

Exploring barriers to effective youth curriculum implementation in the Trans-Orange Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church

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TITLE

Exploring barriers to effective youth curriculum implementation in the Trans-Orange Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Youth ministry

Youth ministry refers to the specialised ministry of the church that seeks to address the particular needs of young people in their own environment and respond to them as they are, and to incorporate them into the fellowship of the church, a caring Christian community (General Conference, 2005:11).

Curriculum

The term 'curriculum' is used to refer to the content and scope of the educational material used in the youth ministry programme, covering the age-specific divisions for the youth: Adventurers (6-9 years), Pathfinders (10-15 years), senior youth (16-35 years) and Master Guides (senior youth who have completed youth ministry leadership courses). The curriculum is meant to achieve the twin objectives of Adventist youth ministry: Salvation and service. It is spread out in the various compilations that are geared to suite the developmental stages of the youth in the Adventurer, Pathfinder, Ambassador and senior youth progressive class material.

Trans-Orange Conference

An association/sisterhood of congregations of Adventists as spread across the Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga and Free State Provinces, with headquarters in Johannesburg. 'TOC' and 'Conference' will be used interchangeably within the text to refer to the Trans-Orange Conference.

Districts

These are clusters of congregations under the Conference that are served by one or more pastors.

Valuegenesis

This term was coined to refer to a research study into the faith and values of young people attending Seventh-day Adventist high schools in North America in the three areas of family, school and church. The first survey was conducted in 1990, and another major survey was conducted in 2000. Related studies, also known as 'Valuegenesis', have also been conducted in other countries (Gillespie, 1993: iii; Johnn Hancock Centre, 2008).

Pathfinder club and Pathfinding

This refers to the club that is formed by youth between ten and fifteen years of age. Their activities, besides the spiritual ones, are akin to those of scouts. The term 'Pathfinding' is used to refer to the activities of this club

Adventurers

These are the children aged six to nine. They are sometimes organised into a club that caters mainly for their physical activities.

Master Guides

Senior youth who have completed youth ministry leadership courses.

Adventist core beliefs

Adventists have as a summary of their core beliefs what they call the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. These include the Trinity, salvation by grace through Jesus Christ, an eminent second coming of Christ (hence the name Adventists). They believe the law as expressed in the Ten Commandments is still binding, including the seventh day Sabbath. The theme of the great controversy between Christ and Satan undergirds their understanding of the subject of the law, human conflict, sin, salvation and God's sovereignty, and the final redemption of the human race at the end of earth's history. They hold that there is a literal sanctuary in heaven, where Christ is performing High Priestly intercessory work on behalf of humanity. There is an emphasis on the spiritual gifts to members for the purpose of edifying the church

through the various ministries within the church, including the gift of prophecy as manifested in the ministry of Ellen White as a prophet (General Conference, 2006). They subscribe to the *sola scriptura* approach to the use of the Bible and its interpretation, and regard the Biblical injunctions as normative for Christian living, viewing the Scriptures as an outcome of divine revelation, inspiration (Van Bemmelen, 2000:30-41) and illumination; also viewing it as trans-cultural and trans-temporal (Davidson, 2000:59 & 85).

Abstract

This research sought to establish the hindrances/barriers to the effective implementation of the Adventist youth ministry curriculum in the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference. The theological and Biblical foundations that underpin the church's youth ministry and its curriculum ought to provide the church with a cutting edge in its youth ministry, and ought to assist tremendously in achieving the major twin goals of its youth ministry, i.e. salvation and service. Its detailed curriculum that is guided by the insights of developmental psychology is divided into four main age-specific levels: Adventurers, Pathfinder, Ambassadors and senior youth. Beyond the spiritual emphasis and soteriological intent, the participant youth should also benefit from leadership and community service development.

The value of the curriculum, however, is only realised when it is implemented among the intended recipients; the youth of the church. Interviews with the youth ministry leaders from the various districts of the Trans-Orange Conference revealed a bleak picture of low levels of curriculum implementation. Expressed barriers to curriculum implementation and a low prevalence of progressive classes included: Low prevalence of qualified Master Guides and youth leaders; difficulties in accessing resources for use in curriculum implementation; unbalanced emphasis on physical activities at the expense of the rest of the curriculum content; lack of parental support; as well as priority issues emanating from church elders and leaders. It is very clear that the current praxis prevailing in the Trans-Orange Conference is not yielding the desired outcomes with regard to the delivery of the youth ministry curriculum.

Given the *status quo* as manifested above, it becomes imperative that new ways of praxis be explored and be implemented to effect a situation turnaround. By revisiting the problem areas as expressed in the interviews, and seeking alternative approaches to youth ministry and curriculum implementation in the territory under investigation, a new model needs to be developed that must increase the prevalence of trained and qualified youth ministry personnel, that must increase the prevalence of progressive classes, and that increases levels of resource accessibility for

congregational youth ministry curriculum providers and the youth in general. Furthermore, parents need to be trained and supported to enable them to be effective in assisting meeting the goals of the youth ministry as reflected in the curriculum, while all relevant leaders should also be assisted to reach a balance in the implementation of the curriculum and to assign appropriate priority to the programming and budgetary provisions for the youth ministry.

Abstrakte

Hierdie navorsing het gepoog om die hindernisse/struikelblokke tot die doeltreffende implementering van die Adventiste jeug bediening kurrikulum in die gemeentes van die Trans-Oranje-konferensie te vestig. Die teologiese en Bybelse fundamente wat die grondslag van die kerk se jeug bediening en sy kurrikulum onderlê behoort die kerk te voorsien met 'n voorpunt in sy jeug bediening, en behoort geweldig te help in die bereiking van die groot tweeling doelwitte van sy jeug bediening, naamlik verlossing en diens. Die gedetailleerde kurrikulum wat gelei word deur die insigte van ontwikkelingsielkunde is verdeel in vier hoof ouderdom-spesifieke vlakke: Voorslaggies, Baanbreker, Ambassadeurs en Senior jeug. Bo en behalwe die geestelike klem en soteriologiese voorneme, moet die deelnemer jeug ook voordeel trek uit leierskap en gemeenskapsdiens ontwikkeling.

Die waarde van die kurrikulum, word egter net besef wanneer dit geïmplementeer word onder die beoogde ontvangers; die jeug van die kerk. Onderhoude met die jeug bediening leiers van die verskillende distrikte van die Trans-Oranje-konferensie het ook 'n donker prentjie van lae vlakke van implementering van die kurrikulum geopenbaar. Uitgesproke hindernisse tot kurrikulum-implementering en 'n lae voorkoms van progressiewe klasse sluit die volgende in: Lae voorkoms van gekwalifiseerde Hoofregters en jeugleiers; probleme in toegang tot hulpbronne vir gebruik in implementering van die kurrikulum; ongebalanseerde klem op fisiese aktiwiteite ten koste van die res van die kurrikulum-inhoud; gebrek aan ouerlike ondersteuning; sowel as prioriteit kwessies wat voortspruit vanuit die kerk ouderlinge en leiers. Dit is baie duidelik dat die huidige praktyk wat in die Trans-Oranje-konferensie heers nie die verlangde uitkomst met betrekking tot die lewering van die jeug bediening kurrikulum opbring nie.

Gegewe die status quo soos hierbo verskyn, word dit noodsaaklik dat nuwe maniere van praktyk ondersoek en geïmplementeer moet word om 'n situasie omkeer te bewerkstellig. Deur die probleem areas soos uitgedruk in die onderhoude te herbesoek, en na alternatiewe benaderings tot die jeug bediening en implementering van die kurrikulum in die gebied wat ondersoek word te soek, moet 'n nuwe model wat die voorkoms van opgeleide en gekwalifiseerde jeug bediening personeel te verhoog, ontwikkel word, wat die voorkoms van progressiewe klasse moet verhoog, en vlakke van die hulpbron toegang tot gemeentelike jeugbediening kurrikulum verskaffers en die jeug in die algemeen te verhoog. Verder, moet ouers opgelei en ondersteun word om hulle in staat te stel om effektief te wees deur hulpsaam te wees om die doelwitte van die jeug bediening soos weerspieël in die kurrikulum te bekom, terwyl alle relevante leiers ook gehelp moet word om 'n balans in die

implementering van die kurrikulum te bereik, en 'n gepaste prioriteit aan die ontwikkeling en begroting bepalings vir die jeug bediening toe te wys.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction and background

The Seventh-day Adventist Church categorises 'youth' as the young people aged between ten and thirty. They comprise seventy percent of its membership that stands at eighteen million worldwide; and twenty-five thousand in the Trans-Orange Conference (Adventist Church). Seeing that the youth constitutes a significantly major portion of the church membership, and acknowledging that the youth are the church of today and not the church of tomorrow (Gerhardt 2005:11), it is therefore imperative for the church to ascertain a successful ministry targeting this group; otherwise, it will have failed the majority of its members. Our country still faces various challenges: crime, poverty, general breakdown of society's moral fibre; and this despite the effort put into the programme of moral regeneration (Moral Regeneration Movement, 2010; The Presidency, 2010). It can therefore be assumed that if the youth ministry programme effectively benefited the church youth, these moral ills could be countered, to some extent, in their communities and with their peers. This is possible, especially given the church's resources on social issues such as abortion, abuse, HIV/Aids, alcoholism, drug abuse, homelessness, homosexuality, illiteracy, teen pregnancy, STIs, etc. (Adventist Church, 2008).

The Adventist youth ministry department has developed a curriculum regime using a Biblical foundation and model, as well as utilising knowledge from other disciplines of human sciences. The curriculum is designed to develop the youth holistically, i.e. mind, body and spirit. Historically, the church has focused on training and helping its youth to have an experiential knowledge of God and to serve Him through service to society (White, 2002:196; Morgan-Cole, 2005:17-21; Adventist Church, 2008; Garcia-Marenko 2001; General Conference, 2005:14). However, these efforts have not always borne the desired fruits everywhere (General Conference, 2001:5).

The Adventist church advocates for a strong emphasis on youth ministry based in the local church, and not a ministry based on Conference-organised activities (General Conference, 2005:1). While this commitment is clearly articulated within the church systems, as already observed above, it appears that the opposite prevails in many local congregations. There is a gap between the curriculum supplied by the Conference and the implementation of same in local congregations.

1.2 Problem statement

The researcher has observed during his tenure as youth ministries director in the Trans-Orange Conference that the youth ministry curriculum was being implemented only in a few congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference. Upon enquiry, the current director also reported that, in 2008, only three of the 320 congregations completed the curriculum; 46 completed only part thereof. This low level of participation by local congregations in the implementation of the curriculum is problematic. As long as this status quo exists, the aims and objectives of the church's youth ministry will remain unfulfilled and the majority of the youth in the rest of the congregations where there is no implementation remains robbed of the valuable contribution that the church's youth ministry has to offer for their spiritual and social growth. This research concerns itself with the lacunal cause in the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations and will seek for solutions thereof. The focus of the research is on the difficulties relating to curriculum implementation.

1.3 Research question

This study is undergirded by ideas from Practical Theology regarding the interaction between theory and praxis as utilised in Practical Theological scientific endeavours. As such, it is imperative that the outcomes of the study on the research problem culminate in the creation of a new practical theological model to be implemented for a new, alternative praxis. The low level of implementation of the curriculum in congregations has already been stated above. This research seeks to inquire as to

the problems experienced in the implementation of the curriculum. Given that our youth are not quarantined from environmental influence, it is both urgent and important that the church be conscious of the impact of, or the lack thereof, of its own ministries to its youth because, whether or not we are aware, we are in competition with other forces, global or local, to touch the lives of our youth (Schweizer, 2008).

The Johnn Hancock Centre for youth ministry at La Sierra University has conducted extensive research around youth ministry issues and has generated useful data, particularly around the Valuegenesis research and planning project (Gillespie, 1993: iii; Johnn Hancock Centre, 2008). It is also noteworthy that at all levels of the church hierarchy there is a designated youth leader. Despite all of this, the researcher has experienced in his parishes over the years a wide gap between the church's intent and praxis (this research seeks to bridge the gap). Even Arzola's (2006:41) desirable 'prophetic youth ministry' paradigm, which surpasses other paradigms such as the activist, traditional and liberal approaches, is of no consequence when it has not reached the intended targets. Blount (2005) refers to the church's obligation to nurture youth effectively so that they experience themselves as a significant part of the faith community and that they have a duty to help grow and develop that faith community.

The research addresses the overarching question: What are the problems that are hindering the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the local congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church? And how may the curriculum be of value and worth, after the obstacles hindering the implementation of the curriculum in local congregations have been determined and resolved, when a new practical theological model has been developed for implementation in a new praxis?

The area of enquiry, as represented by the above-mentioned main research question, will furthermore be explored by investigating the following sub-questions:

1. What is the Scriptural basis for the Adventist youth ministry curriculum, and can any lack be identified in the extent up to which and actuality with which the scriptural basis is deployed in the actual curriculum?
2. What is the current extent of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the Trans-Orange Conference congregations of the Seventh-day Adventists?
3. What are the reported causes of bottlenecks in the implementation of the curriculum where these bottlenecks are experienced?
4. How do the youth leaders, elders and pastors (agencies of the curriculum) in the districts get involved and how do they experience the church's youth ministry and its curriculum?
5. From the dynamics manifested in the current traditions, having considered the empirical lessons, what solutions or new practical theological theory could be proposed for the youth leaders to maximise the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations?

1.4 Aims and objectives

The issues raised above, and in pursuance of the guiding questions raised already, the aim and objectives of this enquiry are as follows: The core aim and objective of the research are to determine barriers that hinder the effective implementation of the youth ministry curriculum and to determine and propose how the curriculum could be of value and worth in new ways that provide impetus to the implementation process in the local congregations of the Adventists in the Trans-Orange Conference.

In order to accomplish the said aim and objectives of the research, it will be necessary for the study to cover the following:

1. To determine the Scriptural basis for the church's youth ministry curriculum, and identify any lack (and the extent) in the Scriptural basis as deployed in the actual curriculum.

2. To establish the extent of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
3. To establish how the church's youth ministry programme filters through from the 'shelves' of the church's headquarters where it is developed, through to the youth in the local congregations and the problems that hinder the implementation of the curriculum in affected congregations.
4. To determine the level of involvement and experience of youth leaders, elders and pastors in the youth ministry and curriculum implementation.
5. In order to propose a new practical theological theory for implementation in the church (new praxis), the dynamics manifested in the tradition, the status quo and the empirical lessons will be considered hermeneutically to enable the introduction of a new practical theological model for youth ministry in the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum.

1.5 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the Adventist youth ministry's curriculum will be of value and worth only when the obstacles hindering the implementation of the curriculum in local congregations have been determined; when a new practical theological model has been developed for implementation in a new praxis.

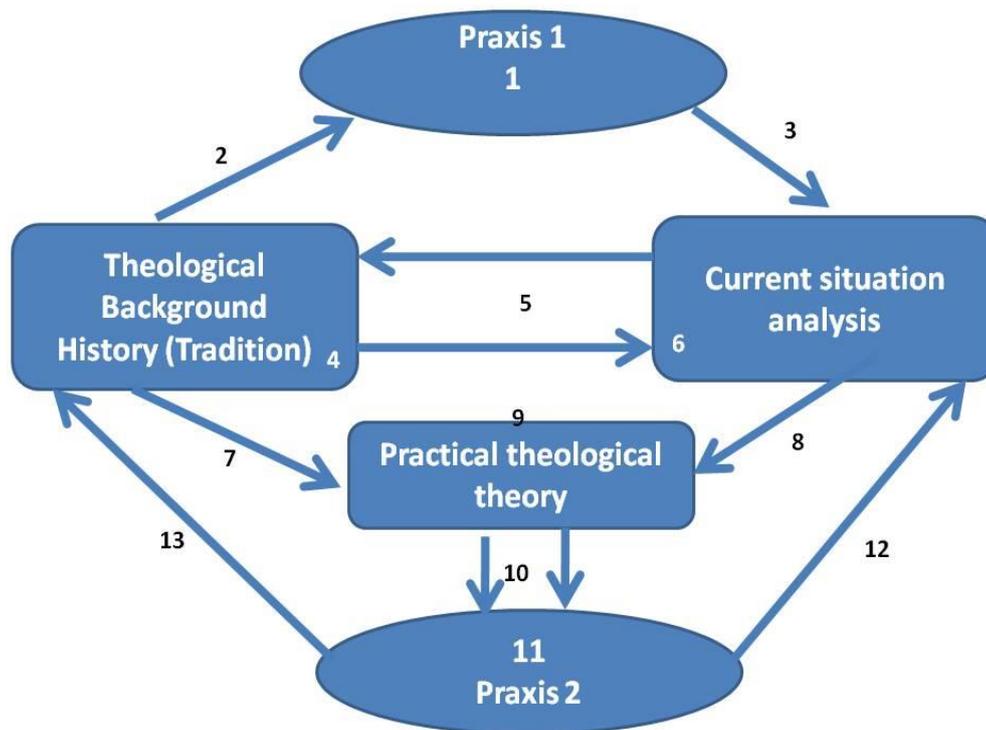
1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 The Rolf Zerfass Model for methodology

In this research, the Practical Theological Model of Zerfass will be followed. This model (as discussed by Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:34-36) will guide in moving from problem praxis to solution praxis. As a methodological model, it explains/shows the relationship and dynamics between theory and praxis, and also charts a possible movement from a (problem) praxis to a new theory and praxis (p. 65). For the purpose of this research, the model should assist in moving the research from the

problem praxis around the youth ministry curriculum implementation to a new praxis where the outcome will be a curriculum that reaches the congregations' youth.

The Zerfass model is illustrated by the following diagram as discussed by Heitink (1999:113,114) and Heyns and Pieterse (1990:35, 36), with minor modifications by the researcher.



The arrows among the various aspects indicate in a simple way how these aspects affect and influence each other. The outcomes of these dynamics result in movement from the unsatisfactory praxis (praxis 1) to another more satisfactory practical theological theory and praxis (praxis 2). For the purpose of this research, the expectation is movement from a low-level implementation of the youth ministry curriculum to a higher level of implementation. When we explore the youth ministry curriculum implementation, the following emerges: By investigating the current praxis 1, we are led to realise that it is influenced by (arrow 2) Adventist (youth ministry) theological tradition (4). As the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum is currently low in the area under study, we are led to explore/analyse (3) the current situation (6) through an empirical study to establish where and why the bottlenecks in the implementation

occur. Arrows 5 indicates the interaction between the various factors in 4 and data obtained from 6 (Theology, youth ministry history, church history, etc.). Comparing 4 and 6 leads to a new Practical Theological theory (9), which leads (10) to a new, more satisfactory praxis (11), in this case a more effective and widespread implementation of the youth ministry curriculum. Arrows 12 and 13 show how praxis 2 needs to be tested against the situation (4) and the tradition (4), a process that could possibly lead to a further modification of the new Theological theory from the exercise.

1.6.2 Practical Theological basis theory

Practical Theology concerns itself with the evaluation and analysis of applicable theories informing praxis, and where these theories prove unsatisfactory/ineffective, must develop new theories to enable new and better praxis (Woodward & Pattison, 2000: xiii; Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:19, 21). Heyns and Pieterse (p. 57) further refer to Practical Theology's basis theory (Practical Theological ecclesiology), which focuses on the functioning of an actual congregation, unlike ecclesiologies – conceptions developed by systematic theology for the (abstract) church. The core functions of the congregations are kerygma, koinonia and diakonia. Heitink (1999:251) clusters homiletics and liturgics together under kerygma. Van der Ven (1993:41) maintains the four distinctive functions of the church by listing liturgy as another role distinct from the other three. The focus of this research is on the constraints in the functioning of youth ministry experienced at local congregations. Determining the basis theory here becomes critical to establish the foundational Biblical-dogmatic and ethical-normative grounds (Letšosa, 2005:12) for the Adventist youth ministry as it currently stands. Letšosa (2005:12) further postulates that an understanding of the scriptural claims for praxis should precede the quest for answers to problems. In this research, it will be done through a (exegetical) scriptural/literature study; examining the church's scriptural foundation for its youth ministry. Through a literature/records review at the Church's regional youth ministry office, and the local congregations being studied, the study will establish the causes and the extent of the problem under review. By examining the theory, one is enabled to evaluate the praxis (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:28). As one notices the gap between theory and practice, how the

church struggles between the ideal and the real (p. 63; Browning, 1996:6), an occasion is set for the review of both the theory and the praxis. The focus of this study is what is happening in the local church, because that is where it is opportune to work towards closing the gap between theory and praxis, between the ideal and the real, a view shared by Heyns and Pieterse (p. 66).

1.6.3 Meta-theory

1.6.3.1 Empirical theory

While the use of the word 'empirical' may suggest a leaning on positivism, empiricism, the dominance of the intellect and an observable phenomenon, its use in Practical Theology has more to do with theological theories, the contexts where theologising takes place, the experience that people have of their environment, and the effect that people have on their environment (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990: 71,72), a conscious process of comparing, induction, deduction, evaluation and testing (Heitink, 1999: 233; van der Ven, 1993:114). In keeping with the Zerfass model (as discussed by Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:51), the study will be enriched by consulting other disciplines apart from theology, but in addition to theology, to shed more light in possible effective methods in providing religious education to church youths. While it can be said that science and religion are talking about different things (Morris & Petcher, 2006:5), human sciences provide useful tools for Practical Theology (Browning, 1996:81; Ballard & Pitchford, 1996:61). Education and anthropology are deemed relevant fields to be considered for this purpose, because of their affinity to human life and the way these disciplines have influenced the practitioners in the human sciences and pastoral work (Browning, 1996: 81). These human sciences do not only take an interest in the role of religion in people's lives, they also offer insights useful in Practical Theology, because Practical Theology – pastoral theology in particular – takes place within a social setting (Northcott, 200:151). McMinn (1996:8, 9) refers to what he calls interdisciplinary and intra-disciplinary integration, referring to the relationship between the human sciences and theology.

In an attempt to have a representative picture of the extent of the youth ministry curriculum implementation or lack thereof, it has been decided that all the youth

ministry structures at district level in the Trans-Orange Conference will be interviewed. Continuing with qualitative interviews with the youth leaders in the fourteen districts of the Trans-Orange Conference, the data/experiences will be useful in forming the basis for the proposal of a possible new theory of praxis, which, hopefully, may lead to the actual implementation of a new praxis. Using the qualitative approach to conducting interviews, the research will establish the causes and problems related to the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations.

1.6.3.2 Qualitative research method

The researcher has chosen the qualitative approach to conducting research. Mouton and Marais (1990:155) briefly suggest that qualitative research is research that does not include statistics, but includes hermeneutics, ethno-methodology and phenomenology. In other words, measurements and quantification are avoided (Slife & Williams, 1995:199). This approach focuses on three types of knowledge, i.e. knowledge of the other (how human beings view and interact with the world), phenomena (e.g. events, methods and the impact of change) and reflexive knowing (when researchers reflect on their own processes) (Swinton & Mowat, 2006: 32, 34). It focuses on the quality (the essence or ambience of something) of the experiences of the participants in the research, using narrative description of the experiences and not reducing data to numerical scores (as is the case in quantitative research), valuing both the process and the product of the process; analysing the data inductively as opposed to moving from a set hypothesis; and observing the meaning given to experiences by the participants (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006: 430-432, Davies, 2007: 191,192). In relation to quantitative approach to research, qualitative research moves from deductive to inductive, from facts to contexts, from statistics to emotions, from a rational focus to a focus on experience, from explanation to understanding and from objective to subjective and inter-subjective (Swinton & Mowat, 2006:60; van Rensburg, 2007: 7). While quantitative methodology derives meaning from the researcher's perspective, qualitative methodology derives meaning from the perspective of the research participant (Schurink *et al.* 2006). Its assumption is that human beings are interpretive creatures (Swinton & Mowat, 2006:29). That is the reason why the qualitative research approach places great emphasis on the

participants' perspective when it comes to interpreting events, actions and norms. While the research will have descriptive elements in the process, it must lead to an analysis and explanation of the phenomena being described (Cartledge, 2003:69, 70). At the point of making research observations, qualitative researchers include elements of subjectivity and personal experience, personal involvement with events or phenomena, a non-structured approach, including unexpected events in the recording and contextual consideration (Mouton & Marais, 1990:162).

1.6.4 Interviews

Interviews with research participants are important because they allow the researcher to verify the accuracy of what he may have observed and as well as the impression that was formed. They also provide extra information that cannot be gathered by mere observation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006:455). Maintaining the qualitative method of interviews (and reviewing relevant literature), the research will determine the level of involvement and experiences of the youth ministry leaders, elders and pastors. These interviews will adopt a semi-structured and unstructured format, which is characteristic of the qualitative approach. The term 'semi-structured' is used to refer to the format of the interview, where there is a set of questions prepared for the interview, but provision is made to allow new questions to emerge and be entertained during the interview (Cartledge, 2003:71,72). This approach should assist in guarding against possible prejudice. Experience/behaviour and opinion/value questions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006:458) will assist the researcher in establishing the issues around the youth ministry curriculum implementation.

The Trans-Orange Conference has more than three hundred congregations wherein youth ministry must take place. The researcher will interview youth leaders from each of the fourteen districts in the Trans-Orange Conference as district groups. Districts comprise clusters of congregations. Permission will be secured from the district youth federations to involve the entire member youth leaders that are active in their structures. The final leaders to be interviewed will be the youth ministry directors at the Union and Conference headquarters. The interviews will be guided by the research question/problem and qualitative research principles and will be electronically recorded with the permission of the participants. The use of a digital

recorder (in conjunction with notes taking) is preferred because it will assist in the accurate and un-interpreted recording of the conversation (Frankel & Wallen, 2006:461). Transcripts will be made available to the participants and to an independent decoder. The independent decoder will analyse the transcript, looking for thematic threads and structuring them. "Analysis is a process of breaking down the data and thematizing it in ways which draw out the meanings hidden within the text" (Swinton & Mowat, 2005:57). The researcher will use the information in the development of a new theological theory for praxis.

1.7 Praxis theory

There is a persistent and indissoluble relationship between praxis and theory (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:24). "All our practices, even our religious practices, have theories behind and within them" (Browning, 1996:6). Praxis is applied theory, never value-free. What is observable in praxis is actually an expression of underlying assumptions of how things ought to be (Ballard & Pritchard, 1996:55, 66). Heyns and Pieterse (1990:30) postulate that theory must be critical towards praxis. With this in mind, in order to propose a new practical theological theory for implementation in the church (new praxis), the dynamics between the traditions, the status quo and the empirical lessons will be considered hermeneutically to enable the introduction of a new practical theological model of youth ministry in the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum. Emphasis is here placed on the interpretive (hermeneutical) exercise that encompasses the dynamic relationship of the three elements above (traditions, the status quo and the empirical lessons). It is the reflective engagement on the unsatisfactory praxis (and the texts, norms, ideas or theories that inform the problem praxis) in the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum that occasions a possibility for a new praxis (Browning, 1996:6). This creates the advent of a new praxis that enables an effective implementation of the youth ministry curriculum within the congregations of the Adventist church within the Trans-Orange Conference. When this shall occur at these congregations, which are the loci of the youth of the church, and when the aims and objectives that undergird the curriculum are realised, then youth ministry shall have achieved its goal.

1.8 Schematic summary

Schematically, the problem statement, aim and objectives and the methodology of the research can be summarised as follows:

Problem statement	Aim and objectives	Methodology
What are the problems that are inhibiting the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the local congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church?	To establish the factors contributing to the bottlenecks in the delivery of the youth ministry curriculum from the church's headquarters to the local congregations in the Trans-Orange Conference.	The Zerfass model of working with problem situations where change is desirable will guide the empirical study on the subject. A literature study and interviews will be conducted.
What is the Adventist theological basis for youth ministry?	To establish the theological basis for a youth ministry imperative within the Adventist Church informing the current praxis of youth ministry.	Investigate, through the review of literature, the basis for the Adventist youth ministry.
What is the extent of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the local congregations within the Trans-Orange Conference?	To establish the extent of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations.	By means of a literature study and interviews.
What are the reported causes of bottlenecks in the implementation of the curriculum where these bottlenecks are	Establish how the church's youth ministry programme filters through from the 'shelves' of the church's headquarters where it is	Using the qualitative approach to conduct interviews, establish the causes and problems related to the

experienced?	developed, through to the youth in the local congregations and the problems that hinder the implementation of the curriculum in affected congregations.	implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations.
How do the youth leaders, elders and pastors (conduits of the curriculum) in the districts get involved and experience the church's youth ministry and its curriculum?	Determine the level of involvement and experiences of youth leaders, elders and pastors in the youth ministry and curriculum implementation.	Maintain the qualitative method of interviews, and review relevant literature, determine the level of involvement of the youth ministry leaders, elders and pastors.
What possible solutions can one propose to enable the youth leaders to implement the youth ministry curriculum at a larger scale and in a more effective way within the congregations where they serve?	The dynamics between the tradition, the status quo and the empirical lessons will be considered hermeneutically to enable the introduction of a new practical theological model of youth ministry in the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum.	Synthesise and interpret the meta-theories and the empirical studies to propose the new praxis.

1.9 Ethical considerations

The researcher's ethical consideration will be concerned with the quality of interaction between the self and the other (Rossouw & Van Vuuren, 2005: 3). He must consistently attempt to uphold the value of objectivity and maintain integrity during the research; follow ethical publishing practices; be sensitive to and respect the participants' rights to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, seeking to achieve informed consent from the participants (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006:462); give full disclosure to them about the research purpose (Davies, 2007:44-46, McTaggart, 1997:27-28); and protect them from harm (physical, psychological and emotional). In keeping with these ethical values, information sheets concerning the details of the purpose of the research work, the rights of the participants (including the right to terminate their participation at any stage they may decide to), the confidentiality clause and other information will be given to all participants for their records and the researcher's. These will be read, discussed and signed by all participants.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

The chapters in the study will be structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement, purpose and methodology

Chapter 2: Discussion of theory: Zerfass' model, consideration of the traditional theological theory of youth ministries within the Seventh-day Adventist church, its praxis and methodologies in youth ministries. Literature study.

Chapter 3: Interviews and analysis of the interviews. Discussion of the qualitative research and results. Analysis of the interviews and observe themes emerging from the interviews.

Chapter 4: Literature control to confirm and define the results. Discussion of proposals and ideas that can assist to resolve the problem: A development of a new practical theological theory for a new praxis.

Chapter 5: Suggestions and proposal for new model for praxis. Suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2

2.1 Introduction

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that the curriculum that the Adventist church uses for its youth ministry, apart from its Biblical foundations, was also developed using knowledge from other disciplines. Furthermore, as stated in the first chapter, this curriculum is the instrument used in local congregations to reach the youth where they are in the church's youth ministry programme. This chapter will include an overview of the curriculum for the Adventist youth ministry in its age-based three levels of youth ministry. In the preceding chapter, one of the stated aims was to determine the scriptural basis for the church's youth ministry's curriculum. This will be done in the current chapter. In keeping with the Zerfass model that was adopted in the first chapter to conduct the research, the current chapter will focus mainly on the *status quo* within the church regarding the curriculum for youth ministry. A more thorough evaluation will follow in the ensuing chapters. While a portion of this chapter will be presenting an overview of the curriculum for youth ministry, this chapter will start with a brief history of Adventist youth ministry and the philosophy of Adventist youth ministry will also be covered. It will also include a discussion of the Adventist theological notion of the Remnant as it undergirds sections of the service aspect of its youth ministry. The approach will at this stage be more descriptive than evaluative regarding the curriculum; however, will be a brief reflection on the curriculum.

2.2 Brief history of Adventist youth ministry

The organisational foundation for the church to start having an intentional ministry to its children and youth was laid in 1852 when the church organised the Sabbath School department, which catered for the various ages in the church, including adult members. However, it was twenty-seven years later, in 1879, that the church formed the first youth organisation (General Conference, 2005: 14). Ever since that year, the Adventist church youth ministry developed and evolved over the years. This growth includes periodically revisiting the philosophical and theological foundation for the

ministry, and incorporating ideas from psychology and sociology. Today, there is a youth ministry desk at all five organisational levels of the church, with the highest level, the General Conference, tasked with the primary duty of providing overall leadership and resources for youth ministry for the world church. When the Sabbath School department was established in 1852, and the foundation was laid for the church to start thinking about ways to nurture its youth, the youth themselves initiated a youth organisation in 1879. Still, in 1852, James White started publishing the Youth Instructor, a magazine that targeted church youth (General Conference, 2005). Teenagers Luther Warren and Herry Fenner from Michigan in the USA initiated a local church youth organisation, supported by the adults in their congregation. The congregation, through its board, appointed adult leaders to focus on directing the congregation to meet the needs of youth in nurturing them spiritually (General Conference, 2005: 14). Ellen White, regarded by the church as an inspired writer, wrote in 1893:

We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organised plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving them reason of the hope that is within them, and honouring God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labour (General Conference, 2005: 14).

Her writings further deepened the church's commitment to its youth. She wrote again: "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!" (White, 2002:196).

In 1891, a youth society was organised in Antigo, Wisconsin and in 1893 the Young People's Society of Christian Service was organised in Lincoln, Nebraska. Eight years after this, the Ohio Conference was the first to organise youth ministry at Conference level in 1899. Two years later, youth ministry was introduced and organised at the highest organisational tier – the General Conference, and it was placed under the department of Sabbath School (General Conference, 2005: 15). It

had spread from the United States to Australia, Europe, Jamaica, Canada and other countries by 1905 (Morgan-Cole, 2005: 21). By 1907, a dedicated department for youth ministry was established and named: Seventh-day Adventist Young People's Department of Missionary Volunteers (Youth Department, 2002: 9, General Conference, 2005: 15). The name was chosen to clearly indicate the focus on service and outreach as an integral part of the youth ministry. Records indicate that shortly after 1907, youth societies were formed in Africa, Tahiti, Singapore, Fiji, Portugal, Bermuda, Japan, the Philippines and Central America (Morgan-Cole, 2005: 32). By 1918, the first youth ministry curriculum for junior youth was crafted and, in 1922, the progressive class work curriculum for junior youth and a leadership training course were developed for senior youth (Youth Department, 2005: 16). In 1928, the first Adventist youth congress was held in Germany and 3 000 youths and their leaders attended. In 1947, 12 000 youths attended the American youth congress in San Francisco. In 1999, an international Pathfinder Camporee saw 22 000 young people gather in Oshkosh, Wisconsin under the slogan 'Discover the Power' (Morgan-Cole, 2005: 21, 33).

In 1972, the department's name was changed to Youth Department of Missionary Volunteers and a hundred years after the inception of youth ministry within the church, in 1978, it was again changed to Adventist Youth (Youth Department, 2002: 8; General Conference, 2005: 16). The change from 'Missionary Volunteers' was necessitated by the negative connotations of the word 'missionary', where it was associated with colonialism in many countries, with associated oppression and exploitation (Morgan-Cole, 2005: 33).

Various commissions on the youth ministry of the church were tasked, over the years, with the purpose of studying various approaches to and issues in youth ministry so that the necessary adjustments, where needed, could be made to enhance effective youth ministry. Reference has already been made in Chapter 1 to the Valuegenesis study that was commissioned to study trends in the church youth's lives and how faith and values can be effectively inculcated. The objective of the youth reaching communities with service was re-affirmed in 2001 in Brazil at its international youth congress: "Equip and empower youth for a life of service within God's church and the community" (General Conference Youth Department, 2001).

After the re-organisation of the youth ministry department into the Adventist Youth Department, the Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministry Department has served the youth through three levels; namely, Adventurer Club for six to nine years old; Pathfinder club for 10 to 15 years old; and Senior Youth/Young Adults for 16 to 31+ years old. At the 2001 World Youth Leadership Convention, an action was taken, charging the General Conference Youth Department to develop material for a new level (The Ambassadors) to meet the need of the youth, ages 16 to 21, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (General Conference, 2006: 3). The Ambassador Club is not intended to replace the AYS, but instead, to strengthen the current senior Youth/Young Adult ministry of the church. This new level provides a structured and organised way for 16 to 21 year olds to become actively involved in their church, both locally and globally.

2.3 Theological and Biblical foundations for youth ministry

More than twenty years ago, Dausey (1983: 23) stated a timeless assertion: "...the theology of the youth worker is ultimately more important than his or her strategy or methodology. Of course the study of theology does not eliminate the need for the study of methods, but method must flow from a sound theology". In more recent years, De Vries (2004: 160) cautions that when youth ministry thinking and strategy formulation are done outside the Biblical faith and dependence on God's grace, leaders are likely to end up relying on human strategies and methods that fail to realise how youth ministry is actually first and foremost God's business. However, no human strategy and methods, independent from God, His Word and His Spirit, can yield genuine repentance and saving faith in the church youth. In De Vries' words: "We have no more power to make a young person grow faith than we have to make a bean sprout" (p. 160). We can, however, as human agents, fertilise the ground and water the seeds. We can work alongside God as He does what is beyond us. What are the Biblical foundations upon which the church is founding its youth ministry; what is its theology for youth ministry? Scriptures do provide insights into how to grow the youth's faith and factors that encourage openness to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in their lives (Richards, 1983: 16).

2.3.1. Why a theology for youth ministry

While there may not be a clearly-defined theology for 'youth', nor one for youth ministry (Gerhardt, 2005: 11), there are Biblical concepts for an approach to working with youth in cultivating their faith experiences.

Gerhardt (p. 11) identifies six reasons why a theology for youth ministry may need to be developed:

- a. There is a growing recognition that the youth of the church are an important segment of society.
- b. The Adventist church has become a youth church where most of the world regional Divisions have a majority membership of baptised members under the age of 30 years.
- c. The Adventist youth today in many countries are becoming highly educated.
- d. The values, principles, and Biblical faith of our church need to be plausible for the next generation.
- e. The Adventist youth today are crying to have a 'piece of the pie' in the plans and goals of the world church.
- f. The 'dos and don'ts' of youth ministry must come from a reflection on the relationship between the youth, the church and our Biblical faith.

2.3.2. The Biblical concepts of youth ministry

The term 'youth ministry' will not be found in the Scriptures. However, if we go by Warden's (1993: 5) definition of youth ministry: '...the act of encouraging Christian growth in young people", the concept of youth ministry is clear in the Scriptures. The Old Testament gives instruction on what and how to do in instilling faith in the lives of the young. The New Testament also has ideas for adults on how to or not to bring up children in the Lord. Scripture also provides guidelines that can be used to formulate models for youth ministry. The first divine provision for the planting and nurturing of faith is the family; where the children are surrounded by God-fearing adults who are present when the youth are 'lying down' and when they are 'rising up' (Deuteronomy

4: 9; 6:4-9; De Vries, 2004: 162). The Bible presents various approaches to planting and growing faith in children/youth. Following are four approaches to implant faith values in youth.

2.3.2.1. Instruction

Allen (1995: 19) is of the opinion that Deuteronomy 4:9; 6: 6, 7 direct adults to use instruction as a means to instilling faith in children/youth. So does Ephesians 6: 4. Scripture-based instruction should form the basis and foundation of youth ministry. Through instruction, youth may be led to the understanding of the will of God for them as revealed in the Scriptures, with the purpose of leading them to an experiential relationship with God.

Indications are that instruction needs to take place within the shared life experiences of the instructor and the youth, even within the environment of daily life experiences (Richards, 1976: 44). The environment can form a powerful context for object lessons to assist in enhancing the youth's learning experience. By taking advantage of the environment and the context where life experiences are taking place, faith and Christian values can be made to be relevant in today's life (Worschech, 2005: 98, 99).

