Why is there a decline of young people in the main church services?

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ABSTRACT

This study involves investigating the reasons there is a decline of young people in the main church services. This study maintains that regular attendance of the church services and activities enhances a sense of belonging to a Christian community, a renewed purpose of life, understanding of God, Jesus and knowledge of right and wrong. The gap in the church was explored using a mixed methodology. Using questionnaires, focus groups and observation. Fourteen youth workers and twenty-two young people gave a descriptive account on the reasons they have left the main Church services. The findings from my study brings the young people voice in this research to show that youth are not included in decision making , leadership and do not feel accepted. The main church service was said to be irrelevant, old fashioned, dull and unfriendly. My study affirms that young people who grow up in the church have an identity, established character and a strong respectable connection with church community. This study suggests some active ways that can help the main churches to engage more effectively with the youth. This research can be used as a resource to guide the main church to actively engage with the young people.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Late Mum Jane Njoki Wagako, who inspired me to become a Christian Youth Worker. It is through this inspiration that saw me become a Christian Youth Worker. Her dedication to the young people in Nyandarua parish inspired me and others to follow Christ.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter will form part of my dissertation which will cover my background, reasons for my study and the main research question. I am a Christian Youth worker within the Church of England, Nottingham. Part of my role is to work alongside the parish priest with the young people in the Church and the community. However, I have always been bothered by the decline of the young people in the main church and specifically, their absence in attending the main church services. My observation has been that the young people are willing to go to other services in the city, clubs and in my placement the young people choose to go to Singalong (a singing group) but will not attend the main church service. I am passionate about young people growing in a Christians communuity and attending main church services. My experience is that growing in the church gave me an identity, established my character and made me to have a strong connection with the church today, the Christian faith and its people. Going to church was identified to enhance sense of belonging to a Christian community, purpose of life, understanding of God and Jesus and knowledge of right and wrong (Collin-Mayo at el 2010:58). I have passion for the young people and an interest in finding out the reasons why they have left the main Church services only to emerge in different places like Singalong, youth clubs, Scouts, Guides and upcoming new churches.

The purpose for this research is therefore, to seek an in-depth understanding of the underlying problems with the aim of coming up with some recommendations for the church. However, this research does not by no means suggest that all main churches have a problem in attracting the young people, but the trend and my observation with these group at Singalong shows a picture of decline in number attending the main church services. Western Christianity has also evolved and is said to have affected the young people attitude towards main Churches. Sookhdeo when describing western Christianity states that, "the fire is now dying. The flame is faintly flickering. It has burned down to embers, though not distinguished" (Sookhdeo 2017:1). This can be interpreted the fire of the young people in our main churches is faintly flickering.

My research will try to find answers to the question, "***Why is there a decline of young people in the main church services ?***"

As a researcher I will therefore undertake my research by asking the young people at Singalong why they are not interested in attending the main church services, I will also ask the practising youth workers to give me reasons for this decline from their observation in their places of work, I will also ask the CYM students of their observation in their placements and I will have a focus group to discuss the same question with some young people from Singalong and other young people. My research will also have my own observation attending two different Church services and Singalong.

In conducting my research, the aims will seek to find out the followings:
- The reasons for the decline
- The young people needs' in the church today
- To identify the areas of improvement and recommendations.

Some relevant areas of interest will be Young people and the Church today, Christianity Cycle & Post Christendom, Generation change X,Y, Z. I will also explore two theoretical models i.e. Faith Development theory and Harts Ladder of participation to engage with the literature and my findings.

1.2 Terminology:

C E- Church of England

Singalong – A mixed group of local people that meet together every Saturday at St. Martha's CE Church in Nottingham to sing. The group sings secular songs with Christian message culminating to a drama production to celebrate Christian festivals like Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

Main Church- will be used to mean the major churches in UK e.g. Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian.

My Main Church – Will use it to refer to Anglican Church

CYM – Children and Youth Ministry

Young people (Y.P in this study) or Youth – "the United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 as youth without prejudice to other definitions" (NYA 2014). For my dissertation purposes I will use the term to describe the people from the age 11-24.

Generation X Y Z
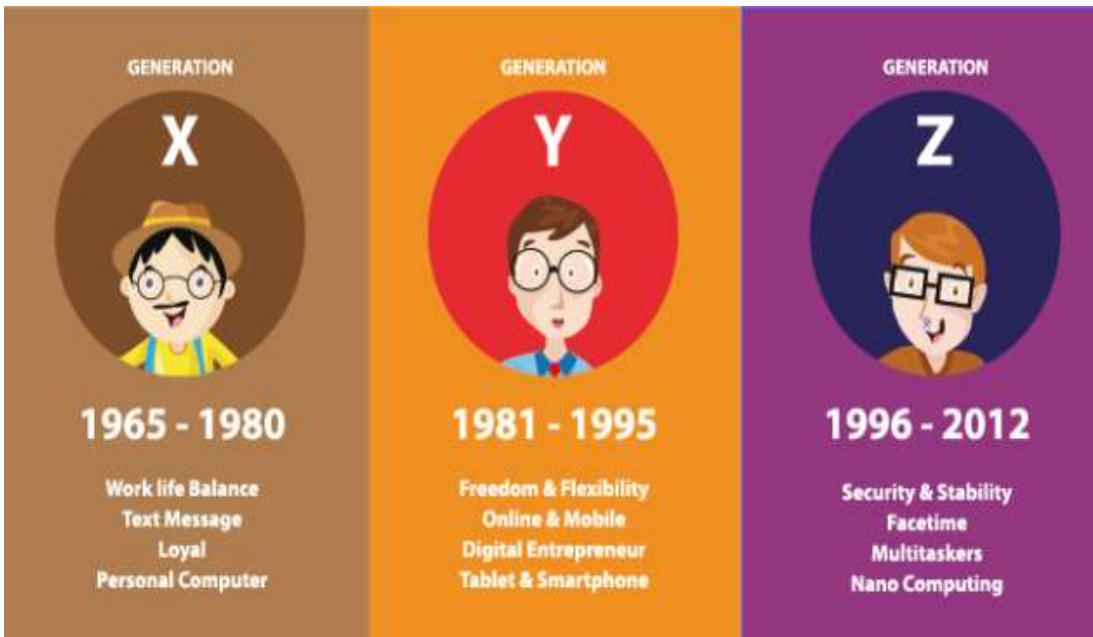
Adapted from grow business (2017)

Gen X- born between 1965- 1980, they are the parents to Gen Z

Gen Y – Born between 1981-95, also known as **Millennials**

Gen – Z- also known as iGen- digital generation, Wi-Fi enabled

1.3 Theology behind the research

The boy Jesus at the temple (ESV Luke 2:41-52), In this story we find Jesus with his parents going to the temple for a festival, but later Jesus is left behind, after three days they found him sitting among teachers listening to them asking questions, when his parents rebuked him, H*e* said *"did you not know I must be to in my Father's house".* From my understanding Jesus knew the significance of the temple, His Fathers' house where he could seek and find answers. Today's church could be said to be the temple, the main churches and its traditions had been there for a long time, build by Christians and consecrated as Our Fathers (Gods') house. For my research, I will evaluate my findings with this theology of our Fathers house where the young people like Jesus could go and find counsel and ways of God. Another example is boy Samuel, who was staying in the temple with the prophet Eli when God called him, he went to seek counsel from Eli (ESV 1Samuel 3). In my research I will try to compare this examples and today's young people relationship and the main Church services and if they can find consul from the temple.

1.4 Reflexivity

It is important to note that as a researcher I am not natural in the process of gathering data but are also impacted by my own background, values, culture and experiences. Denscombe talking about this influence said, " *As a researcher the meaning we attach to things that happen and the language we use to describe them are the product of our own culture, social background and personal experience, making sense of what is observed is a process that relies on what the researcher already knows and believes*" (2017:89). From an African background my idea of a church, might therefore be very different from the young people I work with today in UK. Davies and Smith argue that "reflecting on these influences and understanding how they shape your interpretation is important and needs to be recognised (2010:156).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will explore the reasons for the decline in young people attending main church services. I will sort to the variety of viewpoints within the subject which could help me understand in depth the reasons for the decline and the relationship of Y.P and the main church today. The purpose for my literature review is to explore the young people perception of a church, their needs and in the process make recommendation to the main churches and the youth ministry. I have divided the areas of discussion with the following headings; (1)Reasons for the decline in attendance (2) young people's needs and their ideal church(3) Areas for improvement by the main churches.

2.1 Reasons for the decline

Previous studies show that they are various reasons why the young people have left the main church, Stanton argues that, "*It is no secret that Christian churches struggle to attract and retain young people*" (Stanton:2012). In 2005 church census revealed that many main churches do not have young people at all in their congregation around half have no 11-14 years old and likewise with the 15-19 years old (Brierley 2006). In particular in my placement, my main focus will be on reasons young people prefer Singalong and not the main church service. The reasons of young people decline from the main churches could be deeper than just a choice. Sookhdeo cited that since 1960s the Christian leaders have progressively *betrayed the Gospel,* engaging with lifestyles that do not conform with the word of God, with examples of wide- ranging liberalism to avoid confrontation with the secular world (2017:2). It not unusual these days to hear on the news of the main church going astray, recently there was a sex scandal in the Catholic church(BBC News 2010), is an example of the negative news that has added to youth avoiding the church. Another illustration is recent jail term of Cardinal George in Australia for sexually abusing a pair of 13-year-old choirboys (James M., 2019). Kinnaman speaking about the Catholic Church in his book 'You Lost Me' said that the Y.P wondered on how many have then left the Church, who feel lost, "*we did not leave the Church but rather the church left us*" (2011:10).

The young people feel *disconnected* with the main church, Kinnaman identifying six themes for this disconnect said, *shallow and boring liturgy, no creativity, antiscience, repressive, doubtless*

and exclusive nature of the main churches have pushed the young people outside (2011:92-93). Kinnaman research shows that the young people do not believe that the church could help them in any way in life and neither does it help them find a purpose. Moreover, the young people have learned very little from the older members of the church, calling their believe/faith an inch depth and a mile wide- too shallow to survive and too wide to make a difference (2011:116). Kinnaman claims that, *"A generation of young Christians today believes that the churches in which they were raised are not safe and hospitable places to express doubts, many feel they have been offered slick or half- baked answers to their thorny, honest questions and they are rejecting 'talking head' and 'talking point' from the older generation"* (2011:12). However, Davie (2007:22) exploring contemporary religion describes a concept of a 'vicarious religion', which he defined as *"the notion of religion performed by an active minority but on behalf of a much large number"*.

