a surrogate mother or through artificial insemination. Though same-sex families have not received legal standing in most countries, Stanton maintains that they are nevertheless becoming a socially acknowledged phenomenon. Same-sex families are already legalized in the United States of America, Canada, Netherland, South Africa and Belgium. Because same-sex families are yet to be legalized and accepted in most societies, both parents and children in this type of relationship are intimidated, secretive about their sexual orientation in some instances, suffer stigmatization and shame. As Berns (2006: 102) states, "Being open about their homosexuality renders them vulnerable to discrimination and ostracism."

According to Karraker and Grochowski (2006: 294), "Biases against lesbian and gay parents persist, based on the assumption that a homosexual parent may compromise a child's development (or even be a danger to a child)". In terms of parenting, three fearful attitudes are held by society on children living with same-sex families. The three concerns are that the children will become homosexual or lesbian, that they will be sexually molested, and that the stigma of being raised by homosexuals will cause psychological damage. However, researchers have proved these assumptions to be wrong. Berns (2006:102, 103) writes that research carried out by Andersen, Amlie and Ytteroy (2002) and Goodman, Emery, and Haugaard (1998), "has found no higher incidence of homosexuality among children raised by homosexuals than by heterosexuals, nor have there been any reported incidents of

sexual abuse; also, children reared by homosexuals are not necessarily more psychologically troubled than children reared by heterosexuals.”

Transnational Families

Transnational families, according to Chavez (in Zinn and Eitzen, 2005: 463) are those with one partner living and working in one country, while the other remains “back home” in the country of origin. These types of families are occasioned by the influence of globalization, modernization and labour migration. According to Zinn and Eitzen (2005: 464), “Globalization is creating new immigration patterns and producing new transnational family forms around the world.” Most people who travel to the developed world for greener pastures, like the United State of America, Europe, Australia and Canada, and those who work for transnational companies are affected by this trend because it separates the migrating spouse from the spouse “back home” who needs to take care of the children and other responsibilities, which otherwise would have been carried out by the two spouses. Also to be included in this category are students who are married but travel to foreign countries to study (and work) for a certain period of time (between two and six years). Some of the challenges faced by transnational families are highlighted in Chapter 4.

Child-headed household

This type of household is defined¹⁴ as, “A household where a child looks after the home and his or her brothers and sisters because the parents cannot do this and there are no other adults to take over this role.” As many parents are dying of the HIV/Aids pandemic, so are child-headed households springing up, especially in South Africa. A statistical brief from the South African government news agency¹⁵ revealed that most of the children living in child-headed households have both parents, contrary to previous assumption that the child-headed household is caused by orphaning. The statistics in 2006 show that 61% have living parents, 19% are paternal orphans, 12% maternal orphans while only 8% are double orphans. This report concludes that children in child-headed households are mostly teenagers.

¹⁴http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/SAF_resources_childactx2.pdf. Accessed 16 August 2012.

¹⁵<http://www.sanews.gov.za/dsd.htm>. Accessed 16 August 2012.

2.7 Roles of men, women and children in the family

According to Van der Walt (1995: ii), many roles of men and women in the family have been taken over by or delegated to other societal relationships such as the factory, business world, school, church and state, while the remaining tasks are not even fulfilled in a way it should be. However, the roles of men, women and children as it used to be and how it has changed over the last few years will be addressed in this section of the study.

2.7.1 Roles of men in the family

Stoneberg (2000: 72-74) provides five tasks expected from men to perform in their family. The five tasks are: provision, caretaking, protection, endowment and formation of their children.

2.7.1.1 Provision

One of the roles of the father in the family is the provision of the necessities of the family, which, according to Stoneberg (2000: 72), has been the mark of a good man for many centuries. Though the role of the father is of the provider of necessities like money and food for the family, he is not expected to limit his provision to money or allow the search for money to come at the expense of making himself available as a role model to the children. Provision must not be an end in itself.

2.7.1.2 Caretaking or nurturing

Caretaking or nurturing is a very important role of fathers in the family. The father is to start bonding and attaching himself to the children from birth. Attachment theory¹⁶, formulated by John Bowlby¹⁷ suggests that an infant needs to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver for social and emotional development to occur normally. It helps the father in establishing a strong relationship and trust with their children. Strommen & Hardel (2000: 63) describe this role as the key to healthy family relationships and the key to adolescents' well-being. In an empirical study carried out by Search Institute in the United States, Strommen & Hardel (2000: 64) determined that twenty-five per cent of adopted adolescents in the study who were

¹⁷http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attachment_theory

not emotionally bonded to either parent showed signs of rebellion, rejection, and oppositional behaviour (delinquency, drug abuse, etc.).

2.7.1.3 Protection

Protection is another role of the father in the family. This means that the father is to be present in the family activity. Stoneberg (2000: 73) suggests that men in the twenty-first century should seek to protect their families through becoming community builders because communities where fathers are absent are often run and manipulated by gangs of young men who move in to fill the void.

2.7.1.4 Endowment

Endowment is a crucial role that fathers cannot afford to delegate. Older people (in Family handbook, 2000: 74) endow their children with family property, teach them a trade, and also pass on their traditions, ideals and values to help their young people know their place in time. According to the Jewish saying, “He who teaches not his son to do some work is as if he taught him robbery”¹⁸. Passing on family business to the next generation is very important in raising children up and sustaining them in the future.

2.7.1.5 Spiritual formation

Another role of the father in the family is helping in the formation and guidance of their children’s’ acquaintance with spiritual values. As Van der Walt (1995: i) proclaims, “[E]ducation and religious instruction were also responsibilities of the family.” Boyatzis, Dollahite and Marks (2011: 2) argue that even if it takes a village to raise a child, the family is surely “the first village” of religious and spiritual development. God commanded parents in the book of Deuteronomy (6:6-9, 20-25; 11:19) and Proverbs (22:6) to teach their children all that He told them for their good always.

Lamb (2010: 9) states another role of fathers as standing as a source of emotional and instrumental support to the other people, principally mothers, involved in the direct care of children. This role tends to add to the quality of mother-child

¹⁸ Quoted from Dakes annotated reference Bible (2004:71). It is a short commentary on Mark 6: 3.

relationships and thus facilitate positive adjustment by children. Lamb declared that fathers are to be role models for their children by providing models of behaviour that children can either model or reject. According to Lamb, many of the behaviour patterns acquired in childhood are the result of lessons derived from observing others and adjusting one's behaviour accordingly.

However, the roles of men have changed to some extent in the present time. Because of the economic melt-down, retrenchment and down-sizing going on in the business world, there have been examples of role reversal in some families where the wife is now the bread-winner and the husband has become the care-taker of home. This new arrangement is working well for some families, while other families have suffered from frustrated husbands who have seized the opportunity to abuse the children and the wife.

2.7.2 Roles of women in the family

Traditional women's roles are discussed in this section and followed by their roles in the contemporary family and society. Some of their traditional roles are highlighted below.

2.7.2.1 Traditional roles of women

According to Block (2003: 72), ancient Israelites perceived a wife's role in a marriage to being threefold - according to the ideal revealed in Genesis 1-2. These are helping her husband in fulfilling the blessing pronounced in Genesis 1:18, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth", helping him to fulfil the divine mandate of serving and keeping the garden, and providing companionship for her husband. This means that childbearing is one of the roles of women in the family. Secondly, they played a very important role in managing the household and contributing their labour to the house finance. Thirdly, the wife provided companionship for her husband.

The woman also had responsibilities toward the children. She was to be responsible to nurture the child from cradle. The home was the primary educational agency in Israel where parents lay the foundation for civilized behaviour, excellent performance and responsible decision-making. Proverbs (1:8; 6:20) teaches that mothers continue with their teaching, nurturing until the children are grown up.

2.7.2.2 Contemporary roles of women

Most of the contemporary women have joined the labour force. According to the 2011 statistical abstract of the United States Census Bureau¹⁹ the number of married working women increased from 23 240 million in 1960 to 72 019 million in 2009. The figure for the widowed, divorced, and married (spouse absent) also increased from 40.3 million in 1970 to 49.3 million. Though family well-being benefits from women's employment, researchers (Karraker & Grochowski, 2006: 378; Woodfield, 2009: 6) maintain that shift work and other non-standard work schedules, inferior conditions, less pay, working evenings, nights, or weekends, affects marital stability. Motherhood is now stretched across national boundaries as we now have what is referred to as transnational motherhood. Zinn and Eitzen (2005: 465) describe transnational motherhood as an arrangement whereby immigrant women work in one country, while their children live in another country. This is the extent to which globalization has had an effect on women's roles – taking them outside their matrimonial homes in order to work.

2.7.3 Roles of children²⁰ in the family

Daniel Block (2003: 92-94) described four roles of children in the family. This is from the biblical point of view.

a. Respect for parents

The first one is respect for parents which is highlighted in the vocabulary of respect and the command built into the Decalogue (Exodus 20: 12). Also, respect from children was understood as an absolute parental right, while the treatment of parents with contempt attracted capital punishment. During Ezekiel's tenure as the Prophet of the nation of Israel, he listed dishonouring parents among the crimes that characterized his generation and eventually lead to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in 586BC. In the New Testament, Apostle Paul in Ephesian 6: 1 warns that children are to obey their parents in the Lord who pursue what God wants for their children and not what parents want for their children. Children are not called to obey any instruction simply because they are under parental control.

¹⁹ <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/12statab/labor.pdf>. Accessed August 25, 2012.

²⁰ Children here refer to young people from birth until their exit from parents.

Ndjerareou (2007: 112) writes that where there is conflict between God's will and parent's wants for their child, young people "must politely and respectfully explain why the thing they are being asked to do is wrong". This is where youth ministry can intervene by teaching and empowering young people on how they must resist ungodly parental influences and confront it as they are led by the Holy Spirit.

b. Economy of the household

The second area of responsibility is the economy of the household. Block (2003: 81) posits that children were considered as an important economic asset. Their contribution to the household economy began as early as five or six when they began to pick vegetables, clean up after a meal, gather fuel and help in food production. Examples abound in the Bible, such as Jacob's twelve sons' contribution to the household economy by going into the field to support their father's large family (Genesis 37: 12-14), David's contribution to his father's household as a shepherd boy (1 Samuel 16-20) and Jesus Christ work as a carpenter (Mark 6: 3).

c. Defence of the genealogical integrity

Another role is the defence of the genealogical integrity of the family achievable through a special institution called the levirate marriage²¹. Assohoto and Ngewa (2007: 67) write that the custom of the time was that when a man died without children, his brother would marry the widow. The first child she bore would be regarded as the son of the dead brother and would inherit everything that would have come to his father (Deuteronomy 25: 5, 6).

A case study is that of Judah and his family in Genesis 38. Judah had three sons, Er, Onan and Shela. After the death of Er, Judah's first born; Judah was to arrange a marriage between Onan and Tamar, the wife of Er, in order to raise a child for his dead brother. God slew Onan for his refusal to perform his role of raising a child for his late brother. According to the custom of the time, Shela was next on the family list to marry Tamar but this did not materialize because Judah feared that Shela might also die like his brothers. However, this was the ancient custom in Israel.

²¹ A levirate marriage represented a legally sanctioned union between *yebama*, a widow whose husband has died without having fathered any offspring, and the *yabam*, the brother of the deceased.

d. Safety of parents in their old age

Lastly, children provided a safety net for their parents in their old age. A vivid example is Apostle Peter's mother-in-law who was healed by Jesus Christ in Peter's house (Matthew 8:14, 15). Children were expected to take care of their parents in their old age just as their parents provided a safety net for their children in childhood to teenage years.

2.7.4 Contemporary roles of young people

Bunge (2008: 357) posits that "the idea that children can be teachers, bearers of revelation, or models of faith has often been neglected in Christian thought and practice. However, throughout the tradition and today, we do find theologians who have grappled seriously with these New Testament passages, forcing them to rethink their assumptions about children and exploring what adults learn from them." The thought about children's role in the family has been the subject of discussion in both the theological and sociological fields in recent time.

Speaking about the 'child as master', Burggraave (in Dillen, 2011: 210) argues that, "the child is the radical other that also 'teaches' the parent something, as the child can never be reduced to what is already known or what one wishes. In his or her otherness, the child brings something new to the parents, who are confronted with the ethical obligation not to deny this 'alterity' or to reduce it to the same". In order to teach parents something, parents must learn to give their children space to speak and also become learners for a while to listen to the voice of their children.

Though parents are commanded to teach, train and bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, parents/guardians need to see the other side of the coin. Young people are also created in the image and likeness of God like adults and have been impregnated by God with potentials, ideas, visions and dreams that will contribute to the integration, continuation and unity of families, the church and societies. If families do not allow young people to deliver God's message or perform their roles, the family, church and society will miss out on messages God has planned to give to families. From the scripture, I will give examples of how some families, individuals and groups have nearly lost their blessing because of their attitude to young people.

Joseph (Genesis 37, 39, 40-50)

Joseph was a seventeen year old boy who was given the gift of dreams and interpretation of dreams by God. However, the gifts of God in Joseph was not appreciated, encouraged or cared for by his family. Neither the parents nor siblings realized that God had given Joseph to the family as solution to the future family and global problem that was to come. God, by his mercy, preserved Joseph until Pharaoh gave him a platform to interpret his dreams, made him Egypt's Prime Minister who by God-given gifts of dreams, interpretation of dreams and wisdom saved his family and the world from an unprecedented famine. Are families not driving away their Joseph's today or selling them to the world? Can parents, the church or societies blame God for not intervening in the unpalatable situation in the world today? What would have happened if they had discovered and nurtured Joseph's God-given talent? I presume that he would have interpreted many dreams in the family that would have saved his parents and brothers the harrowing experience they all passed through during their life time.

David (I Samuel 17)

The anointed David was the youngest of Jesse's eight children - unnoticed, uncared for and only fit to be a shepherd. However, he learnt how to trust in God from his experience with animals because he believed that it was God who delivered him from the mouth of lions and bears in the wilderness. His siblings nearly prevented him from performing his roles when he offered to confront Goliath. He believed there was a cause for him to be at the battle front at that time and that he was prepared by God for such a time from his experience with the animals. He killed Goliath and delivered his family and the whole nation of Israel from slavery. David was nearly prevented by his family from delivering them and the nation of Israel from Goliath because he was considered immature and arrogant. They considered David the one who needed to be taught and did not think that he could have anything to teach the elders. However, he taught his family and the whole nation how to live by living faith in the unchanging God of Israel. What would have happened if they had learned early in life the gift of God upon David and allow him to speak the word of faith into their lives? Maybe people like King Saul would have had the faith to finish the battle

before the 'boy' David was sent to the battle field. Can our children teach us or are they meant to be under our teaching throughout their stay with parents/guardians?

Hebrew maid (II Kings 5)

A Jewish maid was used by God to save a great army Captain of the host of the king of Syria named Naaman. Naaman was healed from his leprosy when he followed the idea God has put into the girl's heart as a solution to his master's problem. Naaman would have missed his divine healing if he had rejected the maid's advice to go to Prophet Elisha in Samaria. This unknown maid was God's representative to Naaman's household to pave way for deliverance from shame and reproach of leprosy.

Lad with five loaves (John 6:1-12)

What about the child with the small fish and bread in the New Testament? He might have been led by God to attend the meeting with his lunch box and offered it cheerfully. The spirit of this young lad, who offered his loaves of bread and fishes to cater for the needs of the family of God, was nearly crushed by the insensitive disciples of Jesus who disregarded his contribution as insignificant. Though the young lad saw himself as a partner in ministry with Jesus, the disciples only saw a boy contributing very minute and intangible bread and fishes. The disciples looked down on the quantity of the food at the expense of the quality of the lad's practical teaching on love, faith and sacrifice which Jesus acknowledged and appropriated to feed the multitude. The people would have returned home with an empty stomach and possibly faint on the way if Jesus did not use what God has provided for the people's sustenance through the lad.

Apostle Paul's sister's son (Acts 23:16-22)

When forty men bound themselves to embark on a hunger strike until they kill Apostle Paul, a young boy, Apostle Paul's sister's son, heard the plot and brought the news to the Apostle. What would have happened if Apostle Paul had shunned the lad who by divine providence brought the message of assassination to him or rebuked him like believers praying for Apostle Peter's release rebuked Rhoda the young maid in Acts 12:12-15? He might have died prematurely if he had rejected

God's revelation to him through that child. Apostle Paul gave the boy the platform to speak and received the message which he passed on to the relevant authority. God speaks through various people and means. These include our sons and daughters, hence the need for parents/guardians/leaders to humble themselves and listen to what message the Lord have for them through their children.

As we teach young people, we should also learn to hear from them what the Lord have to say to us because they are also channels through which God speaks to families and societies in the past and is still doing it now if we give them the chance to speak out. Children or youth should be seen and taught, and not to be heard used to be the old adage which the family, church and society should redress. If parents and the church think we are the only ones to teach without giving them the opportunity or platform to minister to us, we will be missing the blessing God wants to flow from them to us as members of the body of Christ. Examples abound in the Bible where children have been used to bless families and societies when they are given the platform to share ideas, dreams, visions, and also voice out prophesies the Lord laid in their heart.

Children are valuable to God and can be impregnated with solutions to so many family and societal problems. All we need to do is to be the midwife to bring about the inherent potential, God-given dreams, visions and ideas in them as they move through the most difficult period of their life - childhood to adulthood. Parents, the Church and society should tap into the inherent potentials and solutions that God has put into our children and not just see them as the one to be taught and not heard. We need to help them open their prophetic voice and ministry to their immediate and future family as well as society. Bunge (2008: 354) sums it up, "Christian parents have a responsibility to listen to children and to learn from them. They should take their questions and concerns seriously. They also are to pay attention to the lessons that children can teach them...to recognize that children can positively influence the community and the moral and spiritual lives of adults. Sociologists have also discovered that children are active agents in families especially in conflict situations. In a research report from Sweden (Sorbring, 2009: 8), it was proven that there is a shift in parent-child socialization from agent-object to agent-agent relationships. The children that were interviewed suggested best ways

for their parents to handle conflict situations in the family. These are reasoning, contact with somebody outside their home when conflict seems to be getting out of control (like a friend, school nurse, children's organization), active confrontation (argumentation) with parents, time out (withdrawal method) to avoid yelling when anyone is offended, goal-oriented behaviour (apologizing for misdeeds for reconciliation) (2009: 18-22). Though children in western countries have been found to be playing active roles in parent-child interaction, youth ministry should help African and other third world countries liberate our children from patriarchy so that we can bring about the best in our children through genuine nurture, teaching, and pastoral care.

In contemporary time, some youth are now leading worship services and engaged in the work of the Lord in various capacities. The role of children and youth today include teaching like Timothy (I Timothy 4:1 2), being a role model of faith like the lad with five barley loaves (John 6: 9) and representatives of Jesus to disintegrating families. However, their roles in their immediate and future family, which is the main focus of this study, need to be delineated so as to empower young people and reduce the impact of disintegrating family life on future youth.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used journals, books and internet sources. Various definitions of family have been discussed from both sociological and theological perspectives. While "family optimists" call for celebrating the changes to family, "family pessimists" have raised their concerns about the grave dangers inherent in not finding an urgent solution to the condition of the contemporary family. Another point of disagreement is the issue of marriage. Is marriage the foundation on which a family is built? Is it important and still relevant? Some sociologists and theologians believe firmly that marriage between a man and woman should be the foundation on which a family is built while others believe that marriage is not necessary and not the foundation of family because majority of people have found other means of forming a family such as cohabitation. Homosexual and lesbian families are included in the definition of family by some socialists and theologians. However, I strongly believe that family should be founded on a heterosexual marriage between two consenting matured adults – a man and woman joined together and living together in an atmosphere of

unconditional love in order to help each other fulfil all of God's purpose for their lives and the lives of their biological, adopted or spiritual children won to Christ. From a biblical perspective, a new form of family was introduced by the advent of Jesus Christ which takes pre-eminence over the family of origin of those who believe in Jesus Christ. Every man must be born again in order to enter this family which often suffer persecution from the unbelieving world. Though every man or woman is born into a family of origin, Jesus Christ asserts and insists that everybody must experience the second birth to have eternal life. Despite one's appreciation of, and affection towards one's family of origin, it is essential to experience the second birth.

It is becoming difficult to define a family because of the rate and the way at which families keep evolving. Different new family types are springing up with gender role-swap between men and women. More women are working outside the home and they are becoming bread-winners which used to be the main role of men. In line with this study, it is discovered that the role of young people in the family have been diminished and despised without investigation to the detriment and peril of parents, the Church and society. From Biblical examples, I have made a succinct summary of cases in which individuals, families, and a nation have nearly missed divine intervention and blessing due to their attitude to their children and their indispensable and significant roles. My conclusion on the role of contemporary youth is that youth are active agents of transformation, unity and growth to each family, church and society. They are loaded with solutions provided by God to solve individual, family, Church and societal problems. We need to stop at times, listen to them and seek for any divine revelation. As children are taught in the way of the Lord at home, in the church, and often at school, it is now time for us to start giving contemporary youth the opportunity to minister to us at home, the Church and in society. God can give the solution to Daddy or Mommy's problems to their children by the revelation of God's Word, vision, dreams or idea. We as parents should not think that children are the only recipients of our limited knowledge of God's Word, world and works. We should be open to receive from them all the blessings God wants to pour upon us through our children. Though I believe that parents are commanded to teach, train and nurture our children; I have discovered that young people also have been given a voice especially when they become born again to speak and teach us by words

and deeds, things parents do not know, if we (parents, church and society) care to listen.

Young people are impregnated with God-given solutions to personal, parents, peers, siblings, Church and social problems. Let us help them deliver the heaven-sent message and not kill them with an overdose of teachings or tag them as problems to society. They are not only able to teach their peers, but also able to teach their families and humble elders. We need to give young people room or a platform to partake in discussions and decision-making at home, church and society. Families are disintegrating because they are not tapping into the inherent wisdom, dreams, visions, and potentials in their children whom God has given to bless them. Many parents have sold the children God has given them to solve their personal, family and societal problems away to the world, while blaming God for not intervening in their problems. The church and parents should be made aware of this inherent role of children as agents of change rather than seeing them as delinquent children. If they are well taught, loved and given the platform to speak and do what God has created them for, they will be able to perform their roles well and God will be glorified.

In conclusion, family is becoming more difficult to define and the impact of social changes on the family is causing the family to disintegrate. In the next chapter, the focus will be on the conceptual understanding of disintegrating family life, its context, causes and consequences on family life.

CHAPTER 3

Disintegrating family life

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the conceptual understanding of disintegrating family life from sociological and theological perspectives. It is then followed by the context, causes and consequences of disintegrated family life. This chapter will also look at the effect of disintegration on family members, give a succinct overview of the link between human dignity and family, while the two family theories are considered in the last part to help answer the question, 'why is this happening?' This is the interpretive task of practical theology.

The interpretive task –Why is this happening?

The interpretive task of practical theological interpretation is carried out by a leader with sagely wisdom, that is, a leader who has the capability to make wise judgment. According to Osmer (2004: 84), wise judgment is crucial to good leadership. The family systems theory and the family development theory (3.7.1 & 3.7.2) are used to help in the interpretive task of practical theological interpretation with regards to disintegrating family life.

Different words have been used by different writers to describe the current condition of family life. Such words include disruption, dysfunction, decay, decline, disintegration, fracture and breakdown. Disintegration is used in this study because it is mostly used by theologians (Van Der Walt, 1995: ii, Strommen & Hardel, 2000: 157, Cahill, 2000: ix). The Oxford Advanced Dictionary (2005: 420) defines the word 'disintegrate', which is the root word for 'disintegration', in two ways: firstly it means, "to break into small parts or pieces and be destroyed"; and secondly, "to become much less strong or united and be gradually destroyed". This chapter therefore seeks to unpack the conceptual understanding of disintegrating family life which is becoming less strong or united and is gradually going into oblivion. The two fields to be considered are the sociological and theological fields.

3.2 Sociological understanding of disintegrated family life

According to Mowrer (1938: 344), the concept of family disintegration represents the climax of any of the various forms of family disorganization which is a process that takes different forms depending on the locus of conflict within family relations. These may be conflict between the children, parent-child conflict, conflict between husband and wife, or domestic discord. The family life is on the verge of disintegrating or has disintegrated when either of the spouses has found their way into the divorce court or court of domestic relations. Karraker & Grochowski (2006: 252) define divorce as the termination of the rights and responsibilities of a marriage by civil authorities. Though divorce is the major visible evidence of disintegrating family life, other writers and empirical results have shown that the concept has been extended to include marital discord or a discordant but continuing family, strained familial relationship, domestic violence (Alviet al., 2010: 1209), migrant labour (Shobola, 2010), war, poverty, racial discrimination, globalization and modernization (Browning, 2003: 1).

Families are disintegrating and two signs of disintegration mentioned by “family pessimists” (Cahill, 2003: ix; Popenoe, 1993: A48) are high divorce rates, single parenthood and steady growth in the number of unwed parents which will be highlighted here. The South African statistical release²² on marriages and divorce records 30 763 divorces in 2009 - with 28 295 children involved (younger than 18 years old). The trend in divorce indicates that the number of divorces has been fluctuating between 28 924 and 34 145 per annum in the last ten years. The report from the Office for National Statistics in the UK claims that the number of divorces decreased from 135 994 in 2008 to 126 496 in 2009²³. This is 30% lower than the highest number of divorces, which peaked in 1993 at 180 523. The figure of divorce from UK is still high despite the decrease in the number of divorce. The Australian Bureau of Statistics also shows the number of divorces granted in 1988 as 41 007 and 47 963 for 2007. However, the highest peak was 53 145 in 2003²⁴. The United States Census Bureau presents the steady increase in percentages and numbers of births out of wedlock (between 1980 and 2008) and single-parent households in ten

²²www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0307/P03072009.pdf

²³<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=170>

²⁴<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3307.0.55.001>

countries between 1980 and 2009 which is another evidence of disintegrating family life. Births to unmarried women in Japan increased from 0.8 percent in 1980 to 2.1 percent in 2006, Netherlands increased from 4.1 percent in 1980 to 41.2 percent in 2008, and the United States increased from 18.4 percent in 1980 to 40.6 percent in 2008.

With regards to single-parent households, the number increased in the United States from 6,061,000 million in 1980 to 10,536,000 million in 2008, from 796,000 in 1980 to 1,163,000 million in Japan and 1,429,000 in 1991 to 2,616, 000 million in 2008 in Germany. This statistic shows that children born into these families are deprived of the loving care and nurture of both parents.

As a result of globalization and modernization, which has opened door for free trade and human movement across continents, married couples, especially in the 'third world countries' have had their family separated. This is due to 'brain drain' where professional workers are leaving their families to work in the western countries like the United States of America, Canada and Europe in order to support members of their family financially in their home country. Shobola's research (2010) however highlighted the negative effect and burdens brain-drain places on spouses (especially women) left behind to take care of the children alone. The burdens include incessant sickness due to emotional strain, conflict with the spouse's family, temptation to start a new love relationship, children misdemeanours and anxiety. Families with this type of arrangement are said to be 'living apart together' (LAT).

Since disintegration is not limited to couple's conflict or separation, parent-child conflict can also lead to disintegration. This is explained by the research of Alvi et al., (2010:1214-1220) on 15 homeless Canadian youth who were thrown out of their families due to unresolved conflict, unrealistic expectations as well as intolerant and authoritarian style of parenting. When parents forcefully or gently eject or permit their teenagers to leave home without knowing or caring about their whereabouts, the family can be said to be disintegrating because the part of the family that will keep the family lineage is cut-off.

Most researchers (Cahill, 2000: ix; Popenoe, 1993: A48) on family issues believe that the disintegrating family life is the bane of society vices like crime and poverty,

frequent divorce, delinquency and crime (including an alarming juvenile homicide rate), drug and alcohol, abuse, suicide, depression, eating disorders, and growing numbers of children living in poverty. According to Cahill (2003: ix), these vices lie at the root of widespread family disintegration. The trend goes on and the question to ask is what happens to the children and youth caught up in this quagmire? Having dealt with the sociological understanding of disintegrated family life, the study moves on to the theological understanding of disintegrated family life.

3.3 Theological understanding of disintegrated family life

3.3.1 Loss of vision for the family tasks

Van der Walt (1995: ii, iii), a theological luminary, claims that family life is disintegrating because of factors outside the family, such as modernisation, migrant labour, urbanization, single-parent families etc., but added that another reason for the disintegration is the lack of loss of a vision concerning the task of the family. Researchers (Van der Walt, 1995: Ingoldsby, 2006: 68) agreed that most of the tasks of the family have been taken over or delegated to other societal relationships like school, church, and state. However, the main task that is taken away from, or relinquished by the family, is the education and religious instruction of their children at home which is meant to aid their socialization. The question is why are parents not taking responsibilities for, or relinquishing their primary task of educating and offering religious training to their children? De Graaff (1995:1) states that, "(F) from the beginning, God has set a structural norm that holds for the family and when parents neglect or openly reject God's Order for the family, the result is disintegration (cf. Rom. 1)." This means that parents can be liable for disintegrating family life.

The parents, that is both the biological father and mother, who are involved in bringing any child into the world are commanded and expected by God to be the first trainer, nurturer and educator of their children. Parents are expected to be matured and have been educated in the way to train their children as they have been taught by their parents. It is written, "For this reason shall a MAN leave his father and mother and be cleaved to his wife" (Genesis 2: 24). Most parents have given their task of teaching, training, and discipline of their children to the state, schools, media and church. This phenomenon, occasioned by globalization and modernization, has

weakened parental control over their children and exposed contemporary children to various defiling and confusing presentations of the media, peers and some contemporary 'churches'.