Christ spent time with His disciples using the method of instruction to grow them in their faith and mission to which He had called them (Mark 9: 30, 31). Christ's approach to assisting His disciples grow their faith and understand His mission can serve a useful approach to reach and prepare the youth, both for their personal growth and involvement in mission (Morgan-Cole, 2005: 92, 93).

2.3.2.2. Reminding

By pointing the youth to past experiences that evidence God's interest and interventions in the affairs of people known to the youth (not excluding the youth's experiences) (Deuteronomy 6: 20-23), it can be expected that the youth's current faith will be strengthened and they will be reassured of God's interest in their current lives. It might also assist in clarifying how God works in the affairs of humankind.

2.3.2.3. Challenging

Deuteronomy 6: 24, 25. The youth can be challenged to order their lives in harmony with God's revealed will, expressing confidence in them that they are capable of making the choice, and that there are positive outcomes that they can expect as they do. While verse 24 refers to God's command to obey, verse 25 indicates the question of choice to obey or not to obey (with the positive outcomes of choosing to obey). Youth should be challenged beyond the desirable experience of a saving relationship with Christ, to discipleship and a growth towards Christian maturity and obedience (De Vries, 2004: 165). Youth leaders have a duty firstly to challenge the youth to make positive choices, to hold high the value of living a God-fearing life and to be able to walk with them through the consequences of their choices (Allen, 2005: 58). It is essential to celebrate the prosperity of the youth that has come as a consequence of their choice to live right, but also to be redemptive when they struggle with the consequences of their wrong choices.

2.3.2.4. Modelling

Deuteronomy 6: 8, 9, 17, 18. There are instructions on the specifics that the adults were to do and the symbols that they were to put in place. They were to be the first to live by the directives and the imperatives from God, and then they were to instruct their children. It was then expected that the children would respond to what they see/hear with interest and actively seek for meaning. Adults and youth leaders should model how to make choices in life, and this will also demonstrate to the youth what the consequences of those choices will be (Allen, 2005: 59). It has been said by some that they would rather see a sermon than hear one; or put differently, they would learn better from what is 'caught' than from what is 'taught' (Case, 2005: 24). The expected outcomes of modelled teaching is that it will go beyond communicating ideas (as happens in formal classroom settings) to the formation of values, and to inform behaviour, feelings, motives and desires (Astely, 1996: 195; Richards, 1976: 44,46; 1Timothy 4:12; 1John 2:5,6)

Case (2005: 24) refers to conditions that make it possible for modelling to occur. There must be frequent and long-term contact with the youth. A warm, loving

relationship must characterise the fellowship with them. The youth must be exposed to the inner state of the leader/model. The youth must also observe the model under a variety of settings and situations. There must be consistency and clarity as to the behaviour and values of the model, and these must correspond with the beliefs and standards held. These conditions argue for a relational approach to youth ministry, as opposed to an incident- and programme-based approach. During the later teen years, interest in institutional religion is at the lowest, but loyalty to relationships at its highest, making the relational approach to youth ministry for this group critical (De Vries, 2004: 165).

2.4. The four theological motifs that underpin the Adventist approach to youth ministry

The church's broader theological positioning and understanding impact directly on its theological basis or foundations for its youth ministry. Gerhardt (2005: 11-15) lifts four theological motifs that are central in Adventist theological thinking. These are also foundational to its youth ministry.

2.4.1. The anthropological motif

The notion of man being created in the image of God, as found in Genesis 1: 26; 9:6, is foundational; human beings have their origin in God's decision to create them. They find their identity and worth in Him as their creator and originator. Even in their fallen nature, humans are still connected to God through His initiative of salvation and redemption. Adventists hold that Christian education is incomplete until it leads to the harmonious development and restoration of the whole person; physical, moral, mind and spiritual, back to the image of God. "As the perfection of His character is dwelt upon, the mind is renewed, and the soul is re-created in the image of God" (White 2002: 7). While this restoration will continue after redemption, it must be started here and now.

God has placed with humans the capacity to be inventive, constructive and to develop, thereby placing with mankind the capacity to grow. Unlike the rest of creation, human beings can take responsibility for their choices and actions and to

make intelligent decisions (Genesis 2: 15-17) with freedom of choice (Genesis 3: 1 ff.)

The fall of humanity as captured in Genesis 3 spells out humanity's loss of integrity, identity, and unity and the resultant tension between what they believe and their practice. It is from this fallen nature that humans have to seek redemption and restoration.

Humanity has been given rulership over the rest of creation and has a responsibility on how they relate to creation surrounding them, including fellow humans as an indication of how they are relating to the Creator God. There is no room for domination and exploitation within these relationships, including with nature, without jeopardising the relationship between the Creator God and His humans.

The implication of this motif for youth ministry is that, firstly, we need to recognise that the youth also bear the image of God and their state is of equal value to that of adults. Domination over the youth is domination over humans that are in the image of God, and it is an affront to God. In as much as all humans are created with a capacity for growth, the youth must be given space for growth and maturity. Responsibility should be part of humans in all stages, including the youth stage. The search for meaning and identity, though the modus operandi may differ, is part of all humans' developmental stages, including the youth. Personal faith (as opposed to the religion of the church) will provide the restoring power in one's life

2.4.2. The Christological-Soteriological motif

Christ is not humanity's 'big brother', but the New Man, the restoration of the lost/distorted image of God. Christ has become that 'image of the invisible God' (Colossians 1: 15); a Saviour of humanity, putting human beings right with God in reconciliation. In Him, a human being's identity is restored in atonement (2 Corinthians 5: 18ff.). God unconditionally accepts humans in Christ and people are drawn back to God because of His love and grace. The divine power that accompanies the ministry of reconciliation, in the person of the indwelling Spirit, enable humans to live a life that reflects more and more of the restored image of

God in them. Christ is the Saviour, model and provider of real self-worth as manifested in His sacrificial death on the cross for human beings. In Him, what was impossible has become possible; he has restored human dignity, the power to live in the Spirit with the attendant fruits of the indwelling Spirit: kindness, loving and caring; the model of confidence and belief in people, self-control and responsibility.

The implication of this motif for youth ministry is that no-one is born a Christian; all are born under the condition of guilt and grief. All are born with an innate inner desire for good. Often, the youth struggle with an experience of a diminishing sense of self-worth, but the teaching of righteousness by faith is the means to a personal belief system and the experience of unconditional acceptance is the source for conversion. The developmental needs of the youth are unconditional acceptance, faith, hope and love. However, the development of a personal relationship with Christ is more important than acceding to a belief system.

2.4.3. The Ecclesiological motif

Just like the human body, the church, the body of Christ, is the creation of God (1 Corinthians 12: 12ff.). Christ is the only head of the body and the individual believers are members of this body. All church structures must therefore remain in harmony with this Christocentric restructure. All members must be esteemed properly regardless of their stature with regard to gender, age, wealth, etc. The all-encompassing principles of all Christian congregations should be the proclamation of the gospel, service to God's world, and fellowship of the believers. This should set people free from bondage or any suppression by evil powers and call them into the kingdom of God. The church, as a mediating agent and the advocate of the oppressed, suffering, fearful and for those who need the life-giving power of hope and forgiveness must make its presence in the world to be both relevant and life-transforming. These duties must serve all humans – churched and un-churched regardless of age.

The first implication of this motif is that the youth are members of the body of Christ with equal worth as the rest of the membership. The church has to understand the developmental tasks of its youth, helping the youth in the search for meaning in life.

It must provide in the nurturing needs of its youth, investing time and means into this. The youth are called upon to participate in service to others, while fostering their personal faith. It wins its youth by convincing and convicting, not by coercing.

2.4.4. The Eschatological motif

In the eschatological motif (Matthew 28; Revelation 21), Christ is not only Lord of the *kairos*¹ at the time of the saving acts of God, but is now Lord of the *chronos*,² of the historical periods of time, the Alpha and Omega of the world's history. The plausible aspect of eschatology is not the end by means of destruction, but the end with a new beginning. While it is the end of all that is bad and evil, it is the beginning of all that is good and fair. It is the establishment of un-ending peace, justice and righteousness. His return is the climax for the individual believers, the realisation of their hope and the reward of their faithfulness. Humans are transformed in full to the likeness of God (1John 3: 1, 2). Promise has become reality. Hope has become experience. It is within the eschatological motif that we are assured that until then, God, in the meantime, remains caring towards the affairs of this planet and its people. Since the church has a future, it takes the present seriously.

The implication of this motif for the church and its youth ministry is that its worship becomes a celebration of its hope in God and the future He has carved for it. The church encourages its youth to discover its gifts (charismata), demonstrating to its youth their present and future value – how they are needed for the present and for the future of the church by placing responsibility and involvement in their hands.

The church's eschatological theology has a great bearing on how it sees God involved in the life of the church and the world. It informs its notion of the 'Remnant', which notion will be discussed next, as it influences its praxis of youth ministry.

¹ Time in its qualitative reality, as in the opportune moment when something priceless occurs, time in terms of moment of significant events. Mark 1: 14; 15. Rom 5: 6. The end of the world is both the end of sin, pain and suffering and the beginning of eternal peace. It is a great time (not chronological time) when God saves and redeems.

² The quantitative aspect of time, as in hours, minutes and seconds. Gal. 4: 4. We have confidence in The Christ of the *kairos* in the eschatological sense, because of how He is Christ of the *chronos*. He remains Emmanuel between the Alpha and the Omega.

2.5. The notion of the Remnant and the service aspect of youth ministry

Goldstein (1994: 11) writes how, for many years now, the words 'Remnant' and 'Remnant Church' have become the definitive, self-proclaimed mark of the Seventh-day Adventists. Before baptism, in the vows that candidates must make, one of the clauses reads: "Do you accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship? Do you desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world church?" (Secretariat, General Conference, 2005: 32 (emphasis supplied)). This doctrine was officially established in the 1980 General Conference business session in Dallas (Goldstein, 1994: 12). The 13th in the 28 statements of beliefs states: "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a Remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This Remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness" (Revelation 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 21:1-14; Secretariat, General Conference, 2005: 13).

The idea of the Remnant is traceable from the Old Testament and is also present in the New Testament. The Old Testament uses the word 'Remnant' to describe three types of people: a historical Remnant, survivors of a catastrophe (2 Kings 19: 31; 25: 11, 22; 2 Chronicles. 34: 21; Jeremiah 23: 3; 24: 8; 52: 15; Ezekiel 6: 5,8; 9: 8; 11: 13; 2; Jeremiah 40-44; Haggai 1: 12; 14; 2: 2; Zechariah 8: 6, 11, 12; Isaiah 11:11). Secondly, to refer to a faithful people that remain faithful to the covenant relationship with God and carry the election promises (1 Kings 19: 18, Ezra 9: 15; Amos 5: 15; 9:11, 12). The third usage refers to an eschatological Remnant in the future that is faithful to the Messiah, remaining faithful until the end and emerging victorious (Isaiah 4: 3,4; 10: 20,21,22; Joel 2: 32; Zephaniah 3:9, 12, 13; Jeremiah 31: 31-34; Ezekiel 36: 24-27; Daniel 7: 25; cf. Revelation 12:6,14; Daniel 12: 1-4). A Remnant

cannot be grasped without a clear depiction of the body to which the Remnant belongs (LaRondelle, 2000: 858, 860). The first indication of the Remnant idea is the account of Noah. After everything and everyone were blotted out during the cosmic flood, Noah and his family were the only ones who remained (the Remnant). They were the only ones remaining after the destruction of the rebellious nation/people (Genesis 6: 9, 12, 18, 22; 7: 1, 4, 23). Noah's choice to remain faithful to God and his willingness to enter into a covenant relationship with God formed the basis for him and his participating family members to remain as the nucleus of the Remnant of the obedient and the saved. They were the Remnant from the rest of the rebellious multitudes (Goldstein, 1994: 17, 18). The thematic flow of the Remnant is accompanied by what is referred to as the present truth (that must be proclaimed as urgent and critical) for that era of the particular Remnant. For Remnant Noah, it was the coming flood and what people had to do to be saved.

Noah's posterity did not all remain faithful to the covenant relationship with God; its rebellion climaxed in the building of the tower of Babel. Later, God identified Abraham (Genesis 18: 19) as the faithful and called him out. He was the Remnant of this era. However, Abraham's posterity, like that of Noah, would not arbitrarily remain a Remnant family; while anyone may be born into a Remnant family (or church), one can only be born again into the Remnant faith (Goldstein, 1994: 22). After Abraham's calling, Israel was called into a covenant relation with God. The name Israel is of divine origin, symbolising the saving relationship of reconciliation that God established by His grace with Jacob at the river Jabok (LaRondelle, 2000:858). Israel's calling as a Remnant with a special mission depended on their remaining true to the spirit of Jacob, their fore-bearer: that of continually seeking God and remaining dependent on Him (Hosea 12: 3-6; 14: 1-3). The election of Israel is pre-eminently and completely by God's grace, before it has anything to do with Israel's obedience (Deuteronomy 27: 9, 10). However, Israel remains special only on the basis of remaining faithful to the covenant relationship with God, a relationship of loyalty and obedience on their part (Exodus 19: 4-6) and divine grace on the part of God. Israel must respond to God's elective grace (Deuteronomy 14: 1) by total commitment of the heart (Deuteronomy 6: 5), by obeying Him willingly (v. 6, 9, 18) and by worshipping Him exclusively (v. 13-15). Israel was to preserve true worship amid pagan and idolatrous nations. Given that Israel's monotheism (Deuteronomy

6:4) amid polytheism, rejection of idolatry, of divination and witchcraft (Exodus 20: 4,5, Isaiah 44: 14-17; Deuteronomy 18:9-14) but remaining true and faithful to the original precepts as practiced by their forebears back to Eden, this would make them the Remnant that remain faithful to the truth. They clung to the Remnant truth, and that made them Remnant people (Goldstein, 1994: 32).

The Remnant motif proceeds into the NT. Paul writes in Romans (11:3-5), connecting with the Remnant of faithful few in Elijah's time, that, even in the New Testament, "at the present time there is a Remnant chosen by grace". This Remnant would be the founding nucleus of the early church, the New Israel, the Remnant from Israel. The church became the elect, chosen by God by His grace into a covenant relationship with Him (Hebrew 8:8; 1Peter 2:9, John 10:16; Mathew 16:18, 19; 18:17; 21:43). In Christ, who is the promise of Genesis 3:15, the church upholds the truths about God that runs through from Eden. That Peter interprets the outpouring of the Spirit as a direct fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the last days (Acts 2:16-21, Joel 2: 28-32) indicates that the church was not an afterthought to God, but part of His grand plan of the earth's history to the end, a plan which included Gentiles in the new, Messianic Israel/Remnant (LaRondelle, 2000: 864; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:9; Galatians 3: 26-29; 6:16; Romans 11: 17). Sadly, Paul predicted apostasy within this Remnant Messianic Israel (2 Thessalonians 2), which apostasy would precede the glorious return of Christ (Daniel 7, 8, 11). He had also observed heresies within the church already (Acts 15: 1, 2, 36-39; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 2Ti. 2:17). The apostasy was to move from it having an antichrist within it, according to Paul, to being anti-Christian, according to John (Revelation 12:6). During this mass apostasy by the church, the Messianic Remnant church remains faithful, sometimes needing to go underground because of persecution, only to resurface later (Revelation 12: 6, 13, 14, 17).

The Remnant motif in Revelation seems to place the Remnant in the end-times; the Remnant re-emerges amidst strife, persecution and apostasy. Interestingly, it is depicted in the apocalyptic writings at the end of the Scriptures (Revelation 12: 17), and there it is linked to the beginning of the Scriptures in Genesis 3: 15. Both passages depict Satan, the woman, her seed, and enmity/war/wrath. Interpreting the prophetic timelines of Daniel 7 and Revelation 12 to start in AD 538 and end in the end of the eighteenth century or early nineteenth century (Goldstein, 1994: 62-63;

LaRondelle, 200:871), Adventists believe that this eschatological Remnant only emerges after the cut-off time of this prophetic timeline. Other descriptions of this Remnant (upholding of the commandments, keeping the faith of Jesus and the testimony of His Jesus Christ) make the Adventists to identify with it and embrace the Remnant idea as a descriptive mark of Adventism (Moore, 2008: 174; Secretariat, General Conference, 2005: 32; Goldstein, 1994: 62-65; LaRondelle, 2000: 883, 884, 887-8). The imagery of the pure woman in Revelation 12 in prophetic symbolism represents a pure church (in doctrine), while an unchaste woman in Revelation 17 and 18 represents an apostate church (Ministerial Association-General Conference, 2005: 182)

It is the above understanding of itself as the fulfilment of apocalyptic prophecy that the church holds that it has a distinct present truth that is critical and urgent and must be proclaimed to the world; to this end time generation (O'Fill, 2007: 94, 95). Adventists (like some Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, etc.) are restorationists (Moore, 2008: 102, 173). The core mission of the Remnant church is understood to be described in Revelation 14, seen together with the Great Commission of Mathew 28. The end-time commission of Revelation 14 has a sense of urgency and a particular message: A call to reformation and a return to true worship and purity of doctrine. The church finds that this has implications for its youth ministry. This is reflected in the AIM of the Pathfinder (junior youth) and senior youth ministry: The Advent message to the entire world in this generation. The Adventist youth are therefore urged and trained to conduct evangelistic projects, calling the world to reformation and a return to a faithful covenant relationship with God. Many resources have been developed and made accessible to the youth for them to participate in the church's outreach programmes. The year 1993 was proclaimed a year of youth evangelism throughout the world (Department of Church Ministries, 1992: 3). In every quinquennium³, the church designates a year of evangelism emphasis within its youth ministry department. Diverse approaches to youth evangelism are employed: Public evangelism, Campus evangelism, Personal witnessing, Music evangelism, Vocational evangelism, Metropolitan evangelism, Inner-city evangelism (Wu, 2005: 153-158) and more than fifty other ideas and

³ A period of five years. Within the Adventist church, church strategy plans and terms of office in the higher structures usually take place in chunks of five years.

projects are suggested by the youth ministry department (Church Ministries Department, 1992: 10-38). There is also an on-going programme for the youth to be involved in volunteer missionary work, where the youth and students are encouraged and supported to be involved in their countries and abroad.

2.6. Current praxis of youth ministry in the Adventist church: Adventist philosophy and praxis of youth ministry

In the preceding chapter it was stated that, guided by the Zerfass model of doing research and working for a possible change in praxis towards a better way of doing things, Chapter 2 will include a consideration of the current situation/praxis of youth ministry within the Adventist church. This will be done by considering the current praxis as pronounced for application within the world church in general, not limited to the congregations within the Trans-Orange Conference, which are the specific focus of this research. There will also be a review of the Adventist theological foundations for its youth ministry. This is also in harmony with the Zerfass model of doing this work as already stated in the first chapter.

Various denominations may have different philosophies that undergird their youth ministry. An understanding of the philosophy of Adventist youth ministry provides a context for the appreciation of the why and how of the church's youth ministry.

2.6.1 The twin goals of Adventist youth ministry

The basic philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist youth ministry is one of salvation and service. The twin goals are to lead the youth into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and to train them for service to others (Morgan-Cole, 2005: 19). It is a specialised ministry of the church that (1) seeks to address the particular needs of young people in their own environment and respond to them as they are, and (2) to incorporate them into the fellowship of the church – a caring Christian community (General Conference, 2002: 11). The church places at the core of its youth ministry the overarching objective of salvation of the young people within its fellowship, as well as turning and preparing them for service towards others, both within the church and outside the fellowship of the church.

2.6.2 Salvation

In 1926 already, the General Conference formally voted to adopt “to save from sin and guide into service” as the central motive and objective of the church’s youth ministry (General Conference, 2002: 20). The focus on salvation reflects the commitment to introduce the youth to Jesus Christ so that they enter into a saving relationship with Him. Starting with the Adventurer group (ages 6-9), it lays a foundation to lead the youth to a saving relationship with Christ, using a language that is appropriate for their age. Indications are that the Pathfinder age (10-15) is an opportune time to galvanise efforts to lead youth into a committed relationship with Christ. Most youth commit through baptism during this age, with an average age for baptism within the Adventist church being 10.8 (General Conference Youth Department, 2001: 9). During the Ambassador years (16-21), continued focus on salvation is sustained, while providing support for a consistent relationship with Christ, bearing in mind the negative peer pressure and their exposure to secularism at this age. During the young adult years, the youth are making many major life decisions; such as career choice, where to live, who to marry and many others. The challenge here is to assist the youth who have made a salvation choice earlier in their lives reaffirm that choice, now with a fuller understanding. If they had not yet made the choice, this becomes an opportune time to include that major decision, together with other decisions that they need to make at this age.

2.6.3 Service

The ideal for Adventist youth ministry is for everyone in the congregation (pastor, parents, church school teachers, and even those members who have little direct contact with youth) to share the goal of saving our young people, and leading them into service for Christ (General Conference Youth Department, 2001: 13, Morgan-Cole, 2005: 19). Secondly, but very significant, the youth should be involved in Christian services. These services include serving other young people who may not be of the church, doing voluntary community service as an outreach to people in need, assisting in projects that establish service points throughout the world, and others. Significantly, the youth must also be involved in missions to lead other youth to salvation.

The Bible is replete with examples of young people who responded to the call to service in both the Old and New Testament: Joseph, Samuel, Namaan's Israelite maid, Mary of Nazareth, Jesus in the temple at age 12 and Timothy. To Timothy, Paul, his mentor, wrote: "Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1Timothy 4:12). These words should be an encouraging admonition to Christian youth today, and should provide guidance to those who work with the youth, who should not look down on them, but challenge them to a worthy life of salvation and service.

The stated two-fold objectives that are articulated within the youth ministry curriculum should constitute a sufficiently rich youth ministry curriculum and ministry to reach the Adventist youth. However, this will only be plausible and worthwhile if the programme reaches the youth in the grassroots/congregations that are the intended practitioners and recipients of the ministry. If, for any reason, it fails to reach the youth and gets only to remain in the shelves of offices and warehouses, its value is effectively negated.

2.6.4 Adventist youth ministry mission statement

The fundamental objectives of Adventist youth ministry as stated above are captured and adequately articulated within its mission statement for youth ministry. As a way of having an early indication of the leaning of the Adventist youth ministry, its mission statement states that:

"The primary focus of Youth Ministry is the salvation of youth through Jesus Christ. We understand youth ministry to be that work of the church that is conducted for, with, and by young people. Our task is to:

- a. Lead youth to understand their individual worth and to discover and develop their spiritual gifts and abilities.
- b. Equip and empower youth for a life of service within God's church and the community.

- c. Ensure the integration of youth into all aspects of church life and leadership in order that they might be full participants in the mission of the church.

To accomplish our task:

We will achieve a balanced ministry by incorporating the Biblical dynamics of fellowship, nurture, worship, and mission. We will be committed to keeping relevant and effective in ministry by relating all ministry to the needs of the youth. It is imperative that we listen to and be informed by youth's perceptions, concerns, and suggestions. Effective ministry becomes possible in an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. We will conduct on-going research to discover areas that need attention. We are committed to experimentation and innovation in our programs because we recognize the ever-changing nature of today's youth.

We will find inspiration in God's word and our history, and have faith in God for the future. Our philosophy will find expression in a wide variety of God-ordained ministry styles and programs. We will provide regular evaluation to ensure that our primary focus is achieved." (Youth Department, 2002: 6)

2.6.5 Four focus areas of Adventist youth ministry: Fellowship, nurture, worship and mission

Rather than being something that exists alongside the ministry of the church, youth ministry is an integral part of the church and its ministry. Its philosophy is based on the same foundational principles that undergird the ministry of the whole church (General Conference, 2002: 10, 11). The four interdependent forces that sustained the life of the early church (see Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47) and continue to provide motivation for the growth of the church today, are still the same dynamics in all successful youth ministry: Fellowship, nurture, worship and mission. *Fellowship:*

Christianity begins with and is about relationships in which individuals bond together in fellowship with Christ and one another. Within youth ministry, the church demonstrates its warm fellowship through its love for and acceptance of young people. *Nurture*: Through fellowship, personal and spiritual growth is nurtured. The Christian church shows its understanding of the developmental needs of young people (and adults) and how to facilitate that growth. *Worship*: Worship is the celebration of these relationships. The community of faith has the ability to release in young people a sense of celebration in corporate worship and individual praise of God. *Mission*: Mission is the church's intentional plan to extend these relationships to others. It achieves this through the affirmation of the individual young person's spiritual gifts and the utilisation of these gifts in reaching out beyond himself or herself to uncommitted young people and adults (Youth Ministries Department, 2005: iii, 259).

The four focus areas of Adventist youth ministry are another phase of the expansion and expression of the two-fold central objectives and motives for the church's youth ministry.

2.6.6 Four levels of ministry to youth

The youth are divided into three categories according to their age: Adventurer ministry is designed to reach and help children six to nine years old. The Pathfinder ministry is structured to reach, help, and train youth that are 10 to 15 years old. The senior youth ministry focuses on youth and young adults, 16 to 30 years old. Those that are 16 to 21 years old have a sub-grouping of their own called Ambassadors within the senior youth category. The youth are formally organised into clubs and societies for the purpose of discipline, discipling and training. Membership is not restricted to church members; non-church members are admitted upon request or recruitment as associate members. As a way of committing the youth into various Christian values and standards, they are required in a responsive way to know and expressively commit to the following:

	Aim	Motto	Pledge	Law
Adventurer	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Because Jesus loves me, I can always do my best.	Be obedient Be pure Be true Be kind Be respectful Be attentive Be helpful Be cheerful Be thoughtful Be reverent
Pathfinder	(Traditionally) The Advent message to the entire world in my generation.	(Traditionally) The Love of Christ Constrains Me.	By the grace of God I will be pure. I will be kind and true. I will keep the Pathfinder Law. I will be a servant of God and a friend to man.	Law is for me to: Keep the Morning Watch. Do my honest part. Care for my body. Keep a level eye. Be courteous and obedient. Walk softly in the sanctuary. Keep a song in my heart. Go on God's errands.
Senior youth (Ambassador)	The Advent message to the entire world in my generation.	The Love of Christ Constrains Me.	Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the work of the Adventist Youth Society, doing what I can to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in the entire world.	Not applicable.
Senior youth	The Advent message to the entire world in my generation.	The love of Christ constrains me.	Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the work of the Adventist Youth Society, doing what I	Not applicable.

			can to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in the entire world.	
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(General Conference, 2004: 24, 25; General Conference, 2006: 6; General Conference, 2002:21, 22).

The challenge regarding the desired outcomes regarding the aim, pledge, motto and the law as expressed above is how to push beyond recitation and head knowledge of these statements to personal experiences based on experiential and relationship-based lives and practices between the youth and the Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ. It is also noteworthy that, with regard to the senior youth, there is a shift grounding the Pledge on the Lord's grace as the foundation, shifting the foundation to 'loving the Lord Jesus'. Whereas founding the basis for faith practice on a loving relationship with God is essential and critical, given the tendency to revert to legalism, the emphasis on salvation by grace alone should not be abandoned, even with senior youth. Not all youth at senior level have experienced sufficient grace emphasis during their earlier years; this is because they were either not yet in the church or simply not in the youth ministry programme.

2.6.6.1 Adventurer club

The Adventurer club is a church-sponsored ministry open to all children ages six to nine, in which the church, home and Church school where applicable, join together to help children grow joyfully in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. It is the policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to admit children to all the rights, privileges, programmes and activities made available by the church, regardless of race, gender, handicap or religion. The Adventurer club assists parents in making the development of their children a richer and more meaningful experience.

The objectives of the ministry within the club is for the club to provide fun and creative ways for children to develop a Christ-like character, experience the joy and satisfaction of doing things well, express their love for Jesus in a natural way, learn good sportsmanship, and strengthen their ability to get along with others. The children are to discover their God-given abilities and to know how to use them to benefit themselves and serve others, discover God's world, improve their

understanding of what makes families strong and the club leadership is to develop parental support for the training of the children (General Conference, 2004: 4).

2.6.6.2 Pathfinder club

The Pathfinder club is a spiritual-recreational-activity programme designed for young people 10 to 15 years of age. Much of the Pathfinder club programme is built around physical activities, adventure, challenges, and group activities, and provides opportunities for the development of new attitudes and skills that produce personal growth, team or community spirit and a sense of loyalty and respect for God, His Creation, and His church. Pathfinding⁴ appeals to this age group because its programme features activities that meet their needs and interests. While the Pathfinder club exists primarily for the youth, one of its basic purposes is also to bring together parents and church members through active involvement with the club and its members. Here, the so-called generation gap disappears as young and old worship, work, and play together in a bond of common experience. Meaningful relationships are forged as leaders and counsellors join with Pathfinders in sharing, building confidence, and working together.

The whole philosophy of Pathfinding is built on the premise that ‘children learn best by example, rather than precept.’ As they see leaders and parents model spiritual and social values, they too will aspire to develop high moral principles, loving and caring attitudes, and determination to excel in all their various pursuits. The role of instruction and modelling has already been discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter.

This philosophy is an integral part of the club. The Pathfinder club curriculum of six classes and nearly 250 honours lies at the heart of the programme. The following objectives can be achieved as the club leaders seek to fulfil these.

- a. Help the young people to understand that God and His church love them, care for them, and appreciate them. As Pathfinders are accepted and

⁴ A word commonly used within the church to refer to the physical activities within the Pathfinder club

affirmed they will begin to appreciate the love of God revealed through the church and its ministry, and feel a need to be more committed to and involved with its programme.

- b. Encourage club members to discover their God-given potential, use their gifts and abilities to fulfil God's expectations for them and the part they can play within the plan of salvation.
- c. Inspire the youth to give personal expression of their love for God by uniting them together in outreach activities.
- d. Prioritise in every club the salvation of each member.
- e. Connect youth with the nature and the outdoors, leading them to a sense of worship as they appreciate God's creative powers.
- f. Lead the club members to develop skills and hobbies that will give them a sense of achievement and satisfaction.
- g. Encourage them to keep physically fit.
- h. Create an environment where they can develop leadership skills as they work together as a team.
- i. Seek to foster the harmonious development of the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual life of each member.

(General Conference, 2004: 4)

2.6.6.3 Senior Youth Society and Ambassadors

As already indicated above, the senior youth category has a segment referred to as Ambassadors (16-21 years old). Otherwise, the 16 to 30 year old youth are referred to as senior youth. The objective of the Adventist youth: "to save from sin and guide into service", was adopted during the 1926 General Conference session. To obtain

the salvation of the youth it is necessary to give them every possible opportunity to participate in all Adventist youth activities. By keeping youth actively preparing for more efficient service, they are protected from evil. It is necessary to place them in some activity as soon as they are ready. Further stated objectives for senior youth are (1) to train the youth to work for other youth, (2) to recruit the youth to help their church, and (3) to work for those who are not of Adventist faith. Priority is given to work for the salvation of all the youth in the church and for the church youth to work for the salvation of other youth (General Conference, 2002: 18, 20; Youth Department, 2002: 7; Morgan-Cole, 2005: 19).

In seeking to reach these objectives, the youth are called upon to pray, study Scriptures and fellowship together in Christian social interaction. They are to act together in small groups to carry out well-laid plans for witnessing, develop tact and skill/talent in the Lord's service, while encouraging one another in spiritual growth (General Conference, 2002: 18).

While there is to be an active Adventist Youth Society in every church, it is important that the youth programme should not be isolated from the rest of the church. In addition to their participation in the youth organisation, the young people should be integrated into responsible leadership and involvement in the entire church programme. There should be young elders, young deacons and deaconesses, etcetera, working with experienced church officers (General Conference Secretariat, 2005:110).

The AY Society meeting is one of the most important appointments of the week for the youth. Its importance is revealed in an analysis of its purpose:

- a. To keep the challenge of the aim, the motto, and the pledge before the Society.
- b. To deepen the devotional life of each AY Society member.
- c. To integrate the vital AY Society features and group activities into the thinking and life of the AY Society.

- d. To keep the young people of the church in touch with the AY movement around the world.
- e. To give an opportunity for each member to obtain an experience in public address and teamwork: praying together, studying together, planning together, and working together.
- f. To hold before the youth Christian ideals and principles for Christian living to help young people find a positive solution to their problems.
- g. To study the most effective methods for doing different kinds of Christian service, and to organise the youth for successful witnessing.
- h. To provide a time when the members of the AY Society may have an opportunity to tell what they have tried to do for the Saviour and what success has been theirs and thereby strengthen and inspire one another in their desire to live out the AY Society pledge.
- i. To provide pleasant Christian fellowship for the young people of the church.

The aims and objectives of the youth ministry programme, even as reflected within the curriculum and manuals, do seem to be sufficiently broad enough in scope and content. However, as indicated above, there might need to be more emphasis on the salvation theme, with specific reference to the subject of salvation by grace alone. This should serve as a safeguard from reverting to legalism. The Valuegenesis studies have revealed that, as a church, we are inclined to 'doing' for salvation (Gillespie 1993:5). It is therefore imperative for our youth ministry to ascertain that we are placing proportionate emphasis on the area of Biblical teaching of the salvation through the all-sufficient grace of God. This, when done together with all the other areas covered by the curriculum, will assist in meeting the goals and objectives of the youth ministry as reflected in the curriculum.

2.7 Selection and training of youth ministry leaders responsible to deliver the curriculum

The youth ministry leaders, like the rest of church departmental leaders and church officers, are elected from among the church members in local congregations. The elected leaders serve a one-year term, and towards the end of the calendar year, fresh elections are done. The elected leader, together with the team appointed, has the task of providing leadership in youth ministry matters. The leader, together with the youth ministry sponsor (usually an adult member of the church), should also play an advocacy role for youth interests. While the church provides a complete curriculum and resources for the training of leaders in youth ministry (Master Guides), it is noteworthy that the practice is to elect leaders from among members without making prior training in youth ministry one of the prerequisites.

The Trans-Orange Conference departmental leaders, including the youth ministry leaders, visit the districts within the Conference to have interaction with the youth ministry leaders. In these interactions, they promote the departments, sharing programmes with the congregational leaders. This usually takes place during several hours on a Saturday. These interactions are the closest to training offered by the Conference. Without the training of the youth ministry leaders, it is unfathomable to expect the leaders to be effective in providing the youth ministry leadership and properly implement the youth ministry curriculum. The other risk associated with leaders that are not trained is that the leaders may become creative and bring about their own ideas into the ministry that may not be desirable at least or even be destructive at most. This lack of capacity building for the leaders that carry the responsibility of delivering the youth ministry curriculum in local congregations presents a cause for concern, implying also that there is virtually no supervision, control and monitoring of what actually takes place in local congregations regarding youth ministry in general and the implementation of the curriculum in particular.

2.8. Curriculum overview

The scope of the curriculum spans over the three major age-based groupings of the youth ministry of the church: The Adventurers, the Pathfinders (junior Adventist

youth) and the senior youth. The content of the curriculum is linked to the developmental needs of the various age groups.

2.8.1 Overview of the Adventurers class work

This five to nine year old group has been sub-divided into four groups named according to their developmental stage and distinct behaviour for the stage: Busy Bees, Sunbeam, Builder and Helping Hand. The Adventurer programme is designed to support parents in assisting children with the challenging task of developing fully as followers of Christ. When one looks at the curriculum, it seems to be designed to assist the children at their own level to commit their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ and gain a positive attitude toward the benefits, joys and responsibilities of living a Christian life. It should assist them to acquire the habits, skills and knowledge needed to live for Jesus today. The curriculum should also assist parents and other primary caregivers to become more confident and effective as team mates in ministering to the children. The programme will strengthen the bond between parent and child (General Conference Youth Ministries Department, 2004: 5, 6). Following is an overview of the curriculum of the Adventurer group as outlined in the teacher's manual (General Conference Youth Ministries Department, 2004: 9-20).

The Adventurer curriculum focuses on four different aspects of the child's world: God, self, family and world. Each of these aspects is further divided into three separate components: The aspect goal, major component and the concepts included in the component. The following table illustrates how the Adventurer curriculum is organised:

Adventurer curriculum goals and concepts			
Tracks	Track goal	Major components of the track	Concepts included in the component
Basic	To ensure that the children have the background necessary to receive maximum benefit from the Adventurer programme.	a. Responsibility. b. Reinforcement.	a. Commitment to the common goals of the group. b. Introduction and review of the

			Adventurer concepts through reading.
My God	To facilitate the development of a growing and fruitful relationship between the child and Jesus Christ.	a. His plan to save me. b. His message to me c. His power in my life.	a. God's love, sin and forgiveness, conversion and obedience. b. Memory verse, Bible books, using and trusting the Bible. c. Prayer, Bible study, witness, living for Christ.
Myself	To enhance the children's care and appreciation for the individual God has created them to be.	a. I am special. b. I can make wise choices. c. I can care for my body.	a. Uniqueness and value for each person, responsibility for service and talents.
My family	To empower the children to be happy and productive members of the family God gave them.	a. I have a family. b. Families care for each other. c. My family helps me care for myself.	a. Uniqueness of families, family changes, roles and responsibilities. b. Authority and respect, appreciation and family activities. c. Safety, stewardship, indoor skills' outdoor skills.
My world	To enable the children to encounter God's world with confidence and compassion.	a. The world of friends. b. The world of other people. c. The world of nature.	a. Social skills, courtesy, prejudice, peer pressure. b. Serving the church, community, country and the world. c. God and nature, nature study, nature recreation, concern for environment.

While the table above lists the various goals and concepts that are covered by the Adventurer curriculum, the table below illustrates how the detailed curriculum content looks like on the Adventurer curriculum on the aspect of 'My God'.

MY GOD REQUIREMENTS			
Busy Bee (6 years old)	Sunbeam (7 years old)	Builder (8 years old)	Helping Hand (9 years)
His plan to save me			
<p>a. Create a story chart showing the order in which these events took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation • Sin and sadness begin • Jesus cares for me today • Jesus comes again • Heaven <p>OR The Bible stories you are studying in your classes or Sabbath School.</p> <p>b. Draw a picture or tell about one of the stories above to show someone how Jesus cares for you.</p>	<p>a. Create a story chart showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus' birth • Life • Death • Resurrection <p>OR the Bible stories you are studying in your classroom or Sabbath School.</p> <p>b. Make a mural or tell about one of the stories above to show someone the joy of being saved by Jesus.</p>	<p>a. Create a chart showing the order in which these events took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul • Martin Luther • Ellen White • Yourself <p>OR the Bible stories you are studying in your classroom or your Sabbath School.</p> <p>b. Plan a skit or newspaper story about one of the stories above to show someone how to give one's life to Jesus.</p>	<p>a. Create a story chart showing the order these stories took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noah • Abraham • Moses • David • Daniel <p>OR the Bible stories you are studying in your classroom or your Sabbath School.</p> <p>b. Make a drama, poem or a song about the stories above to show someone how to live for God.</p>

The specific goals that must be achieved by the Adventurer curriculum in the four aspects of the child's focus area of development are achieved through activities that lead them to scriptures, interaction with each other, other people and nature. They are led into a basic understanding of how they can develop a relationship with Jesus and how they can have an experience of salvation. They are also assisted in acquiring social skills and appreciation for the environment and nature.