The change in Christianity which have taken different forms can also be a major factor. Pimlot (2008) exploring the Christianity cycle explains how the church has revolved since the time of the Roman emperor Constantine in 312AD. Pimlot and Pimlot describing this era as *post-Christendom* said that, is a culture where Christian faith has lost coherence within the society that had been shaped by its story and the institutions that express Christian convictions decline in influence (2008:4). Pimlot refers the main church as institution that has lost its privilege position and increasingly occupying a place in the margins of society alongside other organisations. The author suggests that the Y.P have begun to reject some of the more packaged version of Christianity that has been on offer in the western society (2008:5,7). Shepherd quoting David said that *"Britain institution religion now has half-life of one generation and the generation now in middle age has produced children who are only half likely to attend church or identify with a denomination"* (2016:9). In terms of impact on growth of the church, Voas an Crockett concluded that, decline in Church attendance by young people is because more and more adult never start attending in the first place, in other words their parent does not attend the church(2005:11-28).

The *inconsistences in the churches* has also had a negative effect to the young generation. Joseph (2011) claims that 'he who controls the past controls the future' and the concept of putting pack the youth banner as in (ESV Joel 2:28) to young people is overlooked, meaning that the older generation are not allowing the young people to be partakers in the work and affairs of the church and leadership. Kinnaman(2011) calls it the i*ntolerance* in the Church whereby the young people

see the church as inclusive, with a mentality of inside-outsider mentality, always ready to bar the door to those who do not meet their standards. Emery-Wright(2008) acknowledges the need for young people's participation in the church and emphasised their engagement in collective worship as theologians, interpreters and liturgists. These roles are likely to develop faith language that is relevant for them not just outdated traditions (5-25). Shepherd discussed participation as a model of faith practices to give rise to knowledge and to reinforce identity, "*it is through participation in Christianity that a person learns to interpret the faith and also learn to interpret the world*" (2016:100). My observation is that most of the main church services appear not to allow participation holding on to old practices which can be a source of disconnection of the church and the young people. Ferguson (2018) addressing the issue of Millennial Church Membership absence said the church is unwilling and unprepared to change .

Another factor is the *generation change*, the young people are now said to be the digital generation or *Gen Z or* iGen, term used to describe young people who have grown with the use of web (Praseed 2017). The characteristic of this group is global in social, visual and technological. They are the most connected, educated and sophisticated generation, up-agers, with influence beyond their years (2017). Collins-mayo (2006) describing Gen Y said that changes in their cognitive abilities, have an impact on how they think about Christians ideas citing only 7% are church goers which indicated they are the minority (2006:5,7). Kinnaman(2011) proposed that the church needs to reconsider how to make disciples, seeking to discover Christian calling and vacation, to reprioritize wisdom over information. Furthermore, a new mind, new way of thinking, new way of relating, new vision of its role in the world to pass on the faith to this and future generation. The view tarries with Pauls advise to the Romans about transformation and renewing of mind, urging them not to think highly of themselves but as members of one body (ESV Romans 12:2-4). However, the digital generation has been said to be the one to bring revival. Emery-White (2017) writing about Gen Z said that they will be the most influential religious force in the west and the heart of missional challenge facing the church today.

2.2 Young people needs and the ideal church

The Church in the developed countries (Western) is said to be struggling to connect with the next generation, citing immense technological, spiritual and social changes, Kinnaman(2011). Thus, there is not only need for new ways, visions are required to meet the needs for the young people in main churches today. Shepherd (2016), argues that the church to find different ways of common worship, drawing new and old practice to sustain and engaging the young while identifying and paying attention to them. In particular enabling a form of sense of Christianity through *participation,* which he describes as a practice of faith communities to indwell with traditions but to also give rise to new knowledge (2016:100). According to White, Gen Z is technologically well informed and can access anything-anywhere-anytime through the web (White:2017). Therefore, it is important for the main churches to realise that *relevant theology* is important to the young people today. A survey carried out by Youth for Christ, 94% young people use of media daily and this is where they gather information good and bad (Hancock:2017).

Dunhill at el (2009) proposes Harts participation ladder as a model that can be used to help the church to be inclusive and participatory. The model identifies eight different levels of young people participation.

Ladder of Youth Participation
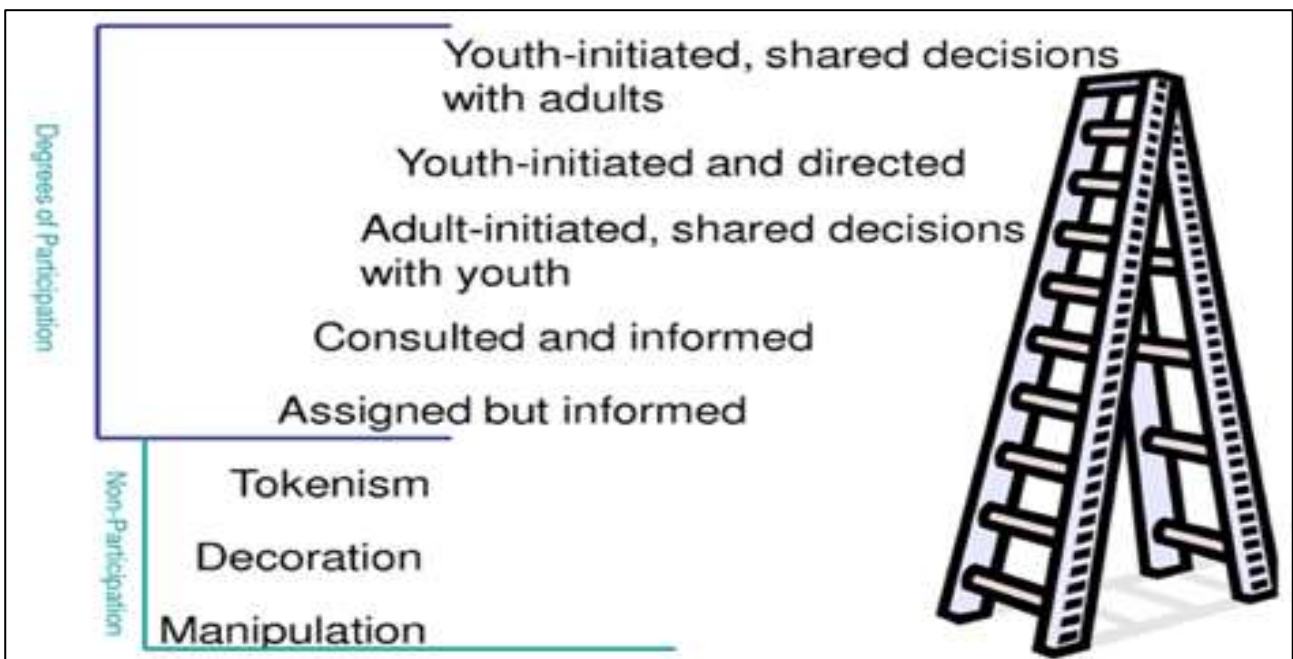
Figure 1: *Adapted from Hart (1992)*

As figure shown in Fig 1 the model suggest that the first 3 ladders are not effective ways to engage. However, the degree of participation is improved by assigning, consulting, sharing decision with young people. Gough (2018: 117-118) encouraging on ability of participation of young people in the youth ministry, he suggested that God involves the young people long before we met them. He urged the church to give the Y.P opportunity to add value without fearing to lose to anarchy and immaturity.

As mentioned earlier young people see the church as inclusive clubs hence main churches have been said not to be very *inclusive.* Probably, if this barrier if well addressed young people would desire to be part of the main Church. Kinnaman, talking on rethinking relationship explains by saying. "*The church is a partnership of generations fulfilling Gods purpose in their time*"(2011:203). Pimlot and Pimlott(2008:26,27) confirms that young people are not always welcome in the church, citing a Midlands church where an outreach work brought a large number of unaccompanied local young people. The congregation complained about them being a disturbance until the relationship created tension and the church decided to stop working with them. This example raises another issue of the church not *engaging* with the young people. In this case the congregation lacked willingness to engage and maybe change to accommodate the Y.P (2008:27). On inclusiveness a youth worker said, **"*Church aren't very good generally at releasing people and empowering them, they are really bad at releasing young people"*(** Pimlott and Pimlott 2008:29). Nash and Whitehead also had observed same issue and wrote, "*One of the greatest ironies for many of us who have worked in the youth ministries is that the church we love and nurtured us is the very church that can be cold and unhelpful when called upon to receive the young people" (2014:130).*

2.3 Areas of improvement

Kara at el (2016:41-43) writing on needs to allow emerging teenagers and young adult to grow in their main churches, she urges that they need to have more youth service, "*church leaders are quick to value how young people serve in their worship team , and discipleship but are myopic in their appreciation of young people's service".* The writers also said the church need to allow innovation, for the church willingness to twist the off the cap releases innovative energy that can transform their community. Kara at el (2016) came up with six components that a church requires to do to enable it to grow and ultimately keeping the young people in church;

- To unlock keychain leadership
- To empower others especially the young people
- To empathise with todays' young people
- To take Jesus message seriously by welcoming the young people into Jesus centred way of life,
- To fuel a warm community,
- To prioritize young people in terms of resources and support and lastly to be the best neighbours (Kara at el 2016:43).

From the views discussed in this section it is clear that the main church needs to improve in lots in many areas to allow the young person to be part of their congregation. Being relevant, practicing inclusiveness, engaging them, allowing them to take part in decision making and use of participation model to be inclusive and empowering among other findings. Shepherd (2016) talking on the issue of growth of young people in the church argues that basic principles would be putting children and youth ministries activities in place to promote growth to actively engage with them. Giving example that employing a children or youth worker has been associated in three quarters of growing churches and is the most effective lay appointment a church can make from growth perspective (2016:10).

"The image of church is wrong said one young person; people don't have a message from the church that they can understand" (Emery-Wright -2008:26). The statements made by a young person emphasis the need for relevant materials. Kinnaman emphasis this idea by telling the church to preach a better gospel, saying that the consumer gospel that promises a life of happiness from now till eternity is wearing thin, he challenges everyone to rediscover the Bible grand narrative and teach an all-encompassing, multi-dimensional gospel.(2008:216).

2.4 Chapter summary

In summary, literature review points out the failures of the church, the generation gap, the culture and the Christianity shift. Nonetheless, literature is also lacking on young people's voice on the kind of a church involvement they would prefer. This study sought to fill this gap by introducing a new thinking and procedures that could be adapted to minimise non-participation and improve degree of youth participation in the main church services, hence meeting their needs.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research focus

The focus of this research is to understand the reasons Y.P do not attend main church services. I believe the main church service is the heart beat of a Christian community where people come together to share fellowship with one another as one Gods family. In this research I will seek young people's views about main church services and perspectives of practising youth workers in my diocese, CYM student youth workers. Kinnaman in his book *You Lost Me*, explored in his search reasons why the young Christians are leaving churches and challenging us to have a new mindset, claiming that the established Christian generation has a lot to learn from emerging generation(2011:12). Therefore, to find answers to my question, I have embarked on this research with the aim to make a resource that can be used by main churches and youth ministries.