Sell (1981: 71) attests to this assertion by stating that the nuclear family has a clear identity and a specific set of responsibilities distinctive from the extended family, as can be seen in Genesis 2: 24. Though the extended family and the tribe are prominent in the Old Testament, it is the nuclear family that is responsible for child rearing. De Graff (1995: 2, 3) claims that outward manifestations of disintegration could be observed where parents and children are interacting in any public place, in church, in a bus, or on a playground. He concludes that many parents today seem to find it difficult to make their children obey and as a result they end up raising "insecure, self-centred, uncommitted children". Any family where God's law and order cannot be obeyed and maintained can be deemed to be disintegrating.

In a Christian family, the Bible is to be the law and guide. The husband is expected to be the one to maintain law and order in the family with the assistance of his wife (his help meet). For smooth running of each family, God has commanded children to honour their father and mother (Exodus 20: 12), obey their parents in the Lord (Ephesians 6: 1) that they may prosper and live long. Both parents are also commanded to love God and teach their children that they also love God (Deuteronomy 6: 4-9) and their neighbours. For the parents, the husband is commanded to 'so love his wife as himself' and wife to 'reverence and be subject to her own husband as the church is subject unto Christ' (Ephesians 5: 24, 33). Where this divine law of love and order are not obeyed and maintained by the parents and children, the family becomes chaotic and breaks if urgent action is not taken to obey the divine injunction and restore God's order. It can be summarised from De Graff's submission that family disintegration is built into the fabrics of children from the time parents neglect the training, nurturance and education of their children. Children, who lack home training, nurture, pass their ignorance, weakness and failure on to their children and the cycle continues until God intervenes through His Church.

3.3.2 Types of incompetent parents

Theologians (Devries, 1994 and Sell, 1981) have identified three types of parents in the negligence of duty towards their children. Devries (1994: 91-94) identified the 'immature Christian parent' and the 'helpless parent'. The immature parents are those who had been to children Sunday school in their childhood, grown in their vocation, but their spiritual development had stagnated. The helpless parents are those who start out intentionally to nurture the faith of their children but often find that more "urgent" demands derail the priority of faith formation. Adults' busy schedules choke out their good intention to nurture their children. Devries (1994: 93) says that today's parents have become victims of their own schedules. They are helpless because they are no longer in control of their own priorities. Sell (1981: 25) identified 'powerless parents' as parents who are deprived of their clear-cut role which is the socialization or the successful rearing of their children. Their loss of power to socialize their children is attributed to the industrialized society. In a recent research report on "Religious Socialization by the Media", Pirner (2009: 277) states that the electronic media represent major socializing agents because they convey "knowledge, world views and life orientations", however actively and constructively these may be acquired by the individual children or adolescents. Despite the challenges parents are facing, they have no excuse for not discharging their divine duty.

3.3.3 Consequence of family failure to discipline children

In his classic titled, "Shepherding a Child's Heart", Tripp (2005: 132) argues that our children are in danger if they are rebellious and disobedient. Therefore, parents must move swiftly to return them to the circle of safety. Tripp's (2005:19-25; 143-145) thesis is that parents are God's representatives - authorized and commanded to shepherd their children's heart Godward. According to him, the children who obey and honour their obedient teaching parents will be in the circle of safety and blessing because the Bible says that such children shall live long and it shall go well with them (Ephesians 6:1-3). On the other hand, rebellious and disobedient children who dishonour and disobey their parents will be in danger of difficulty and hardship. Apostle Paul's inclusion of disobedient children among the last days events of perilous time and the assertion that those who are disobedient to parents are worthy

of death (II Timothy 3:1-2; Romans 1:28-32), serve as a warning to parents and children to return to the circle of protection and blessing as Tripp (2005:131) advocated.

However, it is to be noted that the parents serve as the first line of authority and that the children must learn to obey at home if they will obey other authorities in the church, community and the State. In his commentary on Exodus 20:12a, Ndjerareou (2006: 112), states that the commandment to honour one's parent shows that parents are part of a structure of authority that God has established, therefore, they deserve respect. Some theologians (Tripp, 2005, Fowler, 2004, Schrotenboer, 1995 & De Graaff, 1995) have concluded that parents are to take responsibility for young people's misdemeanours. Where the divine injunction is floated in a family, there is bound to be divisions, abuse, low self-esteem, identity crisis and unfaithfulness. In a research report on fifteen homeless youth in Canada, Alvi et al. (2010:1209-1226) confirm the fact that all the young people interviewed on the streets came from homes where the parents have neglected and rejected God's order. Instead of accepting their negligence of duty, these parents locked their children out of their homes.

Fowler (2004) brings a daunting dimension to parents' negligence of duty. Citing the gospel account of parents who brought their children to Jesus for blessing but were turned away by his disciples, Jesus gave them a warning that "whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea (Matthew 18: 6). In Fowler's (2006: 74) exegesis, he contends that the primary application to the passage Jesus referred to are the believing little ones (those who have already in Jesus to "fall down") while the secondary application is to those who have not yet believed. From verse 8 of the same chapter, Fowler (2004: 75-79) exclaimed that if what you do causes a child (anyone, really) to stumble, you're better off dead! The first stumbling block is neglecting spiritual training, which he termed the comfortable life that cause parents to neglect their duty to teach God's Word to their children (Deuteronomy 6: 10-12). The second stumbling block is undervaluing children, as found in Matthew 18:10 (see that you do not despise one of these little ones). Every child is to be valued. The third stumbling block is

exasperating children, as found in Ephesians 6:4. Turaki (2006: 1437), an African Bible commentator, commenting on this verse says that parents are not to make unreasonable demands of their children: hence the command not to exasperate them. He claims that children who are exasperated by their parents by unreasonable demands may rebel, and rebellion leads to godlessness. A child who has experienced this is very difficult to win back to the Lord. Family is taken seriously by God especially with regard to their tasks towards their children.

3.3.4 Neglect or open rejection of God's order for family

Another reason for the disintegration of family is neglect and open rejection of God's order or structure for family. De Graaff (1995: 1) states that, "(F)rom the beginning, God has set a structural norm that holds for the family and when parents neglect or openly reject God's Order for the family, the result is disintegration (cf. Romans 1)." The beginning refers to the book of Genesis, chapter one verse 26 and 27 when God created man and woman in the image and likeness of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. God blessed them and expects them to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth. Prophet Malachi (2: 15) explains that God made man and woman one because He expects a godly seed from them while the Psalmist (128: 1-3) paints the picture of a God-fearing family led by a God-fearing man. His wife, according to the Psalmist, shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of his house: his children like olive plants round about his table. The order laid down by God, that is, God's perfect will from the beginning, is that a family is to consist of a man and a woman who are to be joined together permanently. Children are expected to be the fruit of this union (Psalm 127: 3) and it is the responsibility of both parents or guardians to train them in the way that they should go so that they will not depart from it when they grow up (Proverbs 22: 6).

Graaf (cf.) refers to Romans 1 because this chapter clearly states the reason why God permitted the reversal of His order for family just as Moses permitted divorce for the safety of endangered lives in marriage. Though God loves sinners who reverse His order, He nevertheless leaves them without warning about the consequence of their choice, as Apostle Paul writes (Romans 1: 26-32):

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy; murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

God’s order is that man should leave his father and mother to cleave to his wife that they might become one flesh (Genesis 2: 24). This original arrangement was reiterated by Jesus and Apostle Paul as to how God designed and desired the family (Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31). Schrotenboer (1995: 10) declares that, “[H]ere are permanent elements of the God-ordained family: husband and wife, one man and one woman who may and should reproduce. The two become one; together they comprise the image of God.” In this marital relationship, God blessed them together and commanded them to be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth (Genesis 1: 27, 28), as well as bring the fruit of the union (children) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6: 4).

Same-sex unions that emanate from previous heterosexual marriages put the divorced spouse and family under financial and emotional stress. The effect of divorce on heterosexual unions, as a result of one spouse coming out to form a new union with another homosexual or lesbian, is enormous on the spouse and children as well as on the new same-sex couple. Divorce fees, expenses on adoption of children, expenses on artificial insemination and stigmatisation presently attached to same-sex partners and their adopted and custodial children, are some of the hassles

they have to put up with. Karracker and Grochowski (2007: 294) writes that, “Although accurate numbers are difficult to estimate, lesbians are conceiving and bearing children through artificial insemination, substantial numbers of lesbians and gays have been in a heterosexual marriage that produced children and, increasingly, lesbians and gays are adopting children.”

From the theological perspective, neglect or open rejection of God’s order for family leads to the disintegration of family life. Though I am aware of diversities of global families, it nevertheless approves reversal of God’s order for family. As Jesus asserts, divorce was permitted by Moses because of the hardness of heart and the only reason given for divorce was if a spouse commit adultery. In the case of married men and women leaving their heterosexual partner to form a same-sex family, this can be categorised as sin caused by hardness of heart. According to Mueller (2006:68, 69), “While God is the author of diversity, he is not the author of sin nor does his holiness allow him to tolerate sin because there is danger in elevating tolerance over biblical truth.” Since God loves all men so much that He gave us his Son (John 3: 16), believers must love and pray for salvation of all men including those who reverse God’s order willingly or ignorantly as well as for immature, powerless, helpless parents and disobedient children (I Timothy 2: 1-4; II Peter 3: 9). As a result of reasons presented by parents for not discharging their duties, this study now seeks to scan the environment to know the context of the contemporary family.

3.4 The context of the contemporary family

Family plays a significant role in socialization and education of children. The context of the contemporary family will be examined in order to get a clearer picture of family life today. The context of a family determines to a large extent the content and quality of the family living within it. Society is a reflection of its core; the family that makes it up and according to van der Walt (1995:1), broader society has a strong influence on the family life of a nation or a country. However, the family also influences society. In the following sections, some of the important societal influences on family life will be outlined.

3.4.1 Modernization

Browning (2003: 129) defined modernization as the spread throughout the world of technical rationality and its efficiency-oriented and cost benefit logics and patterns. Another term for modernization is industrialization. Sell (1981: 25) had earlier stated that much of the failure in child rearing is due to the problems arising out of an industrialized society. Some of the benefits of modernization include better education, more jobs and better pay for men and women, better infrastructures, long life as a result of breakthroughs in the medical field and free market trade and movement. However, most of the benefits of modernization are only reaped in 'advanced countries' in Europe, North America, Australia and some parts of Africa.

Modernization led to the introduction of high schools which isolated youth from their families and the society. It also institutionalized peer society. Roots (2007: 32) posits that the rise of the high school as the location for young people to receive their needed training in the early twentieth century meant that young people stayed with their parents much longer than before and though this was the case, they spent fewer meaningful hours with their parents. Whereas in the decades of agrarianism and apprenticeships, young people and the old worked side by side and skills were passed on through working together. In high school, young people spent most meaningful hours with their peers, away from the work of parents and other adults. The trend has not changed as children now leave home for day-care as early as they are born and many youth now spend two-thirds of their teenage years far from their parents. As mentioned previously, women are now working outside the home, while the husband or wife work late or far from home. Parents and children hardly have meaningful hours together anymore. Likewise, the relationships between husbands and wives have been put under stress because of the easy migration opportunities opened up by globalization and modernization. Yao Lu (2012: 328) posits that, "when parents migrate, children left behind tend to receive less parental support and supervision. The remaining care provider would almost certainly face increased household responsibilities (Taylor et al., 1996), further undermining his or her ability to parent.

3.4.2 Globalization

According to Browning (2003: 129), globalization is a process by which information, images, symbols, and styles of life zigzag back and forth across the world in unpredictable patterns. The contemporary family, as a result of globalization, lives in what is now termed a “global village” or what Clapp (1993: 17-21) described as “the shrinking globe”. The world has been brought home and many of the activities jointly performed by families have been substituted. Van der Walt (1995: ii) had earlier made the conclusion that many of the family tasks have been taken over by or delegated to other societal relationships such as the factory, business world, school, church and the state. Parents have left the training of their children to school teachers, youth ministers in the Church (if there is any in their local church) and the media. With the media goes sexually explicit music and movies from which both adult and youth are learning foul languages, pornography, violence, drug-addiction, crime and values. The children who are more inclined to go along with television, to lap up its messages uncritically, are those who have received little in the way of guidance at home, hence their susceptibility to whatever the big tube send their way. (TV Guide February 1989 In Devries, 1994: 51).

Children, consequent upon early exposure to information from computers, television, cell phones and the eating of junk foods, grow faster in stature and in knowledge than traditionalist adults. These make contemporary children more informative and educative than their parents, though they are not psychologically and emotionally mature to manage the volume of information they are being fed through modern technological channels of communication. Mueller (2006:131) states that today’s world is without objective, transcendent authority outside of self. The “I” determines all things ethical and it is the “I” that does what “I” wants to do. One of the major channels by which youth receive information is the television or internet.

Cook (1996: 246, 247) described television as a mechanical makeover of reality which presents a distorted picture of life. On the social impact of television, he claims that some research reports suggest that people actually act upon TV imagery as though it were reality and that television influences the way people develop human relationships, moral and ethical values, and family routines. Coleen’s conclusion echo’s Gerbner’s “cultivation theory” (in Pirner’s research report, 2009: 278) which

states that, “heavy and regular viewing of television cultivates, in the long run, precisely those attitudes and world views presented by television”.

As most youth spend more time with the television and internet, they learn value systems presented to them. Most of these value systems are corrupt and destructive. Some of these ethical values and systems include improper dressing, pre-marital sex, drunkenness, drug abuse, mind-polluting music and movies. The form of transmitting knowledge to youth is referred to as “media socialization.” According to Pirner (2009: 276, 277), socialization of young people in Western societies has to a large part been taken over by the media and one can conclude that the adolescents’ life-world today is to a considerable extent a media-world. Because the media stories deal with basic human feelings such as fear, aggression, and love, often using symbolic language that is derived from religious traditions, Pirner claims that religious socialization outside institutionalized religion now takes place through the media. This, according to Pirner (2009: 290) means that, “even children and adolescents who come from a secular family background cannot and should not be considered innocent and ignorant in relation to religion.” This finding is valuable to youth ministers in the sense that contemporary youth should not be seen as ignorant of religious traditions and languages. However, he concludes that religious socialization of young people in Western Europe has shown, through empirical evidence over the past decades, a significant decline of the importance of the family and church communities as socializing agents.

Many Christians have reacted differently towards globalization which has some positive effect such as easy transportation and means of communication. However, for the people of Africa, Amanze (2010: 297) concludes that the African churches are facing serious challenges due to globalization, which has created increased levels of poverty, environmental degradation, violence, loss of identity, tribalism, classism, civil wars, the spread of the HIV/Aids pandemic and the breakdown of African traditional values, such as the extended family and the primacy of community ties.

On the other hand, more recently, Barna²⁵ research group’s report on the influence of technology in families’ found that most family members, even parents, feel that technology has been a positive influence on their families. The report states that,

²⁵ <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/488-how-technology-is-influencing-families>.

“[W]hile many assume that families are fed up with technology, by nearly a two-to-one ratio, parents think of technology like computers, cell phones and video game systems as making their family life better rather than worse (32% to 18%)”. In conclusion, Karraker & Grochowski (2006) explained that although technology holds great promise as a means for staying connected, informed, engaged, aware and entertaining, these same attributes can lead to separation, unwanted influences, isolation or overstimulation.

3.4.3 Postmodernity

Cheal (2002:150) states that postmodernity is conceptualized as a type of culture in which an accelerated rate of change produces unpredictable outcomes, and modern social institutions lose much of their capacity. The postmodern world is further described as a fragmented world, more and more populated with isolated and drifting individuals in an age of hyper-individualism. Hyper-individualism²⁶ is defined as a tendency for people to act in a highly individual way, without regard to society. It is an excessive or aggressive pursuit of personal success at the expense of others' well-being, who may include one's children, spouse, parents or other less privileged in society. An independent report on BBC News (February 2009) titled, *Selfish adults 'damage childhood'*, states that the aggressive pursuit of personal success by adults is now the greatest threat to British children. The report mentioned family break-up, unprincipled advertising, too much competition in education and income inequality as contributing factors. According to Mueller (2006: 66), “our postmodern world is marked by a new level of moral relativism, the view that each person's own personal standard of right and wrong is as legitimate, true and authoritative as any other.” As a result of this, the Word of God upon whom the moral fibre of the Church is laid, is shaken by postmodernity. Contemporary Christian youth and family are facing great challenge because of family members' exposure to different 'gods' and 'sacred books' as well as their negative effect on their “faith in God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which was once delivered to the Saints (Jude 3)”.

Hesterhoff (2006: 66) writes that “adolescents have given up on the idea that there is one universal truth because they have discovered that the world is filled with conflicting interpretations of truth. They have embraced the mind-set that what is

²⁶ <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/hyperindividualism>.

right for me may not be right for you and what is right for me today may not be right for me tomorrow. For postmodern students, truth is relative to the community in which a person participates, and with the emergence of clusters, it has become evident that there are many communities that make up the adolescent world.

African families have been mostly affected by this phenomenon because of its desensitization effect on the “Ubuntu” concept in the mind of African people. The core of Ubuntu is its emphasis on the maxim which, according to Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2011:21, 22), is defined in Xhosa as, “Umntu ngumtu ngabantu”. This can be translated to English as, “A person is a person through other persons.” This African concept is antithetical to the Western focus on individualism, which meant that people are lonely in a crowd. Desmond Tutu writes that, “This concept speaks of how people are more important than things, than profits, than material possessions. It speaks about the intrinsic worth of persons as not dependent on extraneous things such as status, race, creed, gender, or achievement. “I am what I am because of who we all are.” Ubuntu is antithetic to the “I,” “me” individualism of the western society which postmodernity has encouraged and popularized. Ubuntu asserts that to be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and establish respectful human relations with them based on that recognition. It stresses the need to choose preservation of life of every human being above wealth and it is expected that individuals will behave in the highest standard in order to portray the highest noble virtues expected by the community from every member of the community. Ubuntu have not only been silenced in the African societies but is also disappearing in the African families with the high rate of divorce, violence, disrespect for the elderly and disregard for normal marriage tradition between man and woman.

Research carried out by the South African Social Studies (Robert, 2006: 114) reports that, “for nearly a third of South Africans, material values predominate over post-material concerns when they were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that ‘the best things in life cannot be bought with money.’ This show the impacts of postmodernism on South African people for most people will rather forfeit values for material things. Apart from elevating hyper-individualism, postmodernity further divide the family internally”.

Ritzer (in Karraker and Grochowski, 2006: 23) writes of the postmodern family:

“The [family] meal is probably not what it once was. Following the fast food model, people have even more options to “graze,” “refuel,” nibble on this, or snack on that rather than sit down at a formal meal. Also, because it may seem inefficient to do nothing but just eat, families are likely to watch television or play computer games while they are eating. The din, to say nothing of the lure, of dinnertime TV programmes such as Wheel of Fortune and of the “binges” and “whines” associated with computer games is likely to make it difficult for family members to interact with one another. We need to decide if we can afford the loss.”

David Wells, a renowned theologian commented (see Mueller, 2006: 72, 73) on the loss of connection and community: “we lived in an integrated society in the days gone by but increased mobility, a booming economy and technological advance has destroyed this sense of community and created a disintegrated society.....families break up. Marriages fail. Friendships are broken. In our highly mobile society people rapidly move in and out of community”. Indeed, we need to decide, as Ritzer said, if we can afford the loss of interaction, connection and community in our families and communities.

3.4.4 Pluralism and its influence on the family

Consequent upon globalisation and modernisation, pluralism has spread all over the world. The pluralistic society is a challenge to families as members are exposed to different religious groups’ doctrines and ways of life. According to Strommen & Hardel (2000: 112), non-Judeo and non-Christian groups such as Muslims, Zoroastrians, Hindus, and the like, are gaining prominence in every section of the country in today’s mainstream society. According to Lawrence (2006:199), exclusivity is at the top of the sin pyramid. This means that people, society or religion/s that view other people, societies or religions as ignorant, inferior and lost are termed myopic and intimidated. Excluding other religions among the list of ‘other ways’ to God is viewed as archaic, while inclusion is what most religions clamour for. However, most families have rejected the idea of pluralism that has opened family

members to different religions, cultural values, new systems of family life and ways of thinking which were formerly unknown to them. Families are being divided because their members defect or become an adherent of another religious group different from the one in which they were raised up. This often leads to family disowning, withdrawing of entitlement or even killing the member who is converted to another religion. Pluralism also concerns societal, cultural, educational and political arenas as most societies, institutions of learning and countries are made up of people from different family training, tribes, and tongues. This has led to inter-tribal marriages, cross-cultural exchanges of knowledge, dressing, music, behaviour and values. Pluralism affects young peoples' identity as they grow up in a society and families mixed with different cultures, values, attitudes and behaviours. It is no longer strange to find youth whose parents come from two different continents, with different cultural backgrounds, language, and values in a country or culture different from theirs. It can be said that children are also affected by pluralism. While pluralism, which is spread by globalization, has seen few youth growing up healthily to become bi- and multi-lingual, or multicultural as a result of the diversity of their home background, others have become confused and troubled by pluralism which affects their identity formation. Research conducted by Van der Walt (1996: 94-133), shows that most of the 103 students (18-22 years old) who responded to this survey claim to be affected by their exposure to other cultures (African/Western), ideologies (communalism/individualism) and religions (Christianity/African). Some of their remarks on the effect of pluralism on their identity go like this: *I feel and act like a Westerner on the "outside" but on the "inside" I feel myself to be an African.* On religion one of these students writes that, *"Today I am torn between the two horns of a dilemma: I do not know which God I should worship. If I worship the ancestors, people will always refer to me as uncivilized and primitive."* Another student writes that, *"I need to rethink my own identity anew," and then relate the shock of having contact with people of colour for the first time at university."*

3.5 Causes of disintegration of family life

Since most causes of family disintegration occurs from inside and outside the family, the causes and effects of disintegrating family life will be divided into the internal and external causes. The internal causes will be dealt with under the section on marriage

and family because both marriage and family issues arise as a result of personal choice and are discussed internally initially by family members, while external causes will be discussed under the section on societal influences that affect marriage and family from outside. Highlighted below are some of the causes of family disintegration.

3.5.1 Internal - marriage and family

3.5.1.1 Sin, Satan and Self

Schrotenboer (1995:20) explains that the alienating influence of sin came into the parent-child as well as the son-son relationship and in short, sin broke up the first marriage and has been doing its devastating work ever since. Kostenberger (2003: 280) corroborates Schrotenboer when he writes that there are several indications elsewhere in the New Testament in Paul's writing and those of others that the devil's efforts to destroy marriages and to subvert family life did not stop at the fall but continue to this very day. Devil's efforts are evident in the high rate of divorce, family violence, juvenile delinquency and suicide. The trio of sin, Satan and self are the major root cause of disintegrating family life. From the theological perspective, the Bible records the account of the fall of man (Genesis 3) which can be rephrased, "the fall of family" or "the fall of society" because both family and society, which is made up of families, consist of men. This trio are inseparable because Satan (also known as the Devil, Liar, Serpent, Accuser) is the author of sin and operate and manifest through self in families (human heart) (Romans 1 John 3:7-9). In the words of Charles Colson (1999: 143, 144),

"THE REAL PROBLEM with this world is not deformity in the body; it's deformity in the soul. In a word, it's sin. Anyone who harbors an idealistic urge to improve the human race ought to look not to eugenics but to means for healing the sinful heart. Yet the very notion of sin is unpalatable to the modern mind. As a result, many of the brightest Western thinkers have constructed a great myth to avoid facing the truth about sin and guilt. And ironically, this myth, more than anything else, has brought unimaginable havoc and misery into this century".

Some of the ways in which sin, Satan and self, manifest in any family are bitterness, hatred, jealousy, anger, pride, adultery, fornication, incest, drunkenness, murders,

strife, disobedience to the Word of God and seditions of which Apostle Paul tells us that those who do these works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). As Bible commentator Wenham (2007) affirms, “Chapter 3 [of Genesis] showed how sin disrupts relations between God and human beings and between man and wife.”

In dealing with disintegrating family life that is evident and increasing in all societies, a way of salvation from sin, Satan and self must be found and applied urgently. The inspired, inerrant and infallible Holy Bible is the only book that provides humanity with the narrative of salvation. As a result of the entrance of sin, thrust into man by Satan, man began to define himself outside of God his maker. Though God gave man the dignity of being identified with the Trinity (Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit), sin became a veil that blocks humanity from seeing and valuing the God-given dignity in himself and other fellow human beings. This led to the first murder in the Bible as Cain killed his brother Abel and disintegration in the family of Jacob. The manifestation of sin, Satan and glorification of self is manifest in contemporary family in the form of adultery, fornication, children and women abuse, domestic violence, parent’s neglect of their teaching duty to their children, lack of love and care in the family, increase in the number of street children, single-parenthood and birth outside marriage.

3.5.1.2 Unequal yoke

Sin causes disintegration when intending couples deliberately flout the divine command that believers should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (2 Cor. 6: 14-16). Ham, Wieland and Batten (1999: 92-94) state that, “Sadly, there are some Christian homes where the parents are more concerned about their children not marrying someone from another “race” than whether or not they are marrying a Christian. When Christians marry non-Christians, it negates the spiritual (not the physical) oneness in marriage, resulting in negative consequences for the couple and their children.” This

is an area which the church should address to reduce the number of families suffering from negative consequences of unequal yoke. Writing on interracial marriage, Ham, Wieland and Batten (1999: 94) argue that, the real ‘interracial’ marriage that God says we should not enter into is when a child of the Last Adam (one who is a new creation in Christ—a Christian) marries one who is an unconverted child of the First Adam (one who is dead in trespasses and sin – a non-Christian). Though heterosexual marriage between Christian couples does not guarantee a peaceful moment throughout the marriage, God sternly warns believers from getting married to unbelievers either within the Church or from outside the church. According to Ham et al. (1999:95) one of the best ways to destroy the family and its function of producing godly offspring, is to have godly people marry ungodly mates and it is obvious that Satan has attempted to do this right down through history.

3.5.1.3 Premarital sex

When intending couples engage in premarital sex before marriage, as it happens in the case of cohabitation, it leads to high rate of divorce (Research report from Catholic report). Writing on a theological perspective on human dignity and sexual behaviours, Vorster (2007:901) states that, “sex can never be an experiment, neither can it be a means to start a (sic) relationship because of its intimate and mysterious character, but it serves the completion of an (sic) relationship. The revelational function of sex implies that the exclusive lifelong marriage relationship is the only proper context for physical sex, precisely because sex involves the knowing of the intimate mysteries of the other person”. Vorster concludes that biblical theology is united in describing the physical act of sex as a visible expression of the exclusivity of the marriage bond that unites husband and wife (cf Genesis 2:24, Proverbs 5:15, Matthew 19, 1 Corinthians 7, Leviticus 18).

3.5.1.4 Cohabitation

Family optimists like Coontz (2000), Stacey (1998) and Skolnick (1993) stress that changes in the contemporary family are really nothing to worry about and that the world should move beyond “the myth of family decline”, to learn to live with a high divorce rate, and to celebrate ‘alternative life styles’ which are here to stay and not all that bad. One of these changes is the incredibly sudden surge in the number of

cohabitating couples. The National Conference of Catholic Bishop's Committee resource paper²⁷ reports (2007: 103-107) that cohabitation is a pervasive and growing phenomenon with a negative impact on the role of marriage as the foundation of family and that cohabitation as a permanent or temporary alternative to marriage is a major factor in the declining centrality of marriage in family structure.

Some of the cultural reasons for the increase in cohabitation, according to the Catholic Bishop's Committee report, are changing values on family and decline in the importance of marriage, declining confidence in religious and social institutions to provide guidance and delay of marriage for economic or social reasons while sexual relationships begin earlier. Other reasons for cohabitation include rejection of the institution of marriage and desire for an alternative to marriage, pressure to conform to current ways of living that having a cohabiting partner is a measure of social success, personal desirability, adult transition, desire to avoid divorce and fear of or disbelief in long-term commitment. The high rate of divorce, especially in the Christendom, has reduced most people's confidence in covenantal and legal traditional marriage. In 2008, Barna²⁸ noted that Americans have grown comfortable with divorce as a natural part of life. This can be said to be true statements with most countries because of the high rate of divorce. He concludes that "there no longer seems to be much of a stigma attached to divorce; it is now seen as an unavoidable rite of passage. Young adults, he suggests, want their initial marriage to last, but are not particularly optimistic about that possibility. Evidence shows that young people are moving toward embracing the idea of serial marriage, in which a person gets married two or three times, seeking a different partner for each phase of their adult life.

3.5.1.5 Marital discord

Strommen and Hardel (2000: 37, 38) claims that marital discord is the strongest of all the factors contributing to family disintegration; "it is at least twenty times more powerful a predictor of family disunity than is divorce". The cause of marital discord is lack of communication. Communication, according to Strommen & Hardel

²⁷ Marriage Preparation and Cohabiting Couples: Information report in Perspective on Marriage: A Reader 2007.

²⁸ <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released?q=divorce+among+christians>

(2000:51), is the key to close family relationships which needs improvement in most families. Karraker & Grochowski (2006: 236) write that couples are likely to have negative feelings about and be dissatisfied with their relationship when they are ineffective in their communication about issues and feelings within and outside their relationship. Lack of communication often lead to triangulation and eventually lead to disintegrating family life.