The scope and content of the Adventurer curriculum seem adequately in depth and age appropriate in approach. The activities are suited for the various primary school age of this group and involve active participation by the children, which active

participation is helpful in attention retention and the learning process/assimilation of the lessons taught. There might be challenges in obtaining the material (such as drawing books for each child, buying a national flag, etc.) for use in rural congregations where financial resources are often an obstacle. The teachers and leaders of this group would require at least some basic training in working with children. If, within the congregations, there are professional primary school teachers, it would be helpful to involve them with this group. It will be necessary to orient them in Christian education and properly guide them on how to work for the spiritual needs of children this age.

2.8.2 An overview of the Pathfinders curriculum

The Pathfinder group covers the youth aged from ten to fifteen years old. As already mentioned earlier in the chapter, this programme is designed to be a spiritual-recreational-activity programme; designed to meet needs commensurate with their age. There are five age-bound classes within the Pathfinder group: Friend (ten years), Companion (eleven years), Explorer (twelve years), Ranger (thirteen years), Voyager (fourteen years) and Guide (fifteen years).

The Pathfinder curriculum is structured into nine focus areas: General requirements, spiritual discovery, service to others, friendship development, health and fitness, organisation and leadership development, nature study, outdoor life and also lifestyle enrichment. In a tabular format, the scope of the curriculum is summarised below:

Area	Requirements
General	Age requirements are stipulated here, as well as class prescribed reading work and other requirements such as mastery of the pledge, aim, motto and patriotic matters.
Spiritual discovery	Pathfinders are led to explore the Scriptures, acquire Bible study skills, and life application of lessons learnt. Various spiritual books are introduced to the various ages of the Pathfinders as prescribed reading material.
Serving others	Pathfinders must spend prescribed

	time involved in community service to the needy and spiritual outreach activities.
Friendship development	In the various ages, Pathfinders must acquire social skills, demonstrate patriotism and general helpfulness towards others.
Health and Fitness	Pathfinders are required to be consistent in practicing healthy lifestyles. They must demonstrate knowledge of healthful living. HIV/Aids issues are introduced to this group.
Organisational and leadership development	Here, Pathfinders are introduced to the implications of being part of an organisation and are assisted in developing leadership skills through their involvement in the Pathfinder club and the congregation.
Nature study	This covers the study of nature and environment and how to live responsibly in relation to our environment.
Outdoor life	It involves outdoor activities, both as fun, recreational and mastery of outdoor survival skills. The activities are akin to those of Boys' and Girls' scouts.
Lifestyle enrichment	Participants need to present evidence of skills in various arts, outreach activities, home industries etc. for which they receive an honours token.

As can be seen, for the Voyager group, the objectives begin to shift towards including the development of the leadership potential and to assist them to choose a Christian lifestyle. They must also learn to evaluate life and its meaning from a Christian perspective. The Guide class's objectives continue on developing the leadership potential, to assist the youth in choosing a Christian lifestyle and to evaluate life and its meaning from a Christian perspective.

The Pathfinder curriculum's content and scope include a great deal of physical involvement of the youth of this age, something that is useful for the positive utilisation of the energy surge of this age group. The activities involve learning social skills and survival skills, all of which are essential life skills. The handicap that

usually attends youth ministry for this group is to allow the physical activities to become an end in themselves, such that instead of providing a holistic ministry to the Pathfinders, only entertainment and recreation are provided, failing to provide a ministry that meets their spiritual needs at this age. If the church's youth ministry fails to secure their faith at this age, much shall have been lost at a critical moment in their lives before they enter the jungles of tertiary educational institutions often beyond the eye of guiding and supportive parents.

2.8.3 Senior youth and Ambassadors

As already mentioned, the Ambassadors (aged 16-21) fall within the bracket of senior youth (aged 16-30+). The senior youth curriculum focuses on the developmental needs of this age group, but with a special focus on developing leadership skills that prepare them for involvement in leadership in youth ministry in particular and within the local church in general. Persons of any age who meet the designated prerequisites and who have the desire to serve in youth ministry may participate in the programme. Participants are required to complete this curriculum within three years from the commencement date. Requirements with completion signatures that are over three years old must be re-done. The Master Guide programme serves as a foundation level for youth ministry leadership. There are two more advanced levels after it: Pathfinder Leadership Award (PLA) and Advanced Pathfinder Leadership Award (APLA). Their curriculum outlines will follow below the Master Guide outlines.

2.8.4 Master Guide

The objective of the Master Guide programme is to provide opportunities for participants to develop an awareness of the role of children/youth leadership and become better prepared to accept this role by receiving training in personal and spiritual growth, skills development as well as leadership. The table below briefly indicates the scope of training for Master Guides.

Area	Requirements
General	This level of involvement in youth ministry leadership requires church membership and exposure to some basic leadership skills in youth work.
Spiritual development	This section fosters a deeper devotional life of the leader and exposes one to church doctrine and denominational history.
Skills development	Focuses on developing leadership skills.
Child development	Exposes the leader in child-development theories, preparing the leader for children's ministry.
Leadership development	Further development of leadership skills, providing for practical involvement in youth ministry leadership.
Fitness lifestyle development	Participate in a personal physical fitness plan for a minimum of three months, and evaluate any level of improvement of physical condition.

2.8.5 Pathfinder Leadership Award

The Pathfinder Leadership training programme constitutes the next level of training that follows the completion of the Master Guide training programme. It is with specific focus on Pathfinder activities. The table below briefly indicates the essence of the curriculum content.

Area	Requirements
Pathfinder Leadership Award Requirements	The participant brings basic youth ministry leadership skills acquired during the Master Guide training period.
Personal growth	Further deepens participant's devotional life and assists in acquiring further life skills.

Skills development	Increases Pathfinder skills by attending the following scheduled seminars on Pathfinding activities, administration, teambuilding, planning, physical activities and recreation.
Area	Requirements
Requirements	The participant bring with the acquired skills from the previous level, and is expected to continue being directly involved in Pathfinder leadership roles.
Personal Growth	The participant is expected to evidence efforts in personal spiritual growth through reading and leading a devotional life
Seminars	Participation in advanced leadership training seminars on various topics is required from the participant at this level
Preparation and presentation	The leader must display acquired skills in preparation and effective presentation of teaching/learning material to be used in training Pathfinders.

2.9 Further observations

As already mentioned, the Adventist youth ministry curriculum is formulated using both Biblical guidelines (including the writings of Ellen White) and knowledge from other fields such as psychology and education. The final product is a comprehensive tool that covers a wide span of ages, from the six year-old to thirty year-olds and beyond. This means that the material caters for age groups that would be regarded as children right across the youth up to young adults. The material itself, contents and approach seem to be well adapted to the various ages concerning suitability in terms of the developmental stages of the target groups and their developmental needs.

One of the Valuegenesis studies' outcomes some twenty years ago was the observed need to refocus the content of teaching of salvation of our youth and the rest of the church membership in the Biblical teaching of salvation by grace, as

already mentioned earlier in this chapter. Changes in the systems and approach of Christian education within the church were effected to reflect this. This is evidenced in the children's ministry Sabbath School curriculum for children and early teens dubbed GraceLink. The GraceLink programme is tailored to assist the children up to age thirteen to understand how God saves people through His grace and love. What is remarkable here is that while the Valuegenesis studies were initiated and conducted by the youth ministry department, the GraceLink programme is run by the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries department. The first observation concerning this point is that it would perhaps help more if there was a concerted effort between the youth ministry department and that of Sabbath School and personal ministries in assisting the target group to understand, appreciate and experience salvation through grace. It would also be helpful if the same teacher of the Sabbath School GraceLink lesson was the same person that taught the same age group of youth ministry curriculum within the auspices of youth ministry department. Where different persons serve as teachers in the two departments, the individuals should share notes and ascertain that common goals are shared and that they work together for the salvation of each youth they are serving.

The senior youth curriculum content, on the aspect of salvation for the youth as a key objective, does not seem to have enjoyed the thorough adjustment on the subject of salvation with grace emphasis as has been done with the Adventurers and Pathfinders. This despite the lessons learnt from the Valuegenesis studies almost two decades ago. As already observed earlier, this would be a necessary adjustment because we cannot assume that all youth have benefited enough on this aspect during their earlier involvement in the Adventurer and Pathfinder years. Some youth enter the faith community later in their senior years. Continued Christian education on all the growing years of the youth would most likely produce better outcomes of salvation and service.

With the headquarters of the church being in North America, and with the material that the General Conference personnel has a duty to produce for the world church emanating from there, it seems inevitable that the material/resources come written in English. Some of the church communities have been able to translate the documents into the languages used in their regions. In South Africa, only the Afrikaans-speaking

community has succeeded in translating some of the resources into their language. The rest of the various communities speaking other languages have to consume the material in a foreign language (and the imbedded culture). This is not without limitations in terms of accessibility to both leaders and youth. To the extent to which people can read and understand the content, only up to the same extent can it be deemed doable and reachable in applying the curriculum in the lives of the church youth. Combined with language issues, it is apparent that cultural elements also come to play in the structuring and contents of the curriculum. An example here would be the type of requirements that the youth would need to meet in achieving some of the honours. Not all communities have access to swimming pools, bicycles etc. because of economic limitations. A consideration could be made within the manuals that adaptability be strongly encouraged, so that the skills development is relevant to the circumstances prevailing in the various communities where the youth are found.

2. 10 Conclusion

This chapter focused on two main areas: The Biblical foundations for Adventist youth ministries and the Adventist curriculum for youth ministries across the six to thirty years (and beyond) age span for youth ministry. This needed to be done to keep the approach to this research work in harmony with the Zerfass model: To examine the current praxis and traditions that that inform such praxis in our pursuit of a new and better praxis as we attempt to resolve the observed problem with the current praxis. The following chapter will, as outlined at the end of the first chapter, record the interviews.

Chapter 3

3.1. Introduction

In the previous two chapters, it was indicated that the third chapter would cover the interviews to be conducted with the participation of youth leaders in the districts of the Trans-Orange Conference. Following the Zerfass model, this chapter covers the meta-theory of the research. The meta-theory comprises literature study as well as the empirical study. This chapter will handle the empirical aspects of the research.

The interviews were conducted with district groups of congregational leaders together with the district coordinators of the youth ministry. District groups set as separate/individual districts; however, during the interview of the youth leaders who were attending the Trans-Orange Conference youth ministry council meeting, the interview took place with groups from four districts (West-Rand, East-Rand, Lowveld and Shalom) sitting jointly. In the second round of the interview with the TOC youth ministry council, eight district groups attended the interview. Interview meetings involved travelling to the various regions of the Conference to meet the groups of leaders in their local districts. The district pastors and the district youth ministry coordinators facilitated the coming together of the congregational leaders into district groups.

The purpose of the interviews was firstly to establish the extent or the level of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations within the Trans-Orange Conference. Furthermore, it was important to determine the experiences of the youth ministry providers, which could serve to provide an opportunity to establish problem areas and suitable possible solutions. As already mentioned, interviews are necessary in that they enable one to gather information that may not be available from simple observation (Frankel & Wallen, 2006: 455).

Being characteristic of the qualitative approach to research interviews, the interviews were semi-structured to unstructured in format (Cartledge, 2003: 71, 72). This allowed the interviews to adapt to the various dynamics that were prevailing in the

various groups that were interviewed. At the end of it all, all key questions were asked to cover the various areas of inquiry required to proceed with the research.

For the purpose of ethical considerations (Wassenaar 2006: 68-76), the researcher took time before each interview to explain the purpose of the interview, to secure an informed consent from the participants, to secure their permission to record the interviews, to assure them of the rights to access the recorded information gathered, and to inform them about the focus of the research. In all interview sessions, the researcher started by providing a background to the interview, stating his connection with the North-West University, the research area and how the information gathered will be handled. Issues of confidentiality and the participants' right to access 'their' information were also discussed.

3.2. The interviews

With the exception of two interviews, all interviews took place with groups of youth leaders meeting at a venue within their district territory. The interviewer travelled to meet the leaders. The districts that were interviewed were Diamond Heritage, Far-West, Mafikeng, North-East, Vhembe, Shiloh, Highveld, West-Rand, Orange-Vaal and Golden-West. The first interview took place at the Conference headquarters where youth ministry leaders from various districts within the Conference had gathered for strategic planning. The interview of this group comprised leaders of congregations from four districts: East-Rand, Lowveld, West-Rand and Shalom. The four districts that participated in this session were not further interviewed individually.

The interview conversations were recorded using digital voice recorders. The interviewer secured permission from the group to record the interview. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim where possible⁵. In all interviews but one, English was used most of the time. In all interviews, some participants would often

⁵ It is very difficult to language edit transcriptions. The transcriptions were language edited in as far as spelling and grammar are concerned; however, the language editor refrained from making too many changes so as to not compromise the authenticity of the conversations, as the manner in which some utterances are made contributes to the effect of the utterances; therefore, the conversational tone of the utterances was maintained.

revert to their mother tongue to express themselves because of limitations in the use of the English language. In the interview of the leaders in the North-East district, Shangaan (the mother tongue of the interviewer) was the language that was mainly used. Given that some participants used other languages during the course of the interviews, it became necessary to translate from the languages used by the participants to English during the transcription. There were instances where adjustments were made during the transcription to compensate for the grammar or syntax errors committed by the participants when expressing themselves in English. In instances where participants made certain remarks or asked certain questions that were, in the opinion of the interviewer, not connected to the interview, but were made during the interview, such remarks were left out during the transcription. The original recordings of all interviews remain available.

While the questions were adaptable to the various interview groups, the guidelines were as follows:

1. How many of you here are attending this meeting as youth ministry leaders in your local congregations? Who of you have received training up to Master Guide level? The purpose of these questions was to establish who of the attendees are directly involved with and are tasked to deliver the youth ministry curriculum; and to what extent are they qualified to lead youth ministries.
2. Which of the congregations that are represented here have progressive classes going on in youth meetings? This was to establish whether there are congregations that are implementing the youth ministry curriculum this year already.
3. Of those who are implementing the progressive classes programme, which ones are being conducted by Master Guides? This is to establish whether those teachers handling the curriculum have received training and are qualified to implement the curriculum.

4. Please share with me your experiences in implementing the youth ministry curriculum in your progressive classes – include here your success stories, your highlights, your frustrations, hindrances, observations and even recommendations resulting from your experiences.
5. (Depending on the group's responses to earlier questions) Finally, please indicate whether you have had experiences where you have led the youth to make spiritual commitments, such as decisions to accept Christ as Lord and Saviour and/or to be baptised as a direct result of the youth having gone through the youth ministry curriculum.

The questions that were asked in each group will have generally covered all four questions above. Various situations with the different groups necessitated adjustments to questions, and the inclusion of other questions for follow-up and clarity purposes. Overall, although questions might have been phrased differently, inquiry into the subjects covered by questions 1 to 4 was covered.

3.2.1. Trans-Orange Conference Federation meeting

The Conference Youth Ministry director gave permission for an interview with the youth ministry leaders from various districts that had come for a planning meeting at the headquarters of the Conference. It was established that all leaders at the meeting of the TOC were actually local congregation level who had attended a meeting called by the Conference. The leaders came from the Shalom, East-Rand, West-Rand, Lowveld and Highveld districts. With this extent of representation, it was possible to get input from several districts in one sitting instead of visiting them individually. It was established that in attendance were senior youth leaders, Pathfinder club directors, and Adventurer club co-ordinators and that there were twenty Master Guides.

Of the congregations represented in the meeting, it was established that there were thirty-two who had progressive classes running. To try to get an idea of trends in finishing the curriculum, it was necessary to check for congregations that completed the curriculum the previous year. To do this, we enquired about those whose work was carried out to the point where they were ready for assessment (investiture). Only

eleven congregations reached this level and had investiture ceremonies. In twelve congregations, the investiture included both honours and promotions from one class to the next one.

Following below is a portion of the interview as it was conducted with the group:

Interviewer: How many of the class instructors in your respective congregations have progressive classes and are Master Guides?

Participants: (Eighteen congregations)

Interviewer: What are your experiences in running the progressive class where you deliver the youth ministry curriculum? What are your joys, frustrations or hindrances that you experience as you do your work?

Participant 1: In my church, we do not have consistent leadership. There is a high turnover of leaders. And some of the leaders, just when they have gained some experience, they have to leave because of mobility either to tertiary schools out of our area or they move because of job opportunities. This lack of continuity impedes on the establishment of effective youth ministry, and it is frustrating. We are left not knowing what to do. We do not have any Master Guides.

Participant 2: I want to say that what I enjoy most is to attend to the spiritual needs of Pathfinders. For example, the Pathfinder curriculum requires them to read the book *Great Controversy*. When they have progressed to Master Guide level, it is a lot easier for me to further teach them because they have been exposed much earlier in their lives.

Participant 3: My frustration emanates from the lack of support from fellow members who have gone through the progressive classes in their youthful years. Now that they have grown up to senior youth, they seem to have lost interest. It is as if they now see the curriculum as old-fashioned and irrelevant. It is as if they see it as out-dated

Participant 4: My difficulty is in constituting the various classes. You find that when you group them according to their age as prescribed in the curriculum, you end up having one person in one of the classes. This is made even more difficult by the shortage of qualified class instructors.

Participant 5 (a District co-ordinator): I am currently not instructing any class, but I want to share my experience in assessing the work done in various congregations that have progressive classes. I have had a chance to assess work from Adventurer classes and the Pathfinder age class. I have discovered that teachers themselves need to be trained. When you look at how they do their work, it is clear that they are not trained. It would help if we also had one curriculum for the training of the teachers. Furthermore, I have observed that by the time they call me for assessment, many of the classes have not completed their

curriculum. You also find that the youth in the classes have not really mastered the contents of the curriculum. I hold the view that this is as a result of teachers that are not trained.

Interviewer: In your experience, does it happen that even when it is clear that the class has not mastered the work, they are still given the honours or they are promoted to the next level?

Participant 5: Yes, it happens. I must also state that sometimes the teacher stops working with the class halfway through, but the youth expect to be assessed and invested, even when they are not ready. We do compromise the standards in such cases because we cannot afford to disappoint them. I have already made suggestions to the TOC youth director based on my observations. I have suggested that we make sure that all teachers/instructors and leaders in the conference should be properly trained. They must be exposed to the curriculum.

Participant 6: My experience is that the Adventurer part of the curriculum is too heavy for the age group. It needs to be simplified to suit their developmental stage. And I am not talking about language (English) here – language is not an issue.

Participant 7: I feel that one of the causes why Adventurers and Pathfinder members do not complete their progressive class work is because the church is competing with the schools for the same people. We give them homework and the schools give them homework and projects. The church work will obviously be the one that is sacrificed here when the youth feel overloaded with work.

Participant 5: I take joy in knowing that as an instructor in the progressive classes, I experience personal growth as I go about working with the youth.

Interviewer: As I conclude, I would wish to verify whether any of you have experienced a situation, where you have the youth experience conversion or decide to commit their lives to the Lord in baptism as a direct result of youth ministry or progressive class work.

Participants: (Nine leaders had had this experience).

3.2.2. Orange-Vaal interview

Preliminary conversations in the meeting established that we had eleven Pathfinder club directors, six Adventurer club directors and six senior youth leaders. None of the leaders were Master Guides and only one leader had training up to Guide level. Languages used in this group were English, Sesotho and isiZulu. The interview took

place during the course of the district's annual revival camp meetings, and because of this, representation by the local congregation was at a maximum.

Interviewer: In how many congregations do we have progressive classes taking place?

Participant 1: In my church, I have grouped my youth from the Adventurer age to Pathfinder age into one group. We do not have the official material to use for the progressive classes, but we use that one manual we have to keep things going for the group. We find ourselves having to see what we can do in the meantime until we have the material.

Participant 2: (a District Coordinator): In my church, we have combined all the Adventurer age children into one Busy Bee class, while we have all the classes in place for the Pathfinder ages. We also have work going on for the Ambassadors.

Interviewer: So only one church is busy with the progressive classes using the prescribed curriculum. In the other congregations, seeing that we do not have progressive classes in place except in this one church, what are your challenges? How come we are not having them? With this question, I am trying to establish your experiences in your work as youth ministry leaders in your congregations.

Participant 1: In Zamdela, we tried to start the progressive classes. I have a copy of each progressive class activity book and manuals, but there is no money to make copies for each youth or to buy it for each of them. The problem is that the majority of the parents in our church do not have money as they are not working.

Participant 3: I am a Pathfinder director in Boipatong. When I joined the church, I had already passed the Pathfinder age and I was not exposed to Pathfinding. It is now difficult for me to teach them what I am not conversant with. I also do not have the curriculum. I do have the Guide manual, but I do not know how to go about using it. I do not have the rest of the material for other Pathfinder progressive class work. My frustration is that the content of the manual that I have is not familiar to me; I was not trained to do all this work.

Participant 4: I only took on the portfolio of Pathfinder approximately two months ago. We do not have material to work with; the church does not provide the budget to buy the material. Most of the parents are not working, so finance is an issue and my church is poor. The other problem I have was mentioned by someone here already. I was a Pathfinder myself ten years ago. I do not remember what I did back then. I need training now to be able to do my work. I also need support from outside my church because mine is a very small church and there is no-one knowledgeable in my church. The only Master Guide in our church is too old and feeble. She also does not have resources. The major need here is training. It would

also help if we had a trainer of trainers so that more leaders can be reached with training.

Interviewer: May I find out if we have other leaders here who have similar experiences as mentioned by others, namely a lack of training, a lack of resources and material. So we have twelve more leaders who are frustrated by a lack of training to enable them to implement the Youth Ministry curriculum in their churches.

What other experiences do we have besides the ones mentioned?

Participant 5: In my church, I experience problems with the leadership. The church elders refuse to allow time for the youth to have meetings. They fill the itinerary with programmes other than youth matters. Even when the youth leaders manage to negotiate for slots for youth ministry activities, when the time comes, the elders shift everything out and replace youth time with their preferred activities. We only have two leaders in our church, that way we cannot teach all the classes that we need to have. We try to meet with the youth during lunch breaks. So the problem we have is lack of support from the elders.

Participant 6: In my church, we also do not have support. We have had to appeal to Evaton North church for support.

Participant 1: In Zamdela, I was given only R1 000 for youth work for the whole year, and this is not enough.

Participant 2: As a District committee, we had planned to have training provided for the leadership. However, the elders and other elderly people always sabotage our efforts. Even now, we have not managed to have the training.

Interviewer: Given that the youth represent the majority of the membership, how does it happen that you get dominated by the ideas of elderly people?

Participant 2: We have tried to get young people involved, but it does not work.

Interviewer: What recommendations and suggestions would you make to make it easier for you to do your work?

Participant 2: We need to get the buy-in of the district pastor. He is the most influential person in the district. If we have his buy-in, things will work.

Participant 7: Youth leaders and the youth need to be committed and available for training and to do the work.

Participant 3: It would help if elders and the elderly people were to be oriented in youth work so that they understand youth issues.

Participant 1: We need to be creative so that, where we lack resources; we can be able to provide some ministry to the youth.

Participant 4: We need a direct support from the office, for training and guidance.

Participant 2: For those who have access to the Internet, let us encourage our leaders and youth to access the material directly online.

Participant 5: The office needs to ascertain that they have stock of all resource. It is frustrating when we go to the office to get material only to find that they do not have some of the material we need to do our work.

3.2.3. Interview of the youth ministry leaders in the Highveld District

The meeting started with a brief conversation to establish the spread of the leaders across the four divisions of youth ministry, i.e. Adventurers, Pathfinders, Ambassadors and senior youth. There were four senior youth leaders, eight Pathfinder club directors and four Adventurer club directors. The Ambassadors cluster has not been launched in the Highveld district. There is only one Master Guide and one Guide.

The languages used by the participants were English, isiZulu and siSwati.

Interviewer: What training have we had as youth ministry providers? How many have gone (in training) up to Master Guide level?

Let me quickly share with you the relevance of the two questions I have just asked: The Master Guide, Pathfinder Leadership Awards and the Advanced Pathfinder Leadership Awards courses contain the training for youth ministries. With two focusing on the Pathfinder level, there would be a need for leaders to expose themselves to that programme so that we are qualified leaders for youth ministries.

At this stage, I would like to find out as to which churches had investiture last year?

Participants: (Only Bethal and Ermelo had investiture, conducted by the district president, the only Master Guide in the district).

Interviewer: Between the two churches that had investiture last year, were these investitures about honours or were they also promotional – promoting them from one class to the next.

Participants: (They were both promotional).

Interviewer: Do you recall how many classes were completed?

Participants: (Bethal completed two, i.e. Friend and Companion. Ermelo completed the entire Adventurers scope).

Interviewer: Which congregations represented here have already started with the implementation of the progressive classes?

Participants: (None had started with the Eager Beaver; Ermelo and New Life have started with the Adventurers cluster; for Pathfinders, Bethal has two classes started, and New Life has five classes; Standerton has five classes).

Interviewer: The next question looks at your experiences in implementing the youth ministry curriculum; those of you who have been implementing it. Given that no senior youth work curriculum is implemented, I will specifically be curious about the work in the Adventurer and Pathfinder levels. We have established already that no curriculum work was done at the senior level in the district last year as well as this year.

Have you experienced a situation where the youth in your church have made spiritual commitments as a direct result of the youth ministry work in your church? As an example, have you had some youth who have decided on baptism as a result of your youth ministry curriculum implementation?

Participant 1: Yesterday I requested the elder to place me in the preachers' roster and they declined.

Interviewer: You are a youth leader, you are also a young person in the church, you want to be involved in the preaching ministries of the church and they declined? What was the reason given for the refusal?

Participant 1: No reason was given, except that they said they do not want to be in trouble.

Interviewer: Was it because of your age or was it because of your gender?

Participant 1: Because of my gender.

Participant 2: In Bethal, I witnessed an incident where one young person expressed her appreciation for the Pathfinder ministry. She got involved, completed the curriculum and became youth ministry practitioner because of her participation in the programme. She also made a decision for baptism because of her exposure to the Pathfinder classes. She is now training as a Master Guide.

Interviewer: I am now aware that very few here are involved in the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum. Have those of you who have been implementing the curriculum found the programme to be helpful in enriching the spiritual lives of your youth.

Participant 3: Yes, I have found it very helpful, especially when you start in their Pathfinder years from ten years upward as you progress with them to Ranger class and Voyager where more spiritual content and Bible doctrines are taught; it has a way of changing their lives. They also get to appreciate and understand church dynamics. It is here that it becomes opportune for them to choose baptism, for instance. These classes do help to change their lives in a big way; I have seen this in my home congregation.

Participant 4: Although I am not yet a Master Guide, I have also observed that as we take the youth through the curriculum, it assists them in increasing their level of self-discipline.

Interviewer: What are your experiences in implementing the youth ministry curriculum? I have noticed that in the majority of congregations in this district there was no implementation of the curriculum both last year and this year. I am curious as to what the obstacles are that are hindering the implementation?

Participant 5: Cases differ; historically, it has not been happening in my church, I now have to start from scratch as there are no resources available. Because of financial constraints, it is difficult for one to raise the resources. Very few of my members are working so most of the youth cannot afford to secure resources for themselves.

Interviewer: So the church cannot afford also to purchase the material needed for the class work?

Participant 5: Yes, it cannot afford it.

Interviewer: Any other experiences that you have to share? Have you been exposed to any training whatsoever?

Participant 6: A little bit; a long time ago during the time of Ps Msimango. However, I did not complete the training.

Participant 7: My challenge is that I was only baptised last year. Now I have been chosen as a leader. My challenge is that I have never been exposed to any progressive work myself as a leader. So how will I be able to implement a curriculum that I was never exposed to? I have no idea what that is.

Participant 8: The past two years as a leader I tried to introduce the progressive classes for Pathfinders and senior youth and the honours for the Adventurers. I did this to try to motivate them to have an interest in what the department has to offer. However, it was a frustrating experience in that I could not get anyone to complete even one honour. I had hoped that I will see the same interest and enthusiasm that I experienced at home in Zimbabwe, but here it was different. I observe though that I am beginning

to make inroads with the Pathfinders. It would appear that to get them while they are young works better than starting with them when they are already senior youth. I am working with the Friend class now and it is going well.

Participant 9: I think that the minimal progress we have in my church is as a result of only introducing the Adventurer programme this year for the first time. It would assist me if I as a leader had been exposed to the Adventurers curriculum. I wish to attend the classes myself. I need training before I can start implementing the curriculum.

Participant 10: Since I was a Pathfinder myself, we never did progressive classes in my church. I think finances have everything to do with it; there is no money to buy books. I am now a Pathfinder director who was never exposed to the Pathfinder curriculum; neither did I receive any training.

Participant 11: My experience is similar to hers. I am a Pathfinder director, but I have not been exposed to the curriculum. I have no clue and it is very hard for me to lead. I need training.

Participant 12: I have just been elected an Adventurer leader this month, so late in the year. I have no idea what is expected of me. I have not been trained as a leader.

Participant 2: I believe all of us here do need training because we have never been trained.

Participant 13: I have had no training as a leader, and I do not have any resources to use in my work.

Interviewer: Right now, I wish for us to converse around the experiences of those who have been implementing the curriculum at various levels. What have been your joys, highlights, successes and frustrations?

Participant 8: I will start with my frustrations; the manuals require that we must get instructors for each class. The problem that I experienced is that people do not have time to come and be involved in helping with that. You find that the one person who comes to assist ends up with up to three classes to instruct. And it becomes too burdensome for volunteer instructors. The joy that I have is that the parents in my church are supportive; they assist the Adventurers with their homework.

Participant 9: My seniors have been supportive in my work with Adventurers; there is one Master Guide who has been very helpful to my work. The parents are supportive, but I have not received training as a leader.

Participant 1: My joy as a leader is that my group is very enthusiastic; we try to work as a team and it is working. My frustration is a lack of support from the parents.

Participant 8: My frustration is with parents who volunteered to assist as counsellors and instructors, but who fail to play their role and fail to attend meetings. It appears that they have no commitment, and commitment is key to youth ministry. I am also worried that too little money is allocated for the purchase of materials we need for the work. It would assist us if the head office provided the material at a more affordable price.

Interviewer: How do you experience the language in which the curriculum comes in? Is it not a problem?

Participant 3: It is partly a problem, but for the youth it might not be a problem though. We have received a few complaints on that, but generally it is not.

3.2.4. Interview of the Far-West District youth ministry leaders

Ten leaders attended the interview. The leaders in attendance at the meeting were senior youth leaders, Pathfinder club directors and Adventurer club directors. The district does not have Ambassador Clubs in all its congregations. There are two Master Guides in the district and they attended. Except for the pastor, the two Master Guides and two other members, none of the members and leaders have ever been exposed to the progressive class work. The Conference youth ministries director attended this meeting.

The languages used in this interview were English and Setswana.

Interviewer: Let us now talk about the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in your churches. By curriculum we are referring to the learning material – the syllabus that must be covered in the youth department programmes, that which needs to be taught in the progressive classes. We call these progressive classes because they are linked to the age-based developmental stages of the youth, progressing from age six upwards, from Busy Bee to Master Guides in senior youth. They progress with the syllabus from the age of six up to the age of sixteen and upwards.

Participant 1: It is very difficult for some of us as leaders, because we do not know what to do – we know nothing about the progressive classes. We really need some training.

Interviewer: And I suppose you could start with Guide. What is the advice of the TOC youth director?

Participant 2: They can do Master Guide, the new combination class, where they are fulfilling the requirements of the Master Guide, but at the same time, they

are being exposed to the contents of the rest of the classes. That way they are exposed to the Pathfinder curriculum that they missed.

Interviewer: So tell me if and how you are busy implementing the youth ministry curriculum in your churches.

Participant 3: We are busy with the Adventurers classes – I have started with Busy Bee and Helping Hand. However, the problem I have is that we have no material. Some of the material I use I have had to download from the Internet. The church just does not provide the funds to purchase the material. We also have no way of ascertaining whether the material we use from the Internet is approved by our conference.

I also have a problem with the spread of the age groups in my church. You find that there is only one child that is nine, and I cannot organise a class for one child. I then have to let him join a class of another age group.

Participant 4: In Kuruman, we have the material, but we do not have class teachers. We have the children in classes, but there are no teachers. We have all the material required for all Adventurers classes.

Participant 5: We do have Pathfinder age classes going on in Kuruman, we introduced them this year. However, the problem that I have is that the church is not buying into the programme, they are not supportive. They do not provide moral support. We are following the curriculum as prescribed, and we have established all the Pathfinder age classes. We are also attempting to introduce Ambassadors.

Interviewer: What other experiences do you have in Kuruman with the implementation?

Participant 6: We are sometimes frustrated by the youth who are slow with their work. Some do not complete their homework. That affects progress. My other frustration is that some of the requirements in the curriculum become impractical for us to complete because of the expenses and other logistical implications for us to meet them.

Interviewer: So it is only Kuruman that is implementing the curriculum – the Adventurer and Pathfinder classes?

Participant 6: We are busy with both the theory and practicals. Theory, like we do in Church Heritage, and then we do physical activities, such as hiking and games.

Interviewer 1: May I find out if you have had youth who have opted for baptism because of your class work.

Participant 3: Although I cannot say their decision for baptism came from the curriculum activities, I can say that some of them did base their decisions on our youth ministry programmes.

Interviewer: Have there been any investitures that took place in this district's churches last year?

Participants: No

Interviewer: Any envisaged for this year?

Participant 3: Not yet, but Kuruman and Vryburg are planning for one.

Interviewer: What is it that hinders the implementation of the curriculum in the congregations that have not yet started with the progressive classes?

Participant 7: We do not have resource materials for the curriculum in Tshepo Ya Rona.

Interviewer: And what is the problem acquiring the material given that the office has the material?

Participant 7: Yes, it is the money problem. The other problem is that historically these classes did not exist in our church, so we as leaders have never been exposed to these. We need training. Youth leaders are not trained – and this is a district-wide scenario.

We also struggle to get support from parents. It would really make a difference if the adults in the church became actively involved in supporting the youth ministry. Right now, the indication is that the church adults do not prioritise youth ministry. It would appear as if other departments are seen as more important than the youth department. Women's ministries and Dorcas are prioritised at the expense of youth ministries. It would really help if the whole church could be assisted to realise the critical role played by youth ministries in the church.

Participant 8: I will share an experience from Ganyesa. I became Adventist in 2004; and were baptised that same year. In 2005, I was elected a youth leader – the very following year. I have been a youth leader since then. I have never been exposed to progressive classes. I also realise that the church prioritises things other than the youth work. Well, what is remarkable with my church is that we have the youth department, but we have no senior youth. Our youth have had to move out of Ganyesa to pursue job and educational opportunities. I am the only senior youth who works locally at Ganyesa. All I know about Pathfinders is that they should do drill downs and the parade marches. I am not the only one with this view, my church shares this view.

However, I now understand better, and I plan to introduce the progressive classes for the children who are growing up. I guess we need training; we need to be trained as a church.

Interviewer: What would you think would assist you in this district to start and implement the youth ministry curriculum in your churches?

Participant 3: I think we need more training of youth leaders. We would benefit from the guidance of those with the expertise and experience. They would need to come from the Conference and other areas to share with us because we are novices here.

Participant 8: I also observe that, because of the small size of our congregations, newly baptised members are rushed into office without training; and what makes it worse is that these members are often burdened with multiple offices they are made to carry. This makes it impractical for one to carry out his/her duties.

Participant 7: For me, I would suggest that the headquarters consider donating resources for those congregations that are too poor to afford purchasing them. Poverty is a big issue in this district.

Participant 3: I must say that though it is true that poverty is an issue, I believe there are also issues of failing to prioritise. Sometimes there is money to spend on other departments, but there is never money to spend on the youth.

Participant 5: The TOC could assist by sending directives to congregations on how much time should be allocated to youth ministry. It would give us an advantage against the domineering adults who lead the church. It would really help – as it does with the prescribed youth week of prayer

3.2.5. North-East interview

There were eight leaders that attended the meeting. Leaders that attended the meeting were those in the Adventurer, Pathfinder and senior youth clusters; the district does not have any Ambassador club in its congregations. The languages used here were Shangaan and English (to a lesser extent).

Interviewer: Let us now briefly share what we have been doing in our department. What have you been busy with since beginning of the year?

Participant 1: We are preparing them for the Trans Orange Conference Pathfinder Fair and we have only a small number of Pathfinders. I have invited non-Adventists youth to be part of the club as we practise.

Interviewer: What does “practise” entail?

Participant 1: We are doing drill-downs and other events (field events.)

Interviewer: So you are busy readying yourselves for the Pathfinder Fair, busy with field activities only?

Participant 1: Yes.

Interviewer: Is that all that you have been busy with?

Participant 1: Yes, that is all.

Participant 2: I have been busy in our company to prepare them for the Pathfinder Fair. We have only managed to do a few of the field events for the Fair.

Participant 3: With us at Ka-Nyavane, we have a home-visitation programme in place. We visit the sick, and pray for them before we leave. We also introduce them to a healthy diet and ideas on nutrition to assist them to get well.

Participant 4: At Ka-Nwamitwa, we are training them in drill-downs and also engage the youth in in-reach programmes Bible studies.

Participant 5: At Ga-Kgapane, we are busy with drill-downs and other activities prescribed for the Fair.

Interviewer: What else are you busy with?

Participants: (Nothing else.)

Participant 6 (District leader): At district level, we really struggle to set anything in motion because we never manage to have full attendance of leaders. They plead financial limitations whenever we have to have meetings, both for training and strategies. We therefore cannot have a co-ordinated districts plan. Even as we approach the Pathfinder Fair, we are not able to get prepared as a district. We are unable to start with progressive classes because firstly, we are not able to bring the leaders together for training and there is no money to secure the manuals, activity books and other class material.

We had planned for a youth rally where we had hoped the youth could be mobilised to be involved in the church and Adventist youth programmes. The rally failed because of financial limitations. We have tried to appeal to the congregations to prioritise youth ministry and to support the department. I really believe that the reason why we see little interest shown by the youth is primarily because we have no support from the churches. We wish to launch a Master Guide programme for the Zone A area; we are yet to determine the launch date.

Interviewer: What will you be doing in this Master Guide programme?

Participant 6: As you will understand, after the youth have been through the Pathfinder programme, having completed the Guide curriculum, they must now go into the Master Guide programme. They are required to read books such as *Steps to Christ*, *Christian Education*, *Messages to Young People* and *Heritage and Leadership Training*.

Interviewer: Are all Zone A congregations involved in Master Guide training?

Participant 6: Well, the support levels are very low. Some congregations you have up to five people who have shown interest, but in some, there has been no interest at all.

Interviewer: Who is training those in the Master Guide classes?

Participant 6: It is Pastor Mamogwa

Interviewer: As far as you know, how are the progressive classes going in the district? How are the Master Guide classes going?

Participant 6: We attempted to start the progressive classes in a way that they start from the entry-level class and progress to the following levels and those that are seventeen years and older. We would then introduce them to the Master Guide programme.

Interviewer: Do you have an idea as to how many congregations have started with progressive classes?

Participant 6: I try to make contact with the leaders in the various congregations to check with them as to what is happening in their congregations. I do get some responses, they do share with me as to what activities they are involved in, and unfortunately, none have indicated that they have progressive classes in place (there are some going on in her home church, see below).

Interviewer: And what do progressive classes entail?

Participant 7: In my case, I would say with the Busy Bees we read Bible stories to them, we get them to sing songs and use visual aids. We struggle though to get money to buy the material needed for these. The church does not provide budgetary support for this.

Participant 8: Well, since we do not have the material for progressive classes, we just do what we can even if it is not in line with the curriculum. We involve the youth in intercessory prayer programmes and DVD ministry, where we share with the community.