In my research I will use mixed methodology which is an approach based on mixing research designs, strategies or modes of analysis. This approach will provide the opportunity to check the findings from one method against the other. (Denscombe: 2017:162-3). Prior to this research I conducted a pilot study to establish a better understanding of how to conduct a viable research. A research design is an approach to planning a study which aims to ensure that the methods chosen are appropriate to the topic being investigated. (Tisdall et al 2009:229). The process and data obtained from the pilot study has contributed to adopting a *mixed method research approach*.

3.2 Justification of research methods

A decision every researcher has to make right from starting their research is the methodology to adopt in order to complete their research study. Depending on the statistical importance of data, it's significant to consider whether to use quantitative data or qualitative data, or both (Marshall and Rossman: 2014). The selection of the methodology depends on the research goals or what the research is intended to accomplish (Tuli, 2011). When this decision was made, a mixed methodology was found suitable for this research. The methodology combines the elements of qualitative (textual, interpretive) and quantitative (numerical, statistical) collection and analysis of the data (Swain 2017 :196).

Mixed methods

The name indicates the use of variety of ways in which the data can be mixed and many aspects of the research can be involved, this can be a mixer of designs, research strategies or mode of analysis (Denscombe 2017:11). It combines the elements of qualitative and quantitative collection and analysis of the data (Swain 2017 :196). This approach was the best method for my research to adopt as it gave me the flexibility in collecting statistical data and also listening the experiences of young people, for the broader purpose of breath and depth of understanding (Swain 2017:194). Both activities gave me qualitative and quantitative data which can be used for the purpose of triangulation design (Punch and Oancea 2014:345).

Pros and cons of Mixed method

Mixed method offers better understanding of the study in with a practical problem-driven approach and offers clear links between different methods and data and compensating strengths and weakness where the combination of methods exploits the strengths of a particular method (Denscombe 2017:175-176). In my case the questionnaires had the most feedback. The observation provided me with substantial amount of data in a relatively short time span especially my attendance to another church.

However, the mixed method also has its disadvantages, it is time consuming and can extend the overall time frame for research and data collection, the challenge for the researcher to develop skills in more than one method, findings from different methods might not corroborate with one another and also the data simplification by qualitative and quantitative mask a more complicated reality (Denscombe 2017:176). The observation method can be selective in recalling the detail (2017).

3.3 Methods of study

Data for this study will be collected using questionnaires, focus groups and observations.

1. ***Questionnaire***

To meet the aims of this study I used questionnaires for they are economical, easy to arrange, and do not require so much time or preparation(2017). This method of collecting data enabled me to collect data from different forums offering a wider perspective on the topic from young people

and youth workers who work closely with them. I formulated two questionnaires (Appendix 3 & 4) which I used to collect information from the young people, youth workers and CYM student youth workers. As a result of this research it gave me both qualitative and quantitative data to analyse. (see chapter4). I also found through my pilot study that the questionnaires provided me a wide range of response and a lot of data in an easy way.

2. Focus group

I used the focus group method to get a wider perspective on youth participation. The method involved two different group meetings which involved several participants including a facilitator (myself) and the focus emphasis was on the question tightly defined topic. (Bryman, 2016:501). I used this method to collect more qualitative data and to compare with the data collected using questionnaires . Although Swain suggests that researchers who use both methods are in danger of being seen as two separate studies if the results do not collaborate (2017:195). Adding the focus group to my research was a productive strategy because it gave me a second voice and also added balanced data to ensure minimal researcher bias (Ritchie et al.:2013). Moreover, both activities resulted to quantitative and qualitative data which can be used for the purpose of triangulation design (Punch and Oancea 2014:345).

3. Observation

For my observation I took the participants observation, which is mainly used by researchers to investigate the lifestyles, cultures and beliefs of a particular social group (Denscombe 2017:224). This method is normally associated with qualitative data, I took a direct observation approach which gave me direct evidence (2017:224). This method allowed me to gain inside perspectives, total participation in depth and detail while retaining the natural setting.(2017:235). I choose this method as I participate in Singalong group every Saturday giving me the chance to have a direct participation with this group. This method has its shortcoming as human memory forget most what we see but uses selective recall pattern, filtering information in the process of selective perception which can be shaped by our own feeling and past experience (2017). I also attended a youth service in a new upcoming church which located in city centre to carry out a direct observation on the young people attendance and the characteristic of the youth service.

3.3.1   Sampling

For sampling my group, I used exploratory samples, this method is used as a way of probing relatively unexplored topics and as a route to the discovery of ideas or theories (2017:43. The approach I used was non-probability sampling which has an element of discretion or choice in my part as a researcher(2017:43). The participants were chosen from different groups to include the Y.P from Singalong, Y.P from a youth club, youth workers and CYM student youth workers. The questionnaires were handed out to those affiliated to Singalong and young people in different churches in the diocese and some CYM youth worker students. To get wider understanding of my question, it was important for me to sort out views of young people representatives in the community and the church. I was therefore able to have unstructured focus group discussion with some young people and the founder of Singalong who is a children and youth Minster with the Church of England.

3.3.2 Ethical consideration

The research which involve young people raises the safeguarding and ethical issues. Fraser explains that, moral questions about power, honesty, respect or abuse in the process of research, risk of published research report which could increase shame, stigma and disadvantage for the group being researched.(Fraser at el 2004:99). To make sure this critical issue is adhered to before my research, I needed to gain permission to carry out the research by gaining ethical clearance to be approved by my LM and the University (Appendix 1). The ethical clearance is a process to scrutinize the design of the research which includes appropriate measures to protect the interests of the group being interviewed and also to ensure that no harm is caused by the investigation (Denscombe 2017:337,338). My LM at placement acts as the gatekeeper for the Y.P, the person with authority to grant access to research the Y.P (Tisdall et al 2009:225).

Accessing the field

Once in the field, I started by formulating a Participatory Information Sheet (Appendix 2) which has information of my research, inviting the young people and youth workers to participate. The form explained who I am, my area of study and the reason for my research. It also explains what the participants are required to do, indicating time that it takes to fill the form and giving the participant choice to answer the questions which they feel comfortable. It also gives them an option to withdrawal and to seek pastoral care if needed. The form also explained that they will

need to sign a consent form to agree if they want to take part. For a participant to take part in a research Bell and Watters view is that we should provide a written statement about the participants rights, our responsibilities and purpose of the research, giving them enough information to make informed decision (2014 :169). Each participant needed to have informed consent form which each is required to sign. I formulated two consent forms for 16+ who could consent but for the under 16 needed parental consent (Appendix 5). I also formulated two different questionnaires for the young people and youth workers (Appendix 3 & 4)

3.4 Research process

I started the research by announcing at Singalong a week before giving the questionnaires and also gave them the information to take home to read allowing them time to process. The following week I set a table at the coffee bar with my questionnaires, information sheets and consent forms. The majority of Singalong are over 16 and it was easier to fill them there and then, the under 16 who had parents around were able to consent for them. My experience during pilot study is that if I allowed them to take the questionnaires home, only few would return, so I did not want to repeat the same mistake again.

The second stage of my process was to approach the youth workers at a prayer meeting and inform them of my research. Most of them were willing to take part in my research. Therefore, I emailed twelve youth workers the information sheet, consent and questionnaires forms (Appendix 2,,4 & 5), only five replied. During this process one of the youth worker who works in the diocese approached me volunteering to approach her youth club to take part in the questionnaires. The group consisted young people of faith and non-faith, this was to give me a wider understanding from different group of young people. The youth worker who is their gatekeeper and therefore she approached the parents, to get the consent. I sent fifteen information sheets, parental consent forms and questionnaires (Appendix 2,3 & 5) The young people filled eleven which the youth worker emailed them back to me. Lastly, I approached my CYM year students and nine of them were happy to fill in their questionnaires during break time.

The focus group took different form, was not structured even though in the information sheet I distribute to the Singalong group indicated also a chance to participate in a focus group, the majority of the members did not find it necessary and opted out. *"There is no single pathway to good research, there are options and alternatives, at any stage the researcher use discretion in order to successfully complete a project"* (Denscombe (2017). I then decided when we gather

around sometimes to ask them if they are willing to contribute to anything that was not in the questionnaire regarding the reasons why they do not attend the main church service, the majority of this group meet at a main church but will not come to the main church service the following morning. Another semi structured meeting was when the founder of the Singalong visited which started as a discussion with some young people who had previously visited an upcoming church in the City. So, I asked if they were willing to contribute to the reasons why the young people were attending the new church and not the main church service. This debate created a very good discussion on why the young people see main church service lacking which they experienced at the new upcoming church service.

Lastly I carried out my observation at Singalong as a member of the group and I also visited an upcoming new church in the city and St. Martha's Church (Anglican). The difference in the two churches has given me a wide area to observe as both have different characteristics in terms of how they conduct their services, times of the services and the people they attract. Moreover, the Singalong which takes a form of a church gathering also has different characteristic compared with a main church service like St. Martha's and city new Church.

3.5 Triangulation

An important aspect of my research was making use of multiple methods to address the issue of validity and answer the research questions (Bryman, 2016) to increase the reliability of the research findings (Creswell and Poth : 2017). "*The purpose of triangulation design is to obtain complementary quantitative and qualitative data on the same topic, bringing together the different strengths of the two methods*" (Punch and Oancea 2014:345).

The methodological triangulation was made possible by comparing the results of one method to another. The process involved looking at young people church attendance and matters from different angles using questionnaires, focus group and observation. However, ideas, explanations, descriptions, motives and perceptions of the main church services which were not checked in observations, were checked against questionnaire responses and focus groups to identify what was similar or dissimilar.

3.6 Reflection on the process

The overall research was a successful process and I think it will be fair to say that a research cannot be exclusive it has to share the space with other researchers ,sitting on the book shelves with others complimenting each other. I went to this research knowing I have vague ideas of the reasons why the young people do not attend the church services but by doing this research has enabled me to see a bigger and deeper picture of the problem, from the young people's perspective, youth workers and a minister. Research with young people is crucial in advancing understanding of how they develop and live their lives, which can contribute to theoretical debates and its outcomes (Fraser al el 2004:1). In the research process my experience was that it was easier to use questionnaires as a method to collect data but focus groups proved difficulty to arrange.

CHAPTER 4 : FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter Overview

The purpose of Chapter 4 is a detailed examination of data collected (Denscombe, 2017). In this section, I will discuss the views of the participants which gave a better understanding reasons the main churches are struggling to retain young people in their main services "*It is no secret that main Christian churches struggle to attract and retain young people*" (Stanton, 2012). The findings present a detailed discussion drawn from the qualitative and quantitative data to explicitly answer the research question Why there is a decline of young people in main church services that guide this study. Data from the qualitative and quantitative will be presented as Section A and B and will then be analysed in three separate groups as Sing Along, Youth group, focus group and observation before concluding.