Judy Wallerstein²⁹, in a fifteen year study on the long-term effect of divorce on children, discovered that almost half the children raised in families characterized by marital conflict were described as “worried, underachieving, self-deprecating, and sometimes angry young men and women upon reaching adulthood. The study shows that youth from disrupted families are twice as likely to exhibit these problems as youth from non-disrupted families. Marital conflict or discord that involves contempt, criticism, and stonewalling is likely to lead to divorce. When such discord, which is linked with problematic parenting, is acrimonious and hostile, it is detrimental to children. Chase-Lansdale (2004:167) explained that children who experience marital conflict and difficult parenting have problems with their own self-regulation and are likely to develop psychological problems.

3.5.1.6 Family triangulation

Family triangulation in psychology³⁰ is a concept originated in the study of dysfunctional family systems and it is used in family therapy. Triangulation is the work of Murray Bowen³¹ who theorized that a two-person emotional system is unstable in that it forms itself into a three-person system or triangle under stress. This occurs in disintegrating families when a member of the family during conflict, choose to confide in a third party in the family about some issues that upset him/her rather than communicating directly with the person with whom he or she is having conflict. In the International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family (2003:1660), triangulation is explained thus, “When tensions exist between two family members, one of them (most likely the person experiencing the greater level of discomfort) may attempt to “triangle in” a third person either directly or indirectly (e.g., by bringing

²⁹ From *Passing on the Faith* by Strommen & Hardel (2000: 38).

³⁰ [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_\(psychology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_(psychology))

³¹ [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_\(psychology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_(psychology))

them up, telling a story about them. For example, in the case of marital triangles, a husband who is upset with his wife might start spending more time with their child”.

It is a form of splitting strategy and often breeds character assassination. When an unresolved dispute between married couple results to bringing the children into it to gain support for their argument or fight the other spouse, this has become family triangulation.

3.5.1.7 Discontinuation of faith transmission

Ham, Wieland and Batten (1999:94) note that, “the family is the first and foremost fundamental of all human institutions and it is the unit that God uses to transmit His Word from one generation to the next.” However, from various studies conducted between 1980 and 1997, Strommen & Hardel (2000: 14) claim that, faith sharing is not happening today in most families of the Church and it seems as though parents do not recognize their role in the faith transmission and growth of their children. The consequence is that both parents and children lack the undergirding that comes from being raised in a home that takes matters of faith seriously. Children from these homes are leaving the Church in their large numbers and are indoctrinated with harmful teachings by the media. The effect is that biblically illiterate children grow up without the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom (Proverbs 1: 7; 9:10), to raise children (another generation) in their own likeness, after their image like God commented about Adam after the fall of man (Genesis 5: 1-3). Ham et al. (1999: 95) write that it is of primary importance in marriage to produce godly offspring, who themselves will then produce godly offspring, generation after generation. This is important because Satan knows that if rearing of godly children can be stopped, then the generations to come will not have the knowledge of the Lord. According to Nuwoe-James Kiamu, an African theologian (2011: 100), discontinuation of faith to youth has led to what he terms a youth “MESS-AGE”. Using the biblical account in the book of Judges, he described how the children of Israel degenerated into a nation where “every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 21: 25) because there was no one to pass on the goodnews to them. When a person lacks living faith that comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10: 17), he/she lacks all that is needed to live a godly, gracious and

greater life that God intends for His creation. Faith is very vital to Christian living because “without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11: 6).”

According to Shrotenbauch (1995), juvenile delinquency is evidence of a disintegrating family because it shows that the parents are not teaching their children the Word of God. This manifests publicly in various forms like disrespect for elders and authorities, deliberate breaking of sacred and divine laws, low self-esteem expressed by different styles of dressing and make-up.

Except for God’s intervention, children who lack Christian education and those who disregard Christian education pose great threat to society, their family and future generation. They are exposed to negative societal influences like addiction to illegal drugs, sexual promiscuity, drunkenness, and they are likely to live a hedonistic, parasitic and unfulfilled transitory life. Nelson (2006: 20) states that, “If, therefore, parents avoid teaching their children about God, those children will, under ordinary circumstances, either fashion a private idea of God, become unaware of God’s existence, or consider God unimportant”. However, if parents pass on their faith to their children, proof abounds to confirm the effectiveness and multiplier-effect of faith transmission. Over 600 academic research studies have shown the fruit to encourage parents. Kageler (2008: 26) states that,

“It was the research from a series of studies showing that Christian youth have assets their less religious peers do not have. Some of these “assets” are the absence of something negative for society. In comparison to their irreligious peers, Christian youth are less likely to commit suicide, they are less sexually active, they drink and do drugs less, and they are less likely to break the law and go to jail. Other “assets” mark the presence of something positive for society. Christian youth stay in school longer, are healthier, feel better about themselves, and are more likely to volunteer their time to help others.”

Christians are commanded to teach diligently God’s commandments referred to as ‘The Shema’ in Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 and train up (or educate) their children in the way that they should go so that they will not depart from the way of the Lord when they become an adult (Proverbs 22: 6). Nelson (2006: 13) states that the Shema is probably the best brief, practical guide parents have for communicating the faith to

our children. Christian religious education is vital for every child because the consequences of present prevailing negligence by parents are unbearable and incomparable to the earthly and eternal benefits promised by God to obedient parents and children (Deuteronomy 28).

Nelson (2006: 20) gives the report of a research carried out by three research sociologists on young Presbyterian adults. The research question was, “*What happens to young adults who grow up with religious teaching in the church but with little or no reference to God at home?*” The answer that came back is that, “the young adults in the study who no longer considered Christian belief important were the ones who grew up with parents who seldom, if ever, talked to them about God”. Semenye (2006:1480) comments that Christian education passes the Christian faith from one generation to the next. It is essential that Christian faith is faithfully transmitted from generation to generation to keep families and the society in which it lives from disintegrating.

3.5.1.8 Divorce

Mowrer (1938) identified divorce as the most visible evidence of a disintegrating family and as the climax of various internal rift and conflicts in families. International statistics, as reported in Chapter 3, show that most countries of the world are experiencing an increase in the number of divorce annually. Berns (2007:91) states that “parental divorce is not a single event but rather represents a series of stressful experiences for the entire family that begins with marital conflict before the actual separation and includes many adjustments afterward”. Married couples divorce for different reasons. These include adultery, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, change in sexual orientation where a spouse leaves the heterosexual relationship to form a new relationship in a same-sex union. When a married man and woman decide to, and eventually divorce, it affects the whole family including the children. Since women often take custody of the children after divorce, it places a financial burden as well as other responsibilities on women which otherwise are both shared with the men before they divorce. Divorce throws most women and the children into poverty and exposes them to social vices, while the father gains as he leaves to live alone. According to Karraker and Grochowski (2006: 256), divorce unquestionably has a deleterious effect on the material standard of living for women.

The Catholic Church, though aware of the fact that there is innocent party in divorce situation, states that “Divorce is immoral also because it introduces disorder into the family and into society. This disorder brings grave harm to the deserted spouse, to children traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them, and because of its contagious effect which makes it truly a plague on society”³².

3.6 External causes - societal influence

3.6.1 HIV/Aids pandemic

The impact of HIV/Aids on families is great. Both parents and their children are greatly affected, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa where about 68% of all people (about 34 million) living with HIV/Aids in the world lives (UNAIDS, 2011³³). This pandemic has led to the increase in the number of orphans due to the death of one or both parents in the affected families. Much to be worried about is the rise of ‘child-headed family’ especially in South Africa. This type of family has surfaced because there are fewer orphanage homes to cater for the needs of the vulnerable children. In this type of family, the eldest child takes over the responsibility for the upkeep of his or her siblings due to the death of both parents. The effect of this trend is that children from such homes lack the necessary care, nurture and support for their proper development. On the other hand, where infected parents are still alive, they suffer stigmatisation and discrimination from their community. All of these factors delay the infected from early accessibility to necessary medication that will sustain them until the Aids stage. HIV/Aids causes stress and conflict, as Russo and Smith (2006: 337) puts it,

“HIV/AIDS clearly affects women who pick up the disease from their male partners. Because of the patriarchal system in most of the ‘third world,’ women do not have the power to confront their husbands when they are suspicious of their husbands’ infidelity, neither do they have the boldness to request for a HIV test together with their husband. However, in homes where women challenge the husband, it often leads to discord in a patriarchal society”.

³² http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm

³³ UNAIDS World Aids day report 2011

http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2011/JC2216_WorldAIDSday_report_2011_en.pdf

According to Mcpherson (2006: 338)³⁴, HIV/Aids also disrupt the transmission of knowledge from one generation to another, because parents die before young people can acquire useful information about farming and household management. This is a great challenge to the next generation as they face the future without the knowledge of the important information needed for their upbringing and smooth all-round growth. Another effect of HIV/Aids on family life is the poverty that it causes as a result of ill health that makes it impossible for parents to work and earn money to feed the family.

3.6.2 Poverty

According to Smith (2006: 17), poverty negatively affects every aspect of family daily life and functioning and it is associated with family violence, disease, child and adult prostitution. Where there are insufficient funds to run a family, it hinders the academic progress and achievements of the children in the family. This is the reason for the high rate of illiteracy in Africa. Many people cannot afford the tuition fee for their children and as a result, their children lack the educational qualification needed to gain employment in either the private or government employments. Poverty limits the power of choice especially for women and children when important decisions are to be taken in the family. This affects the family as most decisions are taken by men, even though they are detrimental to the family. However, when men are jobless, it makes them feel inferior, powerless and aggressive, which makes family life tense. Poverty is one of the reasons that led women to work outside of their homes. The SAIRR (March 2011: 6) conclude that families living in poverty and those who experience unemployment are more likely to have dysfunctional family environments.

3.6.3 Patriarchy and feminism

Castells (2010: 192, 193) in his classic titled, 'The Power of Identity', described patriarchy as a founding structure of all contemporary societies that is characterized by the institutionally enforced authority of males over females and their children in the family unit. According to Castells, the patriarchal family which is the cornerstone of patriarchy is being challenged at this turn of the millennium by the inseparably

³⁴ Macpherson in "Women in two third world" by Sandra L. Russo & Suzannah in Families in Global perspectives)

related processes of the transformation of women's work and the transformation of women's consciousness. Consequent upon the feminist challenge of patriarchy, Castells (2010:194) states that, "The human landscape of women's liberation and men's defence of their privileges is littered with corpses of broken lives, as is the case with all true revolutions." One of the causes of family disintegration is abuse of power or weakness of fathers to use their due power to help maintain God's law and order in their homes. Whenever and wherever power is abused, there is violence which has led to the term 'patriarchal terrorism'. Patriarchal terrorism is defined by Zinn and Eitzen (2005: 368) as violence initiated by men as a way of gaining and maintaining absolute control over their female partners. This pattern according to Zinn and Eitzen is rooted in patriarchal ideas of male ownership of their spouses and involves the systematic use of violence, economic subordination, threats, intimidation, isolation, and other control tactics. The crisis in contemporary family can be attributed to the abuse of power or weakness of fathers to manage their home effectively. Due to abuse of power by men in the past, different feminist movements have sprung up to challenge the former traditional patriarchal family system where the men dominate the whole family.

Olson and Leonard (1996: 17) confirmed that feminism is another powerful force affecting families. The feminist movement, they continued, "has challenged many common, domestic assumptions: that final decision-making power belongs to men; that dominant submissive relationships are healthy; that violence against wives and sexual abuse of children by male partners and fathers is to be hidden and endured; that the role of women is to serve and accommodate men." Globalization, modernization and postmodernity has played a huge role in the rise, spread and the establishment of feminism as a force to be reckon with on global issues. Mansbridge (in Castells, 2010: 234) defines feminism as a "the commitment to ending male domination". As more women are educated about their rights and power to make personal decisions and choices, they were at the same time desensitized with regards to the consequence of neglecting their roles in the family to their husbands and especially their children. This opened up the family to the intruding forces of modernization and globalization that is taking advantage of the gap created by the patriarchy and feminism. The factory and office doors that were opened for women to work, served as an escape route for women. However, the joining of the outside

work force by women left the home open for television and other electronic gadgets to take over the socialization of children as more children spend more time socializing with the latest changing technology. Women did not stop at working outside alone, they also embarked on empowering themselves by studying courses that were once regarded as men's courses like engineering, accountancy, banking, medicine, education and Law. Patriarchy gave rise to feminist movements where women derive their identities outside of men, empower women to sue for divorce, advance youth culture and identity. For example, the 2009 data from Statistics South Africa³⁵ shows that there was more females (49.8%) than males (35%) requesting for divorce. Castell (2010:234) concludes that "In all cases, through equality, difference, or separation, what is negated is woman's identity as defined by men, and as enshrined in the patriarchal family.

3.6.4 Emigration

Emigration could also be seen as another cause of disintegration. Maldonado (2008: 43) states that when a spouse (usually the husband) emigrates and the other spouse (usually the wife) stays behind with the children, potential problems come knocking at the door. Men and women, if they are not living with their spouse, whether they are in their home country or the new land, will experience many tensions and temptations. This statement is corroborated by Shobola's (2010) empirical study carried out on 198 female participants left behind with children by their husbands who emigrated to the United States of America in search for greener pasture. The first finding states that there is a significant relationship between the wife's health status and the husband's migration to America because 46 women claim that they have experienced increased hospital visits since their husband's departure. They have been left with medical challenges like elevated blood pressure, sight abnormality, hearing deficiency due to general anxiety of fear of the unknown. The second finding is that 112 women claimed that they are already in a fresh relationship with other men because they anticipate divorce as they suspected that their husbands might have staged fake marriage in order to obtain a green card³⁶. Lastly, 54 women have experienced in-laws' persecution and interference because

³⁵Statistics South Africa, Marriages and Divorces 2009 page 3

³⁶A green card is an identity document that gives foreigners equal right as citizens in the United States of America.

of their assumption that the wife is preventing the money sent by their son from the United State get to them or that the wife is squandering the money. Some, the women claim, even threaten to attack them with diabolical means. The study by Shobola shows the psychological negative effects of migration as it affects women and especially the children. These include unstable health, emotional trauma caused by in-laws, anxiety and lust for other men.

According to Zinn and Eitzen (2005: 463, 464), transnational family life entails extraordinary emotional, financial, and physical stress for family members and in the word of Chavez (in Zinn and Eitzen, 2005: 463, 464);

“Migrants are subject to many life-threatening experiences in crossing the border and then in working in the United States. As a consequence, parents in transnational families wait expectantly for the migrant’s return, as do spouses and children. Wives not only fear for their husbands’ safety, but often worry that their husbands will meet other women, causing them to forget their families back home.....Family members left behind often must assume tasks and roles belonging to the missing spouse. Although this can be quite burdensome, many families left behind do not reunite with migrants in the United States. Others, however, find the pressures too great to bear and choose to join the family members in the United States.”

3.6.5 War and armed conflict

Apart from the above causes, war is another cause of disintegration. War³⁷ is defined as a situation in which two or more countries or groups of people fight against each other over a period of time. War causes families to disintegrate faster than other causes as it can cause a whole family to be wiped out within a few minutes or cause the death of one or both of the parents in the family leaving a widow/widower, single-parent, or orphans behind. According to Smith (2006: 16, 17), war and armed conflicts have devastating consequences for families and children who have witnessed armed conflict and have been deeply affected. Citing two examples from Sri Lanka and Guatemala, Smith claims that ethnic violence led to thousands of female-headed households and traumatised women and children. War can also

³⁷ Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary. International students edition. 7th edition.

separate family members temporarily or permanently. Some people could find their family members at the end of the war or lose contact with them permanently. Incessant war has led to high number of refugees in most countries that open up their border to save people from war-torn countries. In Africa, Kenya tops the list of countries with the highest number of refugees with 402 905 refugees, while Pakistan tops the world with 1 900 621 refugees³⁸. From the statistics above, it is necessary to ask why is this going on in, or happening to the family?

Family has been proved to be a pre-fall ordinance instituted by God for a purpose. This section therefore uses both family system's theory and family development theory to explain how a family is expected to function and why family is going through this harrowing experience.

3.7 Family theories as a theoretical framework

In order to understand the dynamics of family life, two family theories are highlighted, as well as some major functions of families. Family theory starts with the premise that the problems of any individual often originate or are perpetuated by interactions with the family. These two theories are often used by sociologists, psychologists, counsellors, theologians (pastoral counselling), social workers and health professionals. They are the family development theory and family system theory which, according to Karraker & Grochowski (2006: 33) address the change (and stability) of families. Duvall (1988:132) who formulated the eight-stage model of the family life cycle claims that, "[S]chools use our conceptual framework in their work with students and teachers, as have religious programs of the various faiths for many years." These theories will help us to understand the family and also help in preparing family members for the different foreseen and unforeseen, as well as palatable and unpalatable events that often characterize the family life.

3.7.1 Family development theory in relation to disintegrating family life

Janosik & Green (1992:29) claim that the impetus for family development is the growth and maturation of individual members as they move from one life stage to the next. At each stage, new tasks and responsibilities are assigned to individuals and

³⁸ Source: UNHCR, Global Trends 2012, 20 July 2012, Table 1, pp38-41.

the family as a whole. They are expected to be completed within a critical time period which Erikson [in Janosik & Green, 1992: 29) declares are necessary for the successful accomplishment of their tasks. Van der Walt (1995: ii) had mentioned the lack or loss of a vision concerning the task of the family as one of the reasons for the disintegration of family life, hence the introduction of this theory. When a man and a woman consent to marry and form a family, they should know the tasks and responsibilities to be carried out by each party. As the family is enlarged, the children (biological or adopted) and any other member of the family should be given new tasks and responsibilities in clear terms and assist each other to accomplish their respective tasks.

Karraker & Grochowski (2006: 33) states that family development theory views families as moving through a series of normative events marked by the addition or subtraction of members, the stages of children's lives in the family and changes in contacts between the family and other institutions. This theory aids the assessment of a family as it exists over time and moves chronologically. The three important factors that induce an individual to confront the life cycle task of a particular stage are physical maturation, social and cultural expectation and individual values and aspirations. Each member is given task according to their mental, physical and emotional capacity. Dishing out task and seeing to it that all tasks are accomplished in due time is supposed to keep changing as the family grow individually and collectively.

According to Duvall (1971:113, 114), family development can be divided into two phases, namely the expanding phase and the contrasting phase. While the expanding phase begin at the joining of a marriage couple until children are reared, launched, and leave home, the contrasting phase starts when the first child leaves home and ends with the death of the surviving spouse. The eight stages of a family life cycle are the marital family, the childbearing family, the preschool family, the school-age family, the teenage family, the launching family, the middle-aged family, and the ageing family. This theory has been criticised for two conceptual weaknesses. Laszloffy (2002: 206-214) challenged the family development theory's assumption of universality, which assumes that all families of the world develop the same way along the eight stages. Laszloffy argues that this theory is based on the

traditional, nuclear, intact family form and does not consider newer forms of families whose lifecycles are characterized by alternative developmental sequences (couples who live together but never marry, childless couples, and divorced, single-parent, or remarried families). The second argument is that the family development theory is biased toward a single generational level revealed in the use of terms like “the new couple”, “the ageing family”, and “the family in the middle year”. Though Duvall (1988: 132) recognises the new forms of family in her later work, she retorts by saying that, “[D]espite the differences between families around the world, and throughout time, family development is common in all humans. All families everywhere form, grow, mature, and eventually dissolve and it is this universality that accounts in part for the wide usage of the family developmental conceptual framework.”

The question being: is marriage necessary for entrance into family cycle? And: What are the effects of the new forms like cohabitating couples, blended families, single-motherhood and out of wedlock birth on this theory? This has caused a lot of debate between young adults, clerics and academics and has already being discussed succinctly in chapter two, section 2.3.3 but will be mentioned briefly again to answer the question, Why is family disintegrating using family development theory.

Family development theory starts with the marital family. According to Shobola (2010: 222), marriage is seen as one of the developmental stages in the life of the individual and that the family is a consequence of marriage. However, there have been various forms of rite of passage into starting a family. These include cohabitation, birth outside wedlock and single parenthood. The reason for seeking to use family development theory in investigating the subject of family disintegration is the research reports that have supported the notion that married couples and children in family that start developing with marriage fare better on average than children who grow up in other families. Horn (2004: 185) claims that children from intact families who lived with two married parents until the age of sixteen (covering the first five stages of family development theory), had higher grades, higher college aspirations, and better attendance records than children who lived with one parent or whose family had broken up. The children from intact families are less than half as likely to have emotional or behavioural problems, about 33% less likely to use illegal

drugs, alcohol or tobacco, 44% less likely to physically abused, 47% less likely to suffer physical neglect and 43% less likely to suffer emotional neglect. Intact families are less likely to experience the disintegrative effects. Though the number of intact families and children growing in such families are dwindling, it is helpful for the church and policy makers to encourage stable, life-long, covenant marriages in which children will be able to receive the first home training, nurture and support needed to develop and influence their society.

Family development theory takes into cognisance the high rate of births to unmarried women, single-parents and same-sex marriage but remains firm in resolution that marital family serves as a good foundation for steady growth, stability and resilience in time of trouble. If the foundation of a family is built on cohabitation or living together, then with single-parenthood and same-sex marriage the development is usually slow and often truncated by divorce in most cases. Documented experiences of cohabiters from empirical results (Marriage Preparation and Cohabiting Couples: Information Report, 2007: 110) show that domestic violence is a more common problem with cohabiters than with married persons, while cohabiters who married are less effective at conflict resolution than those who did not cohabit. One can conclude that family life is disintegrating because couples are not entering into family relation through marriage and those who enter through marriage are not committed to life-long marriage that can facilitate smooth transition from one stage to another and help individual family members to perform their tasks. Though marriage rate is decreasing, family development theory encourages growth and maturation of individual members as they move from one life stage to the next after marriage.

3.7.2 Family systems theory in relation to disintegrating family life

According to Janosik and Green (1992: 13), "Family systems theory is defined as a system of interdependent members possessing two fundamental system attributes: structure, or membership; and function, or interaction." Families are dynamic systems that engage in interaction within and across their borders. Borders are an essential aspect of the family system because it surrounds both individuals and the entire family unit. Family systems theory prevents the heaping of blame on any single member. According to Jasik and Green (1992: 15), approaching the family as a system in which parents, children, extended family members, and the community

influence each other in reciprocal ways, means that whatever occurs is a shared responsibility. This system is akin to “Ubuntu³⁹”, which is grounded in shared responsibility and discourage hyper-individualism of the present postmodern era. In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2011: 21-22):

“A person is a person through other persons. We need other human beings for us to learn how to be human, for none of us comes fully formed into the world. We would not know how to talk, to walk, to think, to eat as human beings unless we learned to do these things from other human beings. For us, the solitary human being is a contradiction. We are created for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence with our fellow human beings, with the rest of creation. We are different in order to know our need of each other.”

When there is understanding and utilisation of the family system by members of the family and other systems like the church, school, and the state, there is stability. Karraker and Grochowski (2006: 35) state that family systems theory views the family as a whole unit, a system made up of subsystems that strives to maintain equilibrium. The family system helps us understand the principle of boundaries which is necessary to prevent conflict that often leads to the disintegration of the family.

Family systems theory helps us to understand that a family is not an island that can isolate itself from surrounding and supporting systems. The family influences the systems around it, while it is also influenced either positively or negatively by the social, economic, spiritual and educational environment. A family also needs to work with other systems to function. However, in working together with other systems and subsystems, they are responsible for what they allow to come in and out of their personal lives and the family as a whole. In relation to disintegrating family life, the family begins to disintegrate when individual members begin to live without regard for the need for unity as well as needs and indispensability of other family members. Though it is obvious that parents are older than their children, they are expected to take the whole family into consideration and carry their children along whenever they are about to make any decision because every member needs to know that every

³⁹ An African word meaning “I am because you are.”

decision (right or wrong) taken by each family member or parent often affect the whole family member negatively or positively in one way or the other, in the present or the future. There is a need for family members to learn how to set boundaries to protect themselves from the effect of any wrong decision taken by members and the negative influence from other system with which they are connected. As mentioned above, hyper-individualism (selfishness) is destroying the fabrics of family system theory as family members, in most cases, think only of themselves when making decisions, without taking cognisance of the unity, protection and wellness of the whole family. Lack of ability to set boundaries or control in families have given globalisation, modernization and pluralism an unrestrained power to cause disintegration of family life. When this is noticed by other systems, then the surrounding and supporting systems like the extended family members or the church family can intervene. In the extreme case, the government can intervene if the internal crisis leads to domestic violence, abuse, or divorce proceedings. Youth ministry is an example of a system within a family system network helping the family in carrying out its duties to their children. Family system theories help family resilience. Resiliency, according to Karraker and Grochowski (2006: 62), means struggling well and working through life's inevitable changes and challenges. Family members need to be prepared for crisis and learn how to adjust and handle them. The effects of disintegrating family life can cause a great damage to any society if it is not effectively and wisely addressed. Why is this happening? One can conclude that there is no more control and boundary to shield family members from negative forces such as sin, Satan, self, globalization and modernization.

3.8 Effects of disintegrated family life on society

3.8.1 Vicious cycle of broken families

Sell (1981: 75) highlighted this point when he said that problematic families perpetuate themselves in a vicious downward spiral, hence his clamour for family ministry in the Church's life. To corroborate, Sell, Amato and DeBoer (in Karraker and Grochowski, 2006: 254) also state that children who grow up in a family in which the parents have divorced or separated have a higher probability of themselves experiencing divorce. The reasons for this vicious cycle may include the fact that parents who divorce may model divorce as a strategy to solve marital

problems while children may exhibit behaviours that impede forming their own happy marriages. In a landmark study carried out by Wallerstein, Lewis, and Baleslee (in Karraker and Grochowski, 2006: 256, 257), 60 families with children who later divorced were interviewed and the researchers followed these families up for 25 years. The result of subsequent interviews shows that the boys seemed to have serious problems in their educational, occupational, and marital adjustment, while the girls on the other hand expressed their hesitation about committing themselves to relationships, marriage and childbearing. Children from divorced or broken families tend to follow their parents' path to divorce because they have been psychologically conditioned for divorce by their experience in their parent's marriage. While Coontz, Hetherington and Kelly believe that the above conclusion by Wallerstein et al. are overdrawn, Amato and Cherlin (in Karraker and Grochowski, 2006: 257) believe that divorce has a persistent impact on children. The South African Institute of Race Relations (May, 2011: 15) states that fractured families is a crisis for South Africa and posits that there is evidence that people from broken families are more likely to go on to have relationship problems and create fractured families themselves which is a cycle that needs to be broken. An example is a research study in the UK that shows that women born to teenage mothers (single mothers) are twice as likely to have a child as a teenager themselves (March 2011:10).

In the book titled "Parents whose parents were divorced", Berner (1992), a child of divorce who was then a parent, conducted a massive research study on parents whose parents were divorced. While few succeeded in keeping their marriages, most of them were found in second and even third marriages which they attributed to the impact their parents' divorce had on them.

3.8.2 Academic success and educational attainment

⁴⁰Research in South Africa, United States of America and the United Kingdom has supported the notion that the academic success and educational attainment of children from disintegrating families (especially where the father is absent) are seriously affected more than children from a two-parent family. International research produced by the HRSC on the effect of fathers on their children suggests that the

⁴⁰http://www.sairr.org.za/services/publications/fast-facts/fast-facts-2011/files/FF_May_2011.pdf.

presence of a father can contribute to cognitive development, intellectual functioning, and school achievement (South African Institute of Race Relations, March 2011: 2). Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan (2004: 121) report from various research studies that children who live apart from their biological fathers perform less well in school, have lower grades, and report lower academic confidence than those who live with both biological parents. They conclude that on average, children living with both biological parents remain in school longer and attain higher educational qualifications than children in one-parent families. According to Horn (2004:185), the research-based consensus is now clear on the evidence that children from healthy families with two married parents fare better, on average, than children who grow up in dysfunctional married households or with only one parent. From other research reports, Horn claims that children from intact families who lived with two married parents until the age of sixteen, had higher grades, higher college aspirations, and better attendance records than children who lived with one parent or whose family had broken up. The children from intact families are less than half as likely to have emotional or behavioural problems, about 33% less likely to use illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco, 44% less likely to be physically abused, 47% less likely to suffer physical neglect and 43% less likely to suffer emotional neglect.

This effect of disintegrating family life poses a great challenge to the education of youth where disintegrating life is rampant. Education is very important and necessary because it empowers, enlightens and encourages growth. Baleke (2011: 90), an African educationist and youth worker, affirms that a pressing need for the majority of African youth is effective education that is geared towards the acquisition of practical skills rather than knowledge-based skills. However, the education should include a marriage and family life course to help youth make informed decisions about their future partner and children. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has warned youth in the SAIRR Fast Facts (2011: 5) with a stern statement that, "Young mothers begin a lifelong trajectory of poverty for themselves and their children through truncated educational opportunities and poor job prospects."

3.8.3 Behavioural and psychological problems

Children also suffer from psychological and behavioural problems because of their father's absence (Karraker & Grochowski, 2006: 254, 255; Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004: 122, 123). Behavioural and psychological problems may generate feelings of abandonment and stress. Examples of behavioural and psychological problems include truancy, depression, aggression, talkativeness, suicide attempt, insanity and forgetfulness. It may be observed in adult and children consequent upon divorce, marital conflict, death of a family member, trauma due to domestic violence and any form of abuse. Wallerstein (1989)⁴¹ states that, "children of divorce make up an estimated 60 percent of child patients in clinical treatment and 80 percent (in some cases 100 percent) of adolescents in inpatient mental hospital settings. While no one would claim that a cause and effect relationship has been established in all of these cases, no one would deny that the role of divorce is so persuasively suggested that it is time to sound the alarm."