Interviewer: Does the district leadership have material for progressive classes?

Participant 6: I only have very limited material, only for ages six to 15years.

Interviewer: What kind of material do you have?

Participant 6: A few pamphlets, such as the Bible-reading plan. I also have the *Happy Path* booklet that was donated to me. I also have cards that list requirements for the various classes.

Interviewer: How many classes are in place?

Participant 6: There is only one in the Adventurer group and two on the pathfinder level.

Interviewer: Do you have in your company any Guide or Master Guide classes going on?

Participant 6: Yes, I do have five people and a few have started with the Master Guide programme. Although the pace is slow, they have submitted their first assignments. We are waiting for Ps Mamogoa to come and evaluate the work.

Interviewer (to all): What else are you doing, say at Pathfinder level?

Participant 5: It is difficult to get the youth interested in the progressive classes. They give various excuses why they cannot participate. It is very discouraging to us as leaders.

Participant 7: We struggle to get material from the Trans-Orange Conference. When we make requests for material for progressive classes, they only make empty promises; they never deliver unless you manage to travel to Johannesburg to collect the material in person.

Interviewer: Do we have a qualified Master Guide in the district besides Ps Mamogoa?

Participant 6: No, not one.

Interviewer: Have you ever gone through a training programme yourselves, to equip you to carry out your duties as leaders?

Participant 7: Not this year, the leaders from the Trans-Orange Conference had promised to come through to train us, but they keep re-scheduling and up to now, we have not been trained. In their annual itinerary, they had not included us. When we raised concerns regarding the omission, they had promised to make a way to accommodate us. Even last year, they did not come through.

Interviewer: Now I will request that we share experiences that we have had as youth leaders. How is it for you to be a leader? How are you experiencing it?

How is it going for you? Please share your joys, successes and perhaps your frustrations too.

Participant 6: Being a youth leader is a tremendous responsibility. Being a leader is quite demanding and difficult. It involves providing leadership to all people across the various ages from youth to adults. You must get their cooperation. All these have their own ideas of what should happen; they have their own personal experiences and backgrounds. To get all of them on board is a challenge. This impedes progress. This district is not progressing because of this. Very few people are supportive; they do not attend meetings nor support initiatives.

I once called a district meeting for the federation. Besides the hosting congregation, only two other people attended. How do we then plan for the rest of the district with such a low turnout? These are our challenges. We are frustrated by the lack of support from the congregations. Youth leaders lack support from the church elders also. Elders plead a lack of money; youth leaders do not get funding from the church.

Participant 7: Youth ministry has really regressed. There is no interest anymore; both youth and parents are not interested.

Interviewer: What do you think should be done to improve youth ministry in your district? What may need to be done to enable you to implement the youth ministry curriculum in your churches?

Participant 6: We need support from the congregations and commitment from the youth themselves. We also need support from the head office. From them we need especially training and guidance. Right now, we lead without knowledge and skills; we just have to do what we can to get by, not according to the prescribed methods. Strangely, head office expects us to submit reports according to a specified format on certain specifics. They ought to come and demonstrate to us before expecting us to perform.

Participant 7: When the office fails with regard to this aspect, it kills the morale for both youth and their parents. It is as if they do not take us serious. Like when they promise to come and they do not pitch, they do not even apologise.

Interviewer: And what about the material you need to process the curriculum?

Participant 6: There is virtually no material for us, the last time we received material was in 2006. I have also discovered that the office does not have stock of the same material required.

Interviewer: I get the sense that, with regard to what I was enquiring about, we have covered everything. Before we close, may I check if perhaps you may wish to mention something else that we did not cover?

Participant 6: We think all is covered.

3.2.6. Interview with the Shiloh District leaders

The Shiloh district meeting had one Ambassador leader in addition to the leaders in the Adventurer, Pathfinder and senior groups. The interview was conducted mainly in English and Sepedi.

Interviewer: In which churches do we have the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum?

Participant 1: In my church, we do not have resources, and we therefore cannot do the work. We just have to be creative and see what we can do, but we do not go by the book, we are not professional about it.

Participant 2: In our church (Lebowakgomo), we do have some resources, and we have grouped the youth according to their ages, from Busy Bee to Master Guide. We are planning to have an investiture after the Pathfinder Fair. The Master Guides that we have in our church are helping to teach the classes together with other instructors in the church.

Participant 3: In my church (Seshego), we do not have the resources, but we do have the Pathfinder club organised. The Adventurer youth are not active. During Pathfinder meetings, we concentrate on the physical activities in preparation for the forthcoming Pathfinder Fair.

Participant 4: In my church (Mankweng), we have organised clubs for the Pathfinders and Adventurers. We focus on drills and marches as part of creating interest in the crusade that we are planning for later this year. We are also getting ready for the Pathfinder Fair activities. We have invited youth from the community to be part of this.

Participant 5 (President): Shiloh as a district is enthusiastic about Pathfinders and Adventurers, but as leaders, we lack the skills and resource material for the curriculum work. We hardly have qualified Master Guides. In my home church (Seshego), we do not have any Master Guides.

Participant 6: I wish there was a way of getting all leaders to be Master Guides, starting from church elders to youth leaders; that would help us.

Participant 7: I am from Esleben, and what I do for my Pathfinders is drum majorettes. We do not have classes and I am not sure if drum majorettes are acceptable at the Fair.

Interviewer: Am I correct to conclude that all the activities in the Pathfinder clubs are purely physical activities in preparation for the Pathfinder Fair? And that there is no curriculum work that is being done?

Participants: (Yes)

Interviewer: What would be helpful for you to enable you to implement the youth ministry curriculum?

Participant 1: I would suggest that we have the current leaders trained, but also include other volunteers in the training. This would create a favourable situation where there will be a large pool to elect qualified leaders in the future. It would help with continuity.

Participant 3: The church must support us as leaders.

Participant 4: Churches must buy the necessary manuals and resources to do the work.

Participant 5: There are congregations that have not elected youth leaders. If they could liaise with us as district leaders, we would assist where there are problems. Elders need to work with us as well.

3.2.7. Interview with the Vhembe District youth ministry leaders

The Vhembe group of youth leaders only had one Master Guide and one Guide among them. The rest of the leaders stated that they have never gone through any progressive class work. They also did not have any Ambassador clubs in their district. The interview was conducted with some participants speaking in Tshivenda and others in English.

Interviewer: I wish to know as to how many of us here have an idea of what we are referring to when we talk about the youth ministries curriculum or the progressive classes.

Participants: (Five people have an idea)

Interviewer: How many of us have progressive classes in their churches – those classes that present the youth ministries curriculum progressing with the youth as they move through their various developmental stages?

Participant 1: I have one class in the Pathfinder group.

Participant 2: I am busy with only the Friend class.

Participant 3: The whole Pathfinder club is studying the book *Growing in Christ*. This helps us take care of everybody, including situations where there is only youth of a particular age. We have all the manuals and books, but we are only using the one book *Growing in Christ* for the entire club.

Participant 4: In my Pathfinder group, I am only concentrating on drilling exercises, preparing for the TOC Pathfinder Fair, even though I am not certain that my club will attend.

Interviewer: With regard to senior youth, are there any of the senior youth leaders that are busy with progressive classes at that level in your churches?

Participants: (Only one)

Interviewer: Do we have progressive classes at Adventurer level?

Participant 5: I teach Adventurers how to drill and that is all that I do with them.

Interviewer: So we do not have any other church in the district that has a programme for Adventurers! May I now ask that we share our experiences in providing the youth ministry in as far as the curriculum or progressive classes are concerned? What are your joys and frustrations, what are the hindrances? How come we are not implementing the curriculum in the churches? (Except in two churches)

Participant 6 (President): The main problem is that churches do not have resources such as manuals and activities. Ideally, each church should have at least one manual for each class, otherwise the youth leaders will have no clue as to what to do. The other challenge is that our youth leaders have no idea of what is expected of them after they are elected into office. This is because they are not trained to do what they have been elected to.

Interviewer: Is this frustration – the lack of training – a problem across the district?

Participants: (Group) Yes it is.

Participant 3: Our other frustration is with the church leadership. They do not afford time for youth in the church programming. They crowd the church time with other activities – and they insist that we as youth should be part of those activities.

Participant 7: My observation is that the senior church leaders also need to get some orientation in youth issues because they really have no idea of how to respond to the youth needs. That is why they frustrate youth programmes. I will even dare to say even our pastors are ignorant about youth issues.

Interviewer: Given that the TOC has manuals and other resources in stock, what is hindering the churches in obtaining these from the office?

Participant 3: I suspect that it is lack of motivation, because the little that we have done from the resources that we had, was never assessed and rewarded.

Participant 5: No-one is encouraging us to apply ourselves in the ministry. We do not have motivation and encouragement. Our senior leaders need to be exposed to youth issues so that the elders can also supervise/monitor the youth leaders' world.

Participant 7: None of the churches represented here have made budgetary provision for the youth – except for the Tshisaule church that has a nominal amount allocated to the youth.

3.2.8. Interview with the Mafikeng church elders and youth ministry leaders

The Mafikeng district group comprised church elders, other departmental leaders and the youth ministry leaders. The presence of elders would give a unique perspective; unique in that their input would provide insights into how church elders may assist in the delivery of youth ministry in local congregations. A few responses were made in Setswana, but the interview was primarily conducted in English.

Interviewer: As I have observed in the other districts where I have been interviewing youth ministry leaders, it has become necessary in my view to approach this extraordinary meeting of church elders and youth leaders. The issues that have come up in the other districts seem to suggest that it could be helpful to also hear from other leaders in the churches. You might be aware that the majority of membership in our church is the youth. The implication of this is that essentially every church leader is largely a youth leader (in that their department's members are youth in majority). I therefore invite the elders herein present to share insights as we converse about the youth ministry work.

Firstly, I would like to know how many of us are Master Guides.

Participants: (We have two Master Guides.)

Interviewer: How many of us here have been in Progressive classes up to Guide level.

Participants: (We have six).

Interviewer: In how many congregations do we have progressive classes going on at present? I am interested here to see also the hands of elders who are aware of the activities in their churches.

Participants: (In Mafikeng Stadt, Setlopo and Montshiwa)

Interviewer: Kindly indicate as to what classes are covered in these progressive classes.

Participant 1: In Montshiwa, we have Busy Bee up to Guide.

Interviewer: Are there any Master Guides that are instructors in those classes?

Participant 1: I am one of the instructors and I am a Master Guide. I sometimes involve some Master Guides from other churches. I also use some instructors and counsellors that are not Master Guides.

Interviewer: What about in Mafikeng Stadt? Are you using Master Guides as class instructors?

Participant 2: Yes, we are using Master Guides only as class instructors.

Interviewer: And what classes are you busy with?

Participant 2: We have Busy Bee, Sunbeam; Builders, Helping hands, Friends, Companions and Explorers are not present; and then we have the Guide and Master Guide classes.

Interviewer: What do we have in Setlopo?

Participant 3: I have Eager Beavers, Friends, Companions, Explorers and Rangers up to Master Guide.

Interviewer: What qualification level do the instructors have?

Participant 3: I only have one Master Guide.

Interviewer: We have twelve organised churches in this district; we also have several companies (smaller congregations). It seems that there are no progressive classes set up in those congregations.

Participant 4: I would wish to have them started at Tsetse, but we would need expertise and support from other congregations since we do not have capable people at Tsetse.

Interviewer: May I find out from the elders here present as to how you are experiencing your involvement in the youth/ministry work.

Participant 3: My interest is to see to it that Youth Ministry work runs smoothly in my church. We have many members who are of youth age. I assist to see to it that they learn right from the beginning to the end because we cannot expect them to be future leaders of this church without them having gone through this kind of training. For me, it gives the basic training and leadership skills because they are given tasks and responsibilities to do. When, as the leader, you are directly involved, you get to see for yourself what is happening among the youth. You get

to see their interest in the church and leadership. I am involved even in Pathfinders. Every Sunday, I am there with them. For me it is a joy to see them learning something and getting excited about it.

Interviewer: For the record, we need to indicate that the participants are from Setlopo where progressive classes are taking place and the elder is directly involved in those classes.

Participant 5: In Signal Hill, we have attempted to start with the lower classes. We have some of the materials that would be needed to do the work, but we will need the assistance from the sister churches to help write expertise and equipment.

Participant 6: I am not an elder at Koi-Koi, but I am involved in youth ministry in Koi-Koi. The problem that we have there is a lack of instructors. The youth are available; they have been grouped for classes according to their ages. However, they are at the point where they have to be instructed, but instructors are not available. That somehow discourages the youth and children. We have, however, sought support from sister churches.

Interviewer: How many of us as elders lead our boards to create budgets for youth ministry when we do church budgeting? Do we provide budgets for resources for youth ministries?

Participant 3: At Setlopo, we do make budgetary provision for youth ministry resources and any other equipment they might need, even though we do not have everything.

Participant 4: We also do that at Tsetse.

Interviewer: As I conclude, I would like to share something with you so that I do not only get something from you for my schoolwork; but also leave you with something: The primary objective for youth ministry is to save our youth and to prepare them for service, to save and let them serve. It is when we train them for service that we also train them for leadership. By the time they are trained as Guides and Master Guides, they are getting ready to lead. You can then start to draw from this pool of leaders some elders and other church leaders. If they have gone through the programme properly, they should be able to carry out their leadership role adequately. However, the primary goal of youth ministries is to save our youth. Research indicates that the ages of twelve and thirteen are the most opportune stage to make religious convictions. That is the Pathfinder age. The Pathfinder age is the most opportune time to lead the youth to salvation. Their age is the most impressionable to make religious decisions. We need to take advantage of this. We know that by the time they pass their Pathfinder age and go to tertiary institutions of learning, their thinking becomes abstract and critical, and if they have not yet established a firm footing in their Christian life, it might become more of a challenge to reach them then.

3.2.9. Interview with the TOC youth advisory council

The first interview with the TOC youth advisory council members was conducted approximately twelve months earlier. A second interview was conducted with this group of leaders to observe whether there might be different information coming in given the time lapse and the change in district leaders since the first interview. The other reason for the second interview was that there were leaders from the congregations from the Golden-West district in attendance. On a few occasions, some of the participants made their input combining both English and their mother tongue in their speech. Where that occurred, again their contributions were translated into English. Where necessary, syntax adjustments were made for the purpose of readability.

Interviewer: This is a follow-up meeting on the one we had early last year right here in this boardroom... I would like to have a profile of this meeting in terms of representation. How many districts are represented here...?

Participant 1: (secretary). We have seven districts. We have Highveld, Lowveld, Orange-Vaal, Golden-West, Mafikeng, East-Rand and Shalom.

Interviewer: What is the total number of people in attendance?

Participant 1: Sixteen people.

Interviewer: May I find out please as to the number of people in here who are qualified Master Guides?

Group: Eight from Golden-West, TOC Master-Guide, Shalom, Golden-West, Mafikeng, Highveld and East-Rand.

Interviewer: From the rest of us, are there any who have been trained up to Guide level?

Group: (Only one)

Interviewer: The next thing that I would like to check for is the congregations in our districts that have conducted investitures during the course of 2011.

Group: In Shalom district: Akasia, Mamelodi, East and Tshwane East. From Golden-West: Klerksdorp church only.

Participant 2: I have a question. When you ask about investiture, are you referring to the one on the youth ministry curriculum, or do you also include the one on honours? Be specific.

Interviewer: Thank you for asking. We are referring to the investiture on the curriculum – that being our subject of discussion as we indicated in the beginning. Is there any need to make any adjustment on the responses we got earlier, or were all the investitures on the curriculum?

Group: There is no need.

Interviewer: So all the investitures were on the curriculum.

Participant 3: (TOC coordinator) We also did investiture in Jan Kempdorp in the Diamond Heritage district. There was also one in the Free State district in Kroonstad.

Participant 4: (Curriculum coordinator for East Rand) Last year we did not do any investitures in the East-Rand; we are planning to do the assessment and investiture for last year's work sometime between February and March this year. We will combine the participating congregations in one district investiture.

Interviewer: Which congregations are currently busy with progressive classes in the four categories? Let us go by district. Shall we start with Golden-West?

Participant 5: In the Golden-West district, we are planning to have a district thrust to get all churches to start to be involved with progressive classes. We want to motivate all the churches within the district to start.

Participant 6: (Golden-West district Pathfinder coordinator) Others have already started, such as the Good Hope church and the Klerksdorp church.

Interviewer: And you have plans to get all the churches in the districts to start this year?

Participant 7: (Master Guide coordinator) In the Mafikeng district, all the churches have already started with their progressive classes this year.

Interviewer: And in the Highveld district?

Participant 8: (Highveld district president) Ten of the fourteen churches in the district have already started with progressive classes.

Participant 4: In the East Rand, we have approximately twenty churches that are busy with progressive classes; some have fulfilled almost all the requirements.

Participant 9: In the Orange-Vaal, we have three congregations that have started with classes. With the rest of the churches, we are waiting for the training of the leaders to enable them to carry out their duties.

Interviewer: Any other district that is busy with the curriculum?

Participant 10: We have in Shalom Enkangala and Mamelodi East, Mamelodi Central and Mabopane.

Interviewer: Are there any leaders here who are directly involved in delivering the curriculum in local congregations? Please share with us your experiences as you deliver the curriculum.

Participant 2: What I have observed is that before adult people did not understand what is going on in these classes, but now, as they see the difference the classes make in the behaviour of the youth, and the way they present themselves in the church, they begin to appreciate the improvement they see. The curriculum impacts on the youth's behaviour and how they present themselves as youths.

Participant 9: In the Vaal, it seems that people are enjoying the classes and the activities; they feel they need to go on with the work.

Interviewer: May I find out whether there are any challenges or hindrances that you experience as you deliver the curriculum.

Participant 8: In the Highveld, I realise that there are congregations such as Piet Retief and others that struggle with the language (English) that is used in the curriculum; they have no clue what is going on. The language is the barrier there. There are no people to help with the translation for the kids to understand. There is a difference in understanding between the kids that go to school in English schools in towns and those in the township schools. Secondly, the other challenge is that the teachers themselves do not understand the purpose of the curriculum and the goals and objectives to be reached. Therefore, the teachers fail us because of a lack of training.

Participant 11: In the Lowveld, the problem is that the parents of the Adventurer group sometimes allow church politics to influence them to withhold their children from the programmes. The Adventurers depend on the support of their parents. Sometimes, when a parent has an issue with the leader, the parent withdraws his/her child from the classes. Unlike the Pathfinders who are independent, the Adventurers are affected because they still depend on the parents.

Participant 9: The problem we have in the Vaal is that quite often the youth time in the Sabbath afternoons is taken over by other programmes where it is expected of everybody to attend. That way, when that happens, it becomes a challenge for the youth classes to continue and this delays the process of finishing the curriculum.

Participant 3: I want to say that it takes three persons together to effectively deliver the curriculum: The child, the teacher and the parent. Usually, there is no problem with the child and the teacher, but sometimes the parents do not support the children. Not all work can be done in class, some of the work must be done at home and if the parents are not supportive, the

work is not done. In addition, the child will not complete the curriculum requirements that way. You find gaps in their portfolios because homework was not done.

Interviewer: What would assist in improving the level of the delivery of the progressive classes for the youth ministry curriculum?

Participant 6: I think we should strive to bring all stakeholders on board, especially elders and deacons. We should train them in youth ministry issues. We need to put them in Master Guide programmes. This is working in my church; some have already joined the programme. I involve the deacons as instructors for some of the classes.

Participant 11: I would think that the spiritual content of the curriculum for the Adventurers may need to be revised to be age appropriate so that the Adventurers can benefit from it. The other components of the curriculum are not difficult for them, but there is a challenge with the spiritual component.

Participant 8: Training, commitment and availability of the material.

Participant 9: Train more people as Master Guides.

Participant 4: The curriculum contents and objectives need to be shared with the parents; let them have an idea. I believe that would help motivate parents to cooperate with the instructors.

3.2.10. Interview with the Golden-West district

Thirty-six youth leaders and Master Guides were in attendance. Of these, seven were Master Guides and twelve were Master Guides in training. Only one had qualified as a Guide. The interview was conducted in English. When it became apparent that the use of English was limiting the participation of the leaders, the group was encouraged to use any language they are more comfortable to communicate in. Several participants then mixed Setswana and English as they participated further. Their input has been translated into English in this interview.

Interviewer: In how many congregations do we have progressive classes in progress this year?

Group: Klerksdorp, Goodhope, Schweizer Reneke and Potchefstroom.

Interviewer: In those churches that have progressive classes going on, which ones are being conducted by Master Guides and Guides as instructors?

Participant 1: In Klerksdorp, we have three Master Guides serving as instructors in Busy Bee, Sun Beam, and Builder up to Companion.

Interviewer: Do we have other instructors that are not Master Guides, and how many are those.

Participant 1: Approximately six.

Interviewer: In Goodhope?

Participant 2: Two

Interviewer: And in Schweizer Reneke?

Participant 3: None

Interviewer: How are the progressive classes going in the churches that have them? What we are trying to establish here are the experiences of the youth ministry leaders as they go about implementing the curriculum. Please share experiences.

Participant 4: I am teaching the Friend class in Klerksdorp. The children show a great deal of interest. I think the curriculum is relevant; however, there are issues in the curriculum that I have a problem with. Number one, some requirements such as hiking. I have a problem with that for this time and era. I believe that it is not safe for the children to be involved in hiking in Jouberton. Maybe if it was somewhere else. It is not safe in Jouberton. The rest of the curriculum is relevant for the children, because in most of it children learn about God. It deals with what is expected of them and their responsibilities in the community, home and church.

Interviewer: What other experiences do you have? By the way, you can share in any language; we will make sure it is translated.

Participant 5: My experience is that those of my youth who attend school in the townships struggle to follow the content of the curriculum that is in English. We have to translate it. Ellen Whites' books are all in English. It requires a great deal of time to translate these prescribed books for the youth. This is quite a hindrance in the smooth running of classes. The language in her books slows everything down.

Participant 1: I can say that in the Klerksdorp church the curriculum is relevant and the kids understand. The Eagar Beavers are particularly enjoying classes a great deal; the Adventurers too. We have extended the programme to include youth from the community. We invite the community to come and be part of the classes and they appreciate the classes.

Participant 6: I am also from the Klerksdorp church and I would like to share my experience in the Busy Bee and Sun Beam classes where I am involved. I am excited by the interest shown by the community's children in what we are doing. It really motivates us because the community is learning about God. I have formed a few clubs there where I teach them the gospel and God's love.

Participant 4: I want to share what I have observed from my two grandchildren aged three and five. Last year already, they were drilled to memorise long Bible verses. Mind you, even in the secular education system, the curriculum has changed to let children be taught to memorise things like recitation. My grandchildren in their progressive classes could memorise long Bible passages. I think it is good that they are sharpening our kids; by the time they reach formal schooling, they will be number one. Thumbs up for the progressive classes.

Participant 7: I am from Potchefstroom. We are a growing club. We are still learning most of the things. Our first challenge was to develop interest in the Pathfinder programme. Initially, there was no interest in the classes. We have this year put up a strategy that resulted in some interest.

Interviewer: May I establish if any of you here have had an experience where some of your youth have given their lives to the Lord because of your youth ministry work.

Group: None

Interviewer: May I see the hands of those who would confirm that in their churches there are no progressive classes in progress.

Group: (Vaal Reefs, Lesedi, Blessed Hope, Kanana, Potchefstroom and Schweizer Reneke)

Interviewer: What are the hindrances for you that make it undoable for you to have progressive classes? Let us share.

Participant 8: Frequent changes of youth directors.

Interviewer: How does the high turnover of youth leaders become a hindrance? Is it because they leave with their training and experience and the new ones have to start from scratch?

Participant 8: No, it is not because they leave with their experiences. They are still there. It is just that the new ones do not know anything; they are not trained.

Interviewer: What are the experiences of others who cannot implement the curriculum?

Participant 9: Same problems (several voices)

Participant 10: My experience in Klerksdorp is that nothing was happening until someone with an interest in the youth stood up and provided motivation. Then we started seeing interest.

Participant 3: In our Schweizer Reneke church, the problem is the shortage of resource material. The leaders are also not trained.

Participant 11: That is also our problem at Vaal Reefs (Group: Also at Potchefstroom and Blessed Hope).

Participant 12: The problem with resource material is that the leaders do not return the material to the church when they leave office. I have observed a similar situation in Schweizer Reneke and Blessed Hope. We worked hard to provide them with the material, but it has disappeared. The previous leaders might be reluctant to be helpful to new leaders, or new leaders may be reluctant to ask for assistance.

Interviewer: Please share any suggestion on how we could increase the level of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum. Furthermore, what do you think of the content of the curriculum? How can we improve the output of the delivery of the curriculum?

Participant 2: I would encourage that there be more training of leaders. During our days there were frequent leadership training sessions that we were required to attend at the TOC. These courses, if provided, would help leaders to implement when they come back. Training is needed.

Participant 12: I would say that we should have more people in congregations who have an interest in the youth and are willing to bear the responsibility. This is what happened in Klerksdorp. In churches, there must be such people, whether elected into position or not, who have a positive influence to help the church see the importance of progressive classes. We prospered in Klerksdorp because there was somebody who stood up to inject the interest and motivation. This should happen in all churches.

Participant 1: I want to suggest that the district committee that was elected today should have a real interest in the work. If they could be serious about God's work and motivate local congregations, it will make a big difference.

Participant 13: If we could also get our church elders to be involved and to know what is involved in the youth work. Some elders are the stumbling blocks and the hindrance to the youth work. If they do not know what is going on in Pathfinder work, it will not help. Like Mrs Maforah said, even though there may be someone who tries to motivate the church, if the elder decides to block it, he will, and nothing will happen.

Participant 14: In a generic sense, I would think that there is a problem of the attitudinal stance that states that children do not matter. This is what needs to be changed. The leadership must change to realise that the

youth does matter. I also think that elections ought to be guided by the individuals' spiritual gifts. Lastly, the church needs to own up and realise that we are together in this. Every member has to play his/her role. Everybody should be taken seriously.

Participant 15: On the subject of the shortage of resource material, I would suggest that congregations establish libraries where the materials are stored and leaders do not take what is there to their homes.

Participant 14: I think we need families to support the objectives of youth ministries. Parents should start working with their children during pregnancy already, all the way through, to uphold our values. Parents should not relegate their responsibilities altogether to the church.

3.2.11. Interview with West-Rand District youth leaders

The West-Rand district is the largest in the TOC in terms of the number of congregations in the district. It has sixty-two congregations. The district also hosts some of the largest congregations. It is also the richest district. The youth ministry federation council meets monthly – the interview was conducted during the course of one of these monthly meetings. There were thirty-six leaders in attendance.

Interviewer: How many people are in attendance?

Participant 1: We have thirty plus.

Interviewer: How many leaders in the various categories represented here are Master Guides?

Participants: Three

Interviewer: How many here have completed the Guide curriculum?

Participants: Five

Interviewer: It has been brought to my attention that we also have Master Guides in training here. How many Master Guides in training do we have?

Participants: Six

Interviewer: Is that not interesting? We have Master Guides in training who have not completed the Guide training! I would like to establish in which congregations we have progressive classes going on as we speak? Which churches have started with progressive classes?

Participant 2: We have six classes in Mohlakeng.

Participant 3: In Jabavu, we have three Pathfinder classes and two Adventurer classes.

Participant 4: Two Pathfinders and three Adventurers in Dobsonville.

Participant 5: We have all classes from Adventurer to Pathfinder classes.

Participant 6: Two Adventurer and two Pathfinder classes.

Participant 7: We have all Pathfinder and Adventurer classes.

Participant 8: In Beulah Land, we have all classes.

Participant 9: One Ambassador, One Pathfinder and three Adventurers.

Interviewer: Do we all know what is meant by progressive classes.

Participants: (Yes we do)

Interviewer: Who are the instructors in your progressive classes? What kind of people do you use as instructors? What were your criteria in selecting staff?

Participant 5: We are using qualified Master Guides and the Pathfinder club director.

Participant 6: We are using the children's ministry coordinator and Sabbath School teachers.

Interviewer: So the selection is not based on their qualification and involvement in youth ministry? Like whether they are Guides or Master Guides? Is it because of the office they hold at church?

Participant 7: Leaders in the AY departments and Pathfinders, people who show interest in youth ministry. Therefore, even if they are not leaders, we would ask them to teach, even if they are not Master Guides. We have two who are Master Guides.

Participant 2: We only use Master Guides as instructors.

Participants 3: We use Sabbath School teachers and Ambassadors who teach the Guide classes.

Participant 8: We only use qualified Master Guides.

Participant 4: We use the Pathfinder club director and his assistant and the Sabbath School class teachers.

Interviewer: As a way of summarising, in how many churches here do we have progressive classes? Please raise your hand to indicate whether your church has progressive classes.

Participants: (nine)

Participant 10: I have a question. Mine is not a church. It is a children's home.

Interviewer: The other alternative word we could have used instead of 'church' is 'congregation'. Your group in the children's home is a congregation.

Participant 10: We are busy with Pathfindering.

Interviewer: We call that youth ministries. I now need to invite you to share your experiences. We are asking you to share how you experience it. How do you experience your delivery of the curriculum? Share what makes it easy for you and what makes it difficult for you.

Participant 9: What makes it easy for me is when parents assist with the homework. The thing that makes it difficult is that some parents do not want you as a teacher to reprimand their children. That makes it difficult. Children are not the same; some cooperate, while others do not. At the end of the day, you want all of them to learn. The other thing that makes it easy is when you have resource material. When we get the material from the office, it really helps to make it easy.

Participant 5: When teachers are committed, it makes the job easier for us. The challenge I have is that all other departments in the church want to see the church full in the afternoon (during the course of their programme) regardless of whether what they are doing will benefit the youth or not. Therefore, we have adopted our own programme, which we submitted to the Lay Activity leader and we specified that we have a programme for the youth every Sabbath. This is working for us. The other challenge is that our office (TOC) is not doing well for us because, if the department's secretary is not there, you are not going to get help. That is a big challenge.

Interviewer: Does it happen that the elders and other leaders want to move the youth from your programme into their programme? If it does happen, how do you handle it?

Participant 5: Yes, it does and it is tough because we have to exchange words. However, at the end of the day we are trying our best to keep our programme running efficiently.

Interviewer: How is it going in Beulah Land?

Participant 8: We are still new.

Interviewer: Another experience, Senaone?

Participant 7: What is great is that we have children who are willing to learn. However, with regard to material, when you go to the TOC you find that they do not have some supplies in stock. You end up having to resort to plan B; I download from the Internet. Most of the manuals that we have were downloaded from the Internet. What makes it hard is that we have a leadership that does not understand how the AY works, in the sense that everybody has to be in the church in other programmes. The other frustration is that we have elders and church board members who do not understand how the AY works and they do not respect AY time.

Interviewer: You said you download some of the manuals from the Internet; what about the books prescribed for reading?

Participant 7: If it is prescribed books, if one person has the book, the teacher reads and summarises it to the class. That way there is no need for each child to have the book. It is a matter of working with what you have. It is improvisation.

Interviewer: How is it for you in Mohlakeng?

Participant 2: Everything is OK. The parents are supportive. The problem that we have is resource material. We do not have enough money to cover the expenses.

Participant 6: The only challenge that we have is that parents are not supportive. When you give the children homework, they return with the homework undone. If the parents do not support the work, there will be no progress.

Interviewer: If we are to go by what we saw here today, in the majority of churches in the West-Rand, we do not have progressive classes. We have sixty-two churches in the district and we only have progressive classes in nine congregations. We would appreciate to hear from those of you in whose churches there are no progressive classes. What are the hindrances?

Participant 11: The reason we have not yet started with the progressive classes in Orlando East is that the church is busy with crusade preparations. After that, we will conduct the enrolment so we can start with the classes.

Interviewer: Is it a question of priorities? The church has prioritised the crusade and progressive classes had to wait?

Participant 11: Yes.

Participant 12: In Diepkloof, we do not have classes. The material is there. I think that the problem is just laziness, there is no other problem.

Interviewer: Who is lazy? Leaders or youth?

Participant 12: I would say everyone.

Participant 13: In Orlando South, we do not have progressive classes for one single reason. If I were to put it bluntly, it is because we have a bunch of stereotyped old leaders who want everything to go their own way. At the end of the day, they have mistaken that for pure Adventism. They tend to think that they know everything. Let me say that a bunch of dictators in the church want things done their own way; and if that does not happen, they sulk, take their families away and stay away from the church. If something is not coming by a certain individual, it will not be supported by the church. That has actually broken the foundation of the church to such an extent that there are no longer young people in the church.

Interviewer: These individuals that you experience as dictators, are they leaders in the church?

Participant 13: Let me put it this way: Orlando South is not a big church. The membership is fifty something. Having that, we have individuals who started the church. They feel that they own the church. If they are not elected to the church board or programmes are suggested for the youth, they do not support. They make sure that they cut it down. As a result, in Orlando South today, though it may be shocking, there are only four young people in the church, the rest are toddlers.

Interviewer: You are one of the four? It is quite a sad report we are hearing there... We would like to hear more from those churches where there are no progressive classes. What are the hindrances?

Participant 14: I am from Dlamini. I would say that all of us as leaders in the youth department are still new. We need first to learn for ourselves. We do not have material yet; we need to buy it. There were other hindrances also that prevented us from starting. I think we will start end of April.

Participant 6: The reason we do not have any progressive classes is that the church does not have information about AY. It does not support the AY department. Even though the leaders go for training, it is just for themselves. It is not for implementation in the church. We have the challenge that the AY department is not supported as in other churches. For us AY is AY only during the youth week of prayer.

Participant 9: In as much as I had said that we have progressive classes in Chiawelo; before we had them, we had some challenges. If the elder is not supportive of what you want to do, it will not happen. Firstly, the church has to buy the resource material. In my case, the church did not buy it. I spent my own money to buy the material, for the sake of the youth. That is one cause for classes not to start. Secondly, it is the lack of qualified instructors. Even if I can give you the manual, if you do not understand what is happening in that manual, you will not be able to teach it. I am talking about the language used in the manual. The English that is used there, you will find that there is this Dorcas who only went as far as grade one at school. Even if that person is eager to be involved, it will not happen. Thirdly, if you have elected a sleeping AY

leader and that person knows nothing and is not interested in progressive classes. In my case, I am the church treasurer in Chiawelo, but for the sake of the children, I have managed to do the progressive classes to assist.

Interviewer: You are not a youth leader (by election)?

Participant 9: No, I am not a youth leader. I am the treasurer. It is for the sake of the children that they do not die spiritually that I am doing this.

Interviewer: Where is the youth leader?

Participant 9: She is sleeping.

Participant 15: I am a Pathfinder director from Alexandra. We have been trying to elect instructors for the progressive classes for three years, but nobody is willing to do the job. There are Guides and Master Guides; they are not willing to do it. When we elect them to do it, they agree, but never get to do it.

Participant 11: The other challenge is that the nominating committee elects people who are not knowledgeable in youth ministries. They do not get to implement the curriculum nor follow the manuals. They act as if they know, but they pack away anything that has to do with progressive classes so that they proceed with what they think they know.

Interviewer: Tell me, have you attended any training in the past after which you felt that it empowered and equipped you to be able to run progressive classes?

Participants: (Four People)

Participant 16: I have attended some training in the past that I felt empowered me to be able to run progressive classes. However, I think the problem lies with the church. Sometimes they elect into youth leadership someone only based on their youthful age. At the end of the day, they also cannot support that leader. They also do not respect the AY time in the church.

Interviewer: Lastly, I would wish to ask you to share recommendations that you feel would assist in a more effective way to run progressive classes. In other words, what would make it easier to have more progressive classes in more congregations?

Participant 17: I think the best way would be to start with AY sponsors, because there is no book or manual that addresses AY sponsors. That way the AY sponsors would be able to make sure that the AY works as the whole works. We need to equip them. Currently they are not equipped. They are just elected. Some do not even know whether they are members of the board or not; including their churches – they do not know. The

church manual itself, page 103, would not say whether you are a member of the board.

Participant 5: If we can respect the time allocated for youth by the General Conference; from 13:30 to 16h00 is youth time. If we can use that time, it would work for us.

Participant 12: We would encourage more people to be Master Guides. That would increase the pool to choose people who would teach progressive classes.

Participant 18: I think the brother who spoke on sponsors misquoted the church manual. I have it here, it is not like that.

Participant 13: I think that what would help and be beneficial would be to include elders in the training of youth leaders. That way we would have a good support system. When you go back to the church, it would be a lot easier, because it would also be coming from the elder and that would help us.

3.2.12. Interview with SAU Youth Ministry director

The youth ministry director at the SAU office oversees the youth ministry work in South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland. The youth ministry director at the Trans-Orange Conference reports to him. He is also a former director at the Trans-Orange Conference.

Interviewer: My area of inquiry is the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the local congregations of the TOC. I have already visited most of the districts in the TOC. There is only one remaining district. I hope to meet them this weekend at the TOC Youth Advisory Council meeting. I wish to check with you as to your experience concerning the implementation of the curriculum in local congregations – starting with the Adventurer right up to the senior youth. I wonder if you have a system that captures the activities in local congregations?

Director: I think at the Union and Conference level we do not lack resources. In all levels of youth ministries, what we have always suffered is the question of implementation, as you say. I think implementation depends on first of all the availability of material/resources for each level. We cannot blame the General Conference, the SID, nor can we say we lack material when we come to the Union and Conferences. When it comes to resources, we are fine. The second thing that is very much important is that you need to have people trained in order to conduct the programmes that are in the manuals – to move the programmes from the

manuals to the lives of the youth and let them impact on them, meeting the objectives of youth ministries on all its levels.

The third aspect, apart from the availability of resources and the training of leaders, is the will of those who are trained to implement. And it is important that we motivate people in implementing the programmes at local congregations. We realise that what is lacking is the will in some geographical areas. I can testify that last week we were in the Western Cape at a regional training session that they have once a year for all youth ministry leaders in all four levels. The meeting was well attended and there was plenty of training material. You could see that people do not only have the resources, but they also have plenty of zeal and the willingness to implement the programmes and to impact on the lives of young people. We will soon be having a training session with the West-Rand district of the TOC. And it is there, I think, where the rubber meets the road. It is the Conference, through the churches, which has to implement the curriculum.

Interviewer: So what do you see to be creating bottlenecks in the implementation?

Director: The issue of the lack of enough volunteers who are inspired enough to put what we have done into practice. I really do not think we lack people with the knowledge from the local church upwards. I must emphasise that I am aware that we have some areas that have been neglected, pertaining to both the resources and the training; areas that we have never touched at all – areas such as Limpopo or the rural areas around the Union. We have concentrated our training on metropolitan areas. Apart from that, there is a general lack of volunteers who are fired up enough to take what is in the books and implement it.

Interviewer: So in larger cities, if implementation does not take place, is it an issue of motivation?

Director: Yes.

Interviewer: And in rural areas, it might be a combination of a lack of resources, a lack of training and motivation?

Director: Exactly! The other problem relates to the instruments that are used to assess and measure whether the programmes have an impact. It leaves much to be desired. We battle, for instance, here at the Union to get reports from the Conferences. Conferences battle to get reports from the local churches. It boils down to the issue of training and the will and motivation by volunteers to feed information through. If you cannot measure it, you cannot tell whether it is working or not.

Interviewer: What is the view of the Union as to the role of the Conference youth ministry director in the implementation of the curriculum?