4.2 Quantitative data

They are two different questionnaires (Appendix 3 & 4) which have been simplified using Linkert scale to provide a straight forward tool for gathering quantitative data (Denscombe 2017:287). This format has enabled me to draw a chart to represent my findings from

(a) 11 Y.P from Singalong and 11 Youth club young people from different churches (Appendix 6)

The data from Table 1 is presented in a simplified Likert model as follows.
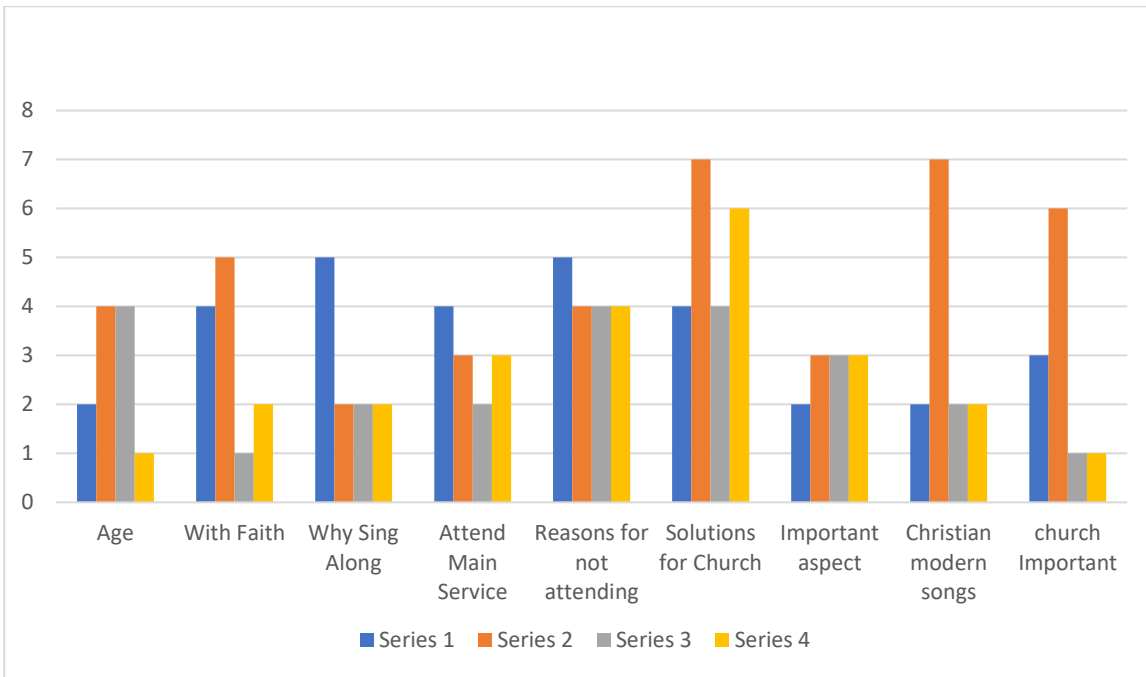
Figure 1: Singalong Data Analysis
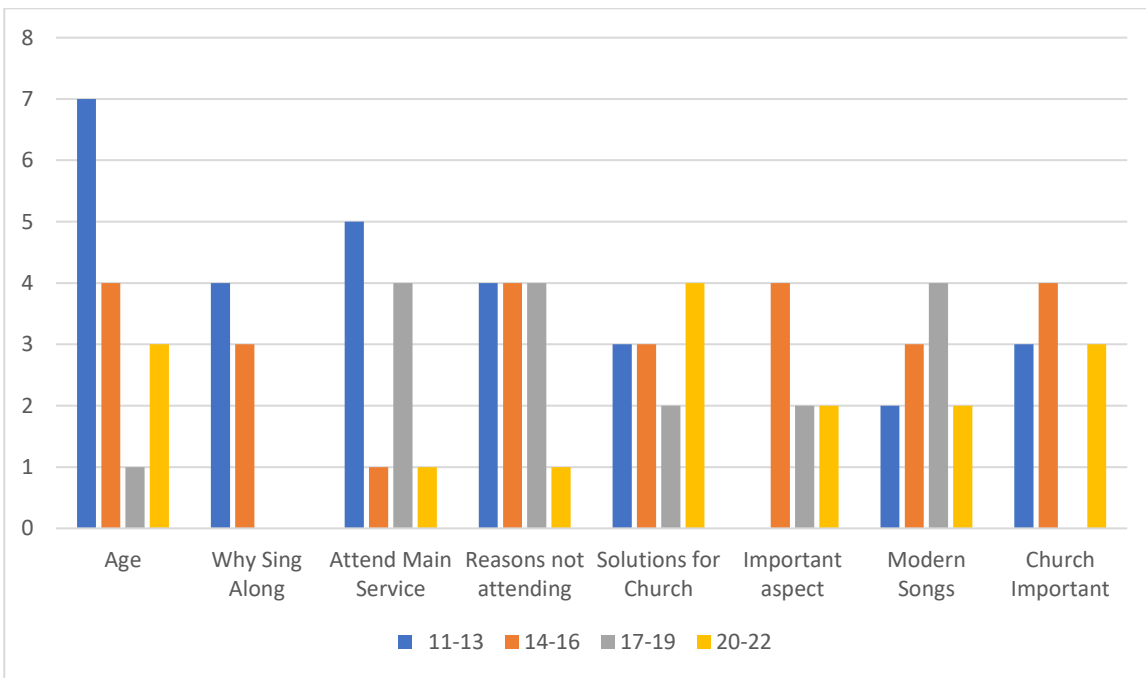
Figure 2: Youth club data analysis

From table 1 (Appendix 6) the Singalong participants Fig 1 consisted of eleven Y.P ranging between 14-19 years with two younger and one older. Most of participants proposed that church service is important although they do not always attend. 63% participants citing lack of involvement as the major issue, better choices scored 57%, 54% lack of modern song and 45% cited service being irrelevant other factors were unfriendliness and among other issues like repetitive services, "*it is*

always the same thing" said one of the young people. Other issues cited by Y.P were the service being boring and preaching was not enthusiastic. Some Y.P said that some services are not understandable to the majority of them. 54% mentioned use of modern songs is important to them and 36% thought time of the services was an issue.

From table 1 the Fig 2 shows, the youth group consisted of 11 Y.P with the majority aged 11-13, 7 out of 11 and the other 4 aged 14-16. They were no 15+ in this group, majority were from a lunch youth group with most of them from year 7 and 8. This group 45% cited irrelevant as their main concern, and 36% cited unfriendliness. This group was uncertain about importance of the church. They seem to have similar answers as Singalong group as to why they do not attend church services, with 36% citing , irrelevance, lack of involvement and time factor as some of the reasons.

The data gathered have some common themes that are emerging, the young people find the main church service disconnected , old fashioned and unfriendly, describing them as gloomy as a funeral service. According to the young people they are attracted to Sing Along and the new church because they are modern, participatory and friendly.

(b) 15 youth workers from Nottingham diocese including CYM student youth workers (Appendix 7) The data from table 2 is represented using Likert as shown below.
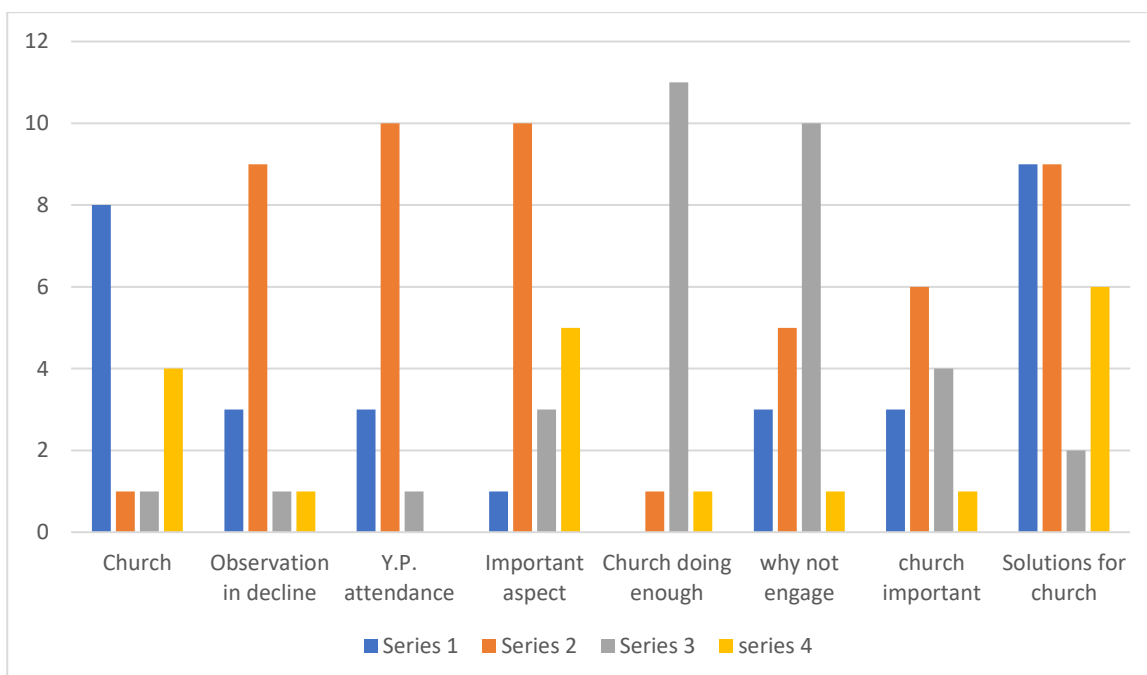
Figure 3 :Young workers data analysis

Analysis

The youth workers who responded were 14, some already practicing in the diocese and CYM student youth workers. The questionnaire was slightly different (Appendix 4) from the young people's one but the context of the search still the same, looking to find answers *why there is a decline in young people attending the main Church services*. The majority of the youth workers church background is Anglican (64%), 28% Evangelicals, with one Catholic. Majority agree there is a decline with 81% and 21% strongly agreeing. 64% of youth workers felt that the main reason for this decline is, the service is irrelevant to young people, 50% citing that parents' absence contributes also to the decline. Other factors were unfriendliness and disconnection with young people which 28% agreed and 21% thought time for the service also contributed to the decline.