3.8.4 Economic effects

Cahill (2003: ix) commented that the vices that lie at the root of family disintegration [rising divorce and illegitimacy rates] are devastating civil society while depleting the social capital. It has been established that many children suffer economically from their parents' divorce (Cheal, 2002: 42, 43). West, a child psychiatrist (in Strommen and Hardel, 2000: 30, 31), reports that the cost of a child born to an incompetent single parent on welfare who grows to become a habitual criminal and spends forty years of his life in prison is high, two million dollars compared to one million dollar contribution by a productive child raised by a competent parent. Another government official in the same country claims that the government have spent over two million dollars dealing with the seventy offenses committed by seven children of one family. The amount was derived after twenty-nine institutions and programs have been used in an attempt to rehabilitate members of this family to no avail. The effect of family disintegration on all economies of the world is overwhelming. Slater⁴² (2010), in a speech presented at a Symposium on the International Day of Families at the United

⁴¹ Wallerstein, Judith. "CHILDREN AFTER DIVORCE. (Magazine Desk)." *The New York Times Magazine* 22 Jan. 1989.

⁴² Slater, S. 2010. A Call to Preserve the Institution of the Family. <http://www.upf.org/international-day-of-families-2010/2842-slater-a-call-to-preserve>.

Nations Headquarters, corroborates West's claim on the high cost of family breakdown. According to her, the United States Government spend \$ 112 billion every year on children welfare while the cumulative cost to every country of the world will run into tens of trillion.

3.8.5 Teenage parenthood

Ravanera and Burch's (2003: 327-353) research on early life transitions of Canadian youth and its effects of family transformation and community characteristics, shows that family disruption impacts negatively on the transition to adulthood. They conclude that independence through work or home-leaving happens earlier among children of non-intact families, while those from intact families continue to have parental support, particularly for education, until later ages. Though, becoming independent is not necessarily detrimental to young adults, they warned that a precipitate move toward independence could curtail the period for accumulating human capital (2003:341, 345). Other researchers (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004: 124) also claim that life transitions are of particular concern in a disintegrating family because early home leaving and early childbearing may interfere with education. For example, the number of pupils in South Africa who fell pregnant in 2007⁴³ was 49 636 which, according to Department of Education, is a 151% increase since 2003, while some 53 pupils in "Grade 3" also got pregnant in the same year. The boys are also affected as Fast Fact reports that 54% of 14-22 year old young men surveyed in KwaZulu-Natal admitted that they had left school as a result of fathering a child. These pupils come from disintegrating families. Alvi et al. (2010:1209-1226) examined strained familial relationships from the perspective of homeless youth. Their description of the family experiences of 15 homeless male and female youth between the ages of 16 and 24 in a suburban area of Southern Ontario, Canada shows that parents in a disintegrating family setup their children for early home leaving for streets, for drug addiction, for early sexual escapades. Early teenage parenthood affects young people's transition to adulthood. Many youth become parents at a time when they are not matured emotionally, physically, or financially for family life. While teenage parenthood affects the education of young people, it also contributes to the poverty in the family. This often happen in families

⁴³ South African Institute of Race Relations Fast Fact, May 2011.

where the people are suffering from poverty. Every addition to the family in terms of new baby will increase the tension and stress on the family budget.

3.8.6 Poverty

Researchers Rank and Yadama (2006: 379) write that, “The detrimental effects of poverty upon families and individuals have been well established and extensively documented. Poverty negatively affects the health, education, and life changes of individuals and family members. It places an undue burden and stress upon families and households. It also infringes upon family members’ ability to fully partake in various opportunities, rights, and freedoms. These rights include right to quality education and job opportunities”.

From the United Nations Development Programme (2003), Rank and Yadama writes that sub-Saharan African countries tend to have the highest values in terms of poverty. It is estimated that Ethiopia has 56% of the population residing in poverty, followed by Mozambique, the Central African Republic, and Senegal. According to the SAIRR report (2011:5, 6), many people live in households facing poverty in South Africa as a result of family disruption. According to Baleke (2011: 91), poverty and family breakdown are some of the five significant issues that impact our young people in Africa as a whole today. She concludes that poverty is experienced by most of Africa, and its effects may include feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, lack of dignity, drug abuse (glue sniffing, marijuana, and so on), prostitution, theft, and violence.

Poverty is likely to cause a family to disintegrate when a jobless father begins to vent his anger through violent behaviour on his wife and children. This abuse may lead the wife to the domestic court to seek for divorce after all effort has been made to help the man. Conflicts caused by poverty can drive young people out of the home prematurely. This can expose them to at-risk behaviours like drug-abuse, smoking, unwanted pregnancy that can make them to drop out of school. Poverty can incapacitate a family from fulfilling their purpose or accomplish their goals in life. When a child’s education is truncated because his or her parents cannot afford to pay tuition fees and a scholarship or loan cannot be secured, it lowers the moral and self-image of the child and even the parents. This can cause emotional stress to the

family, disrupting harmony among family members who may pass blame on each other. Lack of education can keep a family in perpetual poverty as education is very important for success in the contemporary job market.

3.8.7 New way of living

Another important effect of disintegrating family life is the pressure it puts on family members to form new ways of living. Among the new ways of living already established and discussed in Chapter 2 are the single-parent, same-sex and transnational families. Castells (2010:419, 420) captured this effect in his conclusion when he claims that “the challenge to patriarchy, and the crisis of the patriarchal family, disturb the orderly sequence of transmitting cultural codes from generation to generation, and shake the foundations of personal security, thus forcing men, women, and children to find new ways of living.” These new forms of family has led to two groups, namely “the optimists” who believes that the proliferation of family forms is healthy and “the pessimists” who insists that the two married heterosexual parent family is the ideal for parents, children and the society at large. The various ways of living is springing up fast in cultures where patriarchy has thrived for centuries. Mostly affected is the African culture which has been reduced firstly from extended-family oriented to nuclear oriented and now to the homosexual family. This study recognises the diversities in contemporary families and the difficulty some people have in picking a particular family type as the best type. As enumerated in Chapter 2, families rather than family is the appropriate word to use in describing family diversities.

3.9 Human dignity and disintegrating family life

Many theologians have written on human dignity with a focus on previous writings on human dignity, different themes and different areas of life. These include J. M. Vorster’s thesis on “Calvin and human dignity” (2010), N. Vorster’s (2005) writing on “Human dignity and sexual behaviours - A theological perspective”, Johan Boucher’s (2007) “Human dignity and HIV/Aids”, and Elsa Tamez’s (2005) “God’s grace and Human Dignity.” This study hereby seeks to succinctly discuss the impact disintegrating family life has on the dignity of family members from a theological perspective.

Family and human dignity are closely related. As Anderson (2001: 259-265) stated, family should be conceptualized as the image of God, a social context for identity formation, a moral context for character formation and lastly the domestic context of spiritual formation. Family should be conceptualized as the image of God because every member of any type of family (as mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study) are created and made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 26, 27). Vorster (2010: 199) also affirms that the gift of God's image is present in every person. Tamez (2005), a Mexican theologian and biblical scholar, emphasised the need for contemporary Christians to underline the close relationship between God's grace and human dignity which is challenged by a context of social inequality and a lack of human dignity, both of which are signs of structural sin. Though sin led to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, it nevertheless did not erase the dignity of all human beings, as evident in the manifestation and demonstration of God's love for the world when he gave his only begotten Son for us all (John 3:16; Romans 8:32). John Calvin (in Vorster 2010: 200, 201) asserts that the creational dignity/nobility of humans expressed by the *imago dei* was not destroyed despite humankind's separation from God due to fall and man's depravity. Calvin also linked the common grace of God with the concept of man that was created in God's image and with inherent gift. He gave the example of profane authors who reflect what he called admirable light of truth in their writings, which should remind us that the human mind is still adorned and invested with the gifts from its creator - irrespective of his fall and perversion from its original integrity.

Leith (in Vorster, 2010: 201) summarises the idea of God's grace and creation of man in his image by affirming that the whole human race can be regarded as one body reflecting the *imago dei*, with creational gifts under the common grace of God, while Vorster (2010: 201) concludes that human beings, as such, have an inherent value and people should regard each other as people with value in the eyes of God. God's grace is God's gift of His image and likeness to every man, woman, and children alike and it is expected to be valued and preserved for God's sake. In line with this study, contemporary families are daily witnessing man's inhumanity to man with daily manifestations of violence, physical and emotional abuse, oppression and humiliation among family members.

Van Egmond (in Vorster, 2010: 199) asserts that Calvin supports the notion that “humans have an inherent God-given dignity”. However, people are not satisfied with the fact that God made men and women in His image, with an incomparable and inalienable dignity, but seek to appreciate people based on certain criteria laid down by their society. According to Elsa (2005: 276), it is apparently not enough to be human in our world today because people must have many merits in order to “be someone” in the eyes of the world. Those who do not conform to or attain to the minimum standard set by the world today in such areas like education, buoyant economy or big accounts and the good things of life, are not considered “people” and unimportant. The knowledge that human beings are equally made by God in his own likeness, that is male and female, should make every believer in Christ content with their God-given dignity and promote human dignity as God’s grace that should move every human being to recognise God’s impression on other people, receive and respect other people of different educational, economic and geographical backgrounds.

Calvin highlighted some rights which Vorster (2010: 203) admits are rights founded in the dignity of human beings due to their creation in the image of God, which is the guiding principle of Christian love and interpersonal relations. These include rights of adoption, right of citizenship in God’s kingdom, rights to compensation for work, marital and conjugal rights of parents over their children, right of a father to name his child, raise the child, and to set the child up in marriage, right to bury one’s parents or relatives, sacred right of hospitality of the sojourner, the right of asylum or of sanctuary for those in flight and just rights of the poor, the needy, the orphans, and the widows. Women and children’s right are also enshrined in the UN Charter, African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child as well as the constitutional court of South Africa as it is in most countries of the world. These rights are written to prevent people’s dignity from being violated.

From the African Charter⁴⁴, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years and article 4 reads, “Every child who is capable of communicating his or her own views should be allowed to express his or her opinions freely”; article 11 states

⁴⁴African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child
http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Charter_En_African_Charter_on_the_Rights_and_Welfare_of_the_Child_AddisAbaba_July1990.pdf

that, “Every child has the right to an education, to develop his or her personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. This education also includes the preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures.” Section 28 of the Bill of Rights⁴⁵ of South Africa states that children are entitled to or have the right to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment, right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services, right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation, right to be protected from exploitative labour practices. Also, women’s right to life, dignity, privacy and others are protected in section 9, entitled “Equality” in the South African Bill of Rights⁴⁶. This means that women were regarded as second-class citizens before the Bill of rights gave them formal recognition as equal citizens.

Kortner (2011)⁴⁷ affirms that the biblical God forms man according to His image and this constitutes the inviolable human dignity which should make humankind to see their position within the universe as a result of God’s grace and not of special abilities or skills. Elsa (2005: 276) concludes that, “In a context where the excluded, the non-person, abounds, the experience of grace makes people visible: it gives them back their dignity.” Based on the knowledge that human beings are what they are by God’s grace, even as Apostle Paul admits (1 Corinthians 15: 10), human beings are expected to see each other as equal people (both old and young) in the sight of God and love each other as God loves all people. Nel (2001: 127-130) also stresses the importance of the “equi-human” approach for youth ministers and by extension to parents in patriarchal societies who often view young people as less human - to be seen and not heard because of their age and women (their wives) as the “lesser beings” to men. The equi-human approach emphasizes and recognizes that young people are fellow human beings who are educators equal to be loved and nurtured. This approach has a deep tone of human dignity since it emphasizes the fact that every human being is created equally and should be respected. Nel (2000: 128) argues that, “To be ahead of someone as regards age is not to be superior in humanness.” Contemporary families often disintegrate because the husbands

⁴⁵Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Second amendment Act, No. 3 of 2003. page 1255
<http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf>

⁴⁶ <http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf> page 1246

⁴⁷ Kortner, Ulrich. 2011. Human Dignity and Biomedical Ethics from a Christian Theological perspective www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/953 [Accessed 20 August, 2012]

believe that they have the right to make decisions as the head of the family without considering the effects on other members of the family or without including them in the planning and decision-making process. Parents may also collude to force their children to do things contrary to their will, while older children may also want to force some decisions on their younger siblings which often lead to conflict in the family. From the theological understanding of disintegrating family life, undermining or despising young people was condemned by Jesus with stern warning, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones (Matthew 10:28)." According to Firet (in Nel, 2000: 127), one of the three "pre-agogical" categories within the equi-human approach states that the teachers/leaders/parents (as the educator) should experience himself or herself as the fellow-human being of his or her fellow-human being (the one who is educated), and the recognition that the one who is educated has the responsibility and right to choose, although you keep in mind that it is the choice of a child.

Violation of human dignity in the family leads to physical, emotional or sexual abuse, inferiority or superiority complex, incorrigibility on the part of young people as well as marital and family discord. However, the effect of sin on the contemporary family is enormous on every member of the family. In relation to this study, human dignity of youth and family members are put at risk by patriarchal terrorism, social inequalities, hyper-individualism, media pressure and abuse of family members, government bureaucracy, and exploitation from the corporate world. Few ways in which human dignity of family members are put at risk will be summarised below.

3.9.1 Patriarchal terrorism

Patriarchal terrorism, as mentioned under the section on patriarchy/feminism above, involves the use of violence, threats, intimidation, isolation and other control tactics by men to gain and maintain absolute control over their female partners and their children. In order to gain and maintain absolute control over their family through violence, wives and children's dignity are violated as fellow human beings. This affects women and the children. According to Barnett, Miller-Perrin & Robin Perrin (2011:25), "Bartered women also took more time off from paid work and more time off from child care and household responsibilities" when they are attacked. Maltreatment of women and young people who are despised, denied education,

grieved, denigrated during the reign of terror from the father of the house who is supposed to protect the family leads women to separate or divorce while children find their way to the streets where they are exposed to at-risk behaviours.

3.9.2 Hyper-individualism

Hyper-individualism, as discussed above, is a contemporary global malady caused by the spread of globalization, modernization and postmodernism. In his comment on the impact of hyper-individualism on Ireland, David Quinn⁴⁸ (2000) concludes that “finding some way to deal with hyper-individualism will be the great political and social challenge of this century as the public unanimously and regrettably admit that people are becoming more callous, more indifferent, more greedy and, above all, less socially engaged”. The value placed on communal life, child bearing and rearing, respect for life and provision of foster care for the needy have been eroded in most cultures, especially in the third world countries. This is manifested in the rise of street-kids, the child-headed and single mother households. The external family seems to be dwindling and losing its function of extending hands of fellowship to family members from disintegrating families. The increase in street-kids, for example, shows the extent to which their rights to housing, protection, home training and education are denied, which makes their future bleak. Hyper-individualism makes external family members, religious groups and society to turn blind eyes at the suffering of family members who are now often classed as outcasts because of what their disintegrating family has caused them. Hyper-individualism does not only put the dignity of children and women at risk, but also older men and women who are neglected - in most cases by their adult children and the society. Example of neglect as enumerated by National Center on Elder Abuse, 2007 (in Barnett et al 2011) include failure to provide elderly person with food, water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medicine, comfort, and personal safety.

⁴⁸ Quinn, David. "Ireland suffers attack of hyper-individualism; Comment." *Sunday Times* [London, England] 9 Jan. 2000: 17. *Academic One File*. Web. 25 Oct. 2012.

3.9.3 Media pressure and abuse of family members

Media pressure on youth and their families are now becoming a trend as peer-pressure is on youth. Due to technological advancement, young people and their families are having exposure to pornographic materials in the print and electronic media. Vorster (2005: 893) confirms that the mass media has become the major source of sex information in modern society. It makes sex information easily accessible for the public, including children, and devotes a disproportionate amount of time to sex, mostly for reasons of profit. This has led to increase in incest, rape, pre-marital and extra-marital sex cases. The consequence of these licentious activities is the issue of abortion of innocent children and children born out of wedlock to a single mother. The HIV/Aids pandemic is another way in which the dignity is put at risk as raped victims get infected and humiliated by the perpetrators of the evil act of rape. The infected person also suffers stigmatization and discrimination from society in most cases. The media also presents destructive film shows where people learn the art of robbery, use of arms which has been used to kill or maim family members. Though the media helps in the dissemination of news and present some good programmes at times, the bad impact it is having on the family is much more than the good.

3.9.4 Government's bureaucracy

Bureaucracy has three meanings; however, the traditional view of this term will be used for the purpose of this study. According to Ali Farazmand (2009: 5-7), bureaucracy refers to any organization of modern society with several ideal characteristics such as unity of command, clear line of hierarchy, division of labour and specialization, record keeping, and merit system for recruitment and promotion, and finally, rules and regulations to govern relationship and organizational performance. In governing the people of a particular society, Ali explained that bureaucracy can be viewed in its positive and negative way. It is good when it is balanced in its functioning that serves broad-based public interests, free from corruption, repressions, and rigidity but becomes dysfunctional when its main goals, mission, and functions of serving broad-based public interests are replaced with hidden, behind-the-rules and procedures, bribery and corruption, collecting money and other privileges in exchange for select services, dragging feet when the poor

and underclass is being served, and engaging in activities that are deemed illegal, corrupt, and unethical". Government systems of administration contribute to dehumanisation and humiliation of family members. This can manifest in non-implementation of the Human Right Treaty signed by countries in 1945.

As a result of continued war and armed conflict in most countries of the world like Syria, Libya, Mozambique, and Democratic Republic of Congo, many families are losing spouses to war that waste lives of future leaders and prophets, orphans are increasing; child and women headed families are multiplying. All of these situations put the human dignity at risk. By denying citizens their basic rights to housing, education, electricity, protection, job opportunities for youth, and by supporting discrimination and stigmatization in refusing to employ people living with Aids. What about war and armed conflict that leads to child-soldiers in Africa where government and rebels conscript children to fight in civil wars? Governments of the world, by omission and commission, put the dignity of youth and their family at risk. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations writes that, "Without implementation, our declarations ring hollow. Without action, our promises are meaningless. Villagers huddling in fear at the sound of government bombing raids or the appearance of murderous militias on the horizon find no solace in the unimplemented words of the Geneva Conventions, to say nothing of the international community's solemn promises of "never again" when reflecting on the horrors of Rwanda a decade ago".⁴⁹

3.9.5 Corporate world

The corporate world's contribution in terms of exploitation are international transfer of workers in multi-national companies, more work, less pay for some women, child abuse as is the case in Philippines, India and Brazil. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO)⁵⁰ report, there are 215 million children trapped in child labour globally, 115 million of which are affected by its worst forms. This is the corporate economic world's way of putting youth and family dignity at risk without much control from government. In the Philippines alone, it is reported that about 5.5 million children aged 5-17 are engaged in child labour as at 2011. As mentioned

⁴⁹ <http://www.humiliationstudies.org/publications/journal.php>

⁵⁰ <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm#a2>

above, governments of most countries in the world have failed to translate their commitments to fight child exploitation into action. In a recent ILO report, it was found that progress in reducing child labour worldwide has often been outweighed by a failure to translate commitments into practice. Multi-national companies that use child labour are putting the dignity of such children at risk while multi-national companies that transfer workers to another country without their families or employ migrants into their company without seeking visa for their family members, also put the dignity of wife and children in the home country at risk. Shobola (2010: 234) recommends that companies should secure visas for family members whenever they are transferring workers far from their home country in order not to cause disintegration of the family.

a. Problem of integration

Where racial segregation has occurred in the past, like in the United States of America and South Africa, youths from the disadvantaged group may find it difficult to interact with youths who are raised in the dominant group. Tittley (2011: 77) writes that, "Youth who grew up in segregated societies either have a sense of inferiority or superiority depending on which group they belonged to in those days. This can be addressed by effective pastoral care to redress the damage done to the mind, psyche and emotion of the disadvantaged youths, while the youths with superiority complex are brought to Christ so that they will know the truth that God created all men and women equally in his own image". Integration takes a long time to fade away in people's heart wherever segregation once existed. The church seems not to be helping out on the issue because preaching and teaching are not touching the issue of racism which still exists. Tittley (2011: 72), a youth minister in South Africa, confirms that, the transition from apartheid (an Afrikaans word meaning "separateness") to 'saamheid' (an Afrikaans word meaning "togetherness") is not a common feature of church life in this country that is just two decades into democratic rule. A Spirit-filled youth minister skilled in intercultural pastoral care will be able to address this challenge better than a youth minister who is not versatile with other people's cultures and who lack the understanding of human dignity.

b. Suicide

According to the World Health Organisation August 2012 report, almost one million people die from suicide every year and the suicide rate have increased by 60% in the last 45 years. Rates among young people have been increasing to such an extent that they are now the group at highest risk in a third of countries, in both developed and developing⁵¹. There may be a tendency to commit suicide by youths who believe that life is not worth living because of maltreatment from family members, bullying at school, social inequalities, stigmatization or discrimination, injustice, oppression or depression. Janet Batsleer (2008: 125) writes that factors which have been commonly found among triggers of attempted suicide include isolation, bullying by siblings, domestic violence, rape and other forms of sexual exploitation, and experience of coercion or abuse in intimate family relationships. Suicide amongst young people is rife and youth ministers should be sensitive to the Holy Spirit leading with regards to young people who might be manifesting traits of depression that usually lead to suicide. This will involve relational ministry and counselling. Youth leaders should include messages of hope in virtually all their conversations with contemporary youths. As the World Health Organisation posits in the 2012 report, suicide prevention will take the effort of all people, both in the health and non-health sector such as education, law, business and religion (under which youth ministry fall).

It can be concluded that in families where human dignity of each member is respected, the families stay intact and in families where human dignity of each member is not affirmed and respected, such families disintegrate. Hence the need to promote human dignity in youth ministry so that young people will grow to respect the image of God in other people irrespective of their class, age, status, position, religious, educational, cultural background.

⁵¹ http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/ World Health Organisation Suicide prevention [Accessed 26 October, 2012]

3.10 Conclusion

In the above discussion, the concept of disintegrating family life from both the sociological and theological perspectives, the context, causes and effects have been highlighted. The visible evidence of a disintegrating family is divorce consequent upon domestic conflicts, physical, emotional or sexual abuse and violence on members of family. It is established that women and children are mostly affected before, during divorce proceedings and after divorce. These occurrences hinder young people's spiritual development and growth as well as that of their parents. The context of the contemporary family is gloomy because of the forces contending with the family. It is difficult to ascertain the extent of the positive or negative effects of globalization, modernization, migration and pluralism. While some of these forces have brought the world closer and make things easier (as in easy transport, migration and commerce), it has in most cases put families asunder and is making it difficult for families to perform their roles of raising obedient, godly and matured children. Sin is the first main cause of the disintegrating family which the Church needs to deal with in the life of unbelievers, nominal Churchgoers, backsliders, apostate by the preaching of the gospel of Christ that is able to save to the uttermost. This should be followed up with wholesome teachings of God's Word. One of the effects of disintegrating family life is the recurring vicious cycle of producing hurt children who often grow up to experience divorce in their marriage with children. This cycle need to be broken. The effect of the disintegrating family is so enormous that the optimists should be persuaded to reason with the statistics and numerous experiences of believers and non-believers on this issue of family disintegration. From this chapter, it is clear that disintegrating family life have a deleterious effect on all members of the family, especially women and children and by extension the whole society. Amongst its effects are poverty, illnesses, low self-esteem, low school performance and emotional stress.

Tripp (2005) and Fowler (2004) argue for the need for biological parents (or guardians) to shepherd the heart of their children toward God from childhood because of serious scriptural consequences pronounced against careless parents shirking their responsibility to nurture and raise their children in the way of the Lord. The argument still lingers with scholars who believe that the disintegration of family

through divorce is a good phenomenon as it gives both parties involved the freedom to carry on individually with their lives rather than continue in a relationship that lack peace, understanding and respect for each other. Other scholars believe that two-parent families remain the best for both parents and the well-being of children. It is also discovered that knowledge and respect of the inherent human dignity in every man and woman is vital for a healthy, stable and spiritually sound family life. Where neither the parents nor the children respect God-given dignity in other family members and non-family members, the weaker person/s get humiliated as their dignity is violated. Some of the things that cause the dignity of family members to be violated, include patriarchal terrorism, hyper-individualism, negative media presentations, corporate bodies, and government bureaucracy.

Two theories, family system and family development, were used to provide an understanding of the family to answer the question why the family is disintegrating. A family is supposed to be a compact, united unit (system) with a boundary to shut out bad things and let in good things in its interaction with other systems like society, school and the church. However, if the foundation is destroyed (Psalm 11:3) with cohabitation, premarital sex, homosexual or lesbian practice, the natural development of a family from marriage, as instituted before the fall and reiterated by Jesus Christ, will be destroyed. Though I do not condemn those who, by ignorance, simplicity or outright rebellion contradict the Word of God, I personally believe that a family, in this New Testament era, that is built on the solid rock of God's Word will not collapse - despite rain, flood or wind (Matthew 7: 24, 25). The marriage union is the perfect will of God and the gateway into a Christian family which youth ministry should pray for, promote and present among contemporary youth without condemning other non-Christian families. It should be made clear to contemporary youth that building a family on the foundation of marriage does not exempt the family from the rain, wind and flood of this sinful world which come to believers as troubles, temptations, trial or even torment. Converted youths should be encouraged to enter through the narrow and unpopular way of marriage into a Christian family in order to bring forth godly seed, please God and fulfil all that God has set them apart and ordained them to be as well as accomplish all that God want them to accomplish during their earthly pilgrimage. It is the Word of God that will keep a Christian family together as a whole, active system while their family is expanding and contrasting.

As a result of the disintegration of family life caused by reasons highlighted in this chapter and its effects on family life, families are finding it difficult to carry out their duties on contemporary youth. This is affecting all sections of society, including youth ministry. The next chapter will introduce youth ministry and seeks to unravel the challenges of family disintegration on youth ministry and the available opportunities for youth to minister to the disintegrating family life.

CHAPTER 4

Youth Ministry and disintegrating family life: Challenges and Opportunities

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the contexts in which most contemporary youth are raised as well as the causes and consequences of disintegrating family life were discussed. This chapter will focus on youth, youth ministry and the challenges that disintegrating family life poses to youth ministry in order to carry out the normative task of practical theology. The last section will cover the opportunities amidst these challenges that are available for youth ministry.

Normative task of practical theological interpretation – What ought to be happening?

Osmer (2004: 173) explains that normative theological perspectives provide interpretive guides with help in determining what they ought to do using the three approaches to normativity. The first approach is the theological interpretation which involves the use of theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, and contexts informed by a theory of divine and human action. The second approach to normativity is ethical reflection which is the use of ethical principles, rules, or guidelines to guide action toward moral ends. Don Browning's (in Osmer 2004: 151) alternate development of Christian love which he termed "Christian love in an ethic of equal regard" will be used to guide our action toward moral end in youth ministry and family life⁵². The third approach to normativity is good practice which derive norms from good practice, by exploring modes of such practice in the present and past or by engaging reflectively in transforming practice in the present.

⁵² According to Osmer (2004:151), "an ethic of equal regard is grounded in the narratives of creation and Christ's ministry that point to the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings. In stories of creation, human beings are portrayed as created in God's image and, thus, as worthy of respect in personal relations and of fair treatment."

4.2 Youth defined

Linhart and Livermore (2011: 29) state that the definition of youth differs from region to region and that the age of those considered as youth ranges between 18 in North America and 35 in India. Brown and Larson (2002: 5) write that “youth” may subsume all young people under age 20 (including young children) and in some instances includes individuals from age 10 up to 30 or 35 which is an age categorization that suggests that one is not completely mature, responsible, and deserving of full respect as an adult until this much later stage. The United Nations, however, describes youth as a transitional phase when a person moves from a time of dependence (childhood) to interdependence (adulthood) and the age range for youth according to the UN is between 15 and 24⁵³. However, the adopted definition for youth by the African Union⁵⁴ is “every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years old⁵⁵.”

According to Renin (2006: 1077, 1078), biblical words like *na’ur*, *’alumim*, *no’ar* and *yaldut* are all nouns in Hebrew language denoting “youth” (i.e. early years) in the Old Testament⁵⁶ as recorded in Genesis 8:21, 1 Samuel 17:33, Proverbs 2:17, Isaiah 54:6, and Malachi 2:14 following, while the Greek word *neotes* is a noun indicating one’s “youth” or “early years” in Matthew 19: 20; Acts 26:4 and 1 Timothy 4:12. The age range for youth among Jewish boys is between six or seven when they begin the formal schooling and eighteen, which is the time of marriage in the mid-teens for girls, and late teens for boys⁵⁷. Youth, based on the above discussion can be safely categorised to be young people from the age of 15 to 35.

4.3 Youth ministry defined

Since this study is investigating the challenges of disintegrating family life on youth ministry from a theological perspective, the definitions for youth ministry will be looked into from the church angle. As Ward (2001:1 28) claims, “youth ministry starts

⁵³<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/social-transformations/youth/strategy/>

⁵⁴ African Union (formerly Organisation of African Unity) is the association of all the countries in Africa.

⁵⁵<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001875/187571e.pdf>. 7 April 2010 document.

⁵⁶ Expository Dictionary of Bible Words edited by Stephen D. Renn (2006:1077, 1078) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers.