Director: The Union is a bit far removed from the constituency; the level at which the people can be impacted by the youth ministry. It is the Conference's duty, because it has access to where the rubber meets the road – the local churches. The role of the Conference youth director is to find innovative and creative ways to implement the programmes from the General Conference through the Division and Union. They must inspire and motivate leadership at a local church level to implement the beautiful programmes that we have in the church.

Secondly, it is the role of the Conferences to promote the basic objectives of youth ministries. In any area and at every level of youth ministry, the objectives are still the same: To provide the youth with a Bible-based foundation, to raise the devotional life of young people in all their levels. You have to lead the youth to understand their worth before God, to teach them to be principled in the areas of stewardship, to equip and empower them for a life of service. These basic objectives are amplified by the areas of ministries that we have. Pathfinderism, for instance, cannot be for entertainment only; it is intended to impact the youth for a life of mission in the church. So it is with the Ambassador programme. We need to ensure that we are developing the skills of the youth to engage in active ministry. The role of the Conference is to interact with the Union and Division youth ministries and define, innovate and create programmes that will be effective in local churches.

Interviewer: To move around the question of training, given that it is seen as one of the major hindrances in the implementation and as dampening the motivation; what plans would you have to ascertain that conferences conduct training in all their areas?

Director: I think the structures need to be in place in the Conferences territories. The structures and the networks that are pivotal for the delivery of youth ministries to the people. Youth federations for instance, if the Conference director meets with federations and senior youth at regular times to assess progress, it would be better in that it would sensitise him as to where the bottlenecks are.

Interviewer: Any possible turnaround plan from the Union for effective implementation of the curriculum in the churches?

Director: I think we need to emphasise that the top must work with the bottom and the bottom with the top, there must be constant interaction. There should never be constraining hierarchical hindrances – we must work in a contiguous way – each playing their role. The interaction should be smooth to effect what must be done. We need to share ideas and encourage each other.

The General Conference has come up with an interesting innovative programme: The Power of One. The Power of One, emphasising for the next quinquennium the issue of cooperation, not only among the leaders but also among the structures of the church in terms of fulfilling the

objectives of the youth ministries. So apart from coming up with innovative programmes such as those, that when you look at them they just have a different approach but the philosophy is still the same. To try to inject new enthusiasm into youth ministry, there is one area that we are now emphasising – strengthening our performance management systems so that we may know who is doing what. There will be continuous reports by the Union to the Division right up to the General Conference. When we meet with the Conference youth directors, we need to determine where we need to assist each other in carrying the youth ministry forward.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on the Power of One programme from the General Conference.

Director: The Power of One is a programme designed by the General Conference emphasising a philosophy of Youth Ministry that puts Jesus Christ as the centre of our ministry and it deals with the three areas that are also emphasised in the Personal Ministry Directorate: Reach-Up, Reach-Across and Reach-Out. It is designed to do three things: Discipleship, Missions and Community work. Jesus must be at the centre of it all. This is where the church will use the over-arching theme of revival and reformation, and then we also talk about the re-visioning of youth ministries. But when you look at the variables that are involved in the re-visioning approach, you will find that they are still the same, where we want our youth to use community outreach programmes, the philosophy of salvation and service, the issue of one using one's spiritual gifts, serving Jesus Christ, small group ministries, and all that. Ultimately, the point is that we want our young people to honour Jesus, to reveal His Kingdom, transform this world, equip God's people, and finally leading them to a fulfilling destiny. This is what we are all working towards; that one day we will sit down after we are done with our labours for Jesus.

Interviewer: You also spoke about performance management systems that you are putting together to assist in the delivery. Are you able to elaborate on that please?

Director: In the past, we did not think numbers meant much. We are now looking at making sure that we have statistics that will assist us in planning our programmes accordingly and to place an emphasis where more emphasis is needed. The numbers should indicate, e.g. how many Pathfinders we have around the Union, how many young people there are. We are moving away from being anecdotal to using serious statistics so we can see if we are growing or not.

Interviewer: What is your evaluation of the contents of the youth ministry curriculum? Is it all well or does it need some adjustment at some point?

Director: It is great material. I was just looking at one of our documents on our strategic thrust for the next five years. In conjunction with the SID and the GC, there are areas in our curriculum that need changes, for

instance, the Ambassador manual is so thin in substance that it seems we need to merge the youth ministry handbook's seven modules with the Ambassador programme. There are some classes, such as the Rainbow that need to be introduced. We need to localise the content of the curriculum. You will discover that the Pathfinder and Adventurer classes are tailor-made with an American, North-American Division bias. You can actually discover that some of the terminology and concepts used are not applicable to our local setting. We now have a curriculum sub-committee set up to look at all this material to see whether we can adapt the content to the local setting.

Interviewer: Is it a local arrangement?

Director: Yes, it is a locally arranged committee, headed by the Division youth director.

Interviewer: So we are certain that it is going to be an African solution for the African situation.

Director: And that is very important. It will not be just a cosmetic change, like swapping the race of pictures only, it will also be in the kind of thrust that we want for the youth ministry, to make sure we have analysed the conditions surrounding us that affect us both negatively and positively within our ministry. Conditions such as politics, economics, education, legal and technological advancement need to be considered for the content to be relevant.

Interviewer: The last one I wish to check is whether you have any recommendation that you may have to improve the level of implementation of the curriculum in the local congregation.

Director: I think it is still the issue of training. Perhaps the other one is that youth directors at local Conferences must realise that although they are alone in the position, they can seek out gifted people in youth ministry and give them space, almost deputising them to help them. For instance, you will discover that one of the impediments of youth directors in local conferences is that they are tasked with several other ministries for them to lead. We then want to recommend that in such cases the directors should take the liberty to even approach members to assist them. Approach members who have specific gifts and abilities to help them carry the load. If there is a pastor somewhere who you think can help you with campus ministries, you can call for their help. You can recommend their names to the executive committee so that they can help you in that regard. You can surround yourself with these kinds of assistance.

3.2.13. Interview with Free-State district: Zone 1

The Free State Province is home to the Free State district of the TOC. The geographical expanse of the district makes it very difficult for district-wide meetings to take place. Efforts to meet all the leaders from the Free State district proved fruitless. The Zone 1 leaders came together for the interview. They represented the congregations in Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba-Nchu. There are eight congregations in that zone. Ten leaders attended the meeting. Of these ten, only two were Master Guides.

Interviewer: Who of u are Master Guides?

Participants: (Two Master Guides, one of which is also a zone coordinator)

Interviewer: How many of you have gone up to the Guide class?

Participant 2: I did up to Master Guide, but I did not complete it.

Participant 1: We actually have two Master Guides and one in training; we also have four Guides-in-training.

Interviewer: In which congregations do we have progressive classes going on this year?

Participant 2: We have approximately four classes in Thaba-Nchu; they are in the Adventurer, Pathfinder and Ambassador age groups.

Participant 1: At Batho, we have four classes for Adventurers and four for Pathfinders.

Interviewer: How about at Bethel?

Participant 3: We have three classes.

Participant 4: At Adventville we have one Adventurer and one Pathfinder class.

Participant 5: We have not yet begun at Ebenezer, but we are about to begin with Pathfinder classes.

Interviewer: I guess we have captured all churches that have progressive classes. Next I would like to know as to who is instructing those classes that are taking place. Are the instructors qualified Master Guides or not. Let us start with Batho.

Participant 1: At Batho, all the Pathfinder classes are conducted by Master Guides. At Adventurer level, only one class is conducted by a Master Guide.

Interviewer: How about at Bethel?

Participant 3: None are taught by Master Guides. We are using Guides-in-training.

Participant 4: In Adventville, the Pathfinder director is the instructor. I am not a Master Guide.

Interviewer: (The City leader came in late). In City, do we have any progressive classes?

Participant 6: We are still at a planning stage. We have not yet started. I am not the director, but I know that the Pathfinder director is planning to start and use the Master Guides from UFS.

Participant 7: I am the AY leader at City. Yes, for us it is a 'work in progress'. We are still planning to start.

Participant 2: We use Master Guides, Guides and the Pathfinder club director serving as class instructors. We are planning to involve our senior youth, though they are clearly not interested.

Interviewer: From those that are busy with Progressive classes: I now wish for you to share your experience with the classes. How are they going? How are you experiencing the curriculum?

Participant 2: Work is going well; the kids understand the work and the teachers are very patient with them. They meet with the kids even during the holidays. Last year, Mrs Mokhutle took them to her farm where they did some of the honours, such as baking and this is the case across all levels; they are doing very well.

Interviewer: What is helping at Thaba-Nchu? What makes it so doable for you?

Participant 2: The passion of the instructors. The teachers are very passionate and zealous and that makes the kids want to be involved.

Interviewer: How about Batho?

Participant 1: Pastor, regarding the curriculum, there is progress, but we usually have difficulties with support from parents when there is homework. The report that we get from instructors is that the kids do not do their homework. Otherwise, with regard to class work, all is going well.

Participant 8: (Club director, Batho). All the Master Guides in Batho are willing to be involved with our work. Everything is working out well. The challenge that we have is in connection with the honours. We still have to find a way with that. Quite often, the youth time is taken by the church to do some other things. Like yesterday, that is what happened, but otherwise things are going well.

Participant 3: At Bethel, we have a problem. The church has been divided into two; the ones that stay far cannot afford to come to Bethel for Pathfinder meetings. Those at the Khotsong branch really struggle, their parents too are struggling. Even for me as the director, it takes me up to three hours to walk to Khotsong to help them. It is a problem, but we are doing our best.

Participant 4: At Adventville we have no problems, all is going well. The director is very patient.

Interviewer: Those who have not yet started; what are your experiences? What are the hindrances there, if by April we have not yet started?

Participant 7: For City, I will ask the secretary to share what she knows, she is a friend of the director, and they are very close. But I have spoken to him also; he says he will meet with the kids on Sundays to do the drills.

Participant 6: I think the problem is the lack of material. You see, he is still new in the church. He had to start from scratch with the Pathfinders; he himself still has to learn. He is still collecting the material. He is now prepared to divide the children into the various classes. However, he needs training, because he has no background in Pathfinder classes. He became Adventist in 2007, and has now been elected leader. Nevertheless, he has all the support of the Master Guides.

Interviewer: What about work with the senior youth at City? Any progressive classes?

Participant 6: I have spoken to her to take the Ambassadors. Like we said, it is a work in progress. We are still planning. What we are doing now is we are taking the senior youth through the Bible. We have started with Genesis. We study it at home and discuss it at church on Sabbath; that is what we are doing.

Interviewer: So you are not following the curriculum, you are just becoming creative?

Participant 6: Yes

Interviewer: How come?

Participant 6: For me I think it is an issue of time. Most of the time, I am not around, but I have also not asked for the material.

Interviewer: And why have you not asked for the money to get the material.

Participant 6: It is just that I have not asked for it. Otherwise, they would give it to me.

Participant 7: From what I have seen and from my own assessment, it is not only the youth leader who has the problem with time. We must bear in mind that

the senior youth at City are mainly those who are already professionals. They get so busy during the week. Sabbath is the only time when they get to rest. I wish we could handle the issue of time.

Interviewer: What other hindrances do you experience as leaders?

Participant 1: The Ambassador curriculum does not have sufficient content. There are no programmes in it like there are with the Adventurer and Pathfinder curricula. Leaders just have to be innovative, but sometimes the innovations are in contradiction with the church's programmes. The Ambassadors also do not have a clear structure. It is not yet in the manual and that creates a problem during nominations. What we usually do is to nominate the assistant youth leader to be responsible for the Ambassadors.

Participant 3: The Adventurer director and I have a problem of time also. We both have pressure from our schoolwork, we also have to do home chores on Sundays and we cannot dodge that since we are at church on Sabbath.

Interviewer: Are there any recommendations that you wish to make that would assist in making your work easier.

Participant 5: At Ebenezer, we have a problem with the material. Therefore, it would help if the conference could supply the material. Such things as the Pathfinder manuals; they should send these to the churches. They should make material accessible to the churches.

Participant 8: I could offer advice those who have a problem of securing the material. Let your Pathfinders register at the beginning of each year. The registration fee can then assist you with the purchase of the material that you need. You could also use that money for admin work.

Participant 2: I appointed a coordinator. He makes sure all is going well. He gets the manuals for us, and makes copies for us. It makes my job easier. I get people to help me; we also get the members to contribute.

Participant 3: We only have five senior youths at Bethel. Of those five, only three of us are actively involved in youth matters. Sometimes it is difficult for us. There is only one Master Guide, but he is busy because he is a businessperson. It would help us if we could get volunteers from the mother church; even if it only one Master Guide from Batho, our sister church. Let the parents also assist.

Participant 9: I want to share my concern regarding the suggestion that we collect money for registration. I feel that when we have collected the money, we should submit it to the church treasurer. We just have to keep the communication lines open between the treasurer and us. We should not keep the money on us so that we do not get tempted. I think we

could also collect an offering every time we meet; even if it is R1 per person per meeting.

Participant 10: I think it would help if we could approach Master Guides in our congregations to help us teach the classes as volunteers.

Participant 7: Small congregations such as Bethel could also benefit from using the Adventurer and Pathfinder coordinators that are office bearers at zone level.

Participant 3: There are too many meetings at church; they take us away from our youth.

Participant 5: At Botshabelo (Ebenezer), we have a problem; our youth leave as soon as they reach the tertiary level. We then remain with elderly folks only.

3.2.14. Interview with the Lowveld district youth ministry leaders

Interviewer: In which churches do we have progressive classes?

Participant 1: Likazi has six classes covering the Pathfinder age.

Interviewer: Who teaches the progressive classes? Qualified Master Guides?

Participant 1: Well, they are appointed by the Pathfinder club director, so I do not know how he did it.

Interviewer: Do you know if they have Master Guides?

Participant 1: We have a mixture of Master Guides and Master Guides-in-training.

Participant 2: In Barberton, we have one combined class for all the Adventurers with one teacher. We also have one class for all six Pathfinder age groups. Therefore, it is a bit difficult, because we do not have people who are dedicated to do the work.

Participant 3: In our church at Schoemansdal we do not have progressive classes.

Participant 4: At Ngodini, we do have progressive classes. I am heading the progressive classes and the Master Guides-in-training. We have all the classes, but with the Adventurer group, we have grouped them into two classes with two teachers. Both teachers are from Zimbabwe; one is a Master Guide and the other has not yet completed the Master Guide training. We also have other people who have started Master Guide classes, but have not yet completed and they are being used as class instructors.

Interviewer: When you say you have combined classes in Barberton, what does that mean?

Participant 2: I mean we combined all the Adventurer children into one class with one teacher. They are all doing one lesson. The instructor is not even qualified, she is just a volunteer. I requested her to help because the teachers that we appointed do not attend their afternoon classes.

Interviewer: So what material is used for the combined class?

Participant 2: All the material for all the classes in the Adventurer curriculum. However, it is such a struggle because it is tricky to work with such a big class of different ages.

Interviewer: What is the difficulty that you have there?

Participant 2: The instructor is not experienced in any youth work. She is inexperienced, but willing. Those with the knowledge are not willing.

Interviewer: You said in Likazi you do not know if the instructors are qualified Master Guides or not.

Participant 1: We have a few Master Guides, but they do not attend classes. The youth come for lessons only to find the teachers are not there. We often have to make use of Master Guide students to assist.

Interviewer: What causes the classes to not run smoothly?

Participant 1: I would say that it is the teachers, because they are not committed. They do not attend their classes.

Interviewer: I now would like to know what needs to be done or needs to happen to make it possible for progressive classes to take place in the churches.

Participant 2: Maybe if we could have the (requirement) cards to guide us. We would then have an idea of what is required, because in Barberton no-one has an idea of what needs to be done. I have been elected to be Adventurer leader, but I have no experience or knowledge of what is required. There is no-one to guide us. It would help if we had the cards and someone to guide us. Even do not even have the activity books that are needed. We would not even know what would be checked for investiture.

Interviewer: Mr President, what do you think would help improve the level of the progressive classes in the churches?

Participant 4: In my classes, we have the correct books and the teachers are my Master Guide students. I have been trained as a Master Guide trainer. Therefore, my students know what to do in their classes. I have the resources both in hard copy and electronic format.

The challenge that I wish to put on the table is that of trained leaders and qualified instructors to go and teach the classes. When you use unqualified teachers, there is a big question on what they do when they are in their classes. What do they teach?

I also have another problem. I am the one who has to do the honours, because those who are in training do not know yet what to do in the classes. The other problem is the lack of support from the churches. The churches do not provide support to the classes. They interfere with the youth time. They often require the youth to attend other programmes that have nothing to do with youth ministry. That is something that we are facing. If the elders and other leaders of the church were clued up on what happens in the Pathfinder and youth programmes, they would be able to support our work.

Interviewer: When you say leaders, who are you referring to?

Participant 4: I mean the church elders and all the church board members. All the leaders, if they were well informed pertaining to what goes on in the Pathfinder programmes; they would know that there is so much to be done. Currently, they are holding us back.

Participant 5: What I have observed is that there are so many things that the teachers are committed to and they do not have time to attend to their classes. We see a lot of this as we move around the district. You find that when you go to these churches, there are no progressive classes, kids are merely loitering outside. There you realise that teachers have no clue as to what needs to be done. Sometimes the teachers are not there and there is no-one to take their classes. Attendance is key for progressive classes. Sometimes you find that the youth are irregular in attendance. There is no consistency. Some parents let their children attend school classes on Sabbath. That is a problem. Sometimes the youth refuse to attend a class because they do not have a good relationship with the instructor. I think as leaders we need to know and understand the youth.

Participant 4: I think we should make sure that we have coordinated programmes throughout the district. In addition, we should not have too many events that require churches to travel, because if the youth miss two or three classes in succession, they just switch off.

Moreover, the root cause that I have seen is that we have many youths who do not have roots in the ministry, who have not been part of the Pathfinders. They do not have the love, commitment or skills that they are supposed to have. Some do not have child-development skills. If a teacher does not have child-development skills, it becomes a problem, because the teacher is undermined by the kids because the kids know. The same applies when the kids have honours and the teacher does not; this is a problem. It affects the work.

I know a situation where two church leaders have never been Pathfinders or anything in the youth ministry. These people are elected because there is no-one else. They are clueless. The leader does not even know how to put a club on parade. The kids must parade themselves because they know better than the leader. If we can work on instilling the love for the ministry now, we will not have a problem in five to six years from now, because they will have the knowledge. Right now, our problem is a lack of trained leaders; no proper training of leaders.

Interviewer: I think I am through asking questions, unless you have something to share that I did not ask about, that will help us improve on delivering the youth ministry curriculum.

Participant 2: I think the TOC should assist us by developing staff to do investiture every year-end in order to motivate the kids to do their work. This investiture should be district-wide to help promote the youth work. This would help motivate those who are not doing anything to do something. It will help the youth and parents to be motivated. The TOC should also provide souvenirs for each Pathfinder attending the fair to help as an incentive and motivation. There should be rewards for work done.

Participant 4: I have told my leaders to make sure that we as leaders must set an example. As leaders, we must set an example to other parents to support the ministry.

Participant 2: You see, we used to have a problem with youth not coming back for classes, now we have a problem of teachers not coming back. It would help if the TOC could help us motivate the teachers. Currently, even the elders take the youth for other programmes, because they are not doing anything. The leaders should know that every Sabbath we are doing something. We should have investitures for motivation at district level.

Participant 4: I think the other problem is a lack of books from the curriculum, which must guide us on what to do. If we do not have the curriculum books, there is nothing you can do. Furthermore, you find that sometimes you have the curriculum books, but you do not have the prescribed books. You can download the curriculum books, but not the prescribed books such as Happy Path or Desire of Ages. It is a problem. Even the TOC does not have stock. You phone them to check whether they have stock such as Happy Path, and they say yes. But when you get there, they do not have it. Sometimes it takes up to six months to get books from the TOC. This makes it difficult, because six months down the line you cannot start work because of this and the year is ending. You cannot complete the curriculum by year-end. This de-motivates the leaders and youth. Furthermore, we have asked them to come and invest Master Guides, which has not happened. Such things are discouraging. The TOC should dispatch people all over to do training.

There is a difference between training and coming for just information sharing.

Participant 3: I think the TOC does not take our needs as a small district seriously; they do not care what is happening here. Moreover, we have leaders who have no interest in what they are elected to do. In our district, only three of us are committed; the others are not interested in their work. We are the ones who must do everything; the others do not. Maybe it is because they do not have the knowledge of what to do.

3.2.15. Interview with TOC youth ministries director

An interview with the Conference youth ministries director would be necessary as he is charged with the responsibility, among others, to ascertain whether the youth ministries curriculum is delivered in the local congregations. The curriculum is the main vehicle in delivering youth ministries as a whole. His insights, plans, strategies and experiences have a direct bearing on the delivery of the curriculum. At the time of this interview, the director was into the second year of his three-year term in office.

Interviewer: What do you perceive to be the role of the TOC youth ministry director in the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregation of the TOC?

Director: I would say the director's role in implementing the curriculum is to increase the number of qualified Master Guides in the districts so that you have people on the ground who are willing and able to instruct. The youth leaders that are being elected are not necessarily people who know what to do in youth ministry. Therefore, it is better to increase the number of Master Guides so that we have a bigger pool from which to choose leaders. In most of the districts of the Conference, you have leaders such as federation presidents and coordinators of the Pathfinders, Adventurers, Ambassadors and senior youth who do not know who to choose as the curriculum coordinator who should be a Master Guide, who is in charge of making sure the curriculum is implemented in the churches.

The director in the conference is alone and has over three hundred churches. I was overwhelmed and am still overwhelmed as I worry about how to reach every district, every zone and every church.

Interviewer: Does it happen sometimes that we have federation presidents that are not Master Guides?

Director: Yes, that is a big problem. In the meeting that you attended for an interview where the Lowveld district was present, you saw that they do

not have anyone whom they can choose as a Master Guide coordinator, because none of them are Master Guides. Last year at their winter camp, I took all of them to start training them as Master Guides. I took two Master Guides from the East-Rand with me. I had wished to train all youth leaders and all elders. However, right now they do not have anyone. I can name the number of districts where the leader is a Master Guide: The East Rand, the West Rand, Shalom (the lady was still a Master Guide-in-training and she is about to finish) and the Free State.

Interviewer: What instrument does the Conference have to determine the extent of the curriculum implementation in the churches?

Director: I do not know what was happening in the terms before mine, but from last year January, I have been designing report forms. In the senior report forms, I specifically asked the council of the local church as to the number of Master Guides who are qualified and those who are in training. Then I asked whether the classes in the local church are going on with the assistance of the Master Guides. I want to see the link between the presence of Master Guides and the occurrence of classes. Sometimes you find that an individual, out of the blue, just decides on his/her own to come to the TOC to buy material and workbooks for the children and they come and implement it just to close a gap. However, with regard to getting that information into the report form, it is quite a challenge. People are reporting on other things, except that which I am requesting.

Interviewer: How often do you get the reports?

Director: That report must come quarterly, but I am struggling to get the reports. I am supposed to get the reports from the presidents. But the presidents complain that they too are not getting the reports from the local churches. So very little reporting is taking place. Whenever those reports come in, they will only be about other things such as district events and activities, such as tours and visits to hospitals, but not the curriculum work. That is not what I am interested in. Those could be mentioned as extras. I am particularly interested in the questions in the form. Those questions relate to community work, the spiritual growth of the youth, the progress on the Bible-reading plan; I expect to be informed about the youth's evangelism activities. I am not getting that. I am getting other things that to me are peripheral.

Interviewer: So you are getting reports on activities – physical activities. Very little is mentioned about the essential areas?

Director: Yes – very little in that area.

Interviewer: When you look at what is reported in the reports and perhaps as you interact with people and leaders, what would you say is the extent of the implementation of the curriculum in the churches?

Director: I am a bit embarrassed about what I am about to say. For me I gauge the health of any local church's youth on the curriculum, the classes that they have. But there is very little that is happening in that front. I can illustrate it this way: From December 2010 through the whole of last year up until December 2011, in the whole of the Shalom district, big as it is, you have the Akasia church calling the Conference twice within the space of twelve months, for investiture. This is because the classes are taking place there. Then you have Witbank Central and about two or three churches in the entire district that have done some work. Only four churches! That tells you that there is very little that is happening. Then you go to the West Rand where classes are supposed to be running well. That district ought to be the shining example for the rest of the district. I was called only once by the Dobsonville church and the Zone 1 area for investiture. That was all for the entire year. Kelvin is busy doing something, but they have not called us for any investiture.

Interviewer: I would have thought that the districts in the metros would be doing very well?

Director: Aah, Pastor, it is not like that at all.

Interviewer: What do you perceive to be the hindrances in the implementing of the progressive classes at a satisfactory level in the churches?

Director: I think the number one issue is that the youth and youth ministries are not taken seriously; firstly, by the pastors, because it is not part of their training when they are still at school. I have noticed that there is a difference between pastors who trained at Helderberg and those who trained at Solusi University. Solusi, I am told, requires that as part of their training they are supposed to be Master Guides. However, this is not the case at Helderberg. We must do something there so that the Master Guide course should be part of their training at school.

Secondly, I think the elders also. They do not have an idea of what is happening or ought to be happening. I think elders also need the training.

Thirdly, there is a lot of red tape in the departments in the Conference. For instance, there is a Master Guide committee for the TOC led by (name withheld). I am told it was established in the last term. I cannot respond to any church that calls for my services as a director without the red tape of going via this committee. This is also an unconstitutional structure.

The other thing is that there is this unspoken thinking among these Master Guides who attend the TOC Advisory – you saw them when you were there. They seem to think that pastors do not know as much as they know. You can see it and feel it, but they will not say it. They get shocked when I correct them because they do not expect me to know. I

saw chaos because of this at a recent Pathfinder Fare. They were arguing as officers in front of the Pathfinders.

Interviewer: Is there any other thing that you perceive to be a hindrance in the implementation of the curriculum?

Director: Well I do not know how it used to work when you were youth director. But I have a situation here where I have an office secretary. I cannot access her office, but she had a spare key for my office until recently. When she is not there, I have no access to the resources in her office to assist churches. In addition, there are so many restrictions by administration. We cannot order as much material as we should; they restrict us. We know the needs of the churches, but when you go to the treasurer, he will tell you that it is too much. He has so much control and he limits us.

Interviewer: To what extent is your office able to provide training to youth leaders at grassroots level?

Director: I prepare an itinerary. The first three months are consumed by the promotional exercises that we do as departmental leaders from the office. And I think those promotions do nothing to help the churches when you look at what we present there.

Interviewer: So it does not constitute any training at all?

Director: The time we have with the churches must be shared with the president, where he wants to address all the leaders in attendance. In March, I will try to allocate a weekend for each district. I ask them for the area of training they would wish for me to concentrate on in the four areas: Adventurer, Pathfinder, Ambassador and senior youth. However, this is also a problem, because by the time I reach some districts, it is November and elections for new leaders must take place.

Interviewer: Is there any turnaround strategy in place to increase the level of implementing the curriculum in the churches?

Director: In the West-Rand, there are two churches that have requested help to start with the Master Guide courses for their congregations. The district coordinators failed to assist them. They ended up going to the TC. I had to intervene and offer to help them myself. So part of that strategy is to avail myself to four or five districts at a time to train their Master Guides. The idea is to increase the level of training and train more Master Guides.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts about the curriculum, what is your evaluation? Do you think there are areas that need adjustments or do we have a satisfactory curriculum?

Director: In my brief re-exposure to the curriculum, I would observe that the curriculum is reasonably balanced in as far as the spiritual, family, relationship and environment are concerned. But in the lower levels of Adventurers, I feel something needs to be introduced to create more balance. We need to see more emphasis on the spiritual than on the other areas such as the environment and others. I observe when we assess the children's work before investiture that little work has been done on the spiritual exercise, while a great deal has been accomplished in the other work areas in their portfolios. Even if we leave the curriculum as it is, we still need to impress on the minds of the teachers that we need to put more emphasis on the spiritual component of the curriculum than on the others.

3.2.16. Helderberg College Interview

While interacting with youth ministry leaders and observing the potential role that ministers may play in supporting youth ministry in local congregations where they serve, the researcher became curious as to the preparations that trainee ministers get at the seminary as they get trained to serve. This necessitated a trip to Helderberg College in Cape Town to establish whether there is any youth ministry training that trainee ministers get. Helderberg College currently trains the majority of ministers that the Conference employs. Professor M Gwala, current chairman of the Theology Department, availed himself for an interview, but also decided to invite Professor C Plaatjies to the interview:

Prof Gwala: I have decided to invite Prof Calvin Plaatjies to be with us as we discuss this interview. Prof Calvin Plaatjies is one of our Practical Theologians in the Faculty. He is responsible for all the practical aspects of our training at Helderberg College and he has vast experience in church work. He has been an administrator for many years; he has been a pastor and is now lecturing at Helderberg College. You will benefit from him as we engage in this discussion.

Interviewer: I really appreciate it! The way I have phrased my initial question is, in what ways does the training of ministers at Helderberg College prepare the ministers-in-training to provide leadership expertise and support to church ministry in the local congregation in which they will serve? I will wish for us to start there, just to see whether there are other means except youth ministry that ministers-in-training are prepared for in terms of church ministries.

Prof Gwala: I think the first one that we need to look at is that we have what we call pastoral formation courses; these courses are presented in the second, third and fourth years. They actually take the entire year. The first one, presented in the second year, deals with the Minister's Manual, how to

understand the activities that the pastor is supposed to be performing and suggestions that the Minister Manual is providing and how one behaves as minister. In the second year, that is what we are covering.

In the third year, we look at the practical aspects of the Church Manual; how to interpret it, how to allow the church to be the legislature in dealing with certain issues and in creating the local church politics that are in line with the Church Manual itself.

Then, in formation three, we focus on the church policy; how we interpret it, what the rights of the pastors are, what the challenges they face are and the employment of a pastor versus the Labour Relations Act. We cover those things so that when they go out there, they are able to understand where they stand, what their rights are, what the conditions of employment are. That is the first aspect.

The second aspect looks at pastoral ministry in itself and leadership, where we provide them with various worldviews in leadership – leadership in a political sense and in a religious sense; leadership in an NGO, what kind of leadership to expect and the government. All these are actually providing them with perspectives in leadership and we look at pastoral ministry: The pastor, the demands of work, the pastor and his family, the pastor and his church, and the pastor and his time.

Therefore, we look into all these things to try to equip the minister so that he tries to meet the responsibilities out there. We realise that our church is becoming more African; therefore, we have included a section in our curriculum where we deal with African studies. We look at the African worldview.

In an African setting, can we truly say that we understand the fundamental beliefs the same way? In an African setting, can we truly say that syncretism is always part of the African setting? It is easy for an African to worship God and still worship ancestors; and that is not seen as taboo. Therefore, that is the worldview! We deal with that and look at the worldviews that are there: African worldview, Eastern worldview, Western worldview and the Biblical worldviews. We look at the view that will prevail. With regard to the other three worldviews that I have mentioned, there are good things about them and, at the same time, there are challenges about each one of them.

Therefore, we look at those that will help the guys. We have been saying to them, when you go out there, you are going to meet people who actually subscribe to these views.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. So you have a course that just focuses on youth ministry?

Prof Plaatjies: Yes, the course focuses on youth ministry. It is only a two-hour credit course, which I believe is too little, we need more. The discipline of youth ministry today is no longer the same; youth ministry is a discipline on its own, a discipline that is growing more and more.

One of the things that you (Prof Gwala) mentioned, when I listened to you, is that pastoral ministry cannot stand on its self. The minister going out in the field cannot think about pastoral ministry on its self, cannot think of it within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. That kind of understanding of ministry is very narrow.

I think the understanding of ministry should go much further than that. We do have a course, which I teach, which is urban ministry – ministry in the city. What we have done in this course is that you cannot make the course theoretical and only speak about certain things within ministry. You have to know what ministry is all about. Therefore, what we have done is, I have taken them out to go do research in all these little townships around here to see what it is like and what people have been put up with and how can you minister to these people. Pastoral ministry from a church point of view can no longer stand. Therefore, we have to look at ministry from more perspectives and the same thing goes for youth ministry.

Within the youth ministry, the last conference that I attended where Professor Nel, *the* man in South Africa related to youth ministry, from Pretoria University, says, “More and more we are finding that to minister to youth, the parents must be involved properly”.

The last conference I attended was even attended by Kenda Creasy, who has become *the* person in youth ministry. I noticed she is from Yale. More and more we have to include the parents, include the family.

Over the period that I have been Adventist, we have only tried to minister to youth all by themselves; independent of the family/parents and that has not worked. Throughout the world we find that we have to incorporate the parents and the whole family structure more and more. We now have youth and family ministry together, the foundation of family and youth ministry.

From Professor Gwala’s speech, I noticed also now how broad the issue on leadership is, which cannot only be leadership in the church, it has to be much broader than merely leadership in the church. The same thing

applies to youth ministry; it has to be much broader than the church has been approaching youth ministry.

Youth ministry has become a vast discipline all by itself; but it cannot be done independently of the family; it cannot be done independently of the parents. Therefore, when we look into youth ministry, we have to look at the various stages. We have to see how that works.

What is going on in our church, the mix that is in our church? As far as I am concerned, I do not think that the Adventist youth ministry is well structured, because they have not looked into the generation gaps, they have not understood the generation gaps. We have all these various kinds of generations within the church, we are not addressing anyone of them and we are not able to integrate what is happening to the youth. We deal with the youth as if all of them are the same. This is not true, you have generation gaps, you have the Millennials, Boomers, and you have all kinds of things, all kinds of various gaps. Therefore, we have not done well.

Therefore, in dealing with this, I feel very strongly about this, we have to incorporate the parents as to what is going on, and see how we can help them. Of course, as you will know, Kenda Creasy's work as well as the work by the person by the name of Foster; the work that they have done and the books that they have published, I think you need to consult them and how they have approached it. They have written from a point of view of how we worship and about the God-bearing aspects of youth ministry and we have incorporated that within our course. Therefore, youth must be able to see where they are and how they can integrate and bring these various gaps together.

When I teach youth ministry here, I use a great deal of Kenda Creasy's work as well as Malan Nel's work, the world academy of youth, the journal that they put out. We use a great deal of that to get various perspectives of youth work and bring that in to work for the students here so that when they enter the field they may know how to look at it.

From the theoretical side, there is much to be done. Particularly, I feel we have not done well with the generation gaps. I am just thinking about this guy who wrote about generation gaps from UNISA. I read his dissertation about all the work he has done pertaining to the generation gaps. He has published a great deal on the Internet and he has a whole website on it. I will give you his name later on. He has done a great deal of work and we need to look into his approaches to youth ministry and the generation gap. We are doing that here now, we study generation gap theories and go through all those theories to see how

they work within our church and to see what is there and what is not there. We are helping the guys here to understand that perspective of the gap theories. We have made big mistakes trying to reach the youth; we do not know who they are.

Interviewer: You observed the gaps that exist in our approach to youth ministries. Is there any way that Helderberg, your department, is seeking to influence the way in which the church is approaching youth ministries, to bring about the necessary changes?

Prof Plaatjies: They will not listen to us; they will not be bothered with us. Those guys in those offices? There is only one man that I know of who did a master's in youth ministries; there may be others. There is Ps Eddie Baron, do they use his expertise? They do not use his expertise and he is the only one that I know of. Now, the work he has done, the work he has written, who has recognised him? Do you think they will listen? You have to change your approach; do you think the church will listen?

Interviewer: It would be tricky, it would be quite tricky.

Prof Plaatjies: I do not think they are open to that kind of thing. I do not think they are open to any kind of thing that makes them think differently to what they were doing. If we are not going to have to reach our youth, particularly with the generation gap thing, whom are we reaching? We do not even know who they are. If you do not know the characteristics of the various generations, how are you going to approach them? What are you going to do for them? And it has to be done.

Gordonton's work is phenomenal. He has a website where he publishes all his findings and research. Gordonton has been used all over the country because of the excellence of his work. He deals very much with the generation gaps. He does a great deal of work in this area and his work will help us understand how to approach youth ministry, because there are various kinds of youth – the Millennials, the Boomers; you have them, they are all there.

I even dealt with the issue pre-1994 and after that in South Africa, that the youth growing up in South Africa do not know, we have looked at that. We can write, they may read it, but I do not have confidence that they would.

I have written my own dissertation, it appeared in a court case in Bloemfontein and I do not think it will change. Consequently, I am not sure whether you can teach them anything unless they are interested in wanting to know. Otherwise, please excuse me, but I do not believe

anyone can do much in what is happening, unless by the time you finish, you can change it.

Prof Gwala: Maybe I should also come in here. I see my role as an educator as having far-reaching implications. I am not expecting to see a change in the next two to three or five years, but I think if we sow the right seed to all the guys that go through Helderberg. Down the line, it maybe 10 years, it maybe 15 years, but what we believe is that what is right will be realised.

Therefore, that is my thinking, that if we want to change the church in South Africa, we will have to begin with the guys who go through here at Helderberg College. Because 20 years down the line, it will be they who will be leading the church. Therefore, we would have made the change. Ours is not to be tired or side tracked, as long as we are able to achieve our goal with the students that we have. Let us not worry about the future, the future will unfold itself and that is my view.

Prof Plaatjies: I think that the catalyst would be, as Dr Gwala is saying, it would be the students; but for us, him and I, to try and change them, it is not going to work. I think what he says is correct. If you want to see any catalyst for change, you will see it through students. They are going to have to do it, they are going have to remember what they have done here, and they have to bring about those changes. Because those are changes on the ground and I think it is going to be through students, and, as he correctly says, it is not going to be now, but in a couple of years' time.

Interviewer: So that the ministers coming out of Helderberg work in the congregations and perhaps subsequently becoming Conference and Union leaders, they are the ones who could start the revolution so to speak, the change from the ground?

Prof Plaatjies: Yes, I think that is the way it is going to have to work.

Prof Gwala: I think currently I actually see that trend, I mean in all the Conferences; our guys seem to be noticed, whether for good or for bad, but there is a notice. Therefore, that to me indicates there is something they are doing that makes them to be noticed.

Interviewer: You made a comment about various worldviews and you commented on the African worldview. When we look at the church and its programming, which will include the area of my concern, youth ministry, the curriculums, the manuals, they are produced in the U.S – basically all that we have to work with that is church material. What would be your thoughts about the helpfulness of these materials for use among our people in South Africa and perhaps our African congregations?

Prof Gwala: The first thing I want to say is that I personally have a problem with taking an American tree with its soil and planting it in Africa. I have a serious problem with that. I have problems with the internship programme, because it does not talk to our people. We have addressed this with the local leadership (the leadership in our Union). It is not making sense; you cannot take a district model, because in America they do not have districts. They have churches; therefore, that creates a problem and that problem cascades to the pastors. The supervisor himself does not know what to do, because the manual itself does not talk to his situation. Therefore, that is the first challenge that we have.

The second challenge that we have is that we are dealing with developing countries and therefore our way of doing things would be different, and yet the material we get comes from a developed country assuming that we have also arrived at that level. That creates another problem.

The third issue is that it appears that the church has brains only in America, not anywhere else. Therefore, anywhere else, you just have people who must follow, cannot be creative, and cannot initiate anything.

Therefore, what we are doing at Helderberg College is that we are taking what they have in America and we try to rewrite it for the African context. That is what we are trying to do; we are actually trying to work out the internship programme for South Africa. We are looking at that which will be relevant to the needs of South Africans.