This research in Fig 3 revealed that 78% of youth workers felt the main church is not doing enough, with 3 voting no opinion, strongly disagreeing and agree respectively. 78% of the youth workers felt that fellowship with others was the most important aspect in spiritual growth, followed by attendance to youth club with 35%, but surprisingly no one voted strongly about attending main Sunday service with only 7% agreeing. On the question why they think the main Church has not engaged with the Y.P, the majority 71% believes the church is too old fashion, followed by generation gap 35% and failure of church duty or calling was 21%. On the question of what the main church can do, 64% said the service need to be relevant with today's application, equally 64% said the main church should involve the young people. The participants also felt that modern songs and changing the time of services could be a solution to this help the church retain its Y.P. Another youth worker suggested outdoor activities would also be a solution to the problem.

4.3 Qualitative data

This section will discuss the findings from the focus group discussions and observation. These findings are presented in table 4 & 5. The data is then analysed showing the codes, sub themes and themes to give the themes emanating from this research.

4.3.1   Focus groups

My focus groups were not structured as explained in my methodology earlier. It exhibited the problems with focus groups which identified participants are not willing to turn up. However, I managed to have two semi- focused groups which generated a lot of response.

a.   Focus Group A

This group was part recorded, as I juggled between facilitating and handwriting response and it comprised of four young people. The ages ranged from 12-19. Of the four participants two often attend main services and Sing Along while the other two do not. But they all have attended an upcoming new church and there was a lot of comparison of what attract them to that church and not their main church services.

During this discussion the Y.P were getting exited talking about Sing Along and the new Church but lowering their voice talking about main church services. One of them said this "*In a regular(main) church service you know people are devoted to God but you don't see it, you don't feel it, it is literally like a funeral day, everyone is gloomy, everyone is upset, everyone had a bad week but they don't tell anyone about it, they are just keeping it inside like day dreamers*" . Some of the other common in modern theme was the modern music, the expression of the Gospel in modern way, one young person said, "*the use of graphic design in their presentation in tumbler and aesthetic design, brings a WOW factor, it makes our mind alert*" (Appendix 11) this is not used in the main services. They main church is still stuck in the old ways one person preaching to you something the young people found uncomfortable.

b.   Focus Group B

This group was quickly put together as a discussion with two young people, the leader of Singalong (Minister of young people in Church of England), two other church members and facilitator (myself). This discussion seems to turn against the modern new churches emerging in the city with the Minister of CE, criticizing them of not doing the hard work but reaping from the local main churches draining the Y.P from their congregation (Appendix 9).The young people were arguing that the new church has better services than their main church. They expressed the modern

expression of the gospel, use of new technology as their main attraction to Singalong and the new church. The Minister said that the priority of those churches was the atmosphere which can quickly become an idol replacing Jesus as the Lord. My view is that these churches had the advantage of the location, attitude and friendliness and that is why they attract a lot of young people from the universities. On the other hand, the main churches struggled to attract many Y.P and few at Singalong.

The idea that the new church is draining the local churches of Y.P led the Minister to say, "there can never be a Jerusalem without Samaria and Galilee". This simply means that city church only exists because of the hard work done by the main churches. Putting this in perspective of the children under the age of 11 who attend Sunday school and hoping to progress to main church service do not but instead move elsewhere. Probably it could be said the mushrooming new church attract young people who are drawn into to the city

4.3.2   *Observation*

I carried out my observation in three different setting, the Singalong group, the main Church and a new city Church. As a researcher I used systematic observation which was direct observation which gave me direct evidence of eye witness (Denscombe 2017:224). I attended all of them during the services. Table 3 (Appendix 8) shows my observation.

The table shows the three distinctive services that I observed. it was interesting to note how different they are, a difference also reflected in the numbers of young people attending these services. The Singalong which is local, does not follow a laid down structure or liturgy but modern style of worship which seen to attract Y.P whether of faith or not. The few participating Y.P were observed to be actively involved in drama, singing and leadership. However, the main church was seen to still hold its traditions with few or no changes on practice and procedure. The early morning service seem to attract only fewer Y.P with faith but significant less involvement in the running of the service or leadership roles. On the hand, the city-based church attracts a lot of young people of faith such as university students. The majority of these students are actively involved as ushers, leaders or just followers. City church services are very modern, vibrant, semi structured, interactive and tend to play loud music (Appendix 11)

4.4   Data Analysis

I have analysed the data and utilised the typed transcriptions from the focus group following the thematic analysis method and explored the data gathered. The tables 3 shows systematic observation(Appendix 8) followed by generating codes in table 4 & 5 and themes that came out of participants responses.

4.4.1 Generating codes

Table 4 and 5 that follow show how codes were generated leading to theme formation.

Table 4: Generating codes from Focus Group A

Codes	Sub Themes	Major themes
Main Church Services • Silence, no interaction • Restricted • Preaching to you • Same thing every time • Uncomfortable • No sense of belonging • Don't feel the love, devotion • Gloomy like a funeral • Self-centred	*Main Church Services* • Not Connected • Not interactive • Repetitive • Unfriendly • unwelcomed • Unloved • Boring	Disconnected Old fashion Unfriendliness
Sing Along & New Church • Freedom, be yourself • A lot of Interaction • New things- design, visual, music • More relaxed, can breathe • Can share, listened to • Feel accepted, loved	*Sing Along & New Church* • Freedom • Interactive • Modern • Friendliness • Loved, accepted • welcoming	*Sing Along & New Church* Modern Participatory Friendly

Table 5: Generated codes from Focus group B

Codes	Sub Themes	Themes
Main church • local • traditional with one baptism • Boring • Community • Few young people • Draining of members	• Traditional • Local • Few young people • Community based	- Local - Traditional - Few young people
Sing Along • Local • Modern • Music • Friendly • Community	*Sing Along* • Local • Modern • Friendly	*Sing Along* • Local • Modern • Friendly
New Church • Location, city • Modern music • Effective evangelism • Brainwash young people • Reaping from other main churches • Rebaptism is common • Attractive, lots of Y.P	*New Churches* • Located in city • Modern • Evangelism • Can brain wash Y.P • Lots of Y.P • Rebaptism	*New Church* • City • Modern • Evangelism • Lots of Y.P

As Table 4 and 5 shows meaningful information from both focus groups was found to tell a story of the factors keeping Y.P away from the main church. The process of data analysis followed coding leading to sub-themes.

The final step was to refine the sub-theme from the questionnaires, focus groups and observation respectively and combined into one chapter. The themes that emerged after they were all subsumed is what I considered to be the major themes that would guide this study. To my surprise, I found that some of the data collected with all the participants was not substantial to

the analysis and presentation of this chapter, but it will have importance to the discussion that will follow in the next chapter.

4.4.2 Merging themes

Table 7 shows the final themes that emerged from both focus groups, youth workers and through observations.

Table 7: Major themes

Sub- Themes			Major Theme
Questionnaires	Focus Groups	Observation	Merged theme
Lack of Participation Irrelevant service Unfriendliness Old music Time of the service	Old fashion Disconnected Repetitive Boring service	Limited interaction Restricted Formal learning	Non-participatory Disconnected Old fashion

4.5 Chapter summary

Despite the various factors highlighted by the research participants in this chapter, a straightforward strategy to retain and increase the number of young people in the main church remains unclear. The findings of this study show that the factors affecting main church is not just lack of participation or ritualistic liturgy followed every Sunday morning services but also the young people sense of belonging. The feel disconnected to these services which do not give them a sense of belonging. Moreover, the attractiveness of the city churches has played a great role because Y.P like vibrant environments, modern technology and socialising.

Further discussion on specific ways to improve the services is discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The findings in chapter 4 identified the main church services failures to engage with the young people. This chapter draws together the interpretation from the findings and presents a detailed discussion from the research participants. This chapter also links up the theoretical understanding within the conducted in Chapter 2 Literature Review with evaluated views of the main church services with theological and theoretical understanding.

5.1 Overview of the findings

The findings for the decline of young people attendance to the main church services according to the young people show some common themes.

- The young people find the main church service disconnected , old fashioned and unfriendly, describing the services as gloomy as a funeral service. They are attracted to Singalong and the new Church because they are modern, participatory and friendly.

- Findings to the above themes cited issues of repetitiveness, lack of involvement, having better choices e.g. youth clubs, and time of the services as a problem. Majority of main church services are often on Sunday morning which the Y.P are not keen to attend. Moreover, the youth workers felt that failures of Y.P parents attending these services is also a contributing factor.

- The focus group A added lack of enthusiasm in the way the services are conducted as a contributing factor While Group B recognised the hard work done by the main church services. Notably, most of the Y.P who attend the main service were young in age but fail to attend as they grow older. The young people explaining about their attendance were quick to point out that other services like Singalong and the city Church services were more vibrant, modern, used of new modern technology to convey the message (Appendix 8) and are relevant to their lives.

- My observation found that the three services I attended were very different in the way they were conducted, which was also reflected on the number of the young people attending the services. It was clear that early service was not something the young people liked to do, and they were interested with modern, vibrant, interactive services and they preferred late services.

5.2 Discussion

What are the failures of the main church services?

In literature review the main church was criticised for not being able to pass on the message to the young people, with one young person claiming they do not understand their message, "*young people do not have a message that they can understand" (*Emery-wright 2008:26). This was a major issue from my finding ,the young people found the main Church services not relevant and difficulty to understand and interpret the contexts of their teaching. The findings of my research agree with Kinnaman (2011:92-93). The author identifying shallowness and boring liturgy, no creativity, anti-science, repressive doubtless and exclusive in nature. Shepherd (2016:11) adds to this issue by saying, the problem is at crucial tipping point given that nearly half of churches have fewer than five under 16 years connected to them . However, the finding of this study found even fewer number from the age 16 years and above attend the main church service s (Figure 2 & 3). Another interesting finding in literature review was contribution of Church leaders to the decline of young people. This finding is in line with Sookhdeo (2017:2) who called it progressively betrayal of the gospel by failure to role models virtues. In contrast, the Y.P in this study did not seem to be so much specific on this issue, maybe because the interview questions did not address it specifically. Nevertheless, they cited exclusion from the main church services. Most Y.P felt not needed, not valued citing examples of not being consulted in any arrangements and the running of the services. It could be said that intolerance, lack of participation was a major issue. To further support the idea the majority of the main Church services operate in non-participatory level of Harts ladder can be used to illustrate this claim(figure1). I agree with Gough (2018) that the degree of participation can be improved by assigning, consulting, sharing the decision with Y.P, encouraging participation youth ministry would add value to the Church (2018:117-118)

The aim of this study was an in-depth understanding of the main church services in relation with young people. Although the majority said the services are too old fashioned, they are some who also agreed that there is failure of duty by main churches. Prophet Joel calling the inhabitant of Judah and Jerusalem to repent urged and to tell their sons about their experiences. Equally, for their sons to tell their next generation.(ESV Joel1:3). Likewise, apostle Paul talking on salvation message to Romans wondered "*How will they ever know unless they hear and how will they ever hear unless someone preach to them" (ESV* Romans 10:14). This would imply that if the main

church services have failed to deliver the message of good news today, then how will the youth ever know that it is crucial for them to be part of the main church services and ultimately a community of Gods people. The psalmist says, "*How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity*"(ESV 133:1).