⁵⁷ Dictionary of New Testament Background: A compendium of contemporary Biblical Scholarship. edited by Craig A. Evans & Stanley E. Porter (2000:200) Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press.

and ends with the Church". According to Linhart and Livermore (2009: 23), Christian Youth Ministry around the world has grown tremendously with the establishment of youth ministry by different groups of adults in places where youth ministry were non-existence before. The introduction of courses related to cross-cultural, international youth ministry and global youth confirms this growth. Kageler (2008: 11) claims from his own experience that youth ministry is also much more global than in 1991 as there are youth pastors and youth ministry degree programs on every continent, except Antarctica.

Nel (2001: 12) defined youth ministry as a comprehensive congregational ministry in which God comes, through all forms of ministry and with special regard to parents (or their substitutes), with a differentiated focus on youth (as an integral part of the congregation), and also with and through the youth in the congregation to the world. It is clear from his definition that youth ministry is not an island and that it is to be jointly supported by the whole church (domestic and communal) as the church nourishes herself on one hand and reaches the world with the gospel with the other hand. The Lausanne Covenant II states that "the whole church (including youth) must be involved in taking the whole gospel to the whole world".⁵⁸ Wesley (2001:43) also corroborated Nel's assertion by affirming youth ministry as the holistic Christian ministry of the local church under its leadership to young people and those who influence their spiritual growth. Further clarity on youth ministry was furnished by Cannister (2001:77) when he states that youth ministry concerns the period of human development sociologically defined as adolescence. Youth ministry must include theology from both the missional, which means evangelizing the adolescence life stage, and educational field of practical theology, that is, it must contain educational components that initiate young people into the faith and mature those who have grown. However, Dean (2004:2) defined youth ministry as ministry by, with, and for people between the onset of puberty and the enduring commitments of adulthood.

However, the twenty-first century youth ministry is witnessing a great change as youth workers discovers the need for change. Oestreicher (2008: 75), an experienced youth minister with Youth Specialities, defined youth ministry as

⁵⁸ <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/all/twg/1177-twg-three-wholes.html>

communion on a mission: A Christ-infused, true community seeking to engage the world in God's redemptive work in progress. Communion and mission are the two themes which is the most important for the twenty-first century youth ministry. These two themes are backed up with Acts 2:44-46a for communion and John 17:1-8 for mission. In his exposition of this definition, Mark (2008: 105-109) states that youth workers who are led to pattern their ministry after this ministry will have to "be communal" (sharing the Jesus-life with the community of students) and "be a missionary". He concludes that youth ministers should help students to be missional, that is, join themselves up with the mission of God in the world. Kageler (2008: 22-27) defined youth ministry as missional, intergenerational, emergent and culturally transformative. Youth ministry as missional means that youth workers today are connecting to the kingdom of God-what God is doing in the world, and intergenerational in the sense that youth ministers are in a partnership with parents in passing on the faith to young people. Kageler (2008: 24) claims that youth ministry helps the church to keep emerging where most traditional churches buildings are converted to restaurants, antique stores, private homes and many offered up for sale. Lastly, Kageler affirms that youth ministers are creating a good future as positive reports show that youth ministry is impacting our culture and society. According to Kageler, the U.K. Parliament, in response to compelling research reports that show a strong link between religiosity⁵⁹ and assets, made it mandatory in the Education Act of 1988 that there would be one hour of religious instruction or worship in every school in the UK every day. Reports⁶⁰ from other countries such as South Africa, Australia, and Hungary show that where youth ministers place more emphasis on high religiosity, the youth under their tutelage have shown signs of less sexual activity, lower substance abuse, drink and drug abuse.

Oestergaard (2011: 134, 135) however, argues that the concepts of youth work, youth ministry, and youth workers may no longer be necessary if people at the age of 15 and 45 are looking and longing for the same things, and united only by their interests and values rather than by age. This was Oestergaard's experience in Denmark where "adults" who felt much at home in the youth church than in the "big" church started attending programs aimed at reaching young people from age 16 and

⁵⁹ Religiosity is a sociologist's term which refers to expressions of faith such as prayer, Bible reading, attitudes about God, and church or youth group attendance (Kageler, 2008:26).

⁶⁰Kageler 2008:26, 27 The Youth Ministry Survival Guide.

above. This is a researchable topic for the future: What should youth ministry be called when people of ages outside the youth age group begins to join youth groups for spiritual nourishment and nurture?

I define youth ministry as the ministry of the risen, living and coming Christ, the ministry of the Church, and the ministry of Christians to young people, their families and society for the fulfilment of God's purpose. Firstly, we need to understand and believe that youth ministry is God's ministry and that we are just Godbearers. Apostle Paul explained this by saying that, "It is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13)". Secondly, youth ministry is the church's ministry. The church must spearhead youth ministry. Lastly, it is Christians' ministry to their youth within and outside the church. All believers, both old and young, should be encouraged to reach out to young people. Christian parents should be youth ministers to their children and by extension to other children in their sphere. This means that Christian parents do not have to wait to be told before they extend their hand of fellowship to any young people in their place of work, school where they are teaching, or young people in their communities. They should depend on the Holy Spirit to help and comfort them in this task as they offer themselves as mentors irrespective of their response or attitude. Young Christians should also minister to their peers as they are taught at home and in the church by their adult youth leaders.

4.4 Theological nature of youth ministry

According to Ward (2001: 33), the theology of youth ministry seeks to demonstrate how our understanding of God shapes and influences the practice of youth ministry. Christian youth ministry is different from secular youth ministry because Christian youth ministry seeks to demonstrate how their understanding of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, shapes and influences their practice. Knowing that God who calls us into ministry is a minister (Root, 2011: 40) and a missionary Himself who sent His Son as a missionary to make missionaries (disciples) of those who believe in Him, makes us to realize that we are also called to be nothing less than what we are called by the One who calls us, that is, we are missionaries. We know these things about God from the Bible. Ward (2001: 34, 35) affirms that, "The Christian gospel tells the story of a missionary God and that youth ministry is therefore grounded in the missionary nature of God." Root (2011: 40) reports that we do

ministry when we are in contact with this world and it is ministry that will lead to theology. Youth ministry is grounded in theology, which Dean (2011) defined as a reflection on what God is doing with us in human time through the Holy Spirit, as revealed through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which lies at the very heart of ministry with young people. In the words of Dean (2011: 23), “to approach youth ministry theologically is to open the eyes of others to see young people’s status as human beings, created and loved by God”.

Dean (2011: 15, 16) argues that youth workers’ actions and self-conceptions since the inception of youth ministry as it is known now, were rarely informed by significant theological reflection. However, this is changing now as youth ministers have realized the need to make a theological turn. The theological turn involves the reimagining of youth ministry from the practical theology perspective, articulating how God is active in the lives of youth (and our lives), seeking to connect to God’s own ministry as God ministers to adolescents and seeing ourselves as theologians.

As Creasy (2001: 19) puts it, practical theology is intimately connected to the practices of ministry because Christian action unapologetically invites God to use us to transform the world in Jesus’ name, even as we move from experience to reflection and into action.

Kenda (2011: 17, 22) claims that youth ministers, and even youth themselves, are practical theologians. Youth ministry is practical theology and youth ministers are practical theologians because they address issues that affect society on behalf of, and with God. As God intervened in the problems of the world by sending His Son to deliver human beings from the power, punishment and penalty of sin, so ministry to young people place much emphasis on reflection of God’s saving ministry with us. In Kenda’s words, “we (youth workers) are called to stop young people from dying” and help them to choose life (Deut 30: 19). In order to achieve the aims of youth ministry, there should be guiding norms founded on Biblical principles.

4.5 Aims of youth ministry

According to Canister (2001: 78), Christian education may be traced back to the apostolic church, where the apostles’ primary responsibility was to educate

baptismal [old and young] candidates (*catechumeni*⁶¹), after their conversion to Christianity. It is likely, from the history of the early church, that there was no separate ministry to old and young people. Conversion and spiritual nurture of faith for both old and young formed the basis or was the aims of the Church's mission. It can be concluded that the aim of the early church was the conversion and teaching/education/nurture of converts in obedience to Jesus Christ's great commission to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, teaching all nations, all things that He has commanded His disciples (Matthew 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16).

Dean and Foster (1998: 211) write that youth ministry was conceived as a defensive measure for most of the twentieth century: It defended youth against the wiles of culture, and it defended the church against extinction. From Root's (2007: 29) point of view, the aims of youth ministry from its inception also were "to reinforce Christian commitments and to protect young people from the perceived threats of menacing city life". Herein lays the root of the problem with the dominant form of youth ministry as practiced by some contemporary youth ministry. Youth ministry has been practiced with the anxiety of losing young people to the influence of the world rather than walking and working with God to accomplish His will according to His plan, in His way and time. Root (2007: 30) concludes that, "[Thus] youth ministry can be understood as a creation of evangelical Protestantism in reaction to modernization." The form of ministry passed down to subsequent youth ministers is not undergirded by strong theological biblical concept. Hryniuk (2005: 142-145) identified two approaches common to most modern-day youth ministry:

"The first is an approach that emphasizes entertainment and recreation. It seeks to entice young people into church life through a panoply of exciting events, programs, and activities that often offer pizza or some other delicious food to increase turn out. The second approach emphasizes catechesis. It seeks to offer young people solid doctrinal and moral instruction in the often unconscious hope that church dogma will mysteriously "sink in" and make them good Christians, of whatever denominational type."

⁶¹Candidates for baptism in the early church, who were undergoing instruction in the beliefs and practices of Christian faith.

It is to be noted that neither entertainment, recreation, nor teaching solid doctrinal and moral instruction are wrong, it is only that they fall short of the main aim of the Church and by extension of youth ministry.

From a social youth work perspective, the National Youth Agency's statement of values and principles⁶² (2010: 17) states that "the purpose of youth work is to facilitate and support young people's growth through dependence to interdependence, by encouraging their personal social development and enabling them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and society". This definition recognises that young people also have a voice which should be enabled to speak in situations and places where they have been previously looked down upon as 'beings' that only need to be seen and not heard. Though the social youth work is similar to Christian youth work, it is different from Christian youth work as mentioned in chapter one of this study. Young people have a voice and capacity to influence for good, their peers, family and the society at large for the glory of God. However, this is only possible when they are enabled or empowered by the gospel and taught by their leaders and by the Holy Spirit. Young people can speak and influence the tide of disintegrating family life if youth ministry will stimulate their minds and allow young people to make a contribution to family discussions, decisions and operations. As it is written, "God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power, of love and of sound mind (I Timothy 1: 7)."

From the theological perspective, Allan (1995: 15-19) writes that the three indispensable item of any Christian youth ministry manifesto, which I termed aims of youth ministry, should be to evangelize by preaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to teach and to be engaged in pastoral care. He fleshed the three points out as follows:

4.5.1 Evangelism (Soul Winning)

On evangelism, which is Jesus Christ's great commission given to His church (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 47; John 20:21), Allan (1995: 15) mentioned three points to bear in mind when youth workers seek to achieve this aim. Firstly, "different young people will be reached by different means", because our

⁶²Found in *Working with Young People*, edited by Roger Harrison and Christine Wise. 2:Ethical conduct in Youth Work (2010:17), Sage Publication.

ministry is not only to the youth in the church but also to those who are outside the church. Just as God used different strategies to win battles for Israel in the Old Testament, so our Lord Jesus Christ used different means to win the lost that He came to seek. Secondly, evangelism is not one activity; it is three activities working together. The sequence of these activities is as follows: attract young people together, for example at a camp meeting, teach them about the cost of what follows after hearing what the gospel is, and lastly, make an appeal to decide for Jesus Christ. Thirdly, evangelism needs to merge into effective discipleship which involve learning, living (putting into practice everything that has been mentally absorbed in a way that impact on the lifestyle), and loving both God and man, which is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22: 36-40). Effective discipleship must affect the three areas of young people's personality, which are the mind, will and emotions.

Evangelism is crucial in youth work as it has been observed that Christian families are not excluded from the disintegrative forces attacking the family all over the world (2008⁶³). However, Capehart (1996: 178) warned that we must be careful not to assume that church members are born again and living the Christian life. Every congregation should be reminded about Jesus' warnings, "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7: 21-23)." Jesus knew that there are many people in the church whose names are not written in the book of life and warned His followers during His earthly ministry that they should beware of hypocrisy. To buttress this assertion, Mark Senter III (2001: xi) writes that, "While Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant understanding of the church differ, all would agree that not everyone who is physically present at a worship service is considered to be a true member of the church. There are sheep and there are goats (Matthew 25: 31-46). There is wheat and there are weeds (Matthew 13: 24-30). While the Heavenly Father knows the difference between the faith community and the world, pastors and youth ministers have a difficult time distinguishing between

⁶³ Barna Research Group report <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released?q=divorce>

them and in the end they must rely on their Spirit-led perceptions as to which is which". Practicing youth ministry as mission will help youth ministers who are Godbearers to pay attention to this issue of hypocrisy that is rampant in the contemporary church. To buttress this point, Rueben Rashe (2008: 2) observes in his experience as a Pastor in Cape Town, South Africa, "that family violence was not only found in the homes of non-believers, but that it is also prevalent in the homes of believers. An observation was registered that many Christian families, women, men and children have always felt unsafe in their homes because of the cruelty that has grown in human hearts. Mothers today do not feel comfortable to leave their children with their fathers or some members of the family or extended family; because they fear that their children may be abused." Youth minister will have to prayerfully and wisely seek to evangelize the whole family in order to make impact in a disintegrating family.

However, Devries (1994: 26) argues that increased efforts in evangelism cannot address the crisis of youth ministry, which is the inability to lead teenagers to mature Christian adulthood. This leads us to the second important aim which is teaching.

4.5.2 Teaching

Teaching is another aim of youth ministry subsequent to salvation. According to Allan (1995:18), "the aim of all our teaching should be to reach the point where our young people are able to feed themselves. For our teaching ministry to be effective, we are to remember first, that learning is more than absorbing facts". The three types of learning which are knowledge, skill and attitudes must be instilled in young people. Semenye (2006: 1480), an African theologian, explains that, "Knowledge that is not applied to real-life issues will not transform lives. While memorizing is good, it is not enough. Learners need to be challenged to implement what they learn. They will need to be taught skills in analysing, synthesizing and evaluating if they are to be able to confront the challenges facing our contemporary society." Second, learning is progressive because people build on what knowledge they have prior to absorbing new ones. Thirdly, we need to remember that the unstructured teaching opportunities are often the best. Jesus Christ's teaches more at informal gatherings and on a one-on-one basis that build His rapport with the people at their level than formal gatherings like the Synagogue and the Temple. While teaching in the church

setting should not be disregarded, on-going teaching should be encouraged in all means of communication and interaction. Fourthly, some young people will learn faster than the other. This means that youth workers need to take cognizance of this fact and work towards assisting slow learners in their learning curve without obscuring the growth of fast learners. Fifthly, young people should have the resources of the whole church at their disposal. Young people should be brought together with older church members for mutual appreciation of each other, interaction, exchange of, and impartation of different gifts God has deposited in both the old and young people of God.

Finally, for teaching to be complete, pupils must have learned to instruct themselves as mature believers. This is what Devries (1994: 26) calls the aim of youth ministry, “leading teenagers to mature Christian adulthood”. According to Devries, mature Christian adults are those people who no longer depend on “whistles and bells” to motivate them to live out their faith. They have become proactive. Jesus Christ left us with a good example in that He led His disciples to become mature Christians who carried on from where He left the work to the end of their sojourn on earth. Some even died as martyrs. It is evangelism and proper, patient and powerful teaching of the Word of God in the Holy Spirit that can help youth workers lead teenagers to mature Christian adulthood.

Jesus Christ is our perfect example in youth ministry. He went about preaching and teaching because He knew that preaching and teaching goes hand in hand (Matthew 4:23; 11:1). The Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ continued with this important ministry of preaching and teaching (Acts 20:20, 25). Writing to Titus, Apostle Paul specifies what he should teach the converts (Titus 2:1-6):

- Teach that aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, and in charity, in patience.
- Teach aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.
- Teach young men likewise to be sober minded.

Youth ministers should help to revive the teaching of all of God's counsel to all of God's people and most especially, as this study pursues, teaching on Christian marriage and family life.

4.5.3 Pastoral care

Youth ministers' aim should be to pastor the young people under their tutelage. To do this, one-to-one counselling should be encouraged among the youth group. Youth ministers should have a heart for young people and encourage them to seek and come for counselling. On the other hand, young people should also be trained to counsel their peers. Geldard and Geldard (2010: 71) write that "young people prefer to seek help from other young people". In order to protect the life of other vulnerable flock, Geldard and Geldard developed a peer counsellor training programme for youth to guide them in counsel their peers. This training is indispensable and should be recommended in youth ministry. This is to make trained youth available for their mates who might not be comfortable to speak to an adult youth minister, and also to enable youth to reach their vulnerable mates before they take deadly steps like suicide. Time for counselling with a youth minister should be advertised and youth should be encouraged to make use of the opportunity. Secondly, emphasis should be placed on the centrality of the group's life. This means that young people should be encouraged to support one another instead of being driven by adults. Thirdly, adults in the church should be made to feel a pastoral responsibility for teenagers who do not belong to their church, while teenagers should be free to approach non-related for advice and support. According to Pratney (in Allan, 1995: 19), "The whole church does youth work." And according to Allan (1995: 19), "Only in an unhealthy church is youth work left to the youth workers."

Though Devries (1994: 26) argues that increased efforts in evangelism cannot address the crisis of youth ministry, which is the inability to lead teenagers to mature Christian adulthood, Fowler (2004: 123) warns that we [youth ministers] must not allow the indispensable aim of shepherding and nurturing overcrowd the evangelism of children. He concludes that we must accomplish them both. This means that evangelism, education and pastoral care must be done together in order to produce spiritually reproductive disciples.

However, with the theological turn in youth ministry, canvassed by Kenda and Root (2011: 14), the aim of youth ministry has been identified as “saving youth from dying and helping them to choose life”. In order to save young people from dying, the three aims of youth ministry stated above must be included in any ministry to youth. In the words of Mueller (2006:14), “The goal of our missionary efforts is to call the emerging generations to a compelling faith that transforms every area of life and every nook and cranny of God’s creation.” Four theological frameworks that should be emphasized in contemporary youth ministry are highlighted. These are grace, Holy Spirit, repentance, and hope.

Grace

Nishioka (2001: 243) believes that the first theological framework to Christian ministry with youth is grace because it separates Christians from other belief systems and also begins with a remarkable decision by God of the universe to reach out to us rather than our measuring up. Horton (2007: 689) defines grace as God’s unmerited favour and love toward humankind. God created human beings out of His own volition which makes any boasting by man of his works and achievements of little worth. It is God who created human beings and loves us unconditionally. Tavez (2005) points out that human beings should remember that we are made in God’s image and called into relationship with God by His grace. According to Tavez, “the Christian message about grace restores the human being. It reminds people of their place in the world as sons and daughters of God, created in the image and likeness of God”. As Apostle Paul states, “I am what I am by the grace of God.” Nishioka (2001: 248-249) argues that the doctrine of grace forms a key theological basis for youth ministry because it is the basis for our relationship with God and the cause for our discipleship in Jesus Christ. Secondly, he posits that the doctrine of grace serves as a key theological basis for youth ministry because adolescents, more than people at any other age, desperately need to know they are loved for who they are without ties to performance or condition which is prevalent in contemporary culture. Young people are empowered to fight the good fight of faith and endure in the face of pain and suffering when they experience unconditional love in their relationships with people especially their family members. The practices of grace, as delineated by Nishioka (2001: 250-252) are the practice of acceptance, welcome, remembering,

justice, humility, self-control, and of witness. Understanding and practicing grace is essential for an integrated family life.

If grace is chosen as the primary theological paradigm for youth ministry, Nishioka (2001: 252) warns that youth workers must remember that it is only God who saves and that they must refrain from being judgmental. Fowler (2004: 122) affirms that, “the Holy Spirit does the convicting of the need of a Saviour while Ward (2001: 60) confirms that it is the Holy Spirit who opens doors into relationship with young people.

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the promised gift of God to all flesh in these last days. The promise of the Holy Spirit was prophesied in the Old Testament by Prophet Joel (2: 28, 29), by John the Baptist in the gospels (Matthew 3: 11; Luke 3: 16; John 1: 33), and preached on the day of Pentecost by Apostle Peter (Acts 2: 18, 19). Since God has included our “sons and daughters” as well as young men in His promise of His Spirit upon all flesh in these last days, teaching on the need to pray for, and receive the promised Spirit of God is essential for both young and old people (their parents). The presence and manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s power in and through contemporary families will help to combat the forces behind disintegrating family life. Colle (2001: 334) writing on the Holy Spirit: presence, power, person, states that “the recognition of the Spirit’s person is in direct correlation with his presence and empowering agency in the divine economy and only as Person can he recreate persons in community ecstatically oriented to the other”. It is when our sons, daughters and young men and women receive the promised Spirit of God that they can prophesy⁶⁴ effectively and fulfil what the Lord has set them apart to become and do in life before they are formed in their mother’s womb or even coming forth out of the womb (Jeremiah 1: 5). While recognition of the Holy Spirit’s presence and seeking the manifestation of his power are commendable, recognizing the Holy Spirit as a person and obeying Him is important for the direction of the gospel work and the fulfilment of the great commission among youth and their families. Since the gospel calls all men everywhere to repentance, preachers of the gospel need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Though leaders (youth leaders inclusive) need to be equipped with knowledge

and skills, Osmer (2004: 29) stressed that “they must learn to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, rooted in their spirituality”. In order to be used mightily by God in dealing with the challenges of disintegrating family life, youth ministers must be men and women who are full of the Spirit and power of God. Receiving the promise of the Father will help them deal with disintegrating family and prepare them for their future family. The benefits of being filled with the Holy Spirit far outweighs the price to pay for despising the exceeding great and precious promise given to believers by which we are to become partakers of divine nature (Hebrews 4:1; 2 Peter 1: 3, 4). Emphasis should be laid on praying to be filled continuously with the Holy Spirit our teacher, comforter, and guide.

Repentance

Repentance is another theological frame works for youth ministry. It is the essence of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who began His earthly ministry with the preaching of repentance and commanded His disciples to preach repentance among all nations (Mark 1: 15; Luke 24:47; Acts 17: 30). Repentance is defined by Horton (2007: 696) as the reversal of one’s direction with regard to sinful behaviours or attitudes; turning with appropriate sorrow from past acts that was displeasing to God.

Maas (2001: 229-241) challenges youth ministers to examine whether their ministry is synonymous with the pied piper or congruent with John the Baptist, the preaching prophet. While the pied piper played to his employer’s terms of condition, he took revenge on the children after a breach of agreement. John the Baptist fulfilled his divine commission to the point of death (Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:19-29). Youth ministries founded and grounded in the framework of repentance will be pointing people to Christ who forgives sins that we repent of and forsake. Maas (2001: 234) concludes that, “.His role, first and always, is to speak the truth and in this way to warn, console, and prepare. It is the prophet John the Baptizer - and not the mysterious Piper - who best serves as a model for youth ministers. Where the Piper enchants, the prophet prods and pokes. He is follower first, leading only where he is led. His testimony, because it is true, compels but cannot coerce.” Calling sinners to repentance through the preaching of the gospel is an offer of hope to the hopeless (Eph 2:11, 12). Youth ministers will have to call all family members to repentance as

well. This may be the youth or their parents as the case may be. This leads to another framework for youth ministry.

Hope

Christian hope is one of the greatest needs of contemporary youth which should be preached and taught. Parker (2001: 267) exclaims that hopelessness is a constant refrain in the life stories of many teenagers today, irrespective of their race, class, gender, or sociocultural context. Their hopelessness is an indication of their struggle with understanding evil that affects their lives, such as divorced parents, death of a loved one, drive-by-shootings, poverty, hate violence, HIV/Aids, and sexual abuse. Contemporary youth need hope that is grounded in the Word of God. Moltman (1993: 33) in his book titled "Theology of Hope", claims that Christian hope is directed towards a *novum ultimum*, towards a new creation of all things by the God of resurrection of Jesus Christ. Evelyn (2001: 270) defines Christian hope as the expectation of a future rooted in the promises of God, which motivates us to live in the present with certainty and confidence. Hope translates believers beyond the present world into the coming kingdom of God where there will be no more pain, death, evil and despair. Hope is firmly linked with "eschatology", which is defined by Elwell (2007: 192) as that branch of theology concerned with the study of the "last things" - that is, what will happen in the future, both to individuals and to the world as a whole.

Though Evelyn (2001: 269) asserts that the church has promoted an impotent spirituality with youth regarding evil and despair, she however proffered a relevant and potent hope as a startingpoint for youth ministry. Potent hope, according to Evelyn (2001: 270-272), firstly points to Triune God who is present in suffering and despair. Just as God was with Joseph (Genesis 39:2), Jesus Christ in his passion (I Corinthians 15:3-8; I Peter 1:11) and Apostle Paul (1 Timothy 6:14-17) through their sufferings, so has He promised to be with us always when we passed through waters, rivers, fire and even troubles (Isaiah 43:1, 2; 28: 20; Hebrews 13:5). Secondly, potent hope relies on spiritual disciplines that sustain teenagers in times of sorrow and joy. Whitney (2002: 17) defined spiritual disciplines as those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth. They are the habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by the people of God

since biblical times and include Bible intake, prayer, worship, evangelism, service, stewardship, fasting, silence and solitude, journaling and learning. Thirdly, potent hope helps youth to develop coping skills from spiritual disciplines that integrate them into the vocation of the Christian community.

Devries (1994: 25, 26) argues that the crisis in youth ministry is that youth ministry is not leading Christian teenagers to become mature Christian adults. He argues that youth ministry should move youth from thinking or believing that good Christians don't have pain or disappointment to youth who think and believe that God uses our pain and disappointment to make us better Christians. By helping youth to move from childhood to mature adult faith, he believes that proactive youth will be launched and retained in the church instead of reactive youth who backslide at the experience of evil, despair or disappointment.

In a review of recent writings on the pastoral theology of hope and positive psychology, Kwan (2010: 52-56) writes about Donald Capp's call on people involved in pastoral care to be "Agents of Hope". Kwan writes on Donald Capp's explanation of the mission of an agent of hope. The mission of an agent of hope is to turn a client's eyes from the suffering present toward a fulfilment in the future; from unrealizable goals toward realizable ones; from unrealizable people or skills toward a realizable God or person or events; from the problematic past toward the caring mentorship of the past. Jesus Christ is our perfect role model and perfect example. Believers are enjoined to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2). Youth ministers should be agents of hope for contemporary hopeless youth - especially those who come from disintegrating families.

However, there are important people to be acknowledged in youth ministry. These are the youth themselves, the adult youth minister and the indispensable parents, as highlighted by Nel (2000:100-132).

4.6 The three most important people in youth ministry

True ministry cannot be done without interacting with other creations of God. Hence, youth ministry involves the youth minister and young people to whom they minister to

in the name of the Lord. However, youth are the product of two parents; namely the father and the mother who are to be taken into cognisance in youth ministry. According to Nel (2000:100), youth ministry is a ministry to, but also with and through (by means of) the youth. Since the ministry is to, with and through youth, it means that youth themselves are very important in youth ministry. It can be said that without the youth, there is no youth ministry. The other important people in youth ministry are the youth minister and the family in which youth are raised. The three important people in youth ministry, identified by Nel (2000), are examined in this section.

4.6.1 The youth

Youth have been defined and discussed in previous part of this chapter (4.1). However, their identity and the importance of their involvement in youth and family ministry will be discussed. Finding personal identity is the primary development tasks facing young people. One of the tasks of the family is to help young people in forming a personal identity. Anderson (2001: 259-265) expressed his own perspective of the family by suggesting that family should be conceptualized as the image of God, a social context for identity formation, a moral context for character formation and lastly the domestic context of spiritual formation. In the description of family by Anderson (2001: 259-265), which was earlier mentioned in Chapter 2, he asserts that the family is supposed to be the social context for identity formation and moral context for character formation. It is when youth know who they are that they begin to act according to the identity they accept -hence the importance of guiding youth early in life about their identity as the image of God. Nel (2000:101) asserts that identity-finding in youth ministry means becoming the person God created you to be: someone in Christ. Youth identity is given to them by God who created all men and women in His own image and likeness but has also, since the beginning, destined young people to be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus (the new Adam) (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 8:29, 30). Young people's identity as image of God is affirmed as youth ministry help them to see and understand the new reality which, according to Nel (2000:101), is what God has done in Christ, rather than what is sometimes not yet seen in the lives of children and adolescents.