We are looking at everything that comes from America, for instance when you are talking about youth, the youth here is different from the youth there. Therefore, you cannot use that as a model; you can use that as a book that you consult, not as a South African model. To create a South African model for the South African youth is a challenge. Unfortunately, in the Adventist church, even here in Africa, even here in South Africa, anything that is more sensible must come from America. Another that comes from within is regarded as insensible.

Prof Plaatjies: I think that is very true! When I was in America, I went from church to church. I visited five of them, they do things totally different from the way we do them and I was astounded by the fact that they are very developed in what they do. That is a very well-developed country; everything is done in a big way. When they write, they write from their perspective and one of the problems that I think has happened in our church is that one size fits all. That which comes from America is good, but it is not working. I want to say here again, I make my class well

aware of the fact that youth ministry for black youth must be done within the context of the black youth.

But what have we done? I have even noticed the issues between whites and coloured are different. When you are ministering to the youth, differences exist even among the youths. So what have we done about those variations?

Now, when I teach the youth, I am always well aware of the fact that I must ask questions about the youth. I always ask: how does it work within the black context? And, they will tell me, “the way you have explained it, it does not work”. Now I know I am off the mark and then we deal with it the way they are talking about it.

From the Practical Theological perspective, we are going to have to allow, the youth and I do not know how we going to do that, to allow the youth to be writing and to be telling to define themselves.

Because in anything that I teach, even my counselling, I would say, how does it work there? They will say, “No it does not work that way”, and we will discuss that.

Now in the occasion where it turns out I have given them work to do, did you write it from your perspective? Do not write it from the books, do not do it from there, but write something different from the black perspective. I read some of the work and it is well written; not that I understand everything, but it is not for me to understand, but for them to understand and identify themselves.

Therefore, even pertaining to the youth ministry within South Africa, I think there has to be a drastic change in our approaches to youth ministry. Because look, most of the youth in South Africa, the majority of them are black and when I do the genograms with my classroom family I notice that the grave difference is that they are from where they come from. I mean, I ask a guy, please do your family genogram and I see tears in his eyes. I then say, come and see me in my office, he then says in my office, “I cannot do a genogram.” Now, why can't you do a genogram? He says, “I do not have parents, somebody picked me up by the gate and took me in.”

When you look at the genograms and you see how different they are from the white side, even from the coloured side, you have to approach it differently. I think there is a grave need to approach youth ministry within South Africa from a black context.

I think within the black context, there may be some differences. So, if something can be written on that, it would be a tremendous thing for us, with that information, youth ministry within a black context.

Prof Gwala: We have started!

Interviewer: I am curious to know what can be possibly done to create a situation where we can have a constructed and intentional growth in church ministries so that we can have goals that we can work on and realise the goal we have.

Prof Plaatjies: I am concerned about many things within our church. One of the things is the situation where people are changed at a session, simply because they (the constituency) want to change.

If we are going to build a man to lead youth, he is going to need far more than three years to do it. In those three years, I think that the conference should do everything at their disposal to help that man to have a wide understanding of youth ministry, where you go to attend particularly the international academy of youth ministry; to know what is going on around the world and how to help our own youth. There is a lot of help that we can get as we mingle with people, as we listen to what is being done. Some of the things would be strange; some of them would be almost similar to what we are experiencing.

Therefore, when we sometimes have our sessions, we must just have a look at a man in the youth ministry, whether we should not keep him longer so that he can develop further. I mean three years is very little to develop anything.

So perhaps a man should have a longer period of time, but here again we have to see what is going on in our own country, as well as what is going on in the international world with regard to youth ministry.

Youth ministry, even as I look at it from the Stellenbosch University, is a discipline all by itself, but it cannot stand by itself – it has to draw on other disciplines for help.

Interviewer: What are the disciplines that could assist?

Prof Plaatjies: From the practical theological side, the discipline of counselling, the discipline of Psychology, and those kinds of things. To work with young people today, we need a great deal of understanding. I mean we work with them every day here. I can see every day; you just need a lot of understanding of youth.

One of the main things that I believe in is that you have to love the youth. You cannot work with people you do not love. It is the same here with students; I have to love them and they must be able to feel it. The youth must be able to know that, this man wants to empower us and it is as simple as that.

Interviewer: I do not know if I understood you well, you seem to be suggesting that youth ministry would work better if it were integrated with Family Ministry?

Prof Plaatjies: The two should draw on each other, yes. What we have done in the church is that we have tried to deal with the youth independent of the family. The question is, did it work? The answer is, no! More and more I have noticed, even in the international academy of youth ministry that we have to work with the parents, how the child is doing. If we are going to lose the parents in the youth ministry, we are going to lose the youth. That is something that has come through the academy of youth ministry within the international academy of youth ministry. If we are to save the youth, we need to work with the parents.

Interviewer: So you are suggesting something like a systems approach to recognise the young?

Prof Plaatjies): Absolutely, it is a systems approach. The youth ministry within other systems; see how that works.

Interviewer: I found this to be very helpful; again, I must thank you for the time that you made. This is very helpful, I truly treasure it.

Prof Plaatjies: I just wish that in your studies you can come up with something that is going to help the youth in our country. There is nothing that is written in many areas on black work and we need people to write in this particular field. Therefore, in this study, you have to come up with something.

Interviewer: We will give it our best shot. Thank you very much!

3.3. General observations and remarks on the interviews

The original plan was to visit the fourteen districts to conduct interviews with each district group of leaders in their locality. It later on proved undoable to visit some of the districts in their localities because of church politics prevailing in the interim. Fortunately, most of the districts were reachable, nine of the fourteen districts to be

precise. The remaining five were, providentially, in attendance at the two meetings of the TOC Youth Advisory council meetings where interviews were conducted.

As the interviews progressed, it became apparent that one needed to explain the concept of 'progressive classes' and the 'youth ministry curriculum' because it became evident that the majority of the youth leaders could not understand the jargon. Not only would this consume time spent during the interviews, but it was also a sad indication that the youth ministry practitioners themselves are not conversant with their brief in implementing the core of Adventist youth ministry. Often, the same leaders who did not know the concepts were also not implementing the curriculum, nor were they following any formal guidelines in the provision of Adventist youth ministry.

As remarked earlier, the use of English only during the interviews would prove an impediment during the sessions of the interviews. To mitigate for increased participation, participants were encouraged to use their African vernacular should they deem it necessary for them to be able to communicate freely. The interviewer has been able to translate such contributions into English. If the leaders cannot express themselves in English, but the resource material they must use to implement the curriculum is all written in English, it remains curious if language does not become a limitation and a hindrance in the effective implementation of the curriculum.

The interviews were digitally recorded just as they took place. While there were adjustments for syntax purposes and translation where the participants spoke in their mother tongue, the transcripts remained as close to the actual statements as possible. There was, in Chapter 3, no attempt to analyse and interpret the interviews; save comments and a few observations for clarity purposes. The analysis of the interviews follows in the ensuing section. It will include a brief discussion of the qualitative research and results. Thematic threads that appear in the interviews will be identified and listed.

3.4. Brief consideration of the qualitative research approach

The section above recorded the research interviews that were conducted with various youth ministry groups of leaders in the districts of the Trans-Orange Conference. Individuals were also interviewed: Professors Gwala and Plaatjies; lecturers at the Helderberg College theology department; and the youth ministry directors at the TOC and Southern Union Conference. Generally, the interviews with groups proceeded as planned, save for districts that could not be accessed for reasons already mentioned in Chapter 3. The interviews with the youth directors at the TOC and SAU provided useful insights into the operations of the institutions they lead in providing youth ministries at the grassroots level.

The interviews were conducted in line with the qualitative approach to doing research. As already mentioned in the preceding chapters, it is necessary in qualitative research to secure informed consent from participants. Given that there was no risk to the participants, it was not deemed necessary that the participants should sign a consent form (Wassenaar, 2006: 72). They did, however, sign an attendance register. While keeping to the original theme of inquiry, consistent with the principles of qualitative method of research (Kelly 2006: 286, 298), the interview questions remained adaptable as the research proceeded.

Invariably, after the protocols of explaining the purpose of the interview and securing permission to record the interview, the first area of inquiry was as to the 'credentials' of the youth leaders in attendance – to establish their levels of training/qualifications to lead youth. This assisted in establishing their ability or lack thereof to understand the concepts to be discussed in the interview and the extent of capacity to deliver the curriculum. After exploring the degree of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum through the establishment of progressive classes in local congregations, the questions then gravitated towards the sharing of the leaders' experiences in the instruction and provision of the progressive classes for those who had some classes in progress, and the hindrances on the way of those who had no progressive classes in place. The capturing of experiences is key in the qualitative research approach (Kelly, 2006: 287). It would also provide critical information in establishing the nature of hindrances as experienced by the youth leaders in implementing the youth

ministry curriculum. Towards the conclusion of the interviews, leaders shared what they considered would assist in improving the degree of the implementation of the curriculum, while also enriching their ministry to the youth.

3.5. Emerging themes from interviews

Various thematic threads emerged during the course of the interviews conducted with various youth leaders' groups. These themes will be lifted from the various interviews; the extent of the commonality of experiences across the congregations and districts of the Trans-Orange Conference will also be highlighted. Unique responses that appear to have significance in the implementation of the curriculum will also be noted.

3.5.1. Prevalence of Master Guides in youth leaders' interview meetings

The district youth leaders' groups were interviewed in their local district venues. An ideal scenario would be where all or most of the youth leaders have received training in youth ministry up to Master Guide. They should have exposed themselves to courses in Pathfinder Leadership and Advanced Pathfinder Leadership Award. These programmes qualify the individuals for youth ministries. It is for this reason that the first question during the interviews concerned itself with establishing the level of training the youth leaders had attained and whether they were Master Guides. The overwhelming majority of the youth leaders had not received any formal Master Guide training.

There were 20 Master Guides attending the first interview in the TOC Federation Council meeting. The leaders came as congregational leaders from five districts: Shalom, East-Rand, West-Rand, Lowveld and Highveld. Together, these districts represent 220 congregations. The leaders reported that 36 congregations ran progressive classes, but only 18 congregations were using Master Guides as instructors in the progressive classes. In the Orange Vaal group, none of the leaders in attendance were Master Guides (all 17 congregations were represented in the meeting). The Highveld district, with 19 congregations, had one Master Guide and

one Guide. The Far West district, with nine congregations, did not have any Master Guides nor any Guides among the youth leaders, as was the case with the North East (with 12 congregations) and Shiloh (with 21 congregations) districts. Vhembe, with 43 congregations, had one. Mafikeng has 21 congregations, but reported two Master Guides. Golden West has 13 congregations and reported three active Master Guides out of the 36 leaders that attended the meeting. West-Rand has 62 congregations. Thirty-six attended the interview and only three had completed the Master Guide programme and six the Guide programme. The Free State Zone 1 has seven congregations. Ten leaders attended the interview. Of the 10 leaders, two are Master Guides. In the second interview of the TOC federation council meeting, there were eight Master Guides out of the 16 leaders that attended.

The following table shows the summaries of the number of congregational leaders who are Master Guides that attended the interview meetings in comparison with the number of congregations that constitute the applicable districts:

District group	Number of congregations in district	Number of Master Guide congregation leaders	Remarks
Orange-Vaal	17	0	
Highveld	19	1	
Far-West	9	0	
North-East	12	0	
Shiloh	21	0	
Vhembe	43	1	
Mafikeng	21	2	
Golden-West	13	3	
West-Rand	62	3	
Free State (Zone 1)	7	2	
Lowveld	11	2	
Totals	227	14	

Table 1

3.5.2. The prevalence of progressive classes in congregations

The inquiry of this research hinges around the delivery of the Adventist youth ministry curriculum in the congregations of the Conference. Establishing the extent of the existence of progressive classes in congregations remained important because they are the vehicle to deliver the curriculum. The extent to which there are (effective) progressive classes in place in the congregations, to the same extent, we have the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum. In the various interviews, the youth leaders shared information on the existence or otherwise of progressive classes in the congregations in which they operate.

As already indicated above, pertaining to the youth leaders in the first interview with the TOC Youth Federation Council meeting, of the 220 congregations in the five districts represented in the meeting, only 36 congregations had some progressive classes in place. The efficiency in running those classes was not established, save establishing whether qualified instructors ran the classes or not. In the Orange-Vaal district interview (all the district churches we represented), one church had grouped all the classes of the Adventurers and Pathfinders into one class. It is inconceivable how that could be. In another church, all the Adventurer ages were doing the Busy-Bee class, but also had the entire Pathfinder age classes in place; however, qualified instructors did not run the classes. Only one church in the Orange-Vaal district was using the curriculum to do the progressive classes.

In the Highveld district, only two congregations out of 19 had the Adventurer cluster of classes in place. Three congregations had 12 Pathfinder clusters of classes among them. The Far-West district had only one church with two classes for Adventurers and six classes for Pathfinders. None of the congregations in the North-East district had classes in place. Only one church in the Shiloh district had Pathfinder classes established. In the Mafikeng district, one congregation had classes from Busy-Bee up to Guide, another had all Adventurer classes and three Pathfinder classes. The third church had one Adventurer class and one Pathfinder class. The West-Rand district has 62 congregations. Of these, only nine reported having progressive classes in place. The Free State Zone 1 has seven

congregations. Four congregations had some progressive classes in place. Of these, only two use Master Guides in some of their classes.

During the second interview of the TOC Federation council meeting, seven districts were in attendance. Together, these districts have 225 congregations. The leaders in attendance reported the following figures of classes: Golden-West: two; Mafikeng: all congregations; Highveld: 10; East-Rand: 20; Orange-Vaal: three; Shalom: three. A month later, the Golden-West reported an additional class, totalling four.

The following table indicates the number of congregations in the districts mentioned that has some progressive classes in session, although it does not indicate the extent to which they are following the prescribed curriculum:

District group	Number of congregations in district	Number of congregations running progressive classes
Orange-Vaal	17	1 (one church had grouped all the classes of the Adventurers and Pathfinders into one class, not following the official curriculum. Another congregation had done the same, but also grouped all Pathfinder age groups into one class)
Highveld	19	3
Far-West	9	1
North-East	12	0
Shiloh	21	1
Vhembe	43	2 (each of the two running one class each; a third congregation has one group only reading a prescribed text)
Mafikeng	21	3
Golden-West	13	4
West-Rand	62	9
Free State Zone 1	7	4
Lowveld	11	3
Totals	227	31

Table 2

3.5.3. Reported experiences of hindrances to the implementation of the curriculum: Training

The youth leaders in all the districts interviewed list a lack of training as one of the major hindrances in enabling the youth leaders to implement the curriculum in their congregations. During the TOC Federation council meeting, the East-Rand district curriculum coordinator remarked that in his district, which records the highest number of progressive classes in a district, it is evident that the class instructors fail to properly implement the curriculum because of a lack of proper training. Most of the instructors do not manage to complete the curriculum syllabus, he remarked.

In the Orange-Vaal, one leader declared that he was clueless about his role as a youth leader, although the interview was conducted late in 2011. Another cited similar frustrations, aggravated by his being relatively new to the Adventist church. Yet another – elected in August of 2011 – expressed the frustration of being clueless as to her role as a youth leader. Several more leaders emphasised their frustration at being elected to lead without being skilled and trained to play their role.

The Highveld leaders expressed their frustration also emanating from their lack of training. One leader had had no chance even to observe a progressive class in session; he had no idea of what the curriculum is about and how the classes are to be run. This leader had been elected into youth ministry a few months after joining the Adventist church. Another leader expressed how he does not intend to attempt to start any progressive classes until he has been trained. Several more leaders expressed similar frustrations at being hindered from doing their work because of a lack of training. The district leader confirmed that, during his tenure, none of the congregational leaders received training. The district leaders felt that the effects of a lack of training among youth leaders in rural churches is exacerbated by the minimal proficiency in reading the youth ministry material that is written in English. The leaders further suggested that even those who were trained a long time ago should be exposed to refresher courses to renew their skills.

Right at the beginning of the interview with the Far-West district, one participant expressed the disabling effect of leading without training – how a lack of training

impedes their ability to implement the curriculum. Another leader shared how he was elected into youth ministry leadership a few months after becoming an Adventist just a few months earlier in 2004 before he could have an idea of what Adventist youth ministry is all about. He has been a youth leader since then, but has never received any training in youth ministry, nor had he ever been exposed to what goes on in progressive classes. All the participant leaders in attendance had never received training in youth ministries.

The district leader in the North-East district indicated that it was impossible to get their church leaders to assemble for training. Attempts by one of pastors in that district, who is a Master Guide to train Master Guides, had not managed to lift off. A lack of leadership skills and a need to train the leaders were similarly expressed at the Shiloh district. The district leader here suggested that the training could be extended to include volunteers and interested church members so that future leaders could be elected from those who had already received training. The Vhembe district leader mentioned how elected youth leaders remained clueless as to their roles because of a lack of training. The rest of the leaders in the meeting confirmed what he said. While there was no direct reference to a lack of training as a hindrance to delivery in Mafikeng, it was apparent that of all the elders and youth leaders present, only one elder was a Master Guide, and none of the youth leaders present were Master Guides. Several leaders in the Golden-West district also expressed how a lack of training and skills development was a serious hindrance to them in delivering the curriculum. The West-Rand district youth leaders had attended a training session a few weeks prior to the interview. When asked if they had attended any training from which they felt empowered and enabled to conduct progressive classes, only one leader indicated that he has been empowered by training sessions to be able to lead progressive classes. Other participants indicated a need for training that enables them, especially the training of Master Guides. The Free State Zone 1 also expressed a lack of trained leaders as a stumbling block for some of them failing to have progressive classes.

It was notable that the SAU and TOC directors highlighted the issue of training as critical in implementing the youth ministry goals and objectives and the delivery of the progressive classes. It is notable because the responsibility for the training of

leaders rests primarily with them. The TOC director indicated that he plans to increase the number of Master Guides in the districts.

The TOC recruits its ministers from Solusi University and Helderberg College graduates. The majority of the recruits of late come from Helderberg College. The TOC director remarked at the difference in training between the two institutions. He pointed out how Solusi University requires trainee ministers to complete the Master Guide programme before they finish their theology training. This better prepares the ministers from Solusi University for effective involvement in youth ministry. However, at Helderberg College they did not have the requirement for theology students to go through the Master Guide training. From the interview with Prof Gwala and Plaatjies it emerged that the college has now incorporated courses in youth ministry in their theology department. The idea in both institutions is that the ministers can then become trainers of youth leaders and they themselves can directly assist in the provision of youth ministry.

3.5.4. Reported experiences of hindrances to the implementation of the curriculum: Lack of resources and issues of priorities

Lack of curriculum material: The manuals, activity-books and prescribed reading material were cited as another hindrance in delivering the curriculum in the congregations. The reason for the lack of resource material articulated was poverty among members and the congregations and the high prices charged by the Conference for the material. They also cited unavailability of some of the stock at the Conference. Some congregations do have the financial muscle to be able to bear the costs of securing the material, but are not willing to prioritise youth ministry in budgeting. This failure to prioritise youth ministry in budgeting is sometimes accompanied by interference by elders in the youth department programming. The time allocated for youth programmes is often replaced by other programmes based on decisions by elders and other departmental leaders. These experiences were cited in the Orange-Vaal, Highveld, Far-West, North-East, West-Rand, Shiloh, Golden-West, Free State Zone 1 and Vhembe districts.

3.5.5. Curriculum relevance

Professors Gwala and Plaatjies, professors at the Helderberg College where they lecture in the seminary, both expressed concern regarding the tendency of failing to adapt church material and programmes for the church in general and youth ministry in particular. The material and programmes are prepared in America and circulated for consumption and implementation throughout the world. Often, implementation is attempted without any attempt to adapt the material for the local context. For the African context, even the English language used in the resource material can be a barrier to the usability of the material by the youth, and can be similarly limiting to some leaders, especially in rural areas. This was expressed by two other leaders during the interviews. The Union youth ministry director confirmed the expressed need for curriculum adaptation within the Southern African Indian Division territory as evinced in the establishment of a sub-committee for the purpose of reviewing curriculum with the African context in mind.

3.5.6. Miscellaneous responses from the various groups

During the conversations with the district groups, a few responses raised points worthy of recording, although it cannot be said that they became thematic threads across all the groups that were interviewed. Two leaders indicated how they have never been exposed to a progressive class environment; they had never seen one in session and they had no clue, save for the explanation provided by the interviewer. A few expressed a view that the high turnover of youth ministry leaders impeded the development of leaders and their capacity to deliver on their mandate. There were three leaders who were made leaders shortly after they became Adventists, meaning they were expected to provide leadership to an organisation they were yet to fully understand. One participant felt that the curriculum would benefit local youth more if it was adapted for the local settings and realities. Two participants cited the language (English) used in both the curriculum and the prescribed reading work as limiting the usefulness of the curriculum in the rural communities wherein they operated. Poverty in families of members and congregations was mentioned as contributing to the lack of curriculum resources needed among the affected congregations. A few leaders shared frustration from experiences where the TOC had no stocks available of some

of the material they needed. Related to stock availability, some leaders complained that at times both the TOC director and his secretary were not available in their offices to provide the supplies.

Some leaders' feedback suggested that there is a tendency for Adventurer and Pathfinder leaders to spend considerable time preparing their clubs for the Pathfinder Fair field activities. This is evinced in the number of clubs that participate in Pathfinder Fairs. In the 2011 Pathfinder Fairs, more than 120 Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs registered and participated in the fairs. When the number of clubs per district is compared with the number of progressive classes taking place in the same district, a lopsided picture emerges. By way of an example, in 2011, the Orange-Vaal district entered eight clubs for the fair; in the same period, the district only had one church running progressive classes. The overwhelming majority of the clubs that attended Pathfinder Fairs do not have progressive classes, which constitute the core of Adventist youth ministries. The physical activities, parade drills and games are frills, not the substance of youth ministries.

In a few of the interviews, the leaders expressed that the reason the elders do not support youth ministry initiatives, and sometimes actually sabotage the initiatives, is because the elders are not trained to lead the youth. This despite the elders being expected by the church to play a leading and supportive role to the youth ministry (Youth Department and Ministerial Association, 2002: 10). In addition, only a few of the ministers are Master Guides. In the TOC, there is no minister who has specialised in youth ministry in his or her training.

In two interviews, leaders raised concerns that parents fail to assist their children with homework. Criticism of the Ambassadors curriculum also emerged, in that the curriculum for this group is not clear and is insufficient.

3.5.7. Salient points from the interview with Professors Gwala and Plaatjies

The majority of recent entrants into the TOC pastoral ministry graduated from the Helderberg College. This was mentioned in Chapter 3. To determine their possible

impact on the youth ministries within the TOC, the researcher sought to explore what goes into their training and the philosophical positioning of the trainers at Helderberg College. Professors Gwala (chairperson of the Theology Department of the college) and Plaatjies participated in the interview. The following points made by the participants are lifted from the interview:

- They indicated that Helderberg College offers a two-hour credit course in youth ministry, but conceded that this constituted too little ground for providing solid grounding of their graduates in youth ministry.
- They felt that more perspectives in youth ministries should be included in the course.
- They argued that Adventist youth ministries should be reviewed in a way that it would become more family based in line with relevant perspectives/approaches for it to be more effective. Currently, the focus is on the youths themselves in isolation from family.
- The way Adventist youth ministries is structured, without addressing the generational gaps, hinders effective ministry to the youth.
- Youth ministry training should draw from other disciplines, such as Counselling, to increase the impact on the youth.
- They agreed that, given the unlikelihood of current leaders and structures in the hierarchy of the church being willing to embrace change and growth, a strategic focus needs to be on the trainee ministers at Helderberg to shape them to be agents and catalysts for change at grassroots level and up the hierarchy as and when they will occupy those positions of influence at a later stage.
- Gwala commented that the current use of the youth ministry curriculum is like 'taking an American tree and its soil and planting it in Africa'. This, he said, arguing for the need to adapt the curriculum to suit the African church context. Plaatjies went further to suggest a need for a 'black context' youth ministry approach.
- There is a need to reduce the high turnover of youth ministry leaders in Conferences by extending their stay in office to provide them with the opportunity to develop themselves in the youth ministry.

3.5.8. Highlights from the interview with the SAU and TOC youth ministry directors

The two directors' insights into the subject should have a bearing on the implementation of the curriculum given the pivotal role they play in the training of leaders at grassroots level and the supply of resources. The following is highlighted from the interviews:

- The SAU is sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of Conferences concerning the stock of supplies for the curriculum.
- There is an acknowledged low level of implementation of the curriculum at congregational level, acknowledged by both SAU and TOC directors.
- Both directors observe the obstacle to curriculum implementation as mainly being an outcome of congregational and district leaders who have not been trained and are not sufficiently motivated. The poor attitude of ministers and elders towards youth ministry, and their lack of insights/training in youth ministry further exacerbate the situation. The systems in the TOC do not create sufficient time and opportunity for the director to provide training to congregational leaders. The effective training and use of well-trained Federation and congregational leaders and Master Guide instructors would improve the levels of efficient delivery of the curriculum. The TOC director expressed frustrations at the red tape and limits imposed on the youth department in securing a stock of resources for the curriculum.
- While the SAU director holds the view that a lack of training is more prevalent in rural church communities, the TOC director observes that even in the Gauteng metropolitan congregations indications are that there are very low levels of curriculum implementation. He illustrated this by indicating that between December 2010 and December 2011, in the three large districts covering the Gauteng Province, which together is home to more than a hundred congregations, he had fewer than ten congregations that met curriculum requirements for investiture.
- To inject enthusiasm in curriculum implementation and delivery of youth ministry in general, the General Conference has re-packaged the youth ministry approach through the *Power of One* promotion. This current

quinquennium emphasis focuses on Christ being central to all aspects of youth ministry, with a specific focus on discipleship/devotional life, service/community work and mission/evangelism.

- Both directors share the view that although the curriculum in general is plausible, there is a need for it to be reviewed in part. The SAU indicated that there is agreement at SAU and Division level that the curriculum needs review and contextualisation and Africanisation of sorts. A curriculum-review subcommittee has been appointed for this purpose.
- They both expressed a need to improve on reporting systems and patterns/levels to be able to have a grasp of grassroots activities; to be able to detect areas that need interventions and support.

3.6. Further review of issues raised from interviews as hindrances to the curriculum implementation: Implications to the curriculum implementation at grassroots/congregational level

The above section of this chapter has put together the thematic threads that ran through the interviews outlining what youth ministry leaders at congregational level experienced as hindrances for them in delivering the youth ministry curriculum. From the researcher's point of view, what follows below is a brief re-visitation of the issues and their impact on the delivery of the curriculum.

3.6.1. The low-prevalence of qualified Master Guides among youth leaders and the expressed frustration with a lack of training for youth leaders

The ratio of qualified Master Guide leaders to non-qualified leaders paints a disturbing picture throughout all the interview groups met within the territory of the Conference. The tabular representation as reflected in Table 1 (in point 3.5.1 above) illustrates the direness of the situation. During the interviews, leaders in all the districts expressed frustration at their lack of training. They expressed that their lack of training was a hindrance to their implementing the curriculum. In some extreme cases, there were leaders who had absolutely no clue as to what progressive classes are, or what the curriculum entails.

Master Guide qualifications serve as the basis for youth leadership at the local church level (Youth Ministries Department, 2005: iii; Youth Ministries General Conference Department of Church Ministries, 2002: 3, 7-10). Part of the requirements for Master Guides is to complete a Basic Staff Training Course in Adventurer, Pathfinder or youth ministries. Furthermore, they are to supervise the Adventurer or Pathfinder participants through their class curriculum up to investiture/promotion (General Conference Youth Ministries, 2002: 7). By the time the Master Guides reach the Pathfinder Leadership Award and Advanced Pathfinder Leadership Award levels, they are required to have been active Pathfinder class and/or honours curriculum instructors and to have developed personal skills in Pathfinder ministry, sufficient to be a trainer of trainers (Youth Ministries General Conference, 2003: 8, 9; General Conference Youth Department, 2002: 4). By meeting these requirements (and all other requirements), the Master Guides are prepared to provide skilled leadership in youth ministry in general, and to lead the implementation of the youth ministry in particular. They are equipped with the philosophy of youth ministry to enhance their ministry. Not only are they skilled, but it can be expected that their leadership will be enthused, filled with confidence and motivated as well. However, when the leaders are not qualified, not equipped to carry out their ministry and to roll out the youth ministry curriculum, the logical occurs: they will not be able to roll out the curriculum.

The role of equipping congregational leaders with the necessary leadership skills lies primarily with the Conference youth ministry directorate (Feldbush & Hurtado, 1999: 86-88; Johnson, 2005: 45). The Conference youth ministry director is tasked with the training of lay youth ministry providers/leaders at congregational level to skill them in their areas of ministry. This is core to his responsibilities (Youth Department, 1993: 29, 33, 110). The SAU and TOC directors both hold the view that they have a duty to train leaders at congregational level; the TOC director indicated that he has committed himself to increase the number of trained Master Guides in the TOC. However, until this is implemented, the situation remains dire in the Conference – it cannot be conceived that the extremely low levels of curriculum implementation will be increased to satisfactory levels. Conference directors have a specific task to cover their entire territory every year with continuous training (Youth Department, 1993: 8, 23).

3.6.2. The prevalence of progressive classes in congregations

Progressive classes are the vehicle for implementing the youth ministry curriculum. Where they take place, one can conclude that some level of curriculum delivery is taking place, albeit the question of the level of adherence to curriculum content and objectives is not necessarily guaranteed by their existence. This study did not seek to determine the quality of the curriculum implementation, but the extent of the implementation. Judging by some of the comments made by leaders who indicated some presence of progressive classes in their congregations, it would appear that a further study to investigate the compliance with and quality of teaching and learning may be justified.

For ease of reference, the table below is placed herein again (with additional information) to provide a graphic indication of the prevalence of progressive classes compared with the figures reflecting the presence of Master Guide leaders at the time of the interviews:

District group	Number of congregations in district	Number of congregations running Progressive Classes	Number of Master Guides among the leaders in that district
Orange-Vaal	17	1 (one church had grouped all the classes of the Adventurers and Pathfinders into one class, not following the official curriculum. Another congregation had done the same, but also grouped all Pathfinder age groups into one class)	0
Highveld	19	3	1
Far-West	9	1	0

North-East	12	0	0
Shiloh	21	1	0
Vhembe	43	2 (each of the two running 1 class each, a third congregation has one group only reading a prescribed text)	1
Mafikeng	21	3	2
Golden-West	13	4	3
West-Rand	62	9	3
Free-State	7	4	2
Zone 1			
Lowveld	11	3	2
Totals	227	31	14

Table 3

The figures paint a grim, low to non-existent level of curriculum implementation across the Conference districts and congregations. When one takes into account comments as reflected on the Orange-Vaal and Vhembe districts class configurations and teaching/learning environment above, it does suggest a possibility that the quality of teaching/learning that takes place within the progressive classes that are reported may be cause for further concern. There appears to be a coincidence that may have a causal relationship between the low prevalence of Master Guide leaders and the low number of curriculum roll-out in congregations. Some leaders during the interview placed a direct link between their lack of training and their inability to install progressive classes. Unskilled leaders are un-empowered to carry out their roles (Feldbush & Hurtado, 1999: 87) in delivering the curriculum among the youth they lead. During the interview with the Conference youth director, he indicated that indications are that there is very little progressive class work taking place, judging by extremely low figures of requests for promotional investiture for youth who have completed the curriculum. He also shared his frustration with failure on the side of congregational and Federation leaders to submit activity reports. This might be because there are no compliant activities in congregations as revealed by the interviews. Conference youth directors have a duty to do regular check-ups to

monitor compliance and proper use of available material (Youth Department, 1993: 34).

3.6.3. Lack of resources and priority issues impact negatively on curriculum delivery

Among congregations whose leaders cited a lack of resources (manuals, activity-books, prescribed reading material, etc.) as a hindrance to their ability to proceed with progressive classes, they also cited poverty, inadequate stock levels at the TOC, and church leadership that failed to prioritise budgeting for youth needs. Whatever the basis and cause for a lack of resources, the fact remains that congregations can only implement the curriculum to the extent that they have the curriculum resources, even with improvisation factored in. Leaders, justifiably, experience frustration when they are elected, but not enabled to carry out their duties (Feldbush & Hurtado, 1999: 87). On the other hand, it is inconceivable that the Conference may allow itself to be out of stock with the material that needs to be used to implement programmes it has initiated for its congregations, notwithstanding the counterproductive office practices that the TOC director agonised about; especially because the SAU director, who supplies the Conference, is on record as saying that the SAU is always fully stocked up with resources. Conference youth ministry directors have as part of their duty the responsibility to secure and maintain adequate supplies of resources for congregations and to publicise their inventory of supplies to congregations at least twice annually (Youth Department, 1993: 6).

There is a question as to whether the tendency by local congregation elders and leaders to relegate making budgetary provision for youth needs may be exacerbated by low levels of awareness of youth needs and their place in congregational life and ethos (Youth Department and Ministerial Association, 2002: 10). The value placed on the youth ministry and the attitudes towards the youth are perhaps illustrated by reports by youth leaders of frequent disruptions of youth programmes by church elders requiring the youth to forgo their programmes to join other programs at the discretion of elders. Such instances may communicate an unintended negative message to the youth about themselves as church members and about their programmes. This may breed discouragement, confusion and possibly resistance by

youth ministry leaders and the youth themselves. There ought to be no doubt in the minds of the youth as to the level of the church's commitment to them, for the youth will commit themselves to the church that is committed to them (Lynch, 2004: 14).

3.7. Conclusion

The purpose of the research interviews was to establish the extent of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference. Furthermore, it was to establish the causes of, or hindrances in the delivery of the curriculum. Evidently, the levels of the implementation of the curriculum, and the quality thereof where there is any going on are very low. The causes of the bottlenecks and hindrances in the delivery of the curriculum were identified and highlighted in this chapter. Chapter 4 takes the process further by engaging in the discussion of the highlighted problem areas.

Chapter 4

4.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter captured the interviews as they took place in the various districts, with office bearers at the Trans-Orange Conference and the Union, as well as the two lecturers at Helderberg College. This was followed by the drawing out of thematic threads that ensued from the analysis of the interviews. This chapter will delve into a discussion of the problems that were identified as hindrances to the delivery of the youth ministry curriculum. It will also engage in a literature study in relation to the results that emanated from the research interviews. This becomes the second part of the meta-theory aspects of the research process.

4.2. Various issues/problems that were identified as hindrances to the implementation of youth ministry curriculum

Various issues emerged during the interviews and were cited by the participants as problematic in their attempts to provide youth ministry as well as implement the youth ministry curriculum in their congregations. Several of these problems proved to be common across the majority of the districts interviewed. Some appeared to be isolated and rather unique to certain districts or congregations. These problem areas constitute the subject of discussion below.

4.2.1. Low prevalence of active progressive classes among the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference

As observed in Chapter 3, the study reveals a disturbingly low rate of implementation of the youth ministry curriculum among the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference. This is indicated by the low number of congregations that have active progressive classes going on. Progressive classes are the vehicle through which the curriculum is implemented. The data in Table 3 in Chapter 3 demonstrate the very low prevalence of congregations that have progressive classes running – out of a total of 227 congregations, only 28 had the classes in place. In varying degrees of fidelity to the curriculum, work is only taking place in these few congregations.

The Latin word from which the word 'curriculum' derives means to run the race, but within this context, it is used as used by East (2010: 197), Lawson (2008: 364) and Dean & Foster (1998: 117) who use it with a connotative meaning of a course to be run. The course to be run may be well charted, the athlete may have well prepared for the run, but until the race is actually run, the plan, the aim and the preparation are yet to be of value. We must actually get to pass the baton to the youth in the race, and not be satisfied just with declaring the intention to (Dean & Foster, 1998: 117). Besides the historic meaning of the word and its metaphoric use here, the word 'curriculum' in this usage refers to a prescribed academic programme, a written plan outlining subjects to be covered, and the printed hand-out material used for the lessons to be taught (Robbins, 2001: 334). Although the aforesaid definitions of 'curriculum' should suffice for the purpose of Adventist youth ministry syllabus work, in another sense it would be beneficial to include the extended meaning where it covers the "activities intentionally designed to nurture the faith of children" (May *et al*, 2005: 191).

The Adventist youth ministry curriculum is an embodiment of the philosophy and goals of the church's youth ministry. Gilbert Cangy, Adventist world youth leader, comments that:

Our mission is to lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus and help them to embrace His call to discipleship. We pursue our calling in the context of Revival and Reformation as we submit our lives to the transforming, equipping, and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. We are not content with mere church membership, but we are students of Jesus for life in character, community, service, and mission. We embrace our calling to proclaim the soon coming of Jesus and prepare the youth of the world for a purposeful and meaningful life, as Jesus reigns as king of our lives in the here and now, until He comes to claim His own unto himself.

(General Conference Youth Ministries, 2012)

The vehicle for achieving the above is primarily through the delivery of the curriculum through progressive classes. While it is true that the curriculum and all the resources related to it will not by themselves produce mature Christians out of the youth (Lawson, 2008: 365; Trimmer, 1994: 93), it is also true that failing to deliver the

curriculum to the youth is failing the youth in a very significant way. The Adventist youth ministry curriculum can be seen as Christ-centred, Biblically sound and empowered by the Spirit; character transforming, spiritually holistic and should lead to worship and witnessing (Case, 2005: 22). However, no matter how wonderfully constructed the curriculum may be, it is of no value until it reaches and transforms the lives of the youth. The low prevalence of progressive classes means low levels of curriculum implementation. If the church's youth ministry fails to have a reasonably sufficient capacity and ability to deliver its curriculum, then it is failing to achieve its goals and mission.

The Adventist church has organised its youth ministry into age-related and developmental stage groupings (Adventurers, Pathfinders, Ambassadors and senior youth), and the curriculum takes into consideration the youth's developmental stage. Lawson's (2008: 136; see also Dettoni, 1993: 64) views of the youth groups organised for teaching and learning in the church are in line with the Adventist philosophy and goals regarding its ministry and youth curriculum: to equip leaders for maturity and ministry, focusing on training/discipling and elevating the levels of Christian experience and commitment (Youth Department and Ministerial Association, 2002: 12). East's (2010: 184) emphasis of the purpose for youth ministry curriculum is on discipling the youth to follow Jesus, getting to know Him and allowing their lives to reflect Him to the world. The central purpose of the church's curriculum is to lead the learners to a saving faith in the Lord, and is not an end in itself (McGuire, 2008: 100). The Adventist Church's youth ministry's stated central purpose is to lead the youth to salvation in Christ, and also to lead them to service to other (Youth Ministry Department, 2005: 15; 259).