From the minister point of view (Appendix 9) the main Church is doing all it can to the young people from an early age and to some extent participate in school assemblies, chaplaincy and holiday clubs. Criticizing the new upcoming churches in the city as rooting or uprooting the Y.P from the local churches that do hard work and reaping where they did not sow. He continued to say they brain wash and manipulate the gospel to attract the youth. However, the youth worker from the new church had different view(Appendix 10), he said the reasons why the young people are attracted in great numbers to their services is because;

- Give space for the Y.P to feel included

- Encourage them to join small peer groups(Crew)

- The Y.P have their own service which is later in the day

- Service is no too long, its modern and engaging

Both of these arguments were important for my research, I think both church services are important for the growth of a Y.P. From this discussion about church services I think main churches seem to be doing the sowing while the new church in this case is nurturing and I think both need each other for their existence.

5.3 What should the Church service do to improve to keep and attract its young people?

The levels of Y.P participation shows that the church needs to improve to attract and keep them. Kara at el (2016) agrees with this finding and shows six components that a church should follow to enable it to grow and ultimately keeping the young people in church;

- To unlock keychain leadership

- To empower others especially the young people

- To empathise with todays' young people

- Take Jesus message seriously by welcoming the young people into Jesus centred way of life.

- To fuel a warm community,

- To prioritize young people in terms of resources and support and lastly to be the best neighbours(2016:43).

Moreover, Kara at el (2016) also identified Y.P contribution to church growth as:

- Inclusiveness to participate in the services to allow diversity.

- Change in mode of services such as technology and teachings

- Improve main service delivery and duration

- Enliven the church by introducing enthusiastic models

5.4 Theoretical Evaluation

The findings show that Harts ladder of participation(Fig 1) would be a good model to apply in main church services. However, I do not think using it alone will have maximum effect. The young people are in a stage where their faith is developing. According to Westerhoff (2012) faith development theory, the teens to adulthood are said to be in searching faith stage, this is a critical point where a Y.P becomes aware that personal beliefs or experiences may no longer be identical to those of the family or the church to which they belong. At this point one recognises that their faith is formed more by others than by personal conviction and will venture out to find a place where they can fit. The main church services in my literature review was found not to be friendly and the young people at this stage are looking for love and belonging, Westerhoff said "*the despair and doubts of a searching soul need to be affirmed and personal need to join others in intellectual quest for understanding*"(Westerhoff :2012). Therefore, the affirmation and meeting the needs of the young people is paramount and failure of this leads to the immigration of the young people from the main churches to the new and emerging services.

5.5 Theological Evaluation

As discussed earlier in previous chapter the need for young person to be in the temple seeking counsel was the Jesus model, but today Y.P will seek consul outside the main churches from their peers. The danger in this is seen in (Isaiah 60:5), "those that see together flow together". The fact that we are not seeing together we are not flowing together then it means we are not walking together. The model of the church that Paul speak about is the body of Christ (ESV 1 Corinthians 12:12-31), that we all belong to one body and one part cannot say it does not need the other one for if the whole body was the eye, who would hear, walk or smell. Paul speaks out saying if one body suffers the others suffer and each member of the body of Christ (Church) has a role to play and each has a particular job for them to do. Paul speaking to the young people advised them not to let anyone look down on them, but to set an example for believers in speech, conduct love, faith and purity (ESV 1 Timothy 4:12).

5.6 Conclusion.

The outcome of this study shows that most Y.P are not attached to the main churches and therefore will have nothing to do with their service. But I think the decline in Y.P attending main churches has been a trend that has been going on for many years in the main churches and was never addressed or talked about and has gone too far now that maybe to reverse it seem like an impossible mission. My research shows some steps the church can follow to created change do by listening to the Y.P and meeting their needs, by using participation model and having an intellectual conversation with the Y.P, reassuring them and affirming their believe and most of all being friendly to them. In this section I have discussed the failures of the main Church services looking into the literature review and young people contribution. I have also looked into the minister's view and a youth worker and I have looked at the ladder of participation and faith development in theoretical evaluation. Finally, I looked at some theological implication from prophet Joel and apostle Paul. In the next chapter as I conclude I will make some recommendation to the main church services as my findings dictated.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

6.1 Main findings of the study

This research study has been to find reasons for the decline in the main church services and importantly, to hear the voice of the young people and the reasons why they are not attending. As a Christian youth worker, I have a passion for the young people and concerned by their absence in my main church and my observation has been most of the main churches I have visited have few of them attending their main services. I embarked on this research to not only find the reason why but also as result to generate a resource that can be used by the main churches and youth ministry to engage with the young people. Throughout the research I have engaged with the young people of faith and non-faith together with the people who worked with them, youth workers and a minster of religion. In my research I found out that many reasons why the young people are not attending the services and surprisingly, are same reasons why they left the main churches in the first place. To add their voice in what they want, and their ideal church today was my objective. However, their answers raised questions in my mind whether the main churches we have today are fit for purpose when it comes to the young people needs. My research and literature review found enough evidence of a lot of the issues that concern the young people with regarding to the main church services. The reasons have been discussed in earlier chapters but to conclude I will put together what young people said they want in a main church service.

What the *young people said they need in a main service;*

- Inclusion-To be included in decision making and leadership. To feel part of the church
- Acceptance -To be listened to and understood
- Relevant- To have a service that has a meaning to their lives
- Modern- service to include new song, new literature, modern equipment to communicate
- Celebratory- a service that is energetic, vibrant, not boring but full of joy
- Creativity- new way of conducting a service unlike repetitive liturgy programmes
- Friendship- they like to be social, hate the idea of "keep themselves to themselves"
- Relationship- they want to have a relationship with older members who according to them are not willing to embrace them. To tell them their story and vice versa
- Modern language- the use of thou and thee are old language that the young do not understand

- Modern buildings- update them to reflect modern living. Young people said the colours in the interior some of them are outdated.
- Time- to have appropriate time not early hours on a Sunday morning

A closer look at the above list that the young people are voicing, I am worried that the main churches which as earlier mentioned are institutions not willing to change for fear of anarchy whether they will listen to the youth and give them a chance. I believe if they are going to be the heirs of the main churches services they have to feel part of it and play part in it. Paul writing to the Ephesians Christians reminded them that they are all heirs together with Israelites and urged to work together as one body(ESV Ephesians 3:6).

My research although a small-scale study made me realise the scale of the problem and actually confirms my fears that the young people do not feel any more part of the main church services. As I reflect as a mother my fear for our young people and my children are the doctrines they will pick from outside the main churches. I need at this point also to recognise a lot of hard work the main churches have done but I believe more need to be done and I think it is about time we all start working together to put our main churches services in order. I have some recommendations that were shaped by the young people contributions towards improving the main services..

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made with a focus to the main church services and a theological view

Improve the services*. " Be transformed by renewing your mind" (ESV Romans 12:2)*
- Creative – the service needs new ways of delivering the word
- New and modern language
- Modern songs and use of technology to deliver the service
- Deliver a message of hope and joy – celebrations services
- Use of participation model like Harts ladder to involve the young people

Relationship*" We are one body of Christ with many members"* (ESV 1 Corinthians 12:12-27*)*
- Improve friendliness -communication by use of buddies- a systems that works at school where they pair the young and the old to be friends

- Inclusive – to share the leadership role with the Y.P

- Mentoring – can have some groups for discussion, story-telling or question times involving young people

Relevant *"No one pours new wine into old wineskins"* (ESV Mathew 9:17)

- Service should be todays application, today's world

- Service to reflect young people hence meeting their need

- Services that Y. P can relate to

- Modern services as mentioned above

Buildings *"Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so we will no longer be a reproach"* (ESV Nehemiah 2:17)

- Renovate the old building to have a modern look

- Use of modern colour to attract the young people

- Install modern technology like screens for better engagement

6.3 Limitations of the study

The scope of this study was limited in terms of observation of only one main church so it is probable that a deeper insight could have been gained if more churches were observed. Furthermore, the experience of the Y.P in my main church cannot be compared with other main churches. Hence generalisation of the findings must be made with great caution.

6.4 Further research work

Finally, it is important to note that this study has produced an interesting finding that the main churches seem to be doing the hard work of planting when the young people are younger but the failure in follow-up and nurturing the Y.P especially in their main services has led them to move to other places. Therefore, a lot of work and new ways of conducting main services is a quest for further studies and research, "*it is foolish to expect success if we are merely imitating that which has failed historically*" (Shearman 2009:157).

WORD COUNT: 10895

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APPENDICES

<div align="center">**Appendix 1**

Ethical Clearance</div>

YM6333 Dissertation Ethical Clearance

<div align="center">**ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR**

DISSERTATION</div>

You must submit your completed Ethical Clearance form for your intended Dissertation to the module coordinator at your Regional Centre at least 3 weeks before you plan to undertake any empirical research for your Dissertation.

Your Regional Centre will give the completed form to the CYM Ethics Officer at your Centre (usually Centre Director or Research Methods tutor). The CYM Ethics Officer will inform you of his/her decision and of any suggested amendments within two weeks of receipt of your form (during term time).

The CYM Ethics Officer has power to

- **(a)   require the student to re-submit the form with changes,**
- **(b)   reject the submission,**
- **(c)   clear the student to start data collection or**
- **(d)   refer the submission to Dr Sally Nash, Module Coordinator**

Approval must be received before students begin their empirical work.

This form, with signed approval, must be bound into your final Dissertation.

Section A

Student information

Name: **NANCY HEFFERNAN**
Address: ██
Tel. No.:   **07941881465**
Email: **nancyn175@gmail.com**
Regional Centre: **INSTITUTE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY MINDLANDS**
Title of Dissertation: **Why is there a decline in young people attending main church services**

Section B

Initial declaration

This investigation will include formal study of children, young people or vulnerable adults
      Yes

This investigation will include formal study of adults   **No**

If you have answered YES to either statements above, then it is presumed that you are completing an Empirical -based Dissertation. You must complete **Sections C, D E and F**.

You will also MUST include a copy of your **Consent Form and Information sheet for human subjects**.