Youth, as an integral and indispensable part of youth ministry, have a role to play in evangelising and counselling their peers because they understand their culture

better than youth ministers. According to Borthwick (1995: 74, 75), the youth represents the greatest resource facing the church worldwide because young people who respond to the love of Christ can be subsequently disciplined and equipped to be part of the mobilized force who will complete the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Youth are also indispensable in family life. Ambert (1992), in her book titled “The effect of children on parents”, argues that the tide has changed in parent-child relations as it can no longer be said that parents are the only one that influences children but that contemporary children (0-18years in her research) are negatively and positively influencing parents and siblings. Some of the areas where parents are affected include, among others, parental health, personality, place/space/activities, life plans, human interaction, financial/economic aspects, attitude, values, values, and beliefs (1992: 30-53). An example of a positive effect will be a child who is an obedient child and excellent achiever at school who makes his/her parents proud of him/her and makes them work hard to make sure the child graduates. An example of a negative effect will be a child hooked on drugs who sells family property to keep up with his/her addiction. This type of behaviour will cause psychological effects on parents and siblings as well as financial strain on family income. Recent reports and studies (UN CRC 1989⁶⁵; Kaczynski, 2003; Sorbring, 2009) have shown that young people are active agents of transformation in family life and have the right to be consulted in matters that affect them. Kuczynski (2003: 12), a proponent of the bilateral model of parent-child relations, claims that,

“Children have been found to issue commands and suggestions to parents with expectations for parental compliance. They use reasoning, question parental actions, and negotiate compromises with their parents. School-age children have also been found to directly intervene to change behaviours relevant to the parent’s socialization. Parents of children 6 to 11 were able to recall incidents when their children successfully challenged and influenced them in the areas of parental personal behaviour, conventional behaviour, health and safety behaviours, and parental attitudes and values. When asked why they had complied with their children in these important areas, mothers and fathers

⁶⁵<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

described a variety of strategies and capacities of their children, including direct assertion (91%), negotiation (72%), and expertise (58%).”

Though research has proved children to be active agents of change in family life, the effect of adult-youth have not been documented. In a disintegrating family, both parents and children may be having a negative effect on one another. However, it is believed that converted and well taught youth can greatly influence their family positively and by extension the society in which they live. As Nel (2000:74, 75) posits, the aim of youth ministry is to train youth to be part of the local church that makes a difference as they make the kingdom of God visible everywhere - including their immediate and future family.

Theologically, evangelized and educated youth who are pastored can bring about change in a disintegrating family and society through Christ who strengthens them (II Corinthians 5:20; Philippians 4:13;). A believer is a believer in the sight of God, irrespective of age and he/she is sent to preach and teach the Word of God by words and deeds to all creatures (John 17:18; 20:21). From the theological nature of youth ministry, young people are also called to be missionaries to the world - that includes their family. They can be empowered by the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to all men (Romans 1:16) and is able to save all men. Youth have been called, in their own right, to be prophets to their family; the church and society.

4.6.2 The adult youth leader

Adult youth leaders are the ones entrusted with young people's lives and are indispensable in youth ministry. Youth ministers need to be aware of the influence that youth may have on youth ministry, as highlighted above. Nel (2000: 116, 117) strongly affirms that, "Youth ministry stands and falls with good leaders" and "Where there is leadership, the youth will be." Good leaders are called into ministry to young people and are to remember, always, to remain engaged in the ministry because of their calling, which is able to keep them through inevitable challenges. Some of the traits expected of an adult youth leader. As highlighted by Nel (2001:121, 122), include self-identity and acceptance; integrity; sincerity; adaptability; courage to persevere; and a balance life. Of great importance is the need for adult youth leaders

to seek to execute God's revealed will as God's servants and empower youth to fulfil God's purpose for their lives.

The discourse on the importance of an adult youth leader will be incomplete without placing emphasis on the "equi-human" approach which is similar to Browning's (in Osmer 2004: 151) ethic of equal regard. These expressions stress the fact that the young people being served are equally human beings with inherent dignity that must be respected and protected. Nel (2000:127) writes that, "He who does not regard the other as a human being, as a peer, as a person with equal value, does not enter into a relationship with that person." Affirming other people as human beings created and made in the image of God and loving people with unconditional love, is crucial, especially in contemporary youth ministry wallowing in the context of rapid migration of people, pluralism of culture and religion and post-modernism. Adult youth leaders must be aware of this context and be able to give reason for this conviction with due respect to other people's beliefs without compromise. Youth leaders must learn from Jesus Christ's principle of equi-humanness, that is, the unconditional acceptance of who other people are and where they are. The application of the equi-human approach will facilitate a relational approach because young people often open up to people who relate to them and respect their dignity.

4.6.3 The family of the youth

Youth ministers (De Vries, 1994; Nelson, 2006; Ward, 1994; Strommen & Hardel, 2000; Nel, 2000; Bunge, 2006; Kenda & Foster, 1998) have come to the conclusion that any form of youth ministry must recognise the importance of the family in which youth originate. They are acculturated into a particular family where they find and form their initial religious, social and cultural identity through interaction with their immediate families or guardians. Parents can make or mar their children's chance of success in life by their behaviour, values, attitude and misuse of power. Where parents exercise God given power or authority under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the whole family will be edified, enlightened and empowered to fulfil God's purpose for their lives and reach their potentials. Karraker and Grochowski (2006: 347) states that,

“Family empowerment is a process in which family members work toward equitable and respectful relationships among themselves and with their surrounding communities. Empowerment is “power with” rather than “power over” family members, from focusing on strengths over limitations. Empowerment prevents family members from overpowering other members, as well as some members experiencing powerlessness at the hands of other members.”

With proper use of power in a family, children trained by the Word of God and exemplary life, as Tripp (2005: 140) and Fowler (2004: 126) advocates, stand the chance of being converted early in life. Parents' influence far outweighs any other adult in the life of their children at the early stage. As Senter III (in Nel, 2000: 109) puts it, “The influence of the student's family on his or her value system will exceed the influence of the youth worker on most occasions.”

One way of influencing children is modelling by both parents. According to Nel (2000: 109-111), modelling by parents or other significant “adults” is life-long and is supposed to be by verbal communication as well as by living an exemplary lifestyle. Modelling requires a long-term relationship between the learner (young people) and the model (parents). It is expected, as Richards (in Nel, 2000: 109) puts it, that the pupil should have the opportunity to see the model in a diversity of situations; and the model should have the opportunity to explain his or her behaviour, as well as the values, “faith” and feelings motivating that behaviour. Two processes shared by Richards to enact effective modelling by parents are sharing of “inner states”, that is, sharing their emotions with their children; and secondly, understanding education or teaching as an “interpretation of life” which is about parents learning to connect their faith in God with their daily life. Nel's (2000:111) conclusion on modelling is that, “Any church with a long-term vision, begins with the development of models for children, and parents are, as the prime choice for models, first in line”. This is very significant for the Church.

Though Richard's suggestion and Nel's conclusion are laudable, two problems confront some African families. The first is that of ‘absent fathers’ (or loss of one or both parents due to war, HIV/Aids or divorce) and the second is patriarchy. For example, in South Africa the percentage of absent (living) fathers has increased from

41.6 % in 1996 to 48.0% in 2009, while 'father present' has decreased from 49.2% in 1996 to 35.9%⁶⁶. In other African countries, the figures are high in this regard. Patriarchy does not allow parents to share their emotions with their children in Africa. This makes the area of family relations an important one to be addressed in youth ministry. Though Nel (2000: 111,112) argues for partnership with parents who are referred to as an 'indispensable partners' and the most natural 'differentiators', the context of Africa and other developing countries should guide youth ministers in these countries.

4.7 Challenges of disintegrating family life to youth ministry

Ward (1995:15) claims that youth workers [including himself] know that their relationships with young people can be extremely demanding and caring for needy young people can be very stressful. This statement echoes the feelings of youth workers around the world. The challenges posed by disintegrating family life to youth ministry are hereby discussed below.

4.7.1 Challenge of family diversity

As discussed in Chapter 2, the global family has become diversified and this is a challenge to youth ministry. This is because today's youth come from all kinds of families which make youth ministers careful not to offend, ridicule or condemn youth from other types of family that are different from their own ideal type of family in his/her relationships and ministry to young people. Most youth are from divorced parents who have been absorbed into blended families, while some remain with their single mothers or fathers. Some of the contemporary types of families are the transnational families, blended families, singles family, boomerang families and homosexual families. As a result of this diversity, the youth ministers' leadership style is challenged as they have to remain non-judgmental, love unconditionally, keep the group united as one and single-mindedly pursue the aims of youth ministry as a missionary without compromise to their Christian conviction. The leadership traits highlighted by Nel (2001: 121, 122), such as self-identity and acceptance; integrity; sincerity; adaptability; courage to persevere; and a balance life, is

⁶⁶Source: SAIRR, South Africa Survey 2009/2010, 2010, p64; Stats SA, Social Profile of South Africa, 2002-2009, Report No 03-19-00, p9.

challenged by family diversity and different youth coming to youth ministry from diverse families.

4.7.2 Challenge of intimidation and threat to the Truth

According to Fowler's exegesis and thesis, as described in Chapter 3 of this study, most parents have caused their children to stumble by their carelessness, behaviour, attitude or sheer ignorance. They have hindered their children from coming to Jesus. While some parents have realised their mistakes, others have not. Since most people do not know God's norm and order for the family, children are still being born at a high rate without the people involved knowing the scriptural warning to parents who do not have concern for their children's spiritual, financial and emotional maturity and stability. The challenge for youth ministry is how to first make parents or young people realise the consequences of neglecting and rejecting God's norm and order for the family. Due to diversity in families, youth workers may be intimidated or threatened by parents, the Church and the society from speaking the truth. Children who disobey God, their godly parents/leaders and stayed outside their parent's circle of blessing (Tripp 2005: 131, 132) as well as parents who despise, exacerbate and cause their children to stumble (Fowler 2004: 75-79) need the gospel truth. In the contemporary pluralistic, globalized and post-modern world where truth is relative and tolerance is elevated, this is a challenge to youth ministry. Optimists, postmodernists, and people of other faith like historian Stephanie Coontz (2000) who wrote *The way we never were*, sociologist Judith Stacey (1998) who wrote *Brave New Families* and psychologist Arlene Skolnick (1993) who wrote *Embattled Families*, will challenge and engage youth ministers as pessimists who are calling for the restoration of the two-godly-parent home where godly children are raised, nurtured and trained according to God's plan for family. If parents in any way cause their children to stumble or hinder them from following in the way of the Lord because of their carelessness, neglect or rejection of God's command, Jesus says that, "it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea (Matthew 18:6). Nevertheless, the warning message must be proclaimed through all means of communication because youth can be used by God to bring an end to most societal ills if they are nurtured and admonished in the way of the Lord by obedient, God-fearing and believing parents.

4.7.3 Challenge of winning the exasperated youth back to the Lord

As earlier mentioned in Chapter 3, youth who have been exasperated by their parents (Ephesians 6:3), despised by their parents (Matthew 18:10) and denied spiritual training/nurture (Deuteronomy 6:10-12) are difficult to win back to the Lord. Turaki (2006:1437), commenting especially on Ephesians 6:3, states that parents are not to make unreasonable demands of their children: hence the command not to exasperate them. This is because children who are exasperated by their parents by unreasonable demands may rebel, and rebellion leads to godlessness and a child who has experienced this is very difficult to win back to the Lord. In Wards' (2001: 51- 76) five stages of relational Christian youth work, the extended contact is most likely due to and made necessary because of the serious damage parents have caused to young people's lives. Youth workers need to spend time, money, energy and sacrifice other commitments to win exasperated youth who have been denied spiritual birth right (spiritual training and nurture in God's word at home), undermined or undervalued. The second challenge that might arise from this point is the challenge of reconciling the converted youth to their parents. The youth worker has the dual responsibility as a missionary to seek the conversion of parents before reconciling the parents with their teenagers who often have lost confidence in their parents. Where parents have grieved their children or caused them to sin, thereby making the child to become resistant to the gospel, it becomes a big challenge for youth ministers who have to find ways to first gain the child's confidence before helping the parents. This is a difficult task which youth ministers will find very challenging. Youth ministers have to build a long-term relationship with both teenagers and their family.

4.7.4 Challenge of deficient reinforcement at home

While youth are starved of Christian religious education at home, they are also starved of good example that will reinforce youth minister's teaching to youth in the church. As Bunge (2008:349) rightly mentioned, "faith is not really taught but 'caught.'" Christian religious education at home, schools, as well as the church is vital for a healthy spiritual, emotional and mental growth of youth. However, the parents must not only teach by the words of their mouth but also by their actions, reactions

and interaction at home to buttress teachings received by their children in the Church.

The powerless, immature and helpless parents as identified by Theologians have intentionally or unintentionally failed in their duty to nurture their children according to the Word of God. As Nelson (2006:20) reports, youth who live in homes where parent have neglected their duties will not be reinforcing what they are teaching their child. For example, while the youth minister is teaching about the fruit of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance which is self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23), this may just be the opposite of what the youth is experiencing at home and it may make it difficult for youth to reconcile the youth ministers teaching with their personal experience at home. Biblical literacy does not make any one a practical or active Christian except the reader and hearer of the word intentionally become a doer of the word (James 1:22-25). This may be a serious challenge to youth from 'Christian' homes whose parents are absolute biblical illiterate (unbeliever) or biblically literate but are not doers of the Word of God which command parents to teach, train and bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6: 4-9; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). Devries (1994:92) contends that "our youth ministries, for the most part, are no longer undergirded by mature Christian parents and unless we pay attention to the significant deficits in our teenagers' families of origin, much of our (youth ministers) creative programming and frantic organizing may be no more than rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Because of the experience of some youth with their parent, they are trooping out of churches. Dean and Foster's (1998:31) claim that the exodus of adolescents from mainline churches is both legendary and sobering is still the same today. According to Webber et al (2010:204), "The move away from identifying with a Christian denomination is particularly acute among youth (teens and young adults aged 13-25)." Lack of parent's reinforcement of youth ministry teaching in the life of youth is one of the reasons why young people resent the gospel at home and in the Church.

Since divorce which is the visible evidence of disintegrating family life is preceded by internal conflict, abuse and violence, youth who witnessed this episode may struggle to believe the possibilities of salvation by grace through faith, talk-less of living out what youth ministers are teaching. This is a challenge to youth ministry in the sense

that lack of change of behaviour and attitude due to lack of reinforcement by youth's parents at home makes youth ministers look as if they are not capable of impacting the lives of youth under their tutelage.

4.7.5 Challenge of restoring youth to their parents circle of blessing

According to Tripp's (2005: 19-25; 143-145) thesis, as discussed in Chapter 3, children who dishonour their parents and by extension, those who are in authority, have moved out of the circle of God's blessing and it is the responsibility of parents to swiftly restore them back into the circle of blessing. However, in a disintegrating family, teenagers often cannot be returned home or reconciled with parents because parents are still violent, alcoholic, abusive or idolaters (worshippers of idols). Most African countries are still steeped in idolatrous practices where blood of animals are still being shed and some fetish rituals are being performed, thereby making such environments precarious for youth. The challenge now for contemporary youth ministers is to get the young people back into the parents' circle of blessing but in a case where the parent of such youth is not yet converted to the Lord, the parents need to be converted first and the house found safe for the teenagers before the youth can be safely restored back to his/her family. However, where parents/guardians reject the gospel and remain hostile, youth ministers are now faced with the challenge of finding an extended or surrogate family to nurture the teenager.

While finding adoptive or surrogate parents used to be automatic for youth from disintegrating families in most parts of the world like Africa because of the value placed on the culture of "Ubuntu" and communal lifestyle, modernization and postmodernity has eroded this culture and lifestyle, as most people of African descent are becoming hyper-individualistic, as discussed in Chapter 3. As Van der Walt (1995:i) postulates, the idea of an extended family has been stripped down to the so-called nuclear family consisting of the father, mother and the minimum number of children – to a single household in the modern industrialised Western society – and increasingly in Africa too. Fewer people are willing to take foster care of children from disintegrating families and this is evident in the new form of families termed "child-headed or women-headed families", as described in Chapter 2 of this study. Though there are families seeking to adopt children in western countries,

mostly because of the inability to conceive or desire to assist displaced, distressed and despondent youth or orphans, the law is very strict because of cases of abuse of adopted children. Another challenge identified in this thesis, is the challenge of providing an extended family for the vast number of youth who come from disintegrating families. This is a big challenge to the ministry of contemporary youth workers.

4.7.6 Challenge of initiating healing and hope for youth from disintegrating families

Numerous orphans, who are now heading their parents' homes in their teenage years, children of divorce parents, physically, and sexually and emotionally abused youth, can be found in all corners of the earth. How can youth ministry help young people get healed from the devastating effects of disintegrating family and kindle hope in them? Deep seated anger, hurt, feelings of revenge, and unforgiveness lies in the heart of most youth which need to be dealt with so that it will not affect their future. As Strommen and Hardel (2000: 157) had predicted and referred to at the beginning of this thesis, there have been a rising figure in the number of hurting people, psychologically scarred youth who does not know close family life and the security of being loved and cared for. Cloud and Townsend (1999:226, 227) writes that, "Healing for victims is difficult because their developmental processes have been damaged or interrupted by abuse." As a result of the damage done to young people, Cloud and Townsend claim that they lose a sense of trust because the perpetrator was someone they knew as children; they also lose a sense of ownership over their soul thinking that they are now public property-that their resources, body, and time should be available to others just for the asking. They also lose their self-worth believing that there is no good in them. What about the challenge of giving hope to the hopeless youth in a child-headed family living in shanty townships who have stopped their education due to poverty, teenagers who are raped and impregnated at school or at home by family members, unskilled and unemployed youth, youth hooked on drugs or pornography and numerous youth with HIV/Aids? This is a big challenge for youth workers who, as missionaries, have to help bruised youth start a healing process and restoration of new hope found in Christ Jesus.

4.7.7 Challenge of funding contemporary youth ministry in third world countries

Funding contemporary youth ministry is one of the challenges of disintegrating family life to youth ministry, especially in third world countries. With the statistics of the high and increasing number of orphans, HIV/Aids children, child-headed families, students affected by divorce, and the need for acquisition of various skills by youth ministers, youth ministry's budget needs augmentation. Though there are volunteer workers in some instances, the full or part-time workers need to be funded to meet daily tasks and needs. For example, evangelistic outreaches, soup kitchens, camp meetings, student bursaries for needy youth, transport costs, first aid training, and administrative expenses are all needed. With the increase in the budget of youth ministry, youth ministers may be opposed and challenged to give reasons for the sudden increase in the budget of contemporary youth ministry.

4.7.8 Challenge of burn-out among youth ministers

Consequent upon the challenges of disintegrating family life enumerated above, Kageler (2010:8-23) presented and analysed his findings about burn-out among youth workers in the United States and European Countries. Some of the causes of their burnout include growing weary of spending time with youth, strained family relations, spiritual dryness and feeling isolated or lonely. If this is the findings in the US and European countries, then youth ministers in developing and less developed countries will have to prepare for the imminent upsurge of the challenges of disintegrating family life on youth ministry. Youth workers in Africa are at risk of burn-out as Baleke (2011:89) exclaimed: "since millions of young people in Africa have lost their parents, youth workers must face the challenge to guide them to become responsible, godly parents themselves -a truly daunting challenge without any role model to follow". Though the situation looks bleak, right understanding of youth ministers' call and the undergirding theological framework would prevent burn-out. Nel (2000:120) confessed that youth ministry is exhausting and draining enough and without what he termed 'support' of a calling, it cannot be sustained. He concludes that lack of definite or genuine call to the ministry is perhaps one reason for the large turnover of personnel in youth ministry.

Root (2007:95) also states that, “We should never assert ‘This is not what I signed up for’ because suffering with and at the hand of those to whom we minister is the call of the incarnation and crucifixion.”

4.7.9 Unequal/uneven distribution of limited youth workers around the world

Youth ministry is faced with the challenge of reaching millions of youth around the world, with limited youth ministers; some who are not trained and financially supported. The more families disintegrate through divorce, untimely death of parents, wars, pandemics and migration, the more youth are expected to be brought into the church through evangelism or those who will come to youth ministry groups because they believe that church is a haven for them or because they are convicted by the Holy Spirit. However, the challenge is that the records, in an unpublished paper title ‘Global Youth Ministry’, show that there are more youth workers in some parts of the world with few youth to handle than other parts of the world where the number of youth affected by family disintegration and other causes are highest. Borthwick (1995: 73, 74) quotes that “The United States has 28 million teenagers making up less than 3 percent of the world’s youth. 99 percent of the paid and volunteer workers in the world minister in the United States. Therefore, 99 percent of the world youth workers minister to less than 3 percent of the world’s teenagers.” On the other way round, it means that 1% of the remaining youth workers in the world minister to more than 97 percent teenagers struggling to get attention, affection and direction from youth ministers in other parts of the world. With the increase in the global youth population and the increase in the number of disintegrating families, the number of youth from disintegrating families are likely to increase and call for a need for large number of youth ministers. It was Strommen and Hardel who claimed in 2000 that, “there will continue to be hurt people, more psychologically scarred youth, more fragmented families in the future of every congregation.” This is becoming true as the number of disintegrating families increase day by day. There is the likelihood of symmetrical increase in the number of affected youth as more families disintegrate due to all causes of disintegration. As we follow the trend of the world in the media regarding high rate of divorce, war, epidemics and high level of emigration, disintegrating family life can be seen to be mounting up pressure on youth ministry.

This is a challenge for youth ministers especially in the third world countries where there is shortage of youth workers and increase in youth from disintegrating family.

4.8 Opportunities available for youth ministry to address family

4.8.1 Reaching and winning the whole family for the extension of God's kingdom

One of the greatest opportunities available to be explored by youth ministry as a result of disintegrating family life is the opportunity to reach and win a whole family to extend the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The traditional youth ministry's aim was concerned with preserving and conserving only the youth from the effect of modernisation but with the new insight in youth ministry that has led to the introduction of different God-honouring approaches like Godbearing, relational and the family-based-youth-ministry approach, the aim of youth ministry has extended beyond young people to their family, whatever type it is. This study have proved there is an inseparable link between young people and their families and it can be stated that what affects the children affects the parents (directly or indirectly) and vice versa because the family is a whole system. In Apostle Paul's typology, a family can be liken to the body, "for the body is not one member, but many", but now are they many members, yet but one body...and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it (1 Corinthians 12: 14, 20, 26).

In ministering to youth from a disintegrating family, missionary youth ministers should aim at reconciliation of members in conflict, restoration of true worship of the living God and revival of God's law and order in the family. It is now time to begin the fulfilment of God's promise in Genesis 12:2, 3 where God said that He will bless Abraham (father of us all, Romans 4:16c), and that He shall be a blessing and through Abraham and His descendants shall ALL the families of the earth be blessed.

4.8.2 Maximization of youth's potentials for family and societal benefit

There is another great opportunity of tapping into youth's inherent untapped wealth of assets that can help in restoring immediate disintegrating family life of

contemporary youth and saving their immediate future family and generation the agony of disintegrating family life. Youth ministry should seize this opportunity to enable them to move from subjects or 'beings' who are created, to be seen and not heard, to a valuable image of God to be seen and heard. Youth are creative, critical thinkers, challenging, curious and candid. Youth are a great asset in any society. They are very important and unique because of their youthful strength; long years ahead to serve the Lord, pliability, and aptitude. Young people are in what Fowler (2004: 118, 119) called 'silver day', in the most timely and the most fruitful time to reach them and teach them in the way that they should go so that they will not depart from it when they grow up (Proverbs 22: 6).

With the technological advancement and globalization, contemporary youth are well-informed and can bring a positive influence on disintegrating family life if parents will engage with them as equi-human. If youth ministry can help parents to realise the fact that young people are God's gift to them as parent's are God's gift to young people, then parents will be able to help their children reach their potentials and fulfil God's purpose, while children will enable parents and society fulfil their roles. From the bilateral parent-child theory, it is seen that youth can influence their parents to make better choices and even keep law and order. This theory is based on recent work of Kuczynski (2003)⁶⁷ whose established assumptions are that the bilateral model of parent-child relations is bi-directional (model of causality), that the model of agency is equal (like Nel's equi-human approach), the model of context is interaction in relationships and, lastly, that there is an interdependent asymmetry in the model of power in the family. In a nutshell, Kuczynski (2003:12, 18) writes that influence flows from both parents and children and not from parents to children as people used to think. Secondly, both parents and children are equal agents of change, as was explained earlier⁶⁸. Though this aspect of influencing parents positively is mostly experienced in cultures where patriarchy is not prominent, youth ministers in Africa and other third world countries and cultures where patriarchy prevails, can seize this opportunity to liberate young people from male chauvinism that have silenced the voice of the youth for a long time under the pretence of "respect for elders". Though disrespect in any form is not advocated for here, yet, young people, as valued

⁶⁷ http://www.isce.vt.edu/files/Kuczynski_Power_Point.pdf

⁶⁸ See section under the title the three important people in youth ministry: "Youth"

members of the family who are going to carry on the family name in future, should be allowed to participate in discussions on issues that affect them and make their contribution to salient issues.

In the case of disintegrating family life, opportunity abound to train young people how to intervene early in conflicts that otherwise would have led to domestic violence, abuse or even divorce. As missionaries at home, young people can now be taught on how to prayerfully counsel and prevail on their parents and siblings in matters that can cause and lead to disintegration. By empowering converted young people with Christian, health, financial and family life education, they can and will make an impact in their immediate family and future family. Another opportunity for youth ministry is the opportunity to desensitize young men from following in the path of patriarchy when they become fathers. A child who is involved in deliberation and decision making processes at home as equal human beings will be comfortable to engage in meaningful discussion in the public and make a better contribution to society.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has underscored the challenges of disintegrating family life for youth ministry. Definitions and age ranges for youth in the world varies and youth includes children from the age of six as denoted by the Jewish culture and can include 35 year old people, like the people in India or the African Union stipulates. This chapter has highlighted the new theological turn which calls on contemporary youth ministers to begin to see themselves as missionaries and theologians reflecting on the actions as they work with God of the mission. With the new understanding of youth ministry as a mission and youth ministers as missionaries bearing God to make missionaries who will take God to their culture, family and society, young people, the next generation stand at getting a better godly, peaceful and fruitful families through which all the families of the earth shall be blessed. The bilateral model of parent-child relations reveals that contemporary youth and parents influence each other either negatively or positively. However, youth ministry have the opportunity to reach out to the whole family to fulfil God's promise to bless all the families of the earth through believers which include young believers who are partners in youth ministry.

In this chapter, the three aims of youth ministry as well as four theological rocks (Grace, repentance, Holy Spirit and hope) have been used as a guide to help us in determining what ought to be happening in youth ministry to combat the effects of disintegrating family life on youth ministry. These are evangelism (preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ), education (teaching of the Word) and pastoral care. Salvation of men in the church and at home is not to be taken for granted or assumed. Youth ministers should make prayer, preaching, teaching of God's salvation message top priority because it is the foundation on which other teachings can be solidly built. Pastoral care is another indispensable aim of youth ministry that is needed to comfort and give hope to contemporary youth who are under stress and pressure from the press, their parents, the public and their peers. The ethical principle of Christian love in an ethic of equal regard is expounded together with Nel's 'equi-human approach' under the 'adult youth leader'. Though there are challenges posed by disintegrating family life to youth ministry such as lack of reinforcement at home, the opportunities it presents is great. The will of God is that all, including every member of each family, be saved from sin. Youth ministry must include the whole family of youth in their performance of their task of evangelism, teaching and pastoral care. The church should rise up to the tasks.

In conclusion, the three normative tasks have revealed the importance of evangelism, education and pastoral care. These should be included and be topmost in youth ministry plans while the four theological rocks of grace, repentance, Holy Spirit and hope adequately interpreted and emphasized. Ethics of equal regard which promote recognition and respect for human dignity with unconditional love is emphasized alongside equi-human approach and should characterize relationship in youth ministry so that youth can take it home and pass it on to their own family in the future. Paul's dealing with Timothy serves as a good practice for youth minister meeting the third aim of normative task. If youth ministry fail to perform the normative tasks, youth passing through this ministry will not be able to serve as missionaries to their immediate family, help their future family and the society with future challenges. The next chapter will therefore discuss the role of youth ministry with regards to the challenges posed by disintegrating families.

CHAPTER 5

Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a succinct summary of the previous chapters will be made by restating the aims of the study followed by the roles of youth ministry with regard to the challenges of disintegrating family life. The roles of youth ministry serves as a response to the last question on how youth ministry might respond to the challenges of disintegrated family life (the pragmatic task).

Osmer (2003: 176-178) claims that the pragmatic task presents us with three forms of leadership. These are: 1) task competence, that is, performing well the leadership tasks of a role in an organization, 2) transactional leadership which influences others through a process of trade-offs, and 3) transforming leadership which means leading an organization through a process of 'deep change' in its identity, mission, culture, and operating procedures.

Although Osmer (2003: 178) agrees that all three forms of leadership are needed in congregations he argues that it is transforming leadership that is most needed, especially in mainline congregations, that is, a leadership that can guide a congregation through a process of deep change. Contemporary youth leaders should aim to cultivate the 'transforming leadership' ethos in order to make impact in contemporary youth ministry and families. In line with this study, recommendations for enacting change in youth ministry, young people's family, and the society at large is highlighted further in this chapter.

5.2 Aims of the study

This study was motivated by a concern for the disintegrating families of the world as well as the challenges it poses for youth ministry. It aimed to answer the following questions: How is the family disintegrating? Does the disintegration of family life pose any challenges to youth ministry? If so, what are these challenges? Can youth ministry serve as a possible medium for restoring disintegrating family life? And,

what are the roles of youth ministry in meeting these challenges? However, in an attempt to answer these questions, some key terms and theories were defined and the four core tasks of practical theology were used to help achieve the aims of the study.

The second chapter fulfilled the first aim which was to get an understanding of the family from both a sociological and theological perspective. The first complexity was identified with the different definitions and diverse views on families by sociologists and theologians. The most prominent of the arguments is that of the pessimists and optimists. While the optimists believe that the arrival, addition and increase in the numbers of families like same-sex families, blended families cohabiting couples as well as high divorce rates are not signs of family disintegration, the pessimists are making a clarion call to the church, state and academics to attend to the disintegrating families and promote the increase in the numbers of two-parent families. Though I acknowledge the advent of other trends like same-sex families, cohabitation and blended families, I stand by the scriptural order of a man leaving his father and his mother to join his wife to become one permanent flesh raising godly children. It is my belief that the nuclear family (not the isolated nuclear family propagated or presented by the western world) is the family saddled with the responsibility of nurturing and rearing children. However, the extended church family is not to be denied her divine role of joint nurturing.