Missed opportunities to implement the curriculum means a failed mission to save and equip the youth in accordance with the stated mission of the Youth Ministry Department (Youth Department, 2002:6). When the church fails to implement the youth ministry curriculum among its youth, it is failing to provide the Christian education necessary to accomplish its mission, goals and objectives (Morgan-Cole, 2005: 19; General Conference, 2002:11). It is this Christian education that must inform the beliefs, affect the attitudes and overt behaviour through the nurturing (Astley, 1994: 7; General Conference, 2002: 10, 11) of Adventist youth as envisaged

in the church's mission statement. The Adventist Church, as part of the Church of Christ, needs to remind itself that the goal of Christian education, the content of its youth ministry curriculum, is to reshape people; to reshape our youth's personalities into the image of Christ (Richards, 1976: 46; Yount, 2008: 185; 1Timothy 4: 12, 13; 1John 2: 5, 6); and through what East (2010: 187) calls 'shared learning', the youth are led to grow in faith. This is done through the instructors of the curriculum taking the participant youth through the process and experience of justification and sanctification, which becomes instrumental in their restoration into the Image of God, moving the youth towards Christ-likeness (Gangel & Sullivan 1995: 74, 76; Dettoni, 1993: 67). East (2010: 188) refers to the same as to "inform, form, and transform". This understanding of the import and pertinence of the Christian education as reflected in the Adventist youth ministry curriculum should provide impetus for the church to move its curriculum from the shelves of its offices into congregations and into the lives of its young people. A theologically sound and a philosophically well-crafted curriculum and youth ministry programme is extremely essential in Adventist youth ministry. In as much as good medicine will only be good for the sick if ingested by the sick, so is a great curriculum for Adventist youth ministry – it is only as good as it gets implemented among the youth who are its target group (Schultz & Schultz, 1993: 15).

It is not sufficient for the church to have a purpose, goals and mission for the church's youth ministry. That purpose, goal and mission must go beyond informing the why and how the church does youth ministry, to motivating it, giving an impetus to meticulously pursue the delivery of the curriculum among the people, purposefully so in harmony with the discipling goals of the Great Commission (Fields, 1998: 17; Mathew 28: 18-20). The discipling goal of the Great Commission includes the teaching role (v. 19, 20). The teaching role or practice would have been evident in the early church (Mark 1: 22, 4: 1,2; 6: 2, 6; 8:31; 9: 31, 12: 35; John 3: 2; Mathew 28: 19, 20; Acts 5: 42; I Corinthians 12: 28; Ephesians 4:11). The same practice should be expected of today's church (Lawson, 2008: 134; Nel, 2001: 10). Treston (1993: 11) is categorical when he says: "Christian religious education is ecclesial because its mandate is situated within the mission of the church to teach" (Mathew 28: 19). The church cannot afford to fail in this role. The church must have something capable of captivating and retaining the youth because it has something

to offer and to respond to their enquiring minds (Creasy & Foster 1998: 161-162; Luke 2:44-46). The content of its teaching curriculum and the progressive classes must be effective enough and be properly delivered to go beyond youth retention to youth salvation and discipling, in keeping with the mission of its youth ministry. According to Vukich and Vandegriff (2002: 268), successful teaching is when lives are changed, growth towards spiritual maturity is encouraged, and thoughts, behaviour and lifestyles are conformed towards the image of Christ.

Besides the curriculum having the function of meeting the discipling needs of the church towards its youth, it also opens up the group to reach out to the associate members⁶ of the church youth groups. In this way, a functioning and effective progressive class programme has the function of outreach and evangelism (Case, 2005: 22). As indicated in Chapter 2 concerning the twin goals of Adventist youth ministry, the youth should be involved in Christian services. The Youth Ministry Mission Statement, states, among other intentions, that it purposes to: Equip and empower youth for a life of service within God's church and the community (Youth Department, 2002: 6). These services include serving other young people who may not be of the church, doing voluntary community services as an outreach to people in need, and assisting in projects that establish service points throughout the world. Significantly, the youth must also be involved in missions to lead other youth to salvation. Vukich and Vandegriff (2002: 58) posit that the youth leaders have a duty to challenge and provide practical opportunities for the youth to be involved in mission work. This would be in keeping with this expressed aim of Adventist youth ministry, which is to spread the gospel to the entire world, starting with the youth's local communities in evangelistic activities (Youth Ministries Department, 2005: iii, 17, 161, 259).

When the youth participate in evangelism activities, they are doing so as equal participants with the rest of the church membership in fulfilling the Great Commission as recorded in Mathew 28: 18-20. The progressive classes' curriculum does not only require the youth to participate in outreach activities, it also covers their training and equipping for this purpose (Youth Ministries Department, 2005: 17, 159-188; Youth

⁶ Associate-members are those young people drawn into the Church youth groups from the community who are not members of the Adventist church (General Conference, 2005: 31)

Department & Ministerial Association, 2002: 62-66). When the church fails at delivering the progressive class curriculum, it is at the same time failing at this important function of evangelism through the open groups of the church's youth ministry (Lawson, 2008: 136; Garcia-Marenko, 2005: 129; Youth Department & Ministerial Association, 2002: 19).

Thirdly, a failed curriculum implementation means missing out on an opportunity to engage the Adventist youth in organised community service. Lawson (2008:137) asserts that (youth) ministry groups "provide the tangible means for members to extend their reach and magnify their impact on culture and the church". In reaching out to the community in service provision, the young people would have an opportunity to serve the Lord by serving and meeting the need of others. Vukich and Vandegriff (2002: 55) see Christian service as essential in the ministries of youth.

4.2.2. Master Guide and training of youth ministry leaders

As observed in the interviews in Chapter 3 and mentioned there, a thematic line across the interviews included a low prevalence of qualified youth ministry leaders in the various districts. A Master Guide qualification is required for Adventist youth ministry leadership. The Master Guide class is the foundation towards the top level of class achievement. You cannot earn your Master Guide without taking at least one Basic Staff Training course. A Master Guide is the expert, the advisor and the promoter for Adventurers, Pathfinders, Ambassadors, Youth Emergency Service Corps and Youth. It is a youth ministry leadership programme that uses the Master Guide as the foundation for youth ministry leadership, then builds two levels of continuing education that will help keep youth leaders sharp, up-to-date and focused on why they are in youth ministry (General Conference Youth Ministries Department, 2012).

In all the interviews, one of the concerns expressed by participants as a hindrance to their ability to provide youth ministry and deliver the curriculum in their congregations was the lack of training and skills. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the role of equipping congregational leaders with the necessary leadership skills lies primarily with the Conference youth ministry directorate (see Feldbush & Hurtado, 1999: 86-88; Johnson 2005: 45). The Conference youth ministry director is tasked with the training

of lay youth ministry providers/leaders at congregational level, to skill them in their areas of ministry. This forms part of his core responsibilities and is central to his duties (Youth Department, 1993: 29, 33, 110).

Malcolm Allen (1995: 134, 147), a youth ministry specialist in the Adventist church, cites a study whose outcomes indicate that the high turnover of youth leaders and the high number of unqualified/untrained youth leaders impact negatively on the church's youth ministry programme. A study by Charles Rosemeyer (1998: 29, 32-33) also indicated that the high turnover of youth leaders and untrained, unqualified youth ministry leaders leads to the failed delivery of programmes. Other surveys of ministry providers and the question of training have linked the lack of training as main contributor in failed programme implementation and volunteer leader dropouts (Williams, 2001: 173).

Malcolm Allen (cited above) was part of the General Conference Annual Council meeting in 1992 where they took a resolution for the world church to ascertain that in all church levels, from local congregation to the highest level, the General Conference, youth specialists should be appointed to lead the youth ministry. The picture that emerged during the research interviews in the Trans-Orange Conference territory indicates that this resolution has not been implemented, given that the cry for training was replete throughout the various districts. In the interview with the Conference youth ministry director, the director confirmed the low level of training of leaders within the Conference. Ideally, those who lead the youth groups/societies should first receive training for them to carry out their duties effectively (Lawson, 2008: 120). This training should start with what Robbins (1990: 154) calls the 'pre-service training' of the volunteers that the church or the youth department have recruited. Williams (2001: 173) states that leaders should receive the training prior to them beginning their ministry. Holderness and Hay (1997: 125) shared a related vein when they proposed that new leaders should receive direct training before they meet the youth. In that way, the volunteers are not thrown into the deep-end of things. The director from the Conference, who should be a professional in youth ministry, should make it his task to facilitate the recruitment, training and skills development of the volunteer leaders in local congregations (McCarty, 2005: 50).

The power of trained leaders can be seen in Christ's disciples. Although they were not trained when he called them, they were trainable. And He did train them. After three years, they were ready to be deployed to reach the then known world with the gospel (Yount, 2008: 50). Berltoni's (1994: 122) motivation for trained youth ministry staff is that it provides the staff the opportunity to learn the unique philosophy of youth ministry held by the church, it also provides staff with the sense and experience that there is support for them in what they are doing. The fellowship and sharing that take place during training engenders encouragement and growth (see also Lawson, 2008: 371; Holderness & Hay, 1997: 116). It should increase self-confidence and efficiency in their ministry, and assist in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the church's youth ministry. The level of training and skills development of the youth leaders and curriculum instructors has a direct impact on how the youth experience the learning sessions, how they maintain interest and even how secure they feel in the learning environment (Wortley, 1991: 40). There are risks that go with entrusting the spiritual welfare of the youth into the hands of untrained leaders. It should be unfathomable for the youth to be left totally to the creativities of leaders who have not been trained. What goes on in the youth societies is not likely to be meaningful when the youth leaders are not (properly) trained and equipped (Veerman, 1992: 83; Diaz-Bolet, 2008: 428).

Kelly (2000: 129), a Catholic author, advocates that all catechists must be trained well, and that the training and spiritual formation of catechists must be on-going. The training of leaders should be communal, repeated, on-going, and situated (learning, growing in the job) and Spirit-led – according to research. Here, 'communal' means extending the training to involve the church as a community to minister to its youth, involving more people and other facets of church life and resources. Single events of training youth leaders do not have the capacity to pass on sufficient skills development for youth leaders, whereas repeated and repeatable practices promote skills development. A spiral-curriculum for training will provide for an incremental approach to training, as is seen, for instance, in the 'Pathfinder Leadership Awards and Advanced Pathfinder Leadership Awards' (Ng, 2005: 68; Dean *et al.* 2010: 78, 81; General Conference, 2003; Williams, 2001: 173). Yount (2008: 382, 386) suggests that churches plan systemic and annual training for leaders and instructors.

Dean *et al.* (2010: 130, 131) and Strommen (2001: 45) cite studies that reveal that congregations/churches that produce spiritually mature youth are those that ascertain that among their high priorities is to train, affirm, and equip its adult and young youth leaders, in an environment of high expectation for performance in ministry. A further reason why youth leaders and class instructors should be trained is because the implementation of the Adventist youth ministry curriculum goes way beyond the impartation of facts and information, to actually cooperating with the Spirit to achieve spiritual goals and lead the youth to a saving and serving relationship with Christ (Case, 2005:22; Robbins, 2001: 338).

4.2.3. Unbalanced emphasis between physical activities and the curriculum delivery (Religious education)

The junior youth/pathfinder clubs are usually ready to attend the Conference Pathfinder fairs where there is a display of skills in drill-downs⁷, handwork and competitive physical games. Their leaders tend to spend time focusing on getting the youth ready for the fairs, but do not get to invest time in carrying out the religious education component of the curriculum, which constitutes a major chunk of the curriculum. In the instance when there is no Pathfinder fair in a particular year, it is probable that the Pathfinder club will not get to be involved in any Pathfinder activities, no curriculum and no physical activities at all. The fellowship meetings and recreational activities are part of the curriculum and philosophy of Adventist youth ministry in pursuit of the holistic development of the youth, and have a very valuable effect on the youth. It is fun, meets the physical needs of youth, assists in building a sense of community among the youth, assists in building social skills and forming relationships among them (General Conference, 2005: 211, 43). Although fun, games and other physical activities should be given their place by not minimising their value, youth ministries are much more than fun and games. A youth ministry that relies heavily on the entertainment and activity approach is the least likely to achieve the goals of youth ministry (Dean & Foster, 1998: 189). Vukich and Vandegriff (2002: 56) lament the church youth becoming spiritually callused as a result of entertainment-style type of programming, also resulting in youth who

⁷ Drill-down in Pathfinder terms refers to what the Pathfinders do on parade, taking orders from a club-leader; they march in certain formations and respond to certain commands, very much similar to armed forces and scouts do on parade.

become observers and not participants in church activities and services. Studies indicate that, while there may be room for activities and entertainment in youth ministry, a heavy emphasis on it leads to ineffective ministry and turns out to be the poorest approach in the quest for committed youth (Strommen, 2001: 71). The result is that the youth shun commitment and involvement in serious church life and turn to view such as belonging to the adult church community (Trimmer, 1994: 156).

Scripture provides unique answers to youth issues; we cannot rob them of these by filling youth ministry time with the bulk of social and physical activities at the expense of the scripture-based curriculum (Bertolini, 1994: 70, 71). Activities have little to none eternal values, impact less on the lives of the youth, and even less on inculcating values. Fashbaugh (2005: 59, 61) warns that activities, while they are time and energy consuming, do not by themselves lead to the youth forming lasting relationships of salvation, nor do they effectively assist them to remain in the faith community throughout their lives. The church will not be able to assist the youth to withstand the effects of the avalanche of secularisation with an emphasis on games and physical activities while ignoring the implementation of the curriculum. There has to be a balance. Each of the components of youth ministry needs to be given its fair and proportionate allocation of attention, resources and effort.

4.2.4. Family and parental support for curriculum implementation

The youth leaders expressed frustration that they do not have the support of parents in getting the children and youth to fulfil their curriculum requirements and tasks. The parents do not only fail to provide the support at church, but also fail to assist their children with tasks that need to be completed at home. If the parents fail to assist in the basics of getting their children to complete their homework, there is a question of whether they can be helpful in inculcating the values that the curriculum seeks to instil in fulfilment of the goals and mission of the church's youth ministry.

Not all Adventist youth come from Christian homes, nor do they all come from a typical nuclear family where father and mother live together. These realities may have a bearing on the capacity of parents to provide the necessary support in youth ministry. Black (2001: 44) and Trimmer (1994: 254) observe that youth come to

church originating from families where they have spent or spend most of their childhood and teen years, where parents have exerted most of the influence in their lives. For this reason, youth ministry, together with Christian families, must reach out to the youth within the context of their daily lives, together demonstrating the ever-available power that comes with the indwelling Spirit of God, empowering a lifestyle of love, learning and living for others (Springer & Smith, 1995: 61). Youth ministry will not function effectively unless it meets the needs of its youth within the context of their families where their ideas, values and attitudes are shaped and formed (Humphrey, 2005: 230). Youth ministry workers and parents need each other, and can and should form a strategic partnership for maximum output to the youth. The combined effort will yield more than a separate or one-sided approach can ever accomplish (Robbins, 1990: 198). Kehrwald, (2010: 148) observes that the church runs the risk of losing the gains it may have made through its youth ministry if it neglects and ignores parents and families. Fields (1988: 21) dares to say: “Youth ministry cannot be healthy if it is isolated from family”.

Benson (2001: 27) puts forth the Christian home as bearing the primary duty of being the agency of Christian education. It is the domestic church, the “first and vital cell of society”; the primary educator of faith and virtues (Mercadante, 2005: 17). The home should be the first classroom where children learn life’s most important lessons (Anthony, 2001: 205). Newman (2011: 31) sees Christian families as God’s training centres for youth. May *et al.* (2005: 151) think similarly of Christian family as “the primary context for faith formation”. De Vries (2004: 60) posits that parents have a formative effect on their children’s faith, for better or for worse. According to Strommen (1993: 33), when there is a congenial relationship between parents and a young person, the youth tend to adopt the values of the adults. We cannot hope to be effective in our youth ministry by focusing on the youth only, the same way that we cannot hope to be effective in stopping a bleed with plaster on a wound. There is as much need to pay attention to the parents as there is to do so to the youth (Black, 2001: 49; Strommen, 2001: 45).

The church can team up with parents to minister to the youth by empowering the parents to be Christian educators of their children within the conducive context of home and family (Holderness & Hay, 1997: 144; May *et al.* 2005: 156, 167).

Strommen and Hardel (2008: 28) see parents as the first apostles, priests, spiritual teachers and leaders of their children, for they have the spiritual authority and should be the first to introduce the gospel to children. Mercadante (2005: 17) places the responsibility to foster the conversion of children squarely upon the Christian parents. Families, according to Newman (2011: 31, 43-48), are centres for evangelism to family members. Family is the first environment that provides ministry to adolescents; the church should therefore invest resources and provide all support to parents to enable them to carry out the role effectively.

Nel's (2001: 16, 17) idea of family as being a hermeneutic sphere where children gain understanding of faith, where the environment permits for them to ask faith questions, which are answered by people whom the children love, trust and look up to, which is critical in their faith formation. Black, (2001. 45) argues that if we are to impact on the lives of youths in significant ways, we must also be willing to work towards touching the lives of those who are in their world of influence, such as parents, siblings, extended family, and peers. "A church that is serious about youth ministry will seek to relate to the parents of teenagers as energetically as it does to the teens themselves". On the same idea, De Vries (2004: 68) states: "Doing youth ministries without parents is like driving a car without an engine".

Youth leaders should be aware that the adults in the church or the parents of their youth affect their ministry to the youth (Fashbaugh, 2005: 25; De Vries, 2004: 67). By intentionally investing in the parents in ministry, the church will be creating a fertile ground for its youth ministry. Research indicates that the family is the most important faith-filled unit in the lives of youth (Dean & Foster, 1998: 79). We need to foster a paradigm that develops families into households of faith, where parents are empowered as primary instructors of the faith goals of Christian education (Mercadante, 2008: 12). The family is scripturally bound to be the main transmitter of faith, as outlined in Deuteronomy 6, and other passages that reflect how in the Judeo-Christian tradition, religious education and religious socialisation (Treston, 1993: 10). This is occasioned within the natural settings of family where there are many opportune moments for teaching and learning during the natural way of living life (Floyd, 2008: 153). Asaph's Psalm (Psalm 78: 2b -7) illustrates both the intentional transmission of faith and the possibility thereof within the setting of family

relationships. Paul reminisces about a three-generational transmission of faith in young Timothy's family (2 Timothy 1:5). The faith formation facilitated by empowered parents continues beyond the formal events to the lived-out lives of the youth in their home environment. This approach is in harmony with the Deuteronomy chapter 6 (verses 1-9, 20-25) guidelines and approach to the discipling of children. In these passages of Deuteronomy, the theme of instructing the children through the daily lived-out experiences of family life, instructing and modelling, using each opportune time to apply the faith principles in the daily life of the family and community of faith are spelt out. The church can play the role of empowering the parents with skills, resources and support.

Studies link thriving faith in teenagers to congregations' capacity to theologically engage their parents and other church adults; and the best way, as Dean *et al.* (2010: 77) put it: "...to get most youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities...if we want young people to have faith, we must attend to the faith of their parents and congregations". It then makes sense when Bertolini (1994: 102,103) concludes that parent ministry is youth ministry and is a non-negotiable in youth ministry. One reason for this stance is that God has actually placed ministry to youth primarily on parents and in families (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Ephesians 6:1-4). Although some parents will fail in playing their roles in leading their children to godly lives, the church cannot simply become a replacement to the parenting role. It can and should provide interventions, and one of those interventions is to provide parenting support to the parents of the youth (De Vries, 2004: 103, 104; Floyd 2008: 153).

Dean *et al.* (2010: 131) refer to a study that shows that congregations where family life is supported, where parents possess and practice a vital and informed faith, promote family faith practices, reflect family harmony, and foster parent-youth relationships, yield youth that are spiritually mature. Derouen (2008: 342) and Strommen and Hardel (2008: 113) also refer to a similar study that yielded similar results. According to Gillespie (1988: 79), during the lived-out lives of the parents and adult family members, children observe the faith-life of, for instance, trust in God, and the children learn the value of trustworthiness of God. From a borrowed

faith, they progress through reflected faith to personalised and established faith as they become more aware of the lives of the faith community of the church. As they grow in the faith families and the church family, they generally grow and progress to personalised faith, as the church and family continue to provide support, education and guidance, through both instruction and modelling. According to Atkinson (1997: 100) and Derouen (2008: 333), parents are very influential to their adolescent children, through modelling, in their formation of values and norms, in their personality development and making major life decisions (see also Gillespie, 1988: 99). Where relationships between parents and children are positive, parents are still the most influential in communicating and passing values to their children, impacting more on them than their peers do (Strommen, 1993: 36; Case & Dudley, 1993: 60).

4.2.5. Priority concerns and youth ministry curriculum resource availability and accessibility

Interviewed participants in various districts expressed concern regarding the low priority given to youth ministry by church leadership in their congregations. This manifested itself in the ways in which congregations availed resources towards youth ministry. These would be resources such as budgets and time to enable them to carry out their youth ministry. McCarty (2005: 24) says that it is a myth that all congregations treat the youth ministry as a critical ministry in the church. It may be so in expressed opinion, but in practice, youth ministry has to contend with an inequitable allocation of staff, money, resources and space, and time in the programming of the church. Strommen (2001: 72) and Nel (2000: 193) both state that the budgetary allocation is an indicator, a barometer, of the estimate of importance the church places on youth ministry.

Derouen (2008: 342) cites research that indicates that congregations that prioritise and support youth ministries tend to produce spiritually mature Christians. The Adventist church encourages pastors and elders to proactively make budgetary provision for the resources and other needs in the youth ministry department, and to take concrete steps to personally evince their support for the youth and their youth ministry programmes (Youth Department & Ministerial Association, 2002: 23, 24, 35).

De Vries (2008: 31) observes that churches tend to fail to invest appropriately in youth ministry. De Vries goes on to declare that the effectiveness of a church's youth ministry is directly tied to the level of investment a church puts into its youth ministry.

It was mentioned in Chapter 3 that Conference youth ministry directors have as part of their duty the responsibility to secure and maintain adequate supplies of resources for congregations and to publicise their inventory of supplies to congregations at least twice annually (Youth Department, 1993: 6). Complaints surfaced from the interview that they sometimes experience stock unavailability, including inaccessibility of the stock office because of the youth department's secretary being absent from the office for extended times. In either case, the Conference youth ministry department should not fail its constituent member congregations in this regard.

Poverty on the side of some of the congregations is a critical variable contributing to the non-affordability of the curriculum resources from the supplier.

4.2.6. Curriculum relevance

The Seventh-day Adventist church is a world church in the sense that it has established a total of 146 601 congregations in 209 countries and areas out of the 232 countries and areas recognised by the United Nations; having a membership in excess of 18 million and over 19 million adherents in those countries (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2012). Its world headquarters are in Maryland, USA. Because the world headquarters of the Adventist Church are in America, its world programmes are designed and disseminated from there for worldwide implementation and consumption. People who are in key leadership positions at the General Conference headquarters also tend to be of Western origin. The consequence of this is that the 'products' from the departmental church ministry leaders may have a Western slant and bias and fail to take into consideration the cultural, economic, etc. contexts of the rest of the world or the 209 countries and areas where these programmes must be implemented. This gives the church the advantage of maintaining doctrinal, missiological and traditional unity and similarity throughout the world. However, by failing to adapt the church resources and

programmes to the various cultures in various regions, the church is failing in its missiological imperatives to take cultural contexts into consideration.

Prof Gwala stated during the interview (captured in Chapter 3) how he is averse to what he referred to as taking an American tree and its soil to plant it in Africa (Baker, (2011: 47, 48) shares the same view). By this he was referring to the tendency to attempt to implement programmes and worldviews emanating from the West in our local church communities without adapting them for our context. Eliezer Vasquez (2007: 61), a youth director at Inter-America Division (1998-2000, and over fifty years of youth ministry directorship at other levels) posits that although as a church's youth ministry leaders we may have embraced the Christian culture that is arguably Biblical based, there remains a need to adapt our methods and youth ministry to the dynamic environment where we serve. If we aim to make an impact in the lives of the youth through the gospel embodied in the curriculum, it will have to be adapted so that it can be communicated in the language and symbols of the target group (Baker, 2011: 53). Prof Plaatjies, during the interview recorded in Chapter 3, asserts that the American, First-world material from the church's headquarters may be good for those communities in the developed countries, but needs to be adapted and be contextualised for the South African black youth who constitute the majority of the South African church membership. According to Pastor Rambelani Maligudu, the current Union youth ministry director (during an interview with him as recorded in Chapter 3), indications are that there is a growing sense in the Southern African region that the youth ministry curriculum drawn by the World Church may need adaptation for the African and South African context. A youth ministry leader from the Golden West district echoed this reality. Lewis *et al.* (1997: 324) admonish that "teachers and curriculum builders should approach various cultures as young children do, with open hearts and minds, as explorers who are able simultaneously to transform and be transformed by their encounters with other cultures". They further argue that "...curriculum also includes the "texts" of cultural action – including decisions, motivations, and those formal and informal processes that seek to legitimise a particular worldview" (p 328). Although the church may hold the view that the Bible carries universally and timelessly applicable truths and imperatives, we cannot escape the need for contextualisation when it comes to application.

If the youth ministry in general and the youth ministry curriculum in particular are not adapted for the local and regional contexts, they run the risk of severely limiting their relevance. Irrelevance of the curriculum and programmes limits the impact that these ought to have on the youth. It will also lessen the likelihood of the curriculum being implemented and being well received by the youth. The curriculum is of value only to the extent to which it reaches the target group and is effectively implemented. There should be no reluctance in removing this barrier of irrelevance and culturally unadapted curriculum. Lying on the shelves of the headquarters and not reaching the youth masses in the Trans-Orange Conference congregations renders the curriculum valueless. Greater impetus should be exerted on the current attempts by the Southern African Indian Ocean Division as it works through the applicable sub-committee to review the content of the General Conference youth ministry curriculum, with a view to adapting it to suit the context of this region.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter dealt with literature control pertaining to the themes that came up in Chapter 3 as hindrances experienced by youth ministry providers in local congregations as they sought to do their duties in delivering the youth ministry curriculum. The discussion on the subjects laid a foundation that makes it possible to explore approaches to alternative praxis from the one that led to the problems that caused hiccups in curriculum delivery to ones that would assist in obviating the problem-laden praxis. It set the stage for what will follow in Chapter 5, which deals with the discussions of proposals and suggestions for an alternative youth ministry praxis that should help resolve the problem areas in curriculum implementation.

Chapter 5

5.1 Introduction

The interviews that were conducted in the various districts of the Trans-Orange Conference assisted in verifying the accuracy of the impression the researcher had concerning the low level of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the Conference congregations. They also provided extra information that could not be gathered by mere observation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006:455). Maintaining the qualitative method of interviews (and reviewing relevant literature), the interviews determined the level of involvement and experiences of the youth ministry leaders, and the extent to which they implemented the curriculum in their congregations. These interviews were semi-structured and unstructured in format, which is characteristic of the qualitative approach. The research and the interviews in particular were guided by the research question: What are the problems that are hindering the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the local congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church?

Coupled with the qualitative method of doing research, the Practical Theological Model of Zeffass was followed and serves as a guide in moving from problem praxis to solution praxis; assisting in moving the research from the problem praxis around the youth ministry curriculum implementation (low-level of implementation) to a new praxis where the outcome is, hopefully, a curriculum that reaches the congregations' youth (high level of implementation).

As an outcome from the interviews conducted with the congregational and district youth ministry leaders in the Trans-Orange Conference, in Chapter 3 several points were identified as problems hindering the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the Trans-Orange Conference churches. Then the fourth chapter dealt with literature control to further discuss the various problem areas that are currently hindering the implementation and delivery of the youth ministry curriculum in the majority of the congregations of the Adventist Church in the Trans-Orange

Conference. In these discussions, there were some subtle hints at possible alternative ways of youth ministry practice that could remedy the situation and help maximise the level of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum among the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference.

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that this project will seek to propose a development of a theory to assist in enabling a new model for youth ministry and curriculum implementation. The intention for this theory is to communicate with the Conference leadership to see the need to create a new model, to possibly negotiate for a new model at General Conference level – which is the highest decision-making organ of the church responsible for church policy, church philosophy, theology and programming. It is not possible for lower structures to formulate their own models of praxis and policies. Therefore, the Trans-Orange Conference cannot have its own model; it must follow the General Conference model. A desirable GC model would be one that accommodates world-wide dynamics that are both dynamic and diverse. A foundation, however, may be laid to enable discussions towards making the necessary changes and adaptations. With this in mind, this chapter will attempt to develop a new and alternative way of implementing the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference. This study should function to expose how the current praxis has failed to yield the desired/intended outcomes – not meeting the aims and objectives of the church's youth ministry. When this is evinced, perhaps the church structures will be open to review its model that informs the current praxis. This will be done by putting forth proposals and ideas that should assist in bringing about solutions to the problems that, according to the research findings, cause the bottlenecks in delivering the youth ministry curriculum in the local congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference. In line with the Zerfass model, there will be an endeavour to raise an interaction between the Biblical foundations for youth ministries and the theologies of youth ministries (basis-theory); with a reflection on findings from the interviews of what caused the failures in delivering the youth ministry curriculum together with the insights from the literature study on the subject (meta-theory). By integrating these elements that have already been dealt with from Chapter 2 through Chapter 4, and by allowing for a hermeneutical interaction among them, it should then set the basis for the development of a new practical theological theory for praxis within the Trans-Orange Conference, which

praxis should prove useful even in other regions of the Church where dynamics are similar and there is a commitment to delivering the youth ministry curriculum to the youth.

5.2 Proposals and recommendations that can enable a possible new model of praxis

As an outcome from the interviews conducted with the congregational and district youth ministry leaders in the Trans-Orange Conference as recorded in Chapter 3, several points were identified as hindering the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the Trans-Orange Conference churches. The various problem areas that are currently hindering the implementation and delivery of the youth ministry curriculum in the majority of the congregations of the Adventist Church in the Trans-Orange Conference were then discussed in Chapter 4. These discussions created the basis for possible proposals and suggestions regarding what could be done to remedy the situation and help maximise the level of the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum among the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference. As indicated in this chapter's introduction, the Zeffass model guided the approach in this research. By investigating the current praxis in implementing the youth ministry curriculum, we were able to realise that the low level of curriculum implementation is influenced by the Adventist (youth ministry) theological tradition and the prevailing problematic practices as revealed in the research interviews. An analysis of the current situation through an empirical study to establish the causes and reasons for the bottlenecks in the implementation sets the stage for the search for alternative ways of praxis that should yield different and desirable results. By analysing the findings from the interviews and verifying them against the Biblical foundations for youth ministry, theology and traditions of youth ministry, it then becomes possible to develop a new Practical Theological theory of youth ministry, leading to a new, more satisfactory praxis; in this case, a more effective and widespread implementation of the youth ministry curriculum.

What will now follow is the putting forth of proposals for the way forward, which should hopefully assist in the installation of a new praxis that would maximise the implementation of the curriculum in the congregations. This will be preceded in each

instance by situating each finding in the basis-theoretical perspective, the meta-theoretical perspective and the empirical perspective.

5.2.1. Training of youth ministry leaders and Master Guides

The low prevalence of trained youth leaders and of qualified Master Guides was identified as one of the biggest hindrances to the delivery of the youth ministry curriculum in the congregations of the Conference. When the volunteers and the elected youth leaders do not have the necessary skills and are not capacitated by training for them to carry out their duties, it is logical that they will be unable to do their work.

5.2. 1.1 Basis-theoretical perspective

In the second chapter (2.3.2), consideration was made of the scriptural guidelines, injunctions and basis for a focused ministry to the youth as outlined in Deuteronomy 4:9; 6: 4-9, 20-25; and Ephesians 6:4. Within the context of family and church society, it was established that the methodology of faith formation in the youth is instruction, reminding, challenging and modelling. The use of instruction and reminding as instruments of instilling faith and godly values presupposes knowledge and skills on the side of the instructor (whether as a parent at home or as a youth ministry leader in a church setting). If this acquired knowledge and skills are as a result of purposeful training, the outcomes of the endeavours of instruction are likely to be desirable and satisfactory. However, the tragedy for the Conference is that it boasts very few trained youth ministry leaders available to carry out the function of instructing the youth in its curriculum.

5.2. 1.2 Meta-theoretical perspective

The Adventist Church has established youth ministry systems to assist in realising its primary goals of youth ministry – the salvation of its youth and service to humanity by its youth. To accomplish this, an extensive youth ministry curriculum has been developed. It has been developed in line with the various developmental stages the targeted youth go through (see 2.7 in Chapter 2). For the youth that enter the system

during the primary level, it is structured in such a way that by the time they are of high school age they have been led through to experience personal salvation and they have also been introduced to community service and evangelism. By the time the youth is sixteen years old and has gone through the curriculum for the earlier stages, he/she is then introduced to youth ministry leadership to prepare him/her to lead other youth. This is followed by a Master Guide course that qualifies the participant to lead both junior and senior youth; and is capacitated to fit in and be involved with the various leadership roles in the church's ministries in general. The advantage of having a good number of church members who have gone through the Master Guide curriculum and are deployed in the various ministries of the church is that it results in having several ambassadors/advocates of youth ministry in the leadership cluster of the congregation. For the immediate purpose of this work, the advantage is that when such qualified persons are youth ministry leaders and progressive classes' instructors, it can be expected that they will be efficient in delivering the curriculum. The opposite of this will also yield opposite outcomes.

5.2. 1.3 Empirical perspective

Interacting with the youth leaders from participating districts of the Trans-Orange Conference, one gained the impression that the congregations within the Conference have at least the basic structure for administering youth ministry in place. One could also deduce a relative sense of commitment and desire to implement the curriculum. This despite the impediments that they expressed as problematic in their quest to play their role.

The applicable shortcomings in the system that impedes the curriculum implementation in the Trans-Orange conference were listed as: Insufficient staffing at congregational level by qualified Master Guides to serve as leaders and instructors; deficiencies regarding the accessibility of the curriculum resource materials; inadequate parental support; failure to prioritise youth ministry and curriculum implementation by parents and church leadership in the church's budgeting and programming. Also raised was the skewed emphasis on physical activities rather than curriculum implementation, and a curriculum content that is not contextualised.

5.2. 1.4 Further observation and reflection

Virtually all congregations within the Trans-Orange Conference have designated youth ministry leaders that have the duty to provide youth ministry to their youth. Part of the structured means of delivering the youth ministry services is to implement and follow through the prescribed syllabi/curricula for the various age-based divisions of the youth department. This should be done by the youth leaders working with a team of instructors in the various classes. While congregations have youth ministry leaders in place, and curriculum material is largely available at the Trans-Orange Conference youth ministry office (and online from the General Conference), indications from the interviews are that there is very little curriculum delivery taking place in the congregations. As already stated, one of the expressed hindrances to curriculum implementation in congregations is the lack of training and necessary skills among the youth ministry leaders.

The Conference youth ministry director has as one of his core duties a role to provide annual training for all the youth ministry leaders in the Conference's congregations and districts (Youth Department, 1993: 29, 33, 110). Feldbush and Hurtado (1999: 86-88), Johnson (2005: 45), and McCarty (2005: 50) share this principle of the need for the youth ministry coordinators to train leaders who work with the youth as a matter of priority and importance. The Adventist church also further prescribes that the Conference youth director must cover the entire Conference territory with continuous training on an annual basis (Youth Department, 1993: 8, 23).

As reflected in the interviews with both the current Union and Conference youth directors, the Conference youth director understands and accepts this role and duty. However, despite this understanding and expressed intentions, the congregational youth leaders still express frustration at having to carry out their duties and play their roles without the necessary training and skills development, and name this inadequacy and incapacity as one of the leading hindrances in them implementing the curriculum.

The current practice in the area of training of congregational youth leaders has virtually no impact on the grassroots. Typically, the Conference youth director joins his fellow Conference departmental directors and administrators as they itinerate around the Conference districts doing departmental promotions. More often than not, two or three districts covering a relatively large stretch of geographical area are grouped together for a one-day event that usually lasts for less than six hours. The time is usually spent doing promotional exercises and orientation on duties and roles. Admittedly, this minimal time allocated for this exercise would be extremely inadequate for any meaningful training to take place. It would be insufficient time to provide even the basics of youth ministry leadership. It would be even much more insufficient to provide for the required scope in the Master Guide, Basic Leadership Award and Advanced Pathfinder Leadership Awards curriculum for leadership training. To illustrate this point, a Basic Staff Training component within the Master Guide course prescribes a minimum of ten hours of a focused Conference sponsored seminar, and the Pathfinder Leadership Award requires a minimum of twenty hours of seminar attendance as a requirement (Youth Ministries Department, 2003: 2). These stipulated times do not include the time it would take to fulfil other requirements and the in-service training.

5.2. 1.5 Proposed new model

In light of the observations above, it cannot be business as usual in the approach of the Conference youth department directorate as it seeks to meet its obligation to training responsibilities and in pursuit of increased levels of curriculum implementation. It becomes imperative for drastic adjustments to enable a new model that could lead to the effective implementation of the curriculum. Firstly, there is a need to acknowledge that failure in providing adequate levels of training that cover the entire Conference territory poses a serious threat to the quest for effective youth ministry in the congregations. There will be a need for the Conference youth directorate to depart completely from the current approach to training or to implement other measures and strategies for training. The directorate needs to prioritise training and create adequate time for it. It could use the beginning of the year or the end of a preceding year to identify committed youth ministry volunteers who have had basic training in youth ministry and are Master Guides. These should

be targeted for Advanced Pathfinder Leadership Awards training. By providing training at this level, the Conference directorate will be training trainers (General Conference Youth Ministries Department, 2002: 3), and those who complete the training of trainers course could then be considered as training assistants to the Conference director as he proceeds to provide training in the fourteen districts of the Conference. They would accompany him on these training errands, but would also be qualified to continue with the training in their regions for the rest of the year. As a team, during the joint training sessions, they could provide intensive sessions so that by the time they finish, a great deal has been covered and the participants sense that it was worth the time and expense to attend⁸.

Another added advantage of getting the youth leaders from several districts together for training is that during the fellowship that comes as part of the training experience, the individual leaders get the sense that there is support and commitment to their youth ministry, and are therefore enthused in their ministry (Berlioni, 1994: 122). In that fellowship, experiences and ideas may be shared, resulting in mutual inspiration. Furthermore, by undergoing regionalised training sessions that group several districts together, the Conference youth ministry directorate would cover the entire Conference territory within a shorter period of time, finishing early enough in the year to empower and enable the congregational leaders to start with their ministry.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is critical that the volunteer youth ministry leaders receive adequate training prior to them starting to work with the youth (Lawson, 2008: 120; Robbins, 1990: 154; Williams, 2001: 173; Holderness & Hay 1997: 125). The advantage of youth ministry leaders who have been equipped and skilled is that they are likely to be motivated as they carry out their ministry and see to the delivery of the curriculum in their youth groups. Furthermore, this would have a rub-off effect on the youth themselves – when their leaders and instructors do their part well, the youth will be enthused to receive what the leaders have to offer. The Lowveld district leaders shared an experience where they received complaints from their youth who expressed disappointment and discouragement when it became apparent that the youth knew more than their leader and class instructor did.

⁸ There have been anecdotal complaints around the Conference that attendees do not gain new insights from the promotional visits by Conference departmental leadership.

Equipping and training youth leaders prior to their commencement of work will help curb unfortunate incidents of this nature.

In pursuit of having a strong force of qualified youth ministry leaders, the Conference youth ministry department should as a matter of urgency start a Conference-wide and Conference sponsored Master Guide training and development programme that will be sustainable and become standing practice in the Conference. It should be ascertained that all districts have a sufficient number of qualified Master Guides, commiserate with the size of the district. There should be a deliberate drive to put these qualified Master Guides in prominent levels at all youth and other occasions to expose them to the youth and congregations as resourceful persons to assist in youth ministry programmes. Persons who have completed their Master Guide training should be followed up and be motivated to be involved in continuing further training (General Conference Youth Ministries, 2002: 2). Rosemeyer (1998: 37) argues for regular quality controls and continuous training for all staff. Trained Master Guides should be placed in active ministry in their local congregations. If they are not elected as leaders, they should avail themselves as support staff and curriculum instructors.