If you have answered NO to BOTH statements above, then it is presumed that you are completing a Library-based Dissertation. You must go straight to **Section E** and obtained your tutor's signature only, then complete **Section F.**

Section C

Please answer the following questions, and give details if answering Yes (or if necessary to explain No):

1	Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent?	**Yes** Some participants will be young people age 11-16 and will require parents to give consent for them to participate. The young adults age 17-24 will be given informed consent form to sign and where applicable the parents will be is required to give consent.
2	Will the study require access to groups or individuals because of their membership of a particular group, organisation, place of study or dwelling place? (e.g. particular youth group, school, community group)	Yes For this research some participants will be young members of a group of local people who come together to sing at my placement every Saturday. There is also another group of mainly youth workers who are CYM students. Another group will be some youth workers who work in the diocese who we meet once a month for prayers at an Anglican Church.
3	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent at the time?	No I will provide all participants with information sheet and consent forms to ensure that voluntary informed consent is given by all. The participants will have been informed and signed a consent form to take part.
4	Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics not usually addressed in your placement work?	No The topic of why the young people do not like attending main church services is normally discussed casually in my placement, but the study could raise some personal issues which could be sensitive to some. The participants can therefore withdraw their participation at any time. There is also significant support in place for any participants to access if need be.
5	Could the study induce psychological stress, anxiety, or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encounter in normal life?	No I do not anticipate this to be the case, however, if participation trigger any painful memories of the past, all participants will be encouraged to seek support from a pastoral leader they can trust should any issue arise.
6	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses) be offered to participants?	No The involvement will be on voluntary basis and will be offering an opportunity for involvement without any financial inducement.

Section D

The investigation that you are about to begin is potentially harmful to participants. You are being judged on four issues:

> Is your study valuable enough to ask other people to give up their time?
>
> Have you considered that some people might not want to take part in your study, and how they will say no (the issue of informed consent)?
>
> How can individuals leave the study if they wish to?
>
> How are you going to store and use the information you have gained?

1. What do you hope to achieve through this study?
Through this study I hope to gather information as to why majority of young people do not attend main church services. For example, most of the young people in my placement find other programmes like Sing Along (alternative service), Youth clubs, Scouting and Girl-guiding more attractive than the main Church services. I am hoping that through this study I can offer some active ways that can help the main churches to engage more effectively with the young people. I hope the study will be a useful resource for the children and youth workers to use in the main churches.
2. How will the study be carried out? (E.g. interviews, questionnaires, observation)
The study will be carried out using mixed methods approach. I will facilitate 3 different approach to collect data. I will repeat the use questionnaires as used in my pilot study, conduct a focus group and carry out an observation as methods to collect data.
To help the participants answer my questionnaire pre-set questions will be available for them to express themselves in written form. The data collected using this form of method will be reliable and valid. The questioner will consist of both qualitative and quantitative questions to ensure a good mix of data. The questionnaire will be given out to the young people on Saturday evening at my placement. The questionnaire will try to seek their understanding of a church and will have some pictures that they can relate to.
I will also have some questionnaires for the youth workers at CYM and some for the youth workers in the diocese who will also contribute by writing down their experience and observation regarding this topic.
I will facilitate a focus group with the young people at my placement, this will allow those young people who like to express themselves through conversations to contribute fully. This method will allow me to collect more data and information.
I will also carry out an observation of the young people at my placement and in the main Church service.
3. How will you collect and store the data (e.g. recording, written notes)
All the written notes and questionnaires will be collected by myself. The data and feedback collected will be typed and stored in a password protected computer and information will be anonymous, I will be using pseudonym only known to the participants. During focus group which I plan notes to be taken, notes will be kept save in a storage cabinet after its all typed in my computer which is password protected, together with any photographic material. The photographs taken during this discussion or during the research will be encrypted for safeguarding and stored in my password protected computer. All the hard copy will be stored in a locked office and kept confidential.
4. How many participants will be recruited, and by what criteria will they be selected?
I plan to have between 10-15 young people from my placement. The participants will be selected because they are active members of the group and some attend the main Church services.
Other participants are the youth workers some from CYM and others from local churches who work mainly with the young people in the church. This will enable me to widen my area of research. They are around 6 to 9 youth workers I intend to approach.

5. Outline your plan for gaining informed consent

(a) initial approach

I will have to first gain access by gaining permission from the relevant gate-keeper. This will be the ethical clearance that I am required before I start any research. Once this is granted , I will inform the group of my intention to carry out a research, I will provide all the young people with a participation information sheet a week before the research begins. This time will allow them to read the information and have an informed consent to whether they would like to be part in the research. The participation information sheet will outline the purpose of my research, explain the process, the young people who can take part in terms of their age, consent forms, right to withdrawal and where to seek pastoral care if needed. It will state the methods that I intend to carry out namely; questionnaire's, focus group and observation.

I will also propose the research to the youth workers at CYM to get a number of those willing to be part on my research and I will also propose to the other youth workers in the diocese during our prayer meeting.

(b) individual consent

I will provide everyone taking part with a consent form which they must sign before they participate. The participants will be informed about the study before through a participation information sheet which will outline the process. There will be two consent forms, one for anyone over 16 and a parental consent form for under 16.

(c) ability to withdraw

This information to withdraw from the research will be included in the Participation information sheet and the consent form. All the participants will be informed on the consent form their right to withdraw at any point during the study without providing any reason and they can also withdrawal their data they have provided up to 3 weeks before the submission date.

(d) parental consent

This will be a requirement for all under 16 who will be given a parental consent form to be filled by their parents to consent on their behalf.

6. Do you foresee any potential adverse effects of the study?

It is unlikely that there will be any adverse effects of this study, but due to the nature of the topic it is recommended to all participants to seek the support of a pastoral leader they trust should issues arise.

7. Will confidentiality be maintained and if so how?

(a) Confidentiality of the INDIVIDUAL?

To ensure confidentiality of the individuals involved, all participants filling in a questionnaire will be asked to provide a Pseudonym and participants from the focus group will be asked within a consent form if they'd prefer to be identified by their actual name or Pseudonym. This will ensure that all participants can remain anonymous if they so wish and their data could be identified should a participant request to withdraw from the study at any point.

(b) Confidentiality of the AGENCY?

To ensure confidentiality of the placement, my placement church will be referred to as the Main church.

Section E

Supervisors

Supervisors are required to have personal experience of formally studying human subjects. The professional practice agency line-manager / gatekeeper (if appropriate) has a particular responsibility to ensure the well-being of the people involved in the study.

CYM Supervisor	Professional Practice Agency Line-manager /Gatekeeper (empirical-based dissertation only)
Name: Nigel Roberts	Name: Rev. June Kirkham
Address: MCYM ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE CHILWELL LANE, BRAMCOTE NOTTINGHAM NG9 3DS	Address: ST MARTHA'S VICARAGE 135 FRINTON ROAD. BROXTOWE NOTTINGHAM NG8 6GR
Tel: 01159251114	Tel: 01159278837
Email: nigel.roberts@yfc.co.uk	Email revdjune@gmail.com
Signature Nigel Roberts	Signature: June Kirkham

Section F

I agree to conduct this study in line with the ethical guidelines laid down in the National Youth Agency document 'Ethical Conduct in Youth Work', and the ethical expectations placed on me by the Practice Agency supervisor. Signature of student ....Nancy Heffernan........ Date: .....12/01/2019.............................

Student name:

DISSERTATION ETHICAL CLEARANCE HAS BEEN APPROVED / REJECTED
FOR AN EMPIRICAL / LIBRARY-BASED STUDY

COMMENTS:

Regional Centre Ethics Officer

Name: Sally Nash

Signed: *Sally Nash*

Date: 19th January 2019

Participation Information Sheet

Study Topic: *Why is there a decline of young people in main Church services?*

My name is Nancy Heffernan and I am currently studying a degree in Youth Work, Communities and Practical Theology, @ St. John's School of Mission, validated by University of Gloucestershire. I am a student youth Worker based at St. Martha's Church, Nottingham. I have a passion for the young people and the church, and part of my role is to support the young people in the community and the Church by walking alongside them.

Purpose

You are invited to take part in a research study that will contribute to my study on why most of the young people do not attend main Church services. This will form part of my dissertation for my degree. The aim of this study will give me some understanding of young/youth people idea of a Church and some of the reasons why most of the young do not attend main Church services. I hope my research will help me to find some answers which can be used to form recommendations that could help the main Churches to engage effectively with the young/young people in the main Churches.

My research will also cover other different aspects of the church, including Early Christians Churches, Young people today or Gen Z, Children spirituality, faith development and main Churches.

Process

 I wish two carry out my research using three of the following methods. I seek to recruit 10-15 young/youth people between age 11-24 years old, the participation will be voluntary.

  (a)Questionnaire: These will be about 10 questions to fill, the questions will be designed to collect data for analysis, and they will ask primarily about your thought about Main church services and why you think the young people have lost interest. The questions will be easy as they will ask straight forward questions which can be answered with a yes or no or a number. There will also be a space if you intend to contribute more. The questionnaires will be handed on next Saturday.

If you decide to take part, you will have a copy of this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. You need only answer the questions you feel comfortable answering. It should take you about 30 minutes or less to fill. I intend to have this done during Sing Along break time, so that we I can have the questionnaires back.

  (b)Focus Group: This will be done on a Thursday meeting and will involve 5-10 young people willing to discuss this topic. It will not be more than 45 minutes. This will mainly to discuss freely the topic and give me some of your thoughts on what you think the main churches should do to attract the young and retain them.

 (c)Observation

I intend to do participant observation, this is mainly my observation on young people who attends Sing Along, other clubs and main Churches.

Consent/ Right to Withdrawal and Confidentiality

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you are under 16 you will need parent consent and therefore your parent or guardian will have to sign a consent form on your behalf.

You do not have to contribute every question or join in every activity and you can leave at any point during the session. You can also withdraw your responses up until 3 weeks before submission.

Please note all the data collected may be used in my dissertation, but the information you contribute will be stored in a place that is secure and you can choose to remain anonymous or use a pseudonym in your forms and feedback.

Pastoral Care

If you feel you need to talk or need support due to questions raised during this research please do not hesitate to contact Rev. June or any other pastoral leader who you are comfortable with.

Thank you for giving your time to take part in my research.

If you require any further information, please contact me nancyn175@gmail.com or if you have concerns regarding the way the study is conducted then contact Rev. June

Or my Dissertation Supervisor Nigel Roberts at nigel.roberts@yfc.co.uk

Nancy Heffernan,

Student Youth Worker

Children and Youth Ministry,

St. John's College, Chilwell Lane, Bramcote.

Nottingham NG9 3DS

Appendix 2 b

Participation Information Sheet for Youth Workers

Study Topic: Why is there a decline of young people in main Church services?

My name is Nancy Heffernan and I am currently studying a degree in Youth Work & Community Work and Practical Theology at St. John's School of Mission, validated by University of Gloucestershire and the National Youth Agency. I am a student youth Worker based at St. Martha's Church, Nottingham. I have a passion for young people and the church, and part of my role is to support the young people in the community and the Church by walking alongside them.

Purpose

You are invited to take part in a research study that will contribute to my study on, ***why most of the young people do not attend main Church services***?. This will form part of my dissertation for my degree. The aim of this study will give me some understanding of young/youth people idea of a Church and some of the reasons why most of the young do not attend main Church services. I hope my research will help me to find some answers which can be used to form recommendations that could help the main Churches to engage effectively with the young people.