The third chapter focused on the concept of disintegrating family life which Mowrer claims to represent a climax of conflict between husbands and wives or parents and children. Divorce, marital conflict, and cohabitation seems to be the most visible evidence of disintegrating family life for sociologists. However, Theologians (see Van der Walt, De Graff and Schrotenboer) claim that neglect and open rejection of God's order is the cause of disintegration of families. The two components of the family can be responsible for family disintegration: parents' utter neglect of obeying God's commandment to nurture, rear and train their children in the way of the Lord, as contained in Shema (Deut 6:4-9; Eph 6:1-3) or children can also become rebellious if exacerbated by their parents. Also, the neglect of order of marriage between a man and a woman was identified as a cause of family disintegration. This is mostly manifested in situations where heterosexual parents' divorce to form either a gay or

lesbian families. The causes of disintegrating family life were identified to satisfy the interpretive task.

The fourth chapter presents the definitions of youth, youth ministry and identifies challenges of disintegrating family life on youth ministry. Youth ministry is defined as God's ministry to youth, their families and society at large. As Dean and Root advocate, youth ministers are to regard themselves as missionaries and theologians reflecting on the ministries to enable them do theology. Though the challenges seem enormous, the opportunities presented to youth ministry are highlighted. The opportunity includes taking the whole gospel to the whole family in order to fulfil God's promise to Abraham that all the families of the earth will be blessed through believers.

This study has thus confirmed that families are disintegrating with serious consequences for families (especially women and children) and society. It has also proven that the disintegration of family life poses challenges to youth ministry. Some of the challenges include winning back exacerbated youth to the Lord and reconciling them to their family, bringing healing and, and getting more youth workers to meet the unequal distribution of youth workers in the world. However, the roles of youth ministry in meeting these challenges to youth ministry are now discussed below. With the challenges highlighted above, I hereby recommend the following as possible means of restoring dignity to disintegrating family phenomenon. Three youth ministry approaches are deemed necessary to help youth ministry respond effectively to the challenges posed by disintegrating family life. The three approaches are the Godbearing approach, relational approach and the family-based-youth-ministry approach. These will be followed up by the other recommendations.

5.3 Youth ministry approaches

Theologians such as Weber, Singleton, Joyce and Dorissa, (2010: 204) claim that Christian-based youth ministry in many Western countries is being conducted in difficult circumstances. However, this can be said to be the same for youth ministry all over the world, based on previous discussions in this study on the challenges of disintegrating family life for youth ministry. Weber et al. (2010: 205) list some well-known recent examples of theological reflection on how to minister effectively to the

youth. These include the work of Dean and Foster (1998); Ward (1999); Dean, Clark, and Rahn (2001); and Root (2007). For the purpose of this study, three approaches to youth ministry are considered. These are the God-bearing ministry, relational ministry and the family-based-youth-ministry approach. This is because the three approaches are considered to support the aims of youth ministry which are evangelism, education and pastoral care.

Practical theology involves taking actions that will alleviate a particular problem, improve or add value to a system, society or people. This study, from a practical theological perspective, seeks for constructive ways to salvage contemporary families from forces contending with its stability, security and sanctity. The following approaches are deemed to be relevant to address the issue of disintegrating family life.

5.3.1 God-bearing ministry

The God-bearing approach to youth ministry is the work of Dean and Foster (1998), which was published in their book titled, “The God-bearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry.” This approach is relevant to this study because it is an approach that, according to Dean and Foster (1998: 78), “focuses on the holy ground of family as a context in which faith catches fire. This focus includes both the families of youth and families of the people who pastor them”. This youth ministry approach also aids the achievement of the aims of youth ministry with regard to the disintegrating family life. Youth ministers must be God-bearers before they can be used of God to address the issue of disintegrating family.

Using God’s affirmation and invitation to Mary to be the channel through which Jesus was brought into the world and Mary’s positive response (Luke 1:26-38), Dean and Foster (1998:48) claim that Mary became “God-bearer,” or *Theotokos*, as the Eastern Orthodox call her. By extension, God wants youth ministers to be God-bearers through whom other people will come to see and know God. However, as in the case of Mary, God does not force His way onto anyone. As Mary surrendered to God’s plan to use her as the channel to bring His only begotten Son to the world, so God is looking for willing, available and submissive believer to make God-bearer.

To become a God-bearer, a youth minister must of necessity come in touch with another God-bearer to begin with. The God-bearer can be an angel of God, a godly pastor, an evangelist, prophet or an apostle. After the God-bearer had encountered the divine target, the God-bearer then conveys God's affirmation which is always at work in us, "bringing us to repentance and holiness". In order to move to the third stage, the receiver of the message must understand God's affirmation because, according to Dean and Foster (1998:49), "our true identity lies in the person God created each of us to be: favoured, beloved, blessed, unbroken, and uncompromised by the world - virgins". This statement is very important because contemporary youth are ignorant of the fact that we are all made in the image and likeness of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26, 27) which made us all special and worthy of salvation in the sight of our creator. Following the affirmation, comes the divine invitation which often leads to a period of struggle. Once we open up ourselves to God, like Mary, and say, *Yes Lord, behold the handmaid or servant of the Lord: be unto me according to your word* (Luke 1:38), the submissive servant will be filled with the Holy Spirit who will transform him and by extension the world around him/her. Youth ministry is redefined as a holy pursuit and not a service profession when we imagine ourselves as God-bearers with youth.

Theologically, sanctifying grace, which Dean and Foster (1998:50) define as the gift of the Holy Spirit, is the one who enters us, dwells among us and makes it possible for Christ to enter the world through us. It allows us to burn without being consumed by ministry to young people and enables us to avoid sin and to do good. The implication for youth ministry is that youth ministers who have been called by God should accept God's invitation without fear and trust God's sanctifying grace to help them become a channel of blessing through which people will be blessed. Though the concept of sanctifying grace is lost among modern day believers, it is nevertheless appropriate, appealing and appreciated by heaven bound believers. God-bearing youth ministry stops nothing short of holiness-without no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 4:12), perfect love, robust and unapologetic Christian maturity, the setting apart of person in community for transparent witness to Jesus Christ. As we say yes to God, we find ourselves in God's plan of salvation, participants in God's restoration of the *imago dei* in every human being.

Youth need God-bearing adults who will convey God's affirmation and invitation to them so that they can become God-bearers, carrying Christ into the culture that adolescents interact with on daily basis. These include their family, society, and church where youth are also found. Dean and Foster (1998:26) state the necessity for building relationships with youth by using the Paul and Timothy analogy (Acts 16:1-3) and states that we impart the gospel in a way that prepares them (youth) for mission when we tend to our relationships with them. Apostle Paul's dealing with Timothy is a good example that can serve as good practical theological practice that youth minister's can follow in youth ministry. Just as Apostle Paul found young Timothy and empowered him to overcome intimidation from elderly people who wanted to despise his youthful age, knowledge, gifts, so youth ministers are to find young people and fan their God-given gifts for the profit of God's kingdom on earth. From the past, Apostle Paul serves as a good example to emulate in the way he related with Timothy (a youth), empowered him and commissioned him to minister to families and the church.

5.3.2 Relational ministry

This approach realizes the importance of tending relationships between youth ministers and young people but Dean and Foster (1998: 27) frown at "using relationships for the sake of meeting developmental needs which represents a misguided concept of church". Though youth ministry focuses on relationships, Dean and Foster (1998: 27) argue that the focus on relationships is not because of whom teenagers are but who God is - a relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is love who has commended His love toward us (Romans 5: 8), who is still demonstrating His love through His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 2: 14), and will continue to demonstrate His love (John 3: 16, 17). Because anybody can have a relationship and choose who he or she wants, Dean and Foster prefer the term 'incarnational' to 'relational' for use in youth ministry. They believe that only God takes on [sinful] flesh in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God incarnated - being the Christ, Son of the living God (John 1:14; Matthew 16: 15). This is what makes it possible for Jesus Christ to enter into relationships with all men as sinful and dirty as we are and also finish God's mission during His earthly ministry. In order for youth ministers to accomplish their aims of evangelism, teaching and pastoral

care, they need to become God incarnated like Jesus Christ. According to Dean and Foster (1998:28,29), “Only the power of the Holy Spirit makes ministry possible at all, and the presence of the Spirit transforms us into an “incarnation” of another sort: the “flesh and bones” of the church, the body of Christ”. Other authors who have written on relational ministry are Root (2007) and Ward (2001).

Ward (2001: 52) declares that, “relationships are the fuel on which youth work travels”. Without building relationships which involve crossing our boundaries or leaving our comfort zones to meet with young people, we cannot achieve the aims of youth ministry. According to Ward, “our presence among a group of young people is an ‘intervention’ in that we have crossed a natural social boundary in order that we might bring about change in the lives of young people”. The purpose of building relationships with young people is to allow them to see, hear and have a feel of God as we stand, sit, walk and work with them. Ward’s (2001: 55-76) five stages of the relational model are contacts, extended contacts, proclamation, nurture, and the church.

Contact is the first stage in what Ward called “a complicated process of relationship-based youth work (2001: 57)”. This involves going to places where young people gather together with the aim of building long-term relationships with them and not to become one of them or impose our values on them. Some of the places to find youth are sports Centres, street corners, schools and coffee shops. Extended contact is a stage where the initial contact is deepened and intimacy begins. It is a time when most youth express their fears, hopes, problems and hurts as well as a time when youth workers can begin to talk about Jesus to young people.

Proclamation is the third stage which brings along with it what Ward (2001: 67) calls “the challenge of finding an appropriate way to share the gospel story with young people”. Youth workers need to decide the appropriate way and place to share the gospel that will enable youth make decision without duress. Evangelisation of youth is one of the main aims of youth work and cannot be compromised. Extended relationships without the aim of calling youth to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ, is not to be encouraged or emulated.

The fourth stage is the stage of nurturing the converted youth, which Ward (2001: 71) asserts should have the aim of helping the converted to start to explore the Christian faith themselves and having as end result true Christians who remain in contact with their neighbourhood and their existing friendship group. On the aspect of nurturing, Ward (2001: 73) concludes that youth workers need to be theologically informed and spiritually sensitive to guide against the error of adding to or subtracting from the Word of God.

The last stage is the incorporation of young converts into the church community. According to Moon (in Ward, 2001:73), the church is not an option for young Christians but part of the basic package. Youth ministers' duty will be to help in the smooth transition and settling down in a Bible-believing and God-honouring church where the person and work of Jesus Christ, holiness and holy living is emphasized.

On the theology of relationships, Root (2007: 79) writes that relational ministry is not about a strategy of influence but about persons being conformed to the person of Jesus as incarnate, crucified and resurrected, and going into the world to join the who of Christ as incarnate, crucified and resurrected. This means that conformity to the person of Christ Jesus should come first before one can faithfully representing him to others in any relationship. This is because we can only do all things (including transformative relationships) through Christ who strengthens those who believe and have received him (Philippians 4: 13).

Using Boehoeffer's writing on the concept of relationship which is the essential component of his theology, Root (2007: 126) writes that we have to acknowledge the present humanity of others and enter into a relationship where we share the place of the other if we are to be a real disciple of Jesus Christ - the incarnate, crucified and resurrected. Doing what Ward highlighted above, is place-sharing which is only possible for God-bearers in the will of God. Place-sharing places youth ministry firmly in practical theology as youth ministers prayerfully and practically seek to build relationships with vulnerable youth and families to help them conform to Christ and fulfil God's purpose for their lives in their family and society.

In the words of some Saints of old, Dean and Foster (1998: 28) buttressed their points by referring to Martin Luther's language that youth ministers are "to become

'Christ's' for our neighbour, incarnating Christ's love transparently so that youth will follow him". Apostle Paul, in Galatians 2 verse 20, poignantly states that, "it is no longer I that lives, but Christ who lives in me", to show that we cannot point to Christ or bear Christ on our own except by the help of God. Lastly, they argued that John Wesley points to the fact that "as children of God", we unashamedly bear the "marks" of a Christian, those family resemblances that makes Christ known through us. Youth ministers, I believe, can only enter into this kind of meaningful and transforming relationship with fellow human beings when they allow God to enter the world through them to fulfil His mission of making disciples of all nations.

5.3.3 Family-based-youth-ministry

The family-based-youth-ministry approach is chosen because it is an approach that seeks to connect young people with their family for mutual benefits, as opposed to the conventional youth ministry approach that was practiced without taking cognisance of the family in which young people are raised. The family-based-youth-ministry approach is also chosen because it supports family life education. The National Council on Family Relations⁶⁹ 2011 fact sheet defines family life education (FLE) as any organized effort to provide people with information, skills, experiences or resources intended to strengthen, improve, or enrich their family experience. The objective of FLE, according to their fact sheet, is to enrich and improve the quality of individual and family life.

Family-based-youth-ministry is a recent phenomenon in youth ministry. As divorce rates continue to increase at a rocket speed in almost all societies of the world, with increase in homes without fathers and single mothers, youth ministers realized what they have missed out: the family of young people. Nel (2000: 108-114) included the parents of young people among the three people involved in youth ministry.

According to Devries (2001: 151), family-based-youth-ministry comprises of family model which focuses on supporting parents and families with classes, counselling and support, as well as a youth ministry model which is based on building an intergenerational faith nurturing community for the teenagers. This definition supports the education of families to help families perform their roles as delineated in

⁶⁹www.ncfr.org National Council on Family Relations NCFR Fact Sheet (Accessed July 16, 2012).

Chapter 2. Joiner (2009: 82) corroborates DeVries' assertion by saying that no one has more potential to influence a child's relationship with God than a parent and that the parents' potential to influence a child dramatically increases when parents partner with the church. According to Joiner (2009:83), family ministry is an effort to synchronize church leaders and parents around a master plan to build faith and character in their sons and daughters. Bunge (2008:350) alludes to the fact that faith formation should be seen as a cooperative effort between home and congregation. She affirms the importance of supporting parents because the family has the most potential of any institution for providing for children's basic needs and for shaping their spiritual and moral lives.

Learning from past mistakes of seeking to impact youth's life without taking the family into cognizance, youth ministry now tends toward working together with parents.

Nel (2000: 20,21) and May (2005: 151) affirm that the family is acclaimed as the best hermeneutic sphere, that is, the first and the best training school for children and youth just as their parents have been commanded in Deuteronomy 6. Though not all youth enjoy the privilege of being raised and trained by both parents under the same roof and in accordance with the divine injunction, DeVries (1994: 67) claims that family-based youth ministry has particular benefits for those whose parents are outside the church. To sum this point up, Lawrence (2006: 151) concludes that parents' spiritual maturity is vitally important when it comes to impacting youth group members for Christ, so it should be every youth pastor's concern, not just the senior pastor's concern, if youth pastors are aiming toward permanent impact.

While the family-based-youth ministry approach is chosen in this study, it is important to note that some youth ministers are not in favour of this ministry. For example, Yaconelli (2001: 23) ⁷⁰explains that he is reluctant to adopt the family-based approach because there aren't enough parents available who place their faith as a top priority for their children. They are in favour of Christianity, he says, as long as they think it is going to make their child into a nice person. But as soon as it becomes genuine Christian faith, they start to worry. This generation of parents are

⁷⁰ Mike Yaconelli was quoted by Pamela Smith McCall in her article titled, "Don't isolate youth in 'youth programs:' All in the family. Christian Century April 18 – 25, 2001 page 23

ambitious for its children, and can't let anything get in the way of their future success. Though there may not be enough parents who place their faith high as a top priority for their children, youth ministry should make it a top priority to help these parents if we actually desire to be God's channel of blessing to them and to their children. We should also expose young people to healthy families to trust in God also for a healthy future family. The recent Barna research report (May 3, 2012)⁷¹ shows that not many youth workers are keen on reaching out to the family of the youth under their tutelage. From the research report carried out in the United States of America, 42% youth pastors believed that exposing their students to healthy families is important, but not part of their strategy, 24% believe that exposing students to healthy families is a minor part of their strategy, while 22% believe that exposing students to healthy families is a major part of their strategy. This attitude should be reversed by making youth workers know the inseparable link between young people and their parents and the great influence exposure to healthy families will have on their students.

5.4 Case for Africa

Linhart and Livermore (2011: 33) writes that, "Historically, the people of Africa have had to endure strong influences from Easternization (Islamic Arabic), Westernization (Christianity, literacy), and globalization (external, technological, economic). These are some of the forces working for and against Africa. As mentioned earlier, there are many disintegrating families in Africa due to all causes mentioned earlier in this study and this calls for a God-bearing youth minister who is able, by God's grace, to bear their burdens with them and meet youth and their families where they are without experiencing burnout. This is the reason why I am emphasising the empowerment of young people to firstly influence their immediate family (reactive) and secondly, to help young people lay a good foundation for their future families (proactive). While the number of youth are increasing in Africa (which is my context), the population of two-parent families are dwindling due to divorce, incessant wars, the HIV/Aids scourge, maternal death, birth outside marriage, single parents and a host of incidences that developed countries are managing. For example, the 2011⁷² world population data sheet records ten African countries as countries with the

⁷¹<http://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/565-research-examines-the-role-of-healthy-families-in-youth-ministry?q=youth+ministry> Accessed July 5, 2012.

⁷²http://www.prb.org/pdf11/2011population-data-sheet_eng.pdf

youngest population in the world. These countries are Niger, Uganda, Mali, Angola, Zambia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Chad and Burkina Faso. Africa is presently labelled as the most 'youth-full' continent in the world because 65% of the total population of Africa are below the age of 35 years and over 35% are between the ages of 15 and 35. It is also projected that 3 out of 4 people will be on average 20 years old by the year 2020⁷³. With 12 million HIV/Aids orphans in Africa, leading to the creation of hundreds of thousands of children and youth-headed households, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2010)⁷⁴ reports:

Too often, the formative years of African youth are characterized by exposure to deep-seated poverty, deficiencies in basic services, limited access to education, health care, opportunities for decent employment, poor governance and on-going conflict and war. Compared to other world regions, literacy and secondary school enrolment rates are still very low (e.g. the literacy rate in sub-Saharan Africa where only 72.1% of the youth population are literate, whereas in Asia it is 86.5% and in Latin America 96%), while access to post-primary education remains limited in many contexts. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 3 in 10 youth living on less than US \$1 per day. Youth make up 37% of the working-age population, but 60% of the total unemployed, while access to ICT and to IT skills training remains limited. Among the 10 million youth currently living with HIV/Aids worldwide, more than 60% (6.2 million) are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Does Africa have the resources to handle the short and long term deleterious effects of disintegrating families? Wallerstein (1989)⁷⁵ states that, "children of divorce make up an estimated 60 percent of child patients in clinical treatment centres and sometimes between 80 and 100 percent of adolescents in in-patient mental hospital settings. This is the case in North America where there is enough medical staff, facilities and support staff. With the present state, economy and types of government in African countries, can Africa survive massive full blown cases of disintegrating family life? Will it not be better for African people and leaders to give proper and urgent attention to the restoration of family life in order to save young people,

⁷³ <http://africa-youth.org/index.html>

⁷⁴ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001875/187571e.pdf>.

⁷⁵ "CHILDREN AFTER DIVORCE. (Magazine Desk)." *The New York Times Magazine* 22 Jan. 1989.

families and societies instead of building graveyard, prisons and psychiatric hospitals to incarcerate young people who could have become people of high calibre, pastors and prophets to the nations, academic professors, notable presidents, prime ministers and politicians, philanthropists, private tycoons and public administrators? Is it not time for African people, especially the church, to unite together and pray for, preach about, and publicize the need for a heaven-sent, Holy Spirit revival that will lead to salvation of souls and revival of the two-heterosexual-parent healthy families, strong communal life and respect of human dignity of every human being? Is the overcrowded prisons, human trafficking of African youth, high number of African refugees within and outside Africa, child-headed households, child-soldiers, orphans, HIV/Aids infected youth, and biblical illiterates youth giving us a warning about how the future might be if the millions of youth under stress due to neglect of family and society's role to restore dignity to family are neglected?

With these facts, youth ministers in Africa must be God-bearers, filled with the Holy Spirit in order to handle the vast problems besetting African youth. However, a God-bearer can work anywhere God leads him or her. There is need to empower contemporary youth spiritually, economically, and socially in the area of marriage and family life which most of contemporary youth are missing. This will help to break the vicious cycle of raising immature, powerless and helpless parents in the future.

With the two models in mind, youth ministry will be able to absorb the challenges of disintegrating family life and seize the opportunity that abound to reach out to youth from disintegrating families and society at large. The youth minister as God-bearer, used by God to bring about other God-bearers, will have an impact on youth ministry and the contemporary family. As Dean and Foster conclude (1998:52), youth ministry is a womb, an incubation ward for potential God-bearers.

5.5 The roles of youth ministry with regards to the challenges

The roles of youth ministry with the regards to the challenges of disintegrating family life are tied to the aims of youth ministry. These are evangelism, which is preaching to sinners to repent and believe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, teaching and offering pastoral care to converted youth. The roles of youth ministry with regards to the challenges discussed in Chapter 4 are as follows:

5.5.1 Publicity and awareness campaigns

Since it has been shown that disintegrating family life have a deleterious effect on youth and society, youth ministry have the responsibility of making people aware of the causes, costs and consequences of neglecting parents' task of socializing and nurturing their children to become spiritually, physically and emotionally matured adults in the Church and society. Youth ministers cannot afford to keep quiet when we know the facts on paper and by our experience with youth, the damage disintegrating family is causing family members and society. To reduce the increase and influx of youth from disintegrating families in society, youth ministers as practical theologians incarnating Christ should spearhead or liaise with other organisations and governments (if possible) to make more people aware about the earthly and eternal consequences of family's neglect of God's commands because of the value God place on children's welfare and His plans for their lives. Youth ministry has been silence for some time now, but must not be intimidated or threatened by the proliferation of family types or the 'optimists'. Now is the time for youth ministry to make their contribution to the Church and society.

Some of the things that can be included in the campaign are the urgency of intervention in disintegrating families that hinders child socialization and nurturing, the present and future cost as well as the consequences of negligence to each family and society and, lastly, the positive effects of proper socialization and nurturing of youth. This is to aim at stopping the vicious cycle of raising insecure, self-centred, and uncommitted children as well as helpless, powerless and immature parents in the future.

5.5.2 Restoration of youth back into the circle of blessing

It is the youth minister's duty to help converted youth return to the 'circle of blessing' under their parents, as posited by Tripp (see discussion in Chapter 3). However, the youth minister faces a challenge where the parents of a converted youth refuse to accept him/her or the house is found not conducive for their spiritual growth. This may occur when young people are converted to Christianity from religions like Islam or religions where ancestors are worshipped. It is therefore the role of the youth minister to find an extended church family where the converted youth can be

nurtured to become an adult mature Christian, while a relationship is built with the parents who reject their child where possible. Where the converted youth is accepted back into the family, the youth minister still needs to monitor and follow up on the youth.

5.5.3 Ministerial skills

Due to the impact of globalization, modernization, pluralism and post-modernity on the family, youth ministers need to perform more specific tasks other than preaching and teaching in order to be effective. The effects of disintegrating family life on contemporary youth are enormous and now require the acquisition of more relevant skills from contemporary youth ministers.

With the effects of disintegrating family life on youth in mind, youth ministers who desire to be effective in their ministry to contemporary youth, need to acquire ministerial skills. Black (2001:46) states that, “Youth ministry calls for a multitude of ministry skills – worship leadership, pastoral ministry, counselling, family ministry, leader development, and teaching.” Youth ministers must be apt to teach (1 Timothy 3: 2; II Timothy 2: 24). Contemporary youth are in dire need of both preachers and teachers of the Word of God. However, other training in other related fields is expedient for contemporary youth ministers. Some of these are highlighted below.

5.5.3.1 Counselling

Counselling is defined by Switzer (1989:13) as “acceptance of and love for another”. It is the facilitation of communication-not just the use of words, even intellectually precise ones-but the art of understanding and being understood. This includes emotional meanings as well as intellectual ones. Counselling is essential for the purpose of helping youth and parents before, during and after any crisis, while job seekers, career finders, and new converts from other religions can also benefit from counselling ministry. With the increase in the number of domestic violence, suicide among youth and depression, counselling skills will help youth ministers in their quest to be effective in restoring young people’s hope. According to Kiriswa (2002: 18), “Pastoral counselling is a life-giving ministry that restores life and liberates God’s people from personal and social ills. It brings about healing of human brokenness that enables people to experience the fullness of life and the presence of

the Kingdom of God as revealed in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.” This is a full explanation of pastoral counselling from an African theologian.

5.5.3.2 Knowledge of HIV/Aids

Knowledge of HIV/Aids and how to educate youth on this subject to get to a no-new-HIV age is also essential, as the epidemic is rampant among youth (especially in Africa). It has taken the church a long time to respond to the issue of HIV/Aids and it will be of importance for youth ministers to be equipped with knowledge of this epidemic so that they can save some youth and even families from contracting this virus as well as help the infected in the management of Aids.

Okaalet (2006: 667), an African theologian, writes that, “The church in Africa, and globally, has failed to provide the resources in terms of personnel, leadership and materials required to deal with this pandemic. It is now time for the church to break its silence in the face of this pandemic.....we need to have people and pastors committed to dealing with Aids.”

5.5.3.3 First-aid Knowledge

First aid is defined, in wiki-book⁷⁶, as the provision of immediate care to a victim with an injury or illness, usually affected by a lay person and performed within a limited skill range. First-aid training is needed for youth ministers to enable them to give a first-aid attention to endangered youth as a result of unexpected physical assault or self-inflicted injury by distressed, depressed and despondent youth. In the parable of “Good Samaritan”, Jesus told his listeners how a Good Samaritan provided first-aid treatment for the injured man before taking him to the Inn-keeper for further treatment (Luke 10: 25 – 47). When the Good Samaritan saw the wounded man, he was moved with compassion, came near him and bound up his wounds by pouring oil and wine on it. The injured man was then taken to the Inn (or a clinic in modern colloquialism). Contemporary youth ministers should have first-aid knowledge.

⁷⁶http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/First_Aid/What_Is_First_Aid%3F

5.5.3.4 Marriage and family life course

There is need for youth ministers to be trained as marriage and family life educators. This is an important area to be given priority with regards to this study. If youth are exposed to marriage and family life education, it will empower them to rescue some situation that might lead their parent's to divorce and resolve family conflicts before it degenerates into domestic violence. It will also prepare and prevent youth from experiencing disintegration in their future family. Marriage and family life course or education is essential as one of the channels by which the disintegrating family life syndrome can be combated and it is highly recommended. This type of course is previously given to intending couples or married couples without any thought of youth. Youth in high schools also need the marriage and family life course. According to Karraker and Grochowski (2006: 227), "Today many high schools offer and some require courses in family life education". However, with the bilateral model of parent-child relations theory, youth ministers should introduce the marriage and family life course to young people with the aim of empowering youth to speak out when they sense or see that something is going wrong between family members. The bilateral model of parent-child relations theory warns us never to underestimate the power of influence youth can also have on their parents. What I hear from youth in high schools and tertiary institutions is that their church leaders are not teaching them anything about marriage and family life. Some have signified their willingness to attend such classes because they are scarred of marriage and family life. This is due to their personal experiences in their own families that is disintegrating or has disintegrated.

Though Sell (1981) suggests the following order for a marriage and family life course, his suggestion is augmented to meet the current context and culture. Karraker and Growchoski (2006: 225) lament that clergy and others involved in preparing couples for marriage often bemoan the fact that wedding planning takes far greater precedence over marriage preparation. However, it is to be noted that intending couples, in most cases, shun marriage preparation classes organized by the Church for various reasons as Marcia Zikhli (2009: 56, 57) discovered in her empirical research. This is the more reason why marriage and family life course is essential at the High Schools.

a. Premarital counselling

Peterson (in Sell, 1981: 172) links three major causes of marriage failure to the lack of premarital counselling which are improper choices in marriage partners, unrealistic expectations on the part of potential partners when they enter marriage and inadequate preparation before marriage. Premarital counselling is a form of counselling that centres around the interpersonal relationships of a man and woman considering marriage, helping them evaluate their relationships and thoughts in view of their approaching marriage. Premarital counselling is necessary and the immense benefits of premarital counselling cannot be overestimated within and outside the church. Marcia Zikhli (2009:10) states that the purpose of premarital counselling is to work out any problems in the relationship prior to the marriage as well as to prepare the couple for what is expected in a marital relationship. Additionally, it equips the couple with effective communication skills to enable them to solve problems as and when they arise.

Effective premarital-counselling sessions should involve discussion, content filled with communication, solving of problems and conflict resolution and lastly the evaluation feature. Sell (1981:181) states that, "premarital education makes sense in our complex society where broken homes and inadequate parent models often leave individuals without any guidelines or skills for making right decision concerning marriage or for adjusting after marriage". Though premarital-counselling is made available by the Church for contemporary couples who are engaged, Marcia Zikhli (2009: 56, 57) in her empirical research, identified the following as reasons for couples absenting themselves from opportunity in Limpopo Province of South Africa. These include:

- Lack of knowledge about what premarital-counselling entails.
- Viewing Counsellor as an intruder who wants to interfere with the relationship.
- Lack of knowledge about premarital-counselling and previous bad experience with counselling.
- Belief that premarital-counselling is only necessary when the couple is experiencing problems with the relationship.

- Fear that premarital-counselling will shed light on issues that are rather left unattended.
- Feeling that Premarital-Counselling is not needed.

Youth minister should be aware of the above reasons and address it in youth ministry.

b. Marriage enrichment

Marriage enrichment is an educational venture which Sell (1981:141) believes should and will become a regular part of the evangelical curriculum of family-life education. According to Sell, the goals of marriage-enrichment are biblical and the use of affective education as a technique is commendable. Affective education demands changes in couples attitudes, values, emotions, and spiritual perspective. Marital enrichment is designed to help couples emerge out of their traditional, contract-like entrapments into timely, warm, personal relationships. This programme takes place solely between husband and wife and are sponsored by a variety of religious and secular groups to help couples become fulfilled and satisfied in their marriages.

Marriage enrichment in the International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family (2003:1098), begun in an organized way by David and Vera Mace in the mid-twentieth century and is described/defined as a form of primary prevention in the area of human relationships. Marriage enrichment programs teach spouses interpersonal skills in communication and conflict resolution. The objectives of marriage enrichment are:

- To promote a mutual commitment to growth in the marital relationship;
- To develop and agree on a communication style of talking and listening that works for enhancement of the marital relationship
- To learn how to use conflict in creative ways that helps, not hinders, the marital relationship, including the sharing of feelings
- To develop and maintain a desire for and the presence of intimacy in the marital relationship, utilizing a variety of positive interaction skills.

c. Parent training: A model

A parent training model is indispensable because it will benefit children, future generations and enrich present-day parental life. This training is also essential because, according to DeVries (1994: 86), parents will either empower our ministries or sabotage them by the way they raise their children. In Sell's (1981: 156, 157) model, parent training should be biblical, comprehensive and include actual training. All these features of parent training are fleshed out in the parent training model which begins with identifying the three biblical goals of child rearing. The first goal is to bring children up in the training and instruction of the Lord as it is written in Ephesians 6:4. The second goal is for parents to produce respect for themselves by guarding against severe punishments that can provoke or make children to be discouraged. The third goal is to develop in children a love for God and their neighbours. The purpose of child rearing is to develop in children a love for God.

This model is constructed around "parent power" which is one of the avenues of influence a parent possess. The power is divided into five basic forms which comprise the sum total of the parent-child relationship and the realm in which the parent operates. The five forms are modelling, control, communication, interaction and creation of child's world of experiences.

- **Modelling**

Berns (2007: 68) defines "modelling as a form of imitative learning that occurs by observing another person (the model) to perform a behaviour and experience its consequence". It is an important method of socializing young people. The models can be parents, other family members, church leaders like youth leaders, relatives, friends, teachers, coaches, or television characters. According to Sell (1981: 157), "parental example is a major force in the child's life" and it is explained in the following ways: Firstly, the best way of modelling is a close, revealing relationship because a child will learn about morality and standards from parents that shares their views of life and themselves. Secondly, Sell states that modelling requires personal development, a real-life demonstration that is often very subtle in its influence. For example, if the unsuspecting parent screams "Don't yell in the house", not thinking about the way he or she is missing the essential ingredient needed to

stop the child's shouting, which is that the parent must stop shouting first of all. In family education, it is important to stress the need for parents to watch and mind their attitudes and behaviours so that their children will not be corrupted by any of their bad behaviours. As Berns (2007: 69) warns, children acquire a wide range of behaviours as they grow through modelling from parents, siblings, teachers, and friends, which become part of their repertoire for future interactions. Lack of good role models is one of the problems of the family, church and society at large.

- **Control and discipline**

This is one of the weak points of contemporary parents which are indispensable during the early years of child development. Sell (1981: 158) writes that parents do have an authority to control bestowed on them, not by their size (physical stature) but by the Scripture and society. However, this should not turn to violence or abuse as is the case in most homes. Berns (2007: 517) explains that control "refers to the setting of certain standards and rules by parents and their insistence on adherence to them when deemed necessary, while discipline involves punishment, correction, and training to develop self-control. This stresses the need for families to have a goal or standards by which actions and behaviours are judged as in family systems theory. Control helps families to address deviations from predetermined standards or goals necessary for their survival. In a Christian family, the Word of God is expected to be the family standard or guide for family operation. The parents are to communicate God's Word to their children, obey it themselves and teach their children to obey. As parents obey and live by the Word of God, so they are expected to instil in their children the importance of obedience and submission to God's rules. Tripp (2005:134) defines obedience as the willing submission of one person to the authority of another. According to Tripp, "it [obedience] means more than a child doing what he is told. It means doing [consistently] what he is told – Without Challenge, Without Excuse and Without Delay". He firmly asserts that children must be made to understand that when their parents speak for the first time, they have spoken for the last time. Sell (1981:158) states that control can be achieved in several ways. These are: control by consistent action, by natural consequences, by verbal reproof, by reinforcement, negative consequences, and physical punishment. To guard against abuse parents want to discipline a child or inflict physical

punishment, clear-cut guidelines for spanking are laid down by Tripp (2005: 146-149).

Firstly, the offending child should be told specifically what warrants the spanking which must take place in a private place. Secondly, the parent should secure acknowledgment from the child of what he/she has done and told the function of the spanking. The parent should remind the child that the function of the spanking is not venting frustration because of anger but to restore the child to the place in which God has promised blessing. Thirdly, the child should be told how many swats to receive and then spanked. Lastly, hug the child and pray with him/her that he will “submit to God’s order for family life and will honour and obey Mom and Dad.

- **Communication**

Communication is essential in family life. Just as husband and wife need to communicate regularly for a healthy relationship, so parents must communicate with children and children with parents. Sell (1981: 162-164) comments that family members should communicate their feelings, communicate their interest by listening and lastly, communicate God’s Word. Ellis Nelson (2006: 13) states that “[T]he Shema is probably the best brief, practical guide parents have for communicating the faith to our children.” God commanded parents to firstly keep His Words in their heart and then recite them, talk about them and teach them to their children at home (Deut. 6:4-9).

- **Interaction**

Home interaction is vital for the life of the family. Sell (1981: 164-167) highlighted some areas of interaction in which parental training can be more specific. According to Sell, family should interact with understanding, interact democratically in decision making, interact in solving problems and interact through recreation. Berns (2007: 53) writes that “the family functions as a system of interaction, and the way it conducts personal relationships has a very powerful effect on the psychosocial development of children”. This means that parent should exhaust every channel of interaction for the family stability.

As I believe, through interaction, evangelised and educated young people can influence their parents for good and bring about a great change to the disintegrating family life. The bilateral model of parent-child relations is essential to present here. According to Zinn and Eitzen (2005: 336, 337), the bilateral model of parent-child relations is where the child, while being shaped by the parents, is also active in shaping them. This constructionist theory state that a child is not assumed to be a passive receptor of parental influence, but rather, influences flow both from parents to the child and from the child to parents. Youth ministry should encourage contemporary parents/guardians to tap from the inherent ideas as well as the experience of contemporary evangelised and educated youth. As we empower them, we can help them to regain lost voice. Borthwick (1995: 75) asserts that, “in many cultures, young people are expected to be seen but not heard out of respect for their elders”. For example, Zinn and Eitzen conclude that, “Older children may pressure their parents to quit smoking, to eat a healthier diet, to use seat belts, and to act more positively toward the environment (2005: 337)”. Not only can youth pressure their parent’s to quit smoking, they can also prayerfully and wisely persuade their parent’s to avoid divorce or stop divorce proceedings, quit immoral acts, treat each member of the family with love. With God, it is possible for young people to spearhead a movement that can lead to decrease in the number of disintegrating family life and number of children and youth involved in disintegrating family life.

- **Creating world experiences**

Parents have the power to control their children’s world of experiences. An example is reading the biographies of missionaries to instil in them values, self-sacrifice, faith in God, love, perseverance and brotherly kindness. Examples of biographies to read may include General William and Catherine Booth, Mary Slessor, Dwight L. Moody, Mother Theresa, Judson Taylor, George Muller, Abraham Lincoln. These biographies can also be watched together as a family on DVD and Computers.

In a society where, according to Thomas Gordon (in Sell, 1981:16), parents are blamed and not trained, Sell (1981: 169) believes that the church is in a strategic place to do something about this dilemma. Where the Church is not spearheading the teaching programme, the youth ministry can prayerfully and wisely steer up the Church leaders to this important task.

- **Family life Conference**

The idea of family conference was proposed by Sell (1981) and such conference is to be arranged with the main focus on family. Organizers of family conferences are expected to give primacy to assessing its potential value and purpose. Family life conferences raise the awareness level of a congregation. According to John Howell (in Sell, 1981), “the purposes of family-life conferences are to provide an opportunity for a systematic presentation of Christian teaching on various aspects of family life, to provide a forum period for discussion of pertinent family problems and to provide an opportunity to guide the thinking of youth toward a Christian understanding of dating, courtship, and marriage”. However, Sell adds that evangelism can also be a major purpose of a conference on family life.

Conference goals can include communication at home, retired adults, adults in their middle years, parents with teenagers, young married adults, and teenagers. Sell highlighted some principles for selecting a purpose and the first is to choose a purpose that is narrow; secondly, to keep all age groups in mind when choosing conference goals, thirdly, to plan the conference with a purpose that arise out of the needs of the congregation, and fourthly to allow the purpose to determine the type and the programme of the conference. Youth ministry can make use of this kind of conference to accomplish most of the previously mentioned suggestions on strengthening and building a solid family life. Skidmore and Schvaneveldt (1973) wrote a report on the outcome of a ten year pattern of reaching out to the community through a family life conference in Northern Utah, United States of America. The conference was sponsored by a cooperative action of youth and adults as well as parents and their children from a Northern Utah community from 1963 to 1972. Skidmore and Schvaneveldt (1973: 470) conclude that, “family life conferences have a higher probability of influence for change when families participate together because more about marriage and family life is taught by participants (especially youth) than taught at family life conferences”. However the family life conference should be a form of support to the socialization for marriage and parenthood, which Hill and Aldous (in Skidmore and Schvaneveldt, 1973:470) affirm, “begins in the context of the family of orientation”. Though Karraker and Grochowski (2007: 406, 407) writes that education for marriage and parenting can make a difference in the

quality of family life, they lament that family life education is not effectively or universally available to all individuals and families who might benefit. That is why I deemed it suitable to be included in the educational aspect of contemporary youth ministry and promoted, especially in Africa.

In countries where marriage and family life education and courses are offered, like the United States of America, it is often preceded by an empirical study to determine whether the academic community see any need for this important course. Research carried out in 1942⁷⁷ and 1968⁷⁸ shows clearly that young people desire the marriage and family life education and take the course for various reasons. Out of the total 2 752 suggestions received in 1942 came concerns about pre-marital problems including dating, courtship, and choice of mate; accord in marriage and family relationships; premarital and marital sex adjustment, adjustment between generations; discord; religion in family living and, the most interesting to me, child guidance and the role of the child in the family. This is interesting to me because literature and research are very scarce on the role of the child in the family; an area which need urgent attention.

5.5.4 Prevention of burn-out

Kageler (2008: 86-90) identified three key insights that can prevent burn-out. The first is emotional intelligence, which is knowing who you are (personality type) and being able to see yourself as you interact with others (almost as if from above). The second insight is that youth ministers are to realize the uniqueness of other personality styles which he/she will have to adapt to. This is because youth workers cannot work alone; they need other people with different personalities which God has given to human beings. Networking with God and with others in youth ministry is the third insight. It is also important to be in good standing with their family members and youth families. Lastly, youth ministers must work closely with the Church as a whole to avoid burn-out. Youth workers must network with, and totally depend on God's grace, power and wisdom because He is the one who calls to the youth

⁷⁷ Drummond, Laura W. 1942. *Youth and Instruction in Marriage and Family Living*. New York: Bureau .of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.

⁷⁸ Latts, Sander M. Why Students Take a Marriage and Family Life Course: Implications for the Educator. *The Family Coordinator*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jul., 1968), pp.162-164
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/582256> Accessed 10/04/2012.

ministry. The antidote to burn-out is the understanding of youth ministry as a call rather than a job. Youth ministers' call is a High, Holy and Heavenly calling and it is God who calls who also supply all that is needed to fulfil His call.

As it is written, "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40: 28-31).

I close this section with Dean's (2012: 24) sign-out message to youth workers:

"This is the work that you do: you stop young people from dying. You nourish them with the Bread of Life, sow seeds of hope that take root and create communities where adolescents can thrive as God intends them to."

The question is: can youth ministry in communion with the body of Christ and on a mission with Christ make an impact in the disintegrating family life? The answer is yes, if we make deliberate and concerted efforts to evangelise, educate and pastor both youth and their parents/guardians in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, young people should be targeted first because they have dual influence on their present family and future families. If their present families have disintegrated by divorce or war, training in marriage and family life education will give them hope for their future families.

5.5.5 Connecting with youth outside the church

In the words of Root (2007: 112),

"When an adolescent who is unconnected to the church is cared for by a youth worker as a friend, this is the work of the whole ecclesia, for it is from the community that the minister is sent and to the community that he or she will return. When the minister returns, the adolescent will accompany him or her, and the community will need to make a place for the adolescent. The

adolescent may refuse church participation or even hate it, yet this is irrelevant, for in connecting to us as a friend, the adolescent in the world has been attached to the community. Realizing this theological truth, the community must make a place for the adolescent even if doing so causes the community to suffer (e.g., in rage the adolescent lashes out at it)...Only the community has the ample resources to help adolescents who suffer in severe circumstances. The community's greatest assistance is to provide a new social context that speaks to the adolescent's present social situation, offering words and acts of hope."

In obedience to the great commission (Matthew 28: 18-20), youth workers from the Church need to connect with youth outside the Church because the Church is commanded to go out and it is the will of God that they be saved. Every opportunity should be grasped at winning lost souls outside the Church. Hodgson (2009: 176, 177) writes about the exciting opportunity to develop youth ministry outside the church and into the secular context of Australian schools. According to him, non-religious parents are increasingly seeking a Christian-based education for their children which allow church and para-church representatives to be involved in public schools for what he called "voluntary religious education". He however warns that the school should not be seen as a resource to building a better youth ministry; but rather that youth ministry should be seen as a resource for building a better school community through the transforming presence of Jesus changing lives and values. The continent of Africa has the greatest potential as the statistics from the 2011 world population data sheet⁷⁹ (2011: 2) shows. Ten African countries are classified as the first ten countries with the highest youngest populations in the world (less than 15 years of age). Youth ministers in Africa can capitalise on this opportunity to reach youth who are orphans, displaced from their homes because of wars, famine, and increasing divorce rates in Africa. Youth ministers can go to schools, refugee camps, street corners and sporting centres to meet young people as God-bearers on mission.

The role of a youth worker in a school context can include networking with officers of the school, parents, school societies and offering to train a sport team (if it means

⁷⁹http://www.prb.org/pdf11/2011population-data-sheet_eng.pdf

learning how to coach). By playing with other schools in the community, doors are opened to reach other youth from other schools. Youth workers can also volunteer to offer free counselling services and minister at the school assembly (if it is permitted). Further ministry opportunities are available among refugees, the dispossessed, the illegal immigrant, tutoring students to graduate from high school, and literacy training (Borthwick, 1995: 73).

5.5.6 Adoption of orphans

The church can build orphanage homes, like George Muller⁸⁰ did for thousands of children and youth in Bristol, England, and assign them to an extended family in the church. Commenting on the children accommodated and educated in Bristol, Steer (1975:317), writes that, “in Mueller’s day the need was that of children who had lost their parents often as the result of tuberculosis; today, it is that of children who are the casualties of the disintegration of family life in our society”. The church can also adopt and find an adoptive family for youth in the church after getting the necessary approval from the government (where it is required). By educating young people from disintegrating families through the extended family of the church, they will be able to learn about God and what a family life should be like. This will help break the vicious cycle of disintegrating family life.

5.5.7 Networking with other youth ministries and youth workers

Youth workers can network with other like-minded organisations to publicize the effects of disintegrating family life to individuals, families and society. Youth workers will become more informed and equipped by networking with other youth ministries and youth workers within and outside their locality. Various youth conferences should be attended to meet other youth workers and organisations interested in empowering youth. For example, youth ministry can network with the International Labour Organisation who is working toward empowering youth financially. Also, the United Nation’s goals in the area of health education can be promoted in youth ministry.

⁸⁰ George Muller: Delighted in God by Roger Steer.

5.5.8 Christian education

According to Gorman (2006:641), Christian education means education for Christians, but in reality it is far more than this in scope. It includes a pre-conversion, conversion, and post-conversion learning experiencing. Semenye (2006: 1480), also writing on Christian education in Africa, states that, "Christian education passes the Christian faith from one generation to the next. It helps believers to make their faith their own and to live it out. Aided by the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer, it gives direction for every stage of life." This is the very aim of youth ministry that Devries (1994:26, 27) calls for. For Christian faith to pass from one generation to another, it must be undergirded by a well-tailored Christian education that help young converts to become mature Christians. With Christian education, young people can learn and be transformed by teachings that emphasize their need to bear the fruit of the Spirit as evidence of salvation within the family and outside the family. Fruit of the Spirit is very essential for the smooth running of every Christian family. These are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5: 22, 23). Christian education empowers believers as Christian practices are observed in Christian families to overcome the power of Satan and his host who are roaming about seeking souls and families to destroy (2 Peter 5:8). Some Christian practices necessary to help keep souls on fire for the Lord and unite a family are listed by Dean and Foster (1998:107). These include forgiveness, reconciliation, repentance, self-denial, Christian marriage, searching scripture, fasting, evangelization, catechesis, prayer, praise and thanksgiving, speaking truth in love, intercession, hospitality and care among other practices. By laying emphasis on Christian education for youth at home and the church, youth ministers will be empowering youth spiritually as missionaries to their immediate and future families.

5.5.9 Financial education

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2011)⁸¹ titled "Financial Education for Youth, Asian Decent Work Decade 2006-2015," it states that, "financial education introduces concepts of money and ways to manage it well, promotes wise

⁸¹http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-kathmandu/documents/publication/wcms_153921.pdf Accessed on August 3, 2012

spending, regular savings and ways to make the most of one's resources. These skills serve as a foundation for young people as they are in transition from dependent to independent roles in financial management". This is a type of education where young people are taught about how to make money, invest money and spend money judiciously. Financial education is necessary for youth empowerment since poverty is discovered to be both the cause and effect of disintegrating family life and youth are mostly affected after the death or divorce of their parents. Empowering youth with financial skills will help them to prepare for any eventualities in their teenage life, such as parents' divorce, parent's untimely death, as well as prepare them for their future responsibility as a family man and woman.

In the July 2012 special edition of FinWeek⁸², Buhle Ndwen and Ina Opperman (page 14) claim that many experts believe that financial education should start as soon as children can count, while a recent survey by the financial research group Synovate showed that the majority of South Africans believe a child should start learning about money between the ages of five and 12. According to this special report, the writers lament that a recent global survey by the banking group ING Direct showed one in three parents are more prepared to talk to their kids about drugs, alcohol or sex and dating than they are about money because money management is not freely discussed in many households. Youth ministry should introduce financial education so that youth, especially in Africa and third world countries, can begin to inculcate the habit of learning how to work to raise money, and not always beg for money as well as learn how they can make money work for them. Financial education can help to make young people financially free from poverty and eventually help to reduce prevailing poverty - especially in the third world countries. It is worthy to note that the Bible teaches about financial education and promised blessing to the children of God. However, Apostle Paul writes that it is the love of money that is the root of all evil and not money (I Timothy 6:10). Money is a defence, money answereth all things but we are warned not to trust in riches (Ecclesiastes 7:12; 10:19; Proverbs 11:28; Mark 10:24).

⁸² Kids & Money: How to raise financially savvy children in finweek magazine, 5 July 2012. Page 10-15

5.5.10 Health education

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health education as any combination of learning experiences designed to help individuals and communities improve their health, by increasing their knowledge or influencing their attitudes⁸³. This type of education is essential to enable young people to make wise decisions that will make them avoid 'at risk' behaviour that can lead to school drop-out, paralysis, insanity or untimely death, which is one of the causes of disintegrating family life. As it has been highlighted in Chapter 3 that thousands of children are now orphans in child-headed household due to parents' death caused by the HIV virus, while other children are now languishing in psychiatric hospitals due to their parent's divorce. Health information and statistics can help young people to see and avoid the causes and consequences of disintegrating family life. Contemporary youth ministers will be empowering youth by promoting health education. This can involve inviting health professionals to give young people health-related talks and possibly free check-ups to preserve them and their future families. By increasing the knowledge of youth or influencing their attitudes, their peers and other family members can be influenced to change their attitudes toward some habits like smoking cigarettes, alcohol abuse, hard drugs, and immorality (premarital sex) that can cause their untimely death. On adolescent health, the World Health Organization⁸⁴ confirms that many adolescents who are often thought of as a healthy group do die prematurely due to accidents, suicide, violence, pregnancy-related complications and other illnesses that are either preventable or treatable. To warn young people, World Health Organisation concludes that many serious diseases in adulthood have their roots in adolescence, such as tobacco use, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, poor eating and exercise habits, which can lead to illness or premature death later in life.

Including health education in youth ministry's empowerment programme will be another means of preventing many families from disintegrating in the future due to sudden and untimely death. Health promotion is another means of partnering with the United Nations in its millennial goal designed to help in eradicating some life-threatening diseases like HIV/Aids. We need to tell contemporary youth that "prevention is better than cure". Youth ministry will be partnering with the United

⁸³http://www.who.int/topics/health_education/en/ Accessed August 3, 2012.

⁸⁴http://www.who.int/topics/adolescent_health/en/ Accessed August 3, 2012

Nations in its millennial goal designed to help in eradicating some life-threatening diseases like the HIV/Aids.

Okaalet (2006: 667) concludes his writing on HIV and Aids in the African Bible Commentary by saying that,

In a time of despair, people need to hear that the message of the Bible is about hope, love and the future and to meditate on such passages as Ps 9:18; 30:5; 62:5; 71:5; Prov 23:18; Rom 12:12-13; 2 Cor 1:7; 2 Tim 2:22. The church can then lead by understanding hope, knowing the facts about HIV/Aids; discovering hope in the HIV/Aids epidemic through our biblical foundation; spreading hope by mobilizing the church to perform HIV/Aids ministries; developing hope by changing feelings and attitudes about HIV/Aids; sharing hope through pastoral care to families and communities affected by HIV/Aids; offering hope through HIV/Aids pastoral counselling; giving hope to parents and youth for Aids-free living and ministering hope through home-based care to people with Aids.

For youth ministers to be relevant, they must not only be well-versed in the Bible and the work of saving youth from spiritual death which is ghastly, but be well-informed in a range of issues that will enable youth connect the preaching and teaching of God's Word with the living experience or situation in their lives. All the recommendations in this chapter call for transforming leadership style from a youth leader who can lead a great change as it is gradually manifesting in Africa. From Dean's (2011:13, 14) experience of Sudanese pastors-in-training in Sudan, the inclusion of agriculture and public health together with Hebrew and Greek, according to her, shows that the church is a life-force in Sudan, training pastors how to "stop people from dying."

5.6 Further research

Firstly, I believe an empirical study should be carried out on this topic. Interviews with seasoned youth ministers will give up-to-date information, while youth ministers who do not have the privilege of writing books on youth ministry, can have their experiences documented for global benefit. This type of research will be more real to global youth ministers and help them in their future ministry to disintegrated families. Since Africa is my context, I will like to see this research carried out in Africa.

Secondly, further research should be carried out on the viability of marriage and Family life education in Africa so that it can be introduced as early as possible in High Schools, tertiary institutions, communities and churches. Youth ministers should be proactive in promoting marriage and family life education among contemporary youth. The Department of Practical Theology and Missiology in the Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch, can also score the first in starting a marriage and family life course to supply the continent of Africa and beyond with youth ministers in marriage and family life courses, especially in tertiary institutions and churches. This will be youth ministry's contribution to the field of practical theology in Africa as it seeks to help restore dignity to family life and empower youth to help make their immediate family stable and healthy as well as laying a good foundation for their future homes for a better society.

Thirdly, research and literature on the roles of children in the family are scanty which shows the value society place on children. I suggest that a study be carried out on the roles; rights and responsibilities of children in the family to enable parents perform effectively their task of nurturing, training and teaching their children. This will also enable children to know not only their rights but their roles and responsibilities in their family and society, which will make the family system function properly and peacefully.

5.7 Conclusion

With the four core tasks of practical theology, I have been able to answer the four questions of what is going on, why is this going on, what ought to be going on and how might we respond. Families are becoming fragile and disintegrating at an alarming rate - especially in the Western world and gradually in the developing countries. Why is this going on from theological perspective? Sin, Satan and the flesh stand out as the main causes of family disintegration among others such as unequal yoke, premarital sex, lack of spiritual home training, divorce, cohabitation, and triangulation. Family development and family system theories also reveal that cohabitation breaches the foundation of family setup which often exposes the family system to negative external spiritual force of Satan and earthly forces of globalization, modernization, and pluralism. Family diversity is now a reality as well as the forces of globalization and modernization contending with family integration.

However, this study has demonstrated that families are disintegrating at a global level and many youth involved in the disintegration are affected. Youth ministry's aims must therefore include evangelism, education and pastoral care that will empower young people to open up their voice and make a positive contribution to their families as active agents of change in their immediate, future families and society. This will answer the question, what ought to be going on in the ministry. God-bearing ministry, relational ministry practiced with family-based-youth-ministry will empower youth workers and youth at this demanding time as God carries on His mission both with them and through them. The God-bearing, relational and family-based-youth-ministry approach have been suggested to enable the highly informed but not genuinely reformed youth to be spiritually conformed to the image of Christ. However, youth ministry have the opportunity to empower contemporary youth to accomplish their God given purposes in life if the aims of youth ministry are strictly and prayerfully executed. With the knowledge of the value and inherent blessing God has deposited in youth to bless families, church and society, youth ministry must be ready to motivate the church to have a rethink about their attitude to youth and join hands with youth ministers in giving youth a platform to play their God-given role in the reintegration of disintegrating family life, Church and society. As transforming, God-bearing, missionary youth ministers, efforts should be made to start work on empowering God-bearing missionary youth who will be able to minister to their immediate and future family as well as their society. However, it is noted that the changes might not take place at the same time globally.

Though the challenges of disintegrating family life seems insurmountable, I believe that youth ministry can make a positive impact on youth and their family if youth ministers resolve to follow the scriptural blueprint of preaching, teaching, caring and allow the Holy Spirit to lead them. From this study, I have discovered and I am convinced that youth are not society's problem and cannot be blamed for their ignorance, childishness and delinquent behaviours. It is the manifold rise in the number of "immature, helpless and powerless parents", supported and pampered by the society that is responsible for the raising of "insecure, self-centred and uncommitted children". I agree with De Graaf that family disintegration is built into the fabrics of children from the time their parent's neglect the indispensable home training, nurturing and shirk their duty of giving them spiritual training as God

commanded. It is the duty of parents, as God's authoritative representatives, to shepherd the heart of their children toward the Lord. I have also come to the conclusion that children are not evil as society make us to believe but they are moulded by their parents or guardian's attitude, values and beliefs as well as their society. Youth are precious in God's sight and have been endowed with many gifts, talents, visions, dreams that can help them and bless the people around and beyond them. We should treat youth who are also made in God's image and promised God's Spirit, in a good, gracious and godly way that we might receive the inherent godly blessing from them. Though youth ministers have emphasized the need to support and help parents so that youth ministry might be undergirded by spiritually active parents, I strongly recommend focusing on young people for two reasons: firstly, two-parents combinations for child training and even the extended family are dwindling and in some cases non-existent, and secondly, each child has two families to pass through during his/her earthly sojourn. The first is the family of origin which most often is experiencing disintegration, and the second is their future family. I believe effort should be made by youth ministers to help contemporary youth reconcile with God, get restored with their parents, families or extended families so as to reactively, on one hand, help them overcome the hurt, humiliation, and helplessness which they are experiencing in their present families and proactively prepare them for their future families. This is to stop them from passing their experience on to their children. Since research has shown that few youths are staying in a two-parent family, fewer with a father and mother only, child-headed homes, orphanage homes, and street-children, youth should be urgently empowered through the preaching of the gospel (evangelism), sound teaching that include important subjects like grace, repentance, Holy Spirit and hope as well as pastoral care in order to perform their role as active members of their family, church and society. Theologically, youth are also called to be missionaries, with no less unction or power because of their age. God's promise to pour out His Spirit upon our sons and daughter support the notion that youth are included in God's mission plan. I also believe that societal vices will be reduced with the proposed inclusion of financial, health and marriage and family life education in addition to the traditional Christian education which used to be based only on catechisms.

Approaching youth ministry from the perspective of practical theology is a synergy that will propel the work of the church with youth and the family forward in years to come. I strongly believe that youth are also called by God to make a positive contribution and impact in their immediate and future families as the whole church join hands to ensure the integration and stability of marriage and family. I conclude that youth ministry should intensify all efforts to evangelize, educate and care pastorally for youth so that contemporary youth may become empowered by wholesome teaching that include Christian education, financial education, health education and importantly, marriage and family life. This I believe will ensure that youth's voices are heard as they actively participate in family, religious and social life and pursue their purpose in life with new hope based on the Word of the living God.

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