My research will also cover other different aspects of the church, including Early Christians Churches, Young people today or Gen Z, Children spirituality, faith development, role of Christian Youth Workers and main Churches.

  Questionnaire: These will be about 10 questions to fill, the questions will be designed to collect data for analysis, and they will ask primarily about your thought about Main church services and church and why you think the young people have lost interest. The questions will be easy as they will ask straight forward questions which can be answered by a tick or circling the answer. There will also be a space if you intend to contribute more.

If you decide to take part, please sign a consent form enclosed

You need only answer the questions you feel comfortable answering.

Thank you so much for agreeing to take part.

 Please forward your answers to me; nancyn175@gmail.com or Angela.

Appendix 3

Questionnaire for the young people .

(Please circle or tick your answers.)

Q 1. Tell us your age and gender.

    11-13 / 14-16 / 17-19 / 20-24   Male / Female

Q 2. Would you consider yourself a Christian or a person with faith?

    Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   No Opinion

Q 3. Why do you like Sing Along?

    Friendly atmosphere   Modern songs   Christian context   None

Q 4. Do you go to Sunday main Services?

    Often   Sometimes   On special occasion   Rarely   Never

Q. 5   Most main Sunday Services are said not to attract young people, which one do you think is the main reason for this? (*Please tick two answers*)

- Services are irrelevant to young people
- Time of the service is a problem
- Unfriendliness/disconnected to young people
- Other better choices e.g. youth clubs
- Parents do not attend either
- None or other (*Please specify*)…………………………………….

Q 6. What do you think the church should do to attract the young people to their main services?(*Please tick two answers)*

- Be relevant- have todays application
- Modern songs
- Involve the young people in the services and leadership
- Change the Sunday services times
- Be friendly by taking to the young people, showing interest

- None or other (please specify)……………………………………

Q 7. If the todays main church service is like sing along would you attending?

Most likely   likely   Maybe   Not sure

Q 8. Which is the most important thing for a young person spiritual growth?

- Going to Sunday Services
- Fellowship with Christian friends
- Praying and reading the bible
- Following God's commandment
- None of the above

Q 9 . How important are modern Christian songs to you?

Very important   Important   Not important   Not sure

Q.10 How is faith important to you?

Very important   Important   Not important   Not sure

Questionnaire for the Youth Workers

(Please circle or tick your answers)

Q 1. Which is your church background?

  Protestant   Evangelical   Charismatic   Catholic   Anglican

Q 2. In your observation do you think it is right to say there is a decline of young people in main church services.

  Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   No opinion

Q 3. How often do young people attend Sunday main Service in your context?.

  Often   Sometimes   On special occasions   Rarely   Never

Q 4. Why do you think there has been a decline in young people attending main services? (*Please tick or circle two answers*)

- Services are irrelevant to young people

- Time is a problem

- Other better choices e.g. youth clubs

- Unfriendliness/ disconnected with young people

- Parents do not attend

- None or Other (please specify) …………………………………………..

Q 5. Which is the most important thing for a young person spiritual growth?

- Going to Sunday services

- Fellowship with Christian friends

- Praying, fasting and reading the Bible

- Following God's commandments

- Joining Youth club

- Other (*please specify*)………………………………….

Q 6. Would you say the church as a whole is doing enough to engage with the young people?

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   No opinion

Q 7. Why do you think the main Churches has not been able to engage with young people?

- Failure in their duty or calling

- Generation gap

- Unfriendly Christians

- Church too old fashion

- Cannot be bothered

- None or Other *(Please specify)……………………………………..*

Q 8. How Important do you think are the main Church services to the Young people?

  Very Important   Important   Not important   Not Sure

Q 9. What do you think the church should do to attract young people to their main services? (*Please tick or circle two answers)*

- Be relevant - have todays application

- Modern Songs

- Involve young people in the services and leadership

- Change the Sunday Service times

- Be friendly to the young people by showing interest

Other (*please specify*)…………………………………………………….

Parental consent form

I confirm that I am the guardian of the young person participating in the above study and I have had the opportunity to read and ask questions and understand the information sheet

I understand that my young person participation is voluntary and that she/he is free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason up until 3 weeks before 9th April 2019

I agree he/she to take part in this study

I agree his/her contributions being used in Nancy's dissertation

I agree for the information obtained to be used in publications

Options re confidentiality and anonymity, please say Yes or No to one of these

I am willing for my child contributions to be used with my actual name

I am willing for my child contributions to be used completely anonymously

I am willing for my contributions to be used with a pseudonym

Name of participant:…………………………………………………………………………

Name of the guardian……………………………………………………………………….

Signature:…………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………..

Appendix 5b

Consent Form

Please read the information sheet before completing this form

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason up until 3 weeks before 9th April 2019

I agree to take part in this study

I agree to my contributions being used in Nancy's dissertation

Options re confidentiality and anonymity, please say Yes or No to one of these

I agree for the information obtained to be used in publications

I am willing for my contributions to be used with my actual name

I am willing for my contributions to be used completely anonymously

I am willing for my contributions to be used with a pseudonym

Name of participant:…………………………………………………………………………

Signature:……………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………..

Appendix 6

Young People questionnaires

The table shows responses of the young people from Singalong on the issue that they highlighted in the questionnaires as simplified using Linker Scale.

Table 1 : *Young People questionnaires simplified using Likert Format.*

	Series 1	Series 2	Series 4	Series 5
Age	11-13	14-16	17-19	20-22
With Faith	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
Why Sing Along	Friendly	Modern Songs	Christian context	None
Attend main service	Often	Sometimes	On Special Occasion	None
Reasons for not attending	Irrelevant	Time	Unfriendliness	Other better choices
Solutions for church	Be relevant	Involve Y.P	Change time	Modern songs
Important aspect of spiritual growth	Sunday Services	Fellowship with others	Praying and reading bible	other
Christian modern songs	Very important	Important	Not important	Not sure
Church Important	Very Important	Important	Not important	Not sure

Youth Workers questionnaire

The table shows responses of the young people from Singalong on the issue that they highlighted in the questionnaires as simplified using Linker Scale.

Table 2:*Youth Workers questionnaire simplified using Likert format.*

	Series 1	Series 2	Series 4	Series 5
Church	Anglican	Catholics	Protestants	Evangelicals
Observation in decline	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
Y.P attendance in main service	Often	Sometimes	On Special Occasion	None
Reasons for not attending	Irrelevant	Time	Unfriendliness	Parents do not attend
Important aspect of spiritual growth	Sunday Services	Fellowship with others	Praying and reading bible	Other better choices
Is Church doing enough to engage with Y.P	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
Reasons for able to engage	Failure of duty	Generation Gap	Church too old fashion	other
Church Important	Very Important	Important	Not important	Not sure
Solutions for church	Be relevant	Involve Y.P	Change time	Modern songs

Systematic Observations

Table 3: Systematic Observation

Sing Along	Main church (Anglican	City New Church
- Evening service 6-7.30pm - Mixed group young and old - Singing group - Secular songs with Christian themes - Unstructured - Believers and non-believers - Big screen - Very friendly - Felt like a family gathering - Interactive - Socialising - About 10 Y.P - Informal learning - Local - Bible story in drama - Young people lead	- Morning service 10.30-12 noon - Traditional song - Structured - limited interactive - Restricted on what you can do or say - Expectation - Local - Formal learning - Believers - One person reading from hard copy 4 young people - Adult lead	5 o'clock youth service - Very modern, songs - Semi structured - Interactive - Freedom - Big screen - City location - Friendly ushers - Believers - Engaging teachings of the Gospel - Dancing - Formal and informal learning - A lot of young people - Young people lead in most of the activities

Appendix 9

Minister's view

INPUT FROM THE MINISTER OF CE (Church of England) FROM A GROUP DISCUSSION

Q. **What do you think of the new Church in Nottingham city in relation to immigration of young people from main churches**

Response:

- *They are looting the churches who do the hard work –*
  - *They certainly do have "their own" yp from the families who attend but my experience is that many of their yp already attend other churches and it would be interesting to know how many non-churched yp are reached through their ministry. The have sometimes claimed some of my "unchurched" yp who I have reached as their own!*
  But there is always a danger that one loses the meaning when changing the medium and sometimes the message can be lost. It requires hard work to ensure that Jesus remains central. Any tradition or denomination can find itself creating idols which get in the way of people and Jesus.
  - *There are some dynamics that seem normal to some traditions but which are quite heavy-handed and can re-stitch the Temple curtain, separating people from God turning the whole "God-direct" nature of Christianity into a more "you must do what we say from the front ti get to God" type of thing!*
  - *Requiring someone to lift their hand or come to the front to receive Jesus can be helpful for the person. However, increasingly it feels very controlling and manipulative especially for an increasing number of people who have felt caught up in negative power dynamics. I think these days this approach generally benefits the leader (making them feel good about themselves) rather than the person coming to Christ.*
  - *Demanding that someone is "re-baptised" because they didn't do it properly elsewhere I think is spiritual abuse.*

Q. **Is modern wrong? Is having those churches that can attract young people who are already tired with traditional main church services wrong?**

Response:

- No nothing wrong with being modern, *(it's essential!)* but they spend little or no time ministering in the more difficult Samaria/Galilee rather focusing on Jerusalem, and you cannot have Jerusalem without Samaria/Galilee.
- For those who do not feel they fit in they force themselves to fit in but others who cannot fit in are left hurt and feeling they don't fit in God's kingdom.

Appendix 10

New Church Youth worker view

Hi Nancy,

My name is **xxx**, I work in the youth office with **xxx**. It was great to hear from you, thanks for your encouraging email, my thoughts on the following:

1)   *Why are young people attracted to xxxx church*?

- **Xxxx** Church gives space for young people to feel included and able to be a part of church.

- We encourage young people to join our small groups (called crews) meaning they will know people who are going to be there and will be personally invited by their crew leader.

2) *Is 5 o'clock timing a factor if so why?*

- It is helpful for young people not to have to get up early to come to a service, but beside that it is just the time that we have solidified as the service that we all go to as a youth group.

3) What specific things do the church do to make them want to come?

- The service isn't too long and is modern in its style and feel which engages with what young people are used to in their day to day.

4) *Roughly how many attend the evening service and how about your main services would you say their attendance is the same? Why?*

- we have a regular attendance of 50 young people in a service of about 250. The majority of young people will come to the evening service as this is where their crew will be but some also come with their family to the morning service.

5) *What is the relationship between the Y.P and the church leaders.*

- Relationships tend to be with their crew leader more than church leaders as these will be the people who invite them to the service. But we have a great culture church wide that is invested in seeing young people feel included and be able to grow.

Hope this is helpful!

Thanks

Appendix 11: Photos