Finally, by having trained youth leaders and qualified class instructors, it can be anticipated that this would help address the skewed emphasis on the implementation of the curriculum; where more attention was/is given to the physical activities and games to be performed during Pathfinder Fairs, to the exclusion of the core of the youth ministry curriculum and progressive classes. The trained leaders will be confident to implement the curriculum and the youth are more likely to experience time and resources spent in the curriculum work as beneficial and worthwhile.

The Conference should maintain an up-to-date database of all individuals who are Master Guides or Master Guides-in-training. Efforts should be made to maintain a sustained contact with these, continuously sharing information and resources with them to keep them on the cutting edge of youth ministries and to help maintain interest and motivation. The sharing of information and resources in an electronic form can be done virtually at no cost to the Conference and yet could add enormous value to the ministry life of the youth leaders and Master Guides.

The challenge of putting forth a training emphasis and programme as suggested above is that it does not come without a cost. Firstly, it would consume a great deal of man hours on the side of the directorate of the Conference's youth department as well as that of the leaders in districts and congregations, albeit at a comparatively lower scale with this group. Coupled with that would be the financial costs that will be substantively higher than is currently the case. However, it must be understood that the expected outcomes from such an investment cannot be valued in monetary terms, and would remain worth all the resource and time invested.

5.2.2. Training and guidance for church elders and pastors on the basics of youth ministry

Another thematic thread that emerged during the interviews was the situation where the church leadership fails to provide sufficient budgeting for youth ministry needs and often unilaterally takes over youth ministry time for other programmes. In these instances, youth and youth leaders are compelled to give up youth ministry time and have to attend other departments' activities and meetings.

5.2. 2.1 Basis-theoretical perspective

As observed in 5.2.1.1 above, as well as in Chapter 2, the Biblical basis for an intentional youth ministry situates it within the context of family and the cooperate body of believers – the faith community. Excellence in ministry is not a given phenomenon. Paul, writing to young Timothy, advocates for a concerted effort for excellence in ministry practice when he says: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”⁹ (2 Timothy 2:15). “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth”¹⁰. This counsel may as well serve to sensitise the modern-day church leadership to strive to acquire the necessary skills and fortify themselves with the capacity to enable them to serve well. Elders and ministers who have the necessary

⁹ King James Version

¹⁰ New International Version (NIV)

and relevant skills will have the capacity and will to support youth ministry programmes and activities.

5.2. 2.2 Meta-theoretical perspective

The General Conference has prepared for use throughout the world a curriculum that needs to be used for the purpose of offering basic training for ministers and church elders in the field of youth ministry (Youth Department and Ministerial Association, 2002). In addition to this, the same officers could and should expose themselves to the Master Guide training programme. Alternatively, the recruitment of elders could be restricted to individuals that are Master Guides where this would be practical. This would be justifiable because the majority of church members in most of the congregations are youth. By electing as elder an individual who is qualified also as a youth ministry leader, the interests of the majority members are served. Ministers and elders who are qualified youth ministry leaders are well placed in boards and church business meetings to provide leadership, influence and guidance on matters of interest to youth ministries. It is unlikely that they will use their influence to sabotage the youth ministry programming.

5.2. 2.3 Empirical perspective

It is felt that one contributing factor to the tendency of leadership of congregations using their position and authority in ways that thwart and frustrate the goals and aims of the youth ministry department results from the fact that most of the elders (and most of the pastors) have had no exposure to youth ministry training and remain unaware of the needs and content of the youth ministry programme and curriculum. Youth leaders expressed in the interviews how, oftentimes, the elders would unilaterally disregard the programmes scheduled for youth ministry activities by instructing that all youth should attend other programmes during the time that was allocated to youth work. Related to this, the same leaders would also fail to prioritise youth ministry interests in the annual allocation of budgets.

There is an apparent gap between the formal ideals of the Adventist church as envisaged in the training manual for elders and ministers (Youth Department and

Ministerial Association, 2002), the Biblical guidelines for ministry and church leadership, and the practice in local churches.

5.2. 2.4 Possible new model

It is here proposed that the Trans-Orange Conference youth ministry department, in collaboration with the Ministerial Association leadership, seeks to provide basic youth ministry training for church elders and pastors. This would be in keeping with the General Conference's informed decision that elders and pastors be given this training. The necessary curriculum for this purpose is contained in the Seventh-day Adventist Pastor's & Elder's Handbook for Youth Ministry (Youth Department and Ministerial Association, 2002).

It is further suggested that Adventist seminaries, such as Helderberg College and Solusi University, include a course in youth ministry for all undergraduate programmes for training ministers who will come to serve in the Trans-Orange Conference. The seminaries could even consider providing youth ministry as an option as a major subject.

Ministers and church elders sway tremendous influence on the programming of the church, its budgeting and general direction that the local church takes in its church practice and churchmanship¹¹. It is a given that they cannot give what they do not have. Although Helderberg College does provide some introduction into youth ministry to its ministers-in-training, there is no option of a major or even a minor in youth ministries. Given that the majority of the Adventist church membership is youth (up to 75%), it would make it worthwhile for the church to invest in the equipping of the ministers and leaders, so as to capacitate them to excel in reaching out to the younger members of the church. This issue is pertinent for the (South) African context, because, in the Western countries, congregations have the joy of having both a senior pastor and a dedicated youth pastor for the congregation. Comparatively, all ministers employed by the Trans-Orange Conference each has several congregations under their care, some pastoring up to fifteen congregations.

¹¹ The term *churchmanship* is used to refer to distinct understandings of church doctrine and liturgical practice by members of the church.

Providing youth ministry training for ministers and elders will benefit the congregations' youth ministry because it will result in empowering the top-most influential officers of the congregations; and they can better provide support for the youth leaders and better play an advocacy role for the youth ministry as a whole within the church. Financial investments in this approach would be rewarded in higher member retention rates from this sector of membership, who are likely to be in turn financially supportive to the church when they become economically active.

5.2.3. Focus on family ministry and parent empowerment

During the interviews that were recorded in Chapter 3, youth leaders from several districts indicated how they observed a lack of parental support in their attempts to implement the youth ministry curriculum. Often, some parents would even engage in practices that would be directly in conflict with the aims and objectives of youth ministry as well as being counter-productive.

5.2.3.1 Basis-theoretical perspective

In the preceding chapter, there is a large section that discusses the merits of a youth ministry that embodies family-life ministries as a critical component in achieving the overall objectives of youth ministries. In Chapter 2, as also mentioned in 5.2.1.1, the primary setting for the Biblical grounds and guidelines for a ministry to young people for the purpose of faith formation is situated within the context of a family setting. The parents/adults in the families are tasked with the duty of instructing, reminding and challenging their children in the ways and the will of the Lord for them; and to model out with their lives how to live out their lives of faith (Deuteronomy 4:9; 6: 4-9, 20-25; Ephesians 6:4). Solomon seems to include a promise and an assurance when he says: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). All of this takes place in the natural setting of daily family life. The ever-present challenge with this Biblical imperative is that there is no inherent capacity in parents to perform these functions of faith formation in their children. Unlike it might have been the case in the Judaic setting in which the injunctions were made, today and in the Christian setting it is not unheard of for

parents and their children receiving salvation at the same time, or even children preceding their parents in accepting the gospel. The reality is that many of the youth in the church either do not have parents or their parents are not believers. In such situations, parents may not be in a position to fulfil their duty to guide their children on matters of faith. Again, even in situations where parents may be leading out as heads of spiritual households, the capacity to play their role as leaders in the spiritual formation of their children is not a given; external support remains a necessity.

5.2.3.2 Meta-theoretical perspective

The Adventist church has ministries that reach out to families (Adventist Family-life Ministry), youth (Adventist Youth Ministry) and children (Children's Ministry). In addition to these, the same age groups are targeted by the Sabbath School department for their faith formation in a form of daily thematic Bible study in family setting and in small-group discussions during the weekly Sabbath church meetings. When church members come to church on Sabbath, they firstly split up to attend the various age-specific Sabbath School Bible studies and discussions. They then regroup to attend the worship service. When they return to church after lunch, they split up again to attend to various, largely age-specific programmes. All the ministries and programmes serve to consolidate efforts in faith formation in the lives of the members. In all these, there is a shared goal between the parents and the church with regard to the youth/children: That they grow in the Lord, knowing Him and serving Him.

The above arrangement is good for playing the supportive role to parents in their duty to bring up God-fearing children, while parents receive personal spiritual support for their own spiritual growth. The Family-Life ministries usually open up attendance and participation in its programmes for non-church member parents and spouses. That way, attempts are made to reach these parents with the gospel, while at the same time guiding and supporting them in their family life and parental roles. The varying Adventist Church ministries should, together and interdependently, form a sound basis to support and augment the parental role in the faith formation of their children.

5.2.3. 3 Empirical perspective

One of the problems identified as contributory towards the difficulties experienced in the programme to deliver the youth ministry curriculum is a lack of parental support at best and disruptive parental behaviour at worst when it comes to their (parents') role in supporting the youth ministry objectives for their children. Reported incidents range from apathy to sabotage, where they should be assisting their children with homework and attendance in progressive classes. It is noteworthy that some of the parents do not have the capacity to assist with children's homework because they do not share the Christian or denominational values as espoused by their children in the progressive classes. The effect of this is that it slows down progress in the progressive classes, impedes the delivery of the curriculum and robs the children and youth of their parental participation in their faith formation in as far as youth ministry goals and aims are concerned.

5.2.3. 4 Possible new model

Given that children and the youth spend a considerable portion of their time at home and with parents, and given that parents exert tremendous influence and impact on the faith formation in their children and youth, it becomes imperative and it is here proposed that the Trans-Orange Conference youth ministries, in collaboration with its Family Life Ministry counterparts, intentionally put effort into familiarising the parents and other church adults with the aims and objectives of youth ministries. Beyond this, further seek ways to empower the parents in such subjects as effective parenting, evangelistic parenting and other subjects that will provide a supporting environment for family life and help to achieve the goals of youth ministry. For parents to be willing to invest time and resources in support of their children's activities in youth ministry, they will need to be aware and be capacitated to provide the assistance and support.

The departmental leaders should seek to cooperate with each other to achieve the shared desired outcomes, ascertaining that there are no threats from territorialism between departmental leaders. There is a problem of territorialism that exists among leaders and, for this model to be effective, there should be no territorialism permitted

that may cause leaders feeling that the youth ministry department is encroaching on the family-life department's business by initiating parent-empowering programmes. This will overcome unnecessary conflict among leaders, eliminating competition and instilling cooperation between the departments.

5.2. 4 Resource accessibility

Resources for the department of youth ministry include the material needed for the implementation of the curriculum, the actual curriculum, as well as the documents and books that must be used as prescribed reading. Included also is the material to be acquired for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements prescribed in the curriculum. At a local congregational level, resources would include the finances necessary to purchase the required material.

5.2.4.1. Basis-theoretical perspective

According to the guidelines in Deuteronomy (4:9; 6: 4-9, 20-25), the platform for the propagation of faith from parents/adults to youth was to be in the natural family setting as the family lives out their lives; by the fireside during evening family retreats, as they walked down the road, and the like. It would seem like virtually no material resources were required in terms of what is spelled out in the passages. However, it should be implied that during instruction and reading, written material would be required. The use of object lessons is implied as well: "And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house, and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:8, 9)¹². It has been God's design that there should be resources in His house to make it possible for the work to be carried out (Malachi 3:10^a).

5.2.4.2. Meta-theoretical perspective

The General Conference has developed materials for use in youth ministries. There are many manuals covering various aspects of the curriculum and how to implement it. It has established guidelines on how to make the curriculum material accessible to

¹² King James 2000 Bible

the youth and youth ministry practitioners (Youth Department, 1993: 6). These systems were discussed in 4.2.5 in Chapter 4. The main role-player in the distribution of the youth ministry curriculum resources is the Conference youth ministry director. He is the critical link between the upper group of higher regional organisations of church governance (Union, Division and General Conference) and the congregations. Members and leaders from within the Conference are able to walk in or call the Conference office to secure the resources they need. The Conference youth ministry director also has direct access to the congregations and the youth. For the convenience of those who have access to Internet (and many young people do, even in and through their mobile phones), the General Conference has made virtually all the curriculum resources available online.

Although all the curriculum resources were originally written in English, Unions in various regions of the world have often translated the material to suit their language context, and even adapted parts of the content to fit their social context; this they do while they adhere to the core aims and objectives of the Adventist youth ministry. Within the South African context, the Afrikaans-speaking church has translated the resources into their language. It is advantageous for the youth to do their progressive classes in their mother tongue so that comprehension is maximised.

5.2.4.3. Empirical perspective

According to the interview participants, the issues of accessibility of the youth ministry resource materials from the Trans-Orange Conference was experienced as problematic and contributing as a hindrance in their ability to deliver the curriculum in the congregations. The accessibility concerns included pricing/affordability, stock availability, English language being a barrier and poor customer service from the Trans-Orange Conference youth ministry department.

On the local congregation level, the youth leaders expressed frustration from the difficulty they experience in accessing the necessary budgetary provisions from church boards to enable them to purchase the necessary resources. Provision is made to provide funding for other departments' needs, while little or no provision is made to meet the needs of the youth ministry department.

5.2.4.4. Possible new model

It is here suggested that the Trans-Orange Conference youth ministry director applies the departmental guidelines set out by the General Conference to the effect that he sends out an inventory of stock and pricing to all congregations at least twice a year and, furthermore, maintains a reasonable level of stock of resources commensurate with the number and size of congregations within the Conference. The Conference should also explore ways to keep the costs of the resource materials as low as possible to make these accessible even to the churches that are poor. He should also promote awareness of the availability of the resources for the curriculum online. Many young people and their instructors and leaders have access to the Internet.

For promotional purposes, the director should carry with him a sample of resources to virtually all youth gatherings; and stock to all training sessions. Customer and public relations practices on the side of the departmental secretary need to be improved to create a positive experience on the part of the church leaders who need to interact with the department as they carry out their duties.

One would concede that maintaining an optimal level of supplies in the youth ministry office may pose a risk of dead stock and money remaining locked up in stock that may not be moving. Conference treasurers will ordinarily take a deem view of such occurrences. Maintaining stock and resource materials at affordable prices will necessitate minimal price mark-up, or even selling them at cost price; and selling stock at cost price will have an inherent risk of running at a loss. However, such a loss will be limited to monetary terms. Even then, given that the sisterhood of congregations contributes millions of rands in tithes and offerings every month to the Conference, it would still be appropriate for such funds to be used to subsidise the pricing of resource materials to make these affordable even to the poorest of congregations.

5.2.5 Curriculum relevance

5.2. 5.1 Basis-theoretical perspective

In Joshua 4: 6-7, God gave an instruction to Joshua to create a stone memorial for the purpose of introducing their (children of Israel's) faith experiences to their own children in later generations. The memorial would occasion opportunities for faith conversations and the Lord guided on the content of the conversations between the parents and the enquiring youth. Further examples and the purpose of the content of the instruction that was to characterise the faith formation activities between adults and youth are captured in Deuteronomy 4 and 6. These examples and guidelines should form the basis for the philosophy and theology for youth ministry and curriculum development in the church today, because the principles undergirding the examples and guidelines are timeless.

5.2. 5.2 Meta-theoretical perspective

The Adventist youth ministry curriculum, apparently, is designed with insights from other disciplines, such as developmental psychology and education. The content of each class curriculum for the progressive classes is adapted for the mental and social developmental stage that particular class members are in. Notwithstanding the socio-cultural variables that may be at play in the various regions where the church operates, the concept of 'progressive classes' used in the youth ministry curriculum poises the curriculum for effectiveness in achieving its salvific and missiological aims and objectives.

5.2. 5.3 Empirical perspective

Prof Gwala stated during the interview (captured in Chapter 3) how he is averse to what he referred to as taking an American tree and its soil to plant it in Africa. Because the world headquarters of the Adventist Church are in America, its world programmes are designed and disseminated from there for worldwide implementation and consumption. People who are in key leadership positions at the General Conference level also tend to be of Western origin. The consequence of this

is that the 'products' from the departmental church ministry leaders may have a Western slant and bias and fail to take the cultural, economic, etc. contexts of the rest of the world where these programmes must be implemented into consideration. A youth ministry leader from the Golden West district echoed this reality. According to Pastor Rambelani Maligudu, the current Union youth ministry director (during an interview with him as recorded in Chapter 3), indications are that there is a growing sense that the youth ministry curriculum drawn by the World Church may need adaptation for the African and South African context.

5.2. 5.4 Possible new model

Lewis *et al.* (1997: 324) admonish that "teachers and curriculum builders should approach various cultures as young children do, with open hearts and minds, as explorers who are able simultaneously to transform and be transformed by their encounters with other cultures". They further argue that "...curriculum also includes the "texts" of cultural action – including decisions, motivations, and those formal and informal processes that seek to legitimise a particular worldview" (p 328). In terms of youth needs, their deeper needs generally remain the same over time; however, the expression of these needs will vary, largely affected by such variables as culture (Dausey, 1983: 268).

Those responsible for implementing the curriculum and leading in youth ministries need to be willing and able to be aware of the ever-shifting youth culture and adapt the way they relate with their youth accordingly so as to be relevant. Although the church may hold the view that the Bible carries universally and timelessly applicable truths and imperatives, we cannot escape the need for contextualisation when it comes to application. It would help the cause of youth ministry if further efforts could be put in place regarding the need and ways to contextualise various aspects of the curriculum for the South African situation. These efforts will benefit the youth and youth ministry if the act of implementing youth ministry could be (church) community-based and contextual as well (Kelly, 2000: 102). The packaging of the gospel/curriculum that works in one era or community/culture may become an obstacle in another era or culture (Baker, 2011: 45). The Conference should explore ways of adapting portions of the curriculum contents and some of the specified

requirements for the local contents. An example of this would be where the youth are required to master denominational history (Church Heritage). Instead of studying the denominations history that focus on its development and growth in America, they could be required to also display proficiency in African (even Black African) Adventist church history. This model would be in harmony with what Baker (2001: 47, 48) refers to as growing the faith in the soil of the applicable culture – an incarnational approach to youth ministry. Thula Nkosi, a thought leader in the Trans-Orange Conference, has prepared a well-researched paper on the history of African/Black Adventism, although the work never got to be published. The Conference could secure his work, formalise it into the youth ministry curriculum for its territory and let it be part of the prescribed works.

5.3 Making the youth ministry curriculum to be of value and worth in the congregations

Unless the youth ministry curriculum reaches the youth in the congregations, the aims and objectives cannot be communicated and realised in the lives of the church's youth. The status quo is that for the reasons and causes discussed above, there is a very low prevalence of curriculum implementation in the congregations of the Conference. That way, no matter how well-crafted and how valuable the curriculum may be, if it does not reach the youth and is implemented, those values, aims and objectives are without consequence. The participants in the research interviews have pinpointed the bottlenecks and hindrances to the delivery of the curriculum, and this has assisted in establishing proposals for an alternative way of ascertaining that the levels of curriculum implementation in congregations are elevated.

A proposed new model

A new model that could be effective to combat these pin-pointed bottlenecks and hindrances in delivering the curriculum would be to provide effective training of youth ministry leaders; empowering families and parents according to the stated guidelines; improving the accessibility of the curriculum resources; and contextualising the curriculum to make it relevant to the target church communities.

These would be great strides made in increasing curriculum implementation. This will also make the curriculum useful in the hands of the youth, and assist in making a positive spiritual and social impact in their lives.

5.4 Suggested areas for further research: Recruitment strategies of the Adventist Church

During the interviews with youth leaders in churches, districts, Conference and Union, as well as with the Theology lecturers at Helderberg College, several issues and ideas sprung up that are pertinent in the practice of youth ministry and perhaps indirectly have a bearing on youth ministry curriculum delivery. Because of the limitation of this research project, not all these issues could be given prominence within the project. It is strongly felt that some of them should be subjects of further research and study in order to elevate the quality of youth ministry in general and youth ministry curriculum delivery in particular within the Trans-Orange Conference congregations.

One of the basis for a call for a study and review of the recruitment strategies and policies of the church emanates from the frustration expressed by leaders during the interviews of how they were elected to lead youth only three months after they have become members of the Adventist church – and how that negatively impacted their ability to deliver on their mandate. The writer has an experience of being appointed by the Trans-Orange Conference to be Conference youth ministry director. He was called upon to be a specialist, consultant and trainer in youth ministry while he was not qualified. This has been a general trend in the election and appointment of Conference youth directors. What is the current policy and strategy of the Adventist church in the election and appointment of Conference and congregational youth ministry leaders? In addition, in what ways does the current approach have a bearing on the capacity of the church to provide adequate and efficient youth ministry?

5.5 Conclusion

The study sought to establish the problem surrounding the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum among the congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference. The over-arching research question was: What are the problems that are hindering the implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the local congregations of the Trans-Orange Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church? And how may the curriculum be of value and worth, after the obstacles hindering the implementation of the curriculum in local congregations have been determined and resolved, when a new practical theological model has been developed for implementation in a new praxis?

Youth ministry leaders from the districts of the said Conference participated in various interviews that were conducted by the author in their districts regarding this subject. The issues and problems that emerged and were identified in thematic strands (in varying degrees of prevalence) from the interviews were as follows:

- Low prevalence of Master Guides among the leaders providing youth ministry. Leaders also complained that they are not capacitated through training to carry out their duties. The high turnover of youth leaders in local congregations is another factor related to leader-capacity issues.
- A lack of resources for use in implementing the curriculum. Contributing factors in this regard were poverty among members, the Trans-Orange Conference youth department not always fully stocked up, and congregations not prioritising youth needs in their budgeting
- Misplaced focus in providing youth ministry: The tendency to focus on physical activities related to events to the exclusion of actual youth ministry curriculum.
- Parents not playing their role in providing and supporting youth ministry and curriculum implementation.

- The question of the contextual relevance of the contents of the youth ministry curriculum. The concern here being the language and un-adapted curriculum content that ignores the African context and needs.

The problems that were identified as the causes and contributing factors to the low prevalence of implementation of the youth ministry curriculum in the Trans-Orange Conference congregations were then discussed with a purpose of establishing an alternative way of praxis of the delivery of the youth ministry curriculum among the Conference congregations. Given that this study naturally had a limitation in scope, some of the insights gained during the research became the subjects of recommendations for further study and research in related youth ministry work.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Adventurer curriculum goals and concepts			
Tracks	Track goal	Major components of the track	Concepts included in the component
Basic	To ensure that the children have the background necessary to receive maximum benefit from the Adventurer programme.	a. Responsibility b. Reinforcement	a. Commitment to the common goals of the group b. Introduction and review of the Adventurer concepts through reading
My God	To facilitate the development of a growing and fruitful relationship between the child and Jesus Christ.	a. His plan to save me b. His message to me c. His power in my life	a. God's love, sin and forgiveness, conversion and obedience b. Memory verse, Bible books, using and trusting the Bible c. Prayer, Bible study, witness, living for Christ
Myself	To enhance the children's care and appreciation for the individual God has created them to be.	a. I am special b. I can make wise choices c. I can care for my body	a. Uniqueness and value for each person, responsibility for service and talents
My family	To empower the children to be happy and productive members of the family God gave them.	a. I have a family b. Families care for each other c. My family helps me care for myself	a. Uniqueness of families, family changes, roles and responsibilities b. Authority and respect, appreciation and family activities c. Safety, stewardship, indoor skills and outdoor skills
My world	To enable the children to encounter God's world with confidence and compassion.	a. The world of friends b. The world of other people c. The world of nature	a. Social skills, courtesy, prejudice, peer pressure b. Serving the church, community, country and the world c. God and nature, nature study, nature recreation, concern for environment

MY GOD REQUIREMENTS			
Busy Bee (6 years old)	Sunbeam (7 years old)	Builder (8 years old)	Helping Hand (9 years old)
1. His plan to save me			
<p>a. Create a story chart showing the order in which these events took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation • Sin and sadness begin • Jesus cares for me today • Jesus comes again • Heaven <p>OR The Bible stories you are studying in your classes or Sabbath School.</p> <p>b. Draw a picture or tell about one of the stories above to show someone how Jesus cares for you.</p>	<p>a. Create a story chart showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus' birth • Life • Death • Resurrection <p>OR the Bible stories you are studying in your classroom or Sabbath School.</p> <p>b. Make a mural or tell about one of the stories above to show someone the joy of being saved by Jesus.</p>	<p>a. Create a chart showing the order in which these events took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul • Martin Luther • Ellen White • Yourself <p>OR the Bible stories you are studying in your classroom or your Sabbath School.</p> <p>b. Plan a skit or newspaper story about one of the stories above to show someone how to give one's life to Jesus.</p>	<p>a. Create a story chart showing the order these stories took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noah • Abraham • Moses • David • Daniel <p>OR the Bible stories you are studying in your classroom or your Sabbath School.</p> <p>b. Make a drama, poem or a song about the stories above to show someone how to live for God.</p>
2. His message to me			
Earn the Bible I Adventurer Award	<p>a. Memorise and explain two Bible verses about being saved by Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathew 22: 37-39 • I John 1:9 • Isaiah 1:18 • Romans 6:23 <p>b. Name two major</p>	Earn the Bible II Adventurer Award	<p>a. Find, memorise, and explain three Bible verses about living for Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 20:11-17 • Philippians 2:13 • Philippians 4:13

	parts of the Bible and the four gospels.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I John 2:1,2 • Jude 24
	c. Earn the Friend of Jesus Adventurer Award		b. Name the books of the Old Testament

MY SELF-REQUIREMENTS			
Busy Bee	Sunbeam	Builder	Helping Hand
1. I am special			
Make a booklet showing different people who care for you like Jesus does.	Make a tracing of yourself. Decorate it with picture and words that tell good things about you.	Put together a scrapbook poster, or a collage showing some things you can do to serve God and others.	a. List some special abilities and interests God has given you. b. Demonstrate and share your talents by earning one of the Adventurer Awards that allows expression of personal talent.
2. I can make wise choices			
Name at least four different kinds of feelings. Play the feelings game.	Play the what-if? game.	Earn the Media-Critic Adventurer Award.	a. Learn the steps of good decision-making. b. Use them to solve two real-life problems.
3. I have family			
Earn the Health-specialist Adventurer Award.	Earn the Fitness-Fun Adventurer Award.	Earn the Temperance Adventurer Award.	Earn the Hygiene-Adventurer Award.

MY FAMILY REQUIREMENTS			
Busy Bee	Sunbeam	Builder	Helping Hand
1. I have a family			
Paint or draw a picture showing	Ask each of your family members to tell	a. Share one way your family has	Make a family flag or banner; OR

something that you like about each of your family members.	one of their favourite memories.	changed. Tell how you felt and what you did. b. Find a story in the Bible about a family that is like yours.	collect stories or pictures about your family history.
2. Families care for each other			
a. Discover what the fifth commandment tells about your family. b. Act out three ways you can honour your family.	Show how Jesus can assist you to deal with disagreements. Use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puppets • Role playing • Other 	Play the love game.	Help plan a special family worship, or family outing.
3. My family helps me care for myself			
Earn the Safety Specialist Adventurer Award.	Earn The Road Safety Adventurer Award.	Complete the Wise Steward Adventurer Award.	Earn Adventurer Awards not previously earned, in one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft • Indoor skills • Outdoor skills

MY WORLD REQUIREMENTS			
Busy Bee	Sunbeam	Builder	Helping Hand
1. The world of friends			
Tell how you can be a good friend. Use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puppets • Role-playing 	Complete Courtesy Adventurer Award.	a. Make friends with a person who has a handicap or a person of another culture or generation b. Invite that person to a family	Earn a Caring Friend Adventurer Award.
2. The world of other people			
Tell about work	a. Explore your neighbourhood. List	a. Know and explain your	Choose a world culture to study.

people do in your church. Find ways to help.	things that are good and things you can help make better. b. From your list, choose ways and spend time making your neighbourhood better.	national anthem and flag. b. Name your country's capital and your country's leader.	Find a way to share the love of Christ with the people of that culture.
3. The world of nature			
Earn the Friend of Animals Adventurer Award.	Earn the Friend of Nature Adventurer Award.	Earn an Adventurer Award for nature that was not previously earned.	Earn an Environmentalist Adventurer Award.

Appendix B

2.5.2.1 Friend class requirements (10 years old)	
Area	Requirements
<i>General</i>	<p>Be 10 years old and/or in Grade 5 or its equivalent.</p> <p>Be an active member of the AJY Society or Pathfinder club.</p> <p>Memorise and explain the Pathfinder pledge and law.</p> <p>Read the book <i>The Happy Path</i> (or similar book on the pledge and law).</p> <p>Have a current book club certificate.</p>
<i>Spiritual discovery</i>	<p>Memorise the Old Testament books of the Bible and know the five areas into which the books are grouped.</p> <p>Demonstrate your ability to find any given book.</p> <p>Have a current memory gem certificate.</p> <p>Know and explain Psalm 23 or Psalm 46.</p> <p>During several worship periods, read with your parents the historical prologue to the book <i>Early Writings</i> and list the main events of the SDA church.</p> <p>Complete the crossword puzzle based on the prologue to <i>Early Writings</i>.</p> <p>In consultation with your leader, choose one of the following Old Testament characters: Joseph, Jonah, Esther or Ruth and discuss with your group, Christ's loving care and deliverance as shown in the story.</p>
<i>Serving others</i>	<p>In consultation with your leader, work out ways to spend at least two hours expressing your friendship to someone in need in your community by doing any two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit someone who needs friendship. Help someone in need. With the help of others, spend half a day on a community, school, or church project. Prove yourself a good citizen at home and at school. Bring at least two visitors to Sabbath School or Pathfinder meetings.
<i>Friendship development</i>	<p>List ten qualities of being a good friend, and discuss four everyday situations where you have practised the 'Golden Rule'.</p> <p>Know your national anthem and explain its meaning.</p> <p>Demonstrate good table manners with a group of persons of various ages.</p>
<i>Health and fitness</i>	<p>Complete the following:</p>

	<p>Discuss the temperance principles in the life of Daniel, or participate in a presentation or role-play on Daniel 1.</p> <p>Memorise and explain Daniel 1:8, and either sign the appropriate pledge card or design your own pledge card showing why you choose a lifestyle in harmony with the true principles of temperance.</p> <p>Learn the principles of a healthful diet and engage in a project preparing a chart of basic food groups.</p> <p>Complete the Honour in Beginner's Swimming. HIV/AIDS curriculum.</p>
Organisation and leadership development	<p>Plan and take a three-hour or 8km hike. Plan to complete a requirement under the Nature Study or Outdoor Life sections or a Nature Honour.</p>
Nature study	<p>Complete one of the following Honours: <i>Cats, Dogs, Mammals, Seeds, Birds, and Pets.</i></p> <p>Know different methods of purifying water and demonstrate your ability to build a camp shelter. Consider the significance of Jesus as the water of life and as our refuge place.</p> <p>Know and identify ten wild flowers and ten insects in your area.</p>
Outdoor life	<p>Know how ropes are made and demonstrate how to care for ropes in the correct manner. Tie and know the practical use of the following knots: Overhand, granny, square, slip, double bow, two half hitches, clove hitch, and bowline. Participate in an overnight campout.</p> <p>Pass a test in general safety.</p> <p>Pitch and strike a tent and make a camp bed.</p> <p>Know ten hiking rules, and know what to do when lost.</p> <p>Learn the signs for track and trail. Be able to lay a 2km trail that others can follow and be able to track a 2km trail.</p> <p>Start a fire with one match, using natural materials, and keep that fire going.</p> <p>Properly use the knife and axe, and know ten safety rules in their use.</p> <p>Tie five speed knots.</p> <p>Demonstrate baking, boiling and frying camp food.</p>

<i>Lifestyle enrichment</i>	Complete one Honour in Arts and Crafts. Complete one Honour in Vocational or Outdoor Industries.
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Appendix C

2.5.2.2 Companion class requirements (11 years old)	
Area	Requirements
<i>General</i>	<p>Be 11 years old and/or in grade 6 or its equivalent.</p> <p>Be an active member of the Pathfinder club.</p> <p>Learn or review the meaning of the Pathfinder Pledge and illustrate its meaning in an interesting way.</p> <p>Read the book <i>The Happy Path</i> or similar book on the Pledge and Law if not previously read.</p> <p>Have a current Book Club Certificate and write at least a paragraph of review on one book of your choice.</p> <p>Know the composition and proper use of your national flag.</p>
<i>Spiritual discovery</i>	<p>Memorise the New Testament books and know the four areas into which the books are grouped. Demonstrate your ability to find any given book.</p> <p>Hold a current memory gem certificate.</p> <p>Choose, in consultation with your leader, one of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of Christ's parables One of Christ's miracles Sermon on the mount Second Advent sermon <p>Show your knowledge of what Christ taught in one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion with the leader Group activity Giving a talk <p>Read the gospels of Matthew and Mark in any translation.</p> <p>Commit to memory any two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Béatitudes Matthew 3:3-12 Lord's Prayer Matthew. 6:9-13

	<p>Christ's Return Matthew. 24:4-7, 11-14 Gospel Commission Mat. 28:18-20</p> <p>Read about Ellen White's first vision and discuss how God uses prophets to present His message to the church. Complete the crossword puzzle on the first vision of Ellen White.</p>
<i>Serving others</i>	<p>Through consultation with your leader, work out ways to spend at least two hours in your community demonstrating in a consistent manner real companionship to someone else. Spend at least half a day participating in a project that will benefit the community or your church. Participate in an outreach activity, and bring a non-SDA friend to participate or observe.</p>
<i>Friendship development</i>	<p>Discuss the principle and demonstrate the meaning of respect for people of different cultures and gender. Discuss and demonstrate respect for your parents/guardian and what they provide you with.</p>
<i>Health and fitness</i>	<p>Memorise and explain 1Corinthians 9:24-27. Discuss with your leader physical fitness and regular exercise as they relate to healthy living. Learn about the detrimental effects of smoking on health and fitness, and write your own pledge of commitment to abstain from the use of tobacco. Complete the Advanced Beginner's Swimming Honour. HIV/AIDS curriculum. Attend a Five Day Plan, or view two films on health, or make a poster on smoking or drug abuse, or help prepare a display on tobacco for a show, etc.</p>

<p>Organisation and leadership development</p>	<p>Plan and lead a devotional service for your group.</p> <p>Help your unit or club plan a special activity such as a party, hike, or overnight campout.</p> <p>Participate in a special club event such as an investiture, open house, induction, or Pathfinder Sabbath and then evaluate the event to determine how it can be improved upon.</p>
<p>Nature study</p>	<p>Participate in nature games OR participate in a one-hour nature walk.</p> <p>Complete one of the following honours: Amphibians, birds, livestock, poultry, reptiles, shells, trees, or shrubs.</p> <p>Review the study of creation, and keep a seven-day outdoor log of your personal observations from nature in which each day focuses on those parts that were created on that day.</p> <p>Identify and describe twelve birds in the wild and twelve native trees.</p>
<p>Outdoor life</p>	<p>Find the eight general directions without the aid of a compass.</p> <p>Participate in a two-night campout. Know at least six points relative to the selection of a campsite.</p> <p>Learn or review the friend knots. Tie and know the practical use of the following knots: Sheet bend, sheepshank, fisherman's knot, timber hitch, taut line hitch. Learn three basic lashings.</p> <p>Pass a test in Companion first aid.</p> <p>Build five different fires and describe their uses. Discuss the safety rules in lighting fires, or hike 8km and keep a log.</p> <p>Cook a camp meal without utensils.</p> <p>Prepare a knot board with at least fifteen different knots.</p>
<p>Lifestyle</p>	<p>Complete one Honour in Arts and Crafts not previously</p>

enrichment

earned.

Complete one Honour in Household Arts, Health & Science, Vocational, or Outdoor Industries not previously earned.

Appendix D

2.5.2.3 Explorer class requirements (12 years old)	
Area	Requirements
<i>General</i>	<p>Be 12 years old and/or in Grade 7 or its equivalent.</p> <p>Be an active member of the AJY Society and Pathfinder club.</p> <p>Learn or review the meaning of the Pathfinder Law and demonstrate your understanding by participating in one of the following: role-play, panel discussion, essay, or prepare a project of your choice.</p> <p>Read the book <i>The Happy Path</i> if not previously read.</p> <p>Have a current Book Club Certificate and write at least a paragraph of review on each book.</p> <p>Know the composition and proper use of the Pathfinder Flag and Unit Guidon.</p>
<i>Spiritual discovery</i>	<p>Become familiar with the use of a concordance.</p> <p>Hold a current memory gem certificate.</p> <p>Read the gospels Luke and John in any translation, and discuss in your group any three of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luke 4:16-19 The Scripture Reading Luke 11:9-13 Ask, Seek, Knock Luke 21:25-28 Signs of Second Coming John 13:12-17 Humility John 14: 1-3 Lord's Promise John 15:5-8 Vine and Branches <p>Choose in consultation with your leader one of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John 3 Nicodemus John 4 The Woman at the Well Luke 15 The Prodigal Son

	<p>Luke 10 The Good Samaritan Luke 19 Zaccheaus</p> <p>Share your understanding of how Jesus saves individuals by using one of the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussion with your leader. Giving a talk at AJY's. Writing an essay. Making a series of pictures, charts or models. Writing a poem or song. <p>Memorise and explain Proverbs 20: 1 and Proverbs 23:29-32.</p> <p>Read about JN Andrews. Discuss the importance of mission service to the church and why Christ gave the Great Commission (Mat. 28: 18-20).</p> <p>Complete the map work on missionaries and places of service.</p>
<i>Serving others</i>	<p>Be familiar with the community services in your area and provide assistance to at least one.</p> <p>Participate in at least three church programmes.</p> <p>Enrol a new member in Sabbath School, Pathfinders, or Bible correspondence course.</p>
<i>Friendship development</i>	<p>Participate in a panel discussion or skit on peer pressure and its role in your decision-making.</p> <p>Tour your municipal offices or have a city official visit your group and then explain five ways you can cooperate with them.</p> <p>Earn one of the following Honours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian grooming and manners

	Family life
Health and fitness	<p>Complete <i>one</i> of the following two requirements:</p> <p>Participate in a group discussion on the physical effects of drugs and alcohol on the body.</p> <p>View an audio/visual on alcohol or other drugs, and discuss the effects on the human body.</p> <p>Peer pressure discussion.</p> <p>Participate in a 16km hike and make a list of clothing to be worn.</p> <p>Peer pressure and AIDS awareness.</p>
Organisation and leadership development	<p>Lead out in your club's opening exercises or a Sabbath School Programme.</p> <p>Help your unit or club plan a special outreach activity such as a project for unfortunate children, community beautification, etc. and carry out the activity.</p> <p>Participate in a special club event such as an investiture, open house, induction, Pathfinder Sabbath, etc. and participate in the evaluation of the event afterwards along with the Companion Class.</p>
Nature study	<p>If you live in the Northern Hemisphere, be able to identify the North Star, Orion, Pleiades and two planets.</p> <p>If you live in the Southern Hemisphere, identify Achernar, The Southern Cross, Centaurus, and Orion.</p> <p>Know the spiritual significance of Orion as told in Early Writings.</p> <p>Complete one of the following Honours: Animal tracking, cacti, flowers, stars, or weather. Identify six tracks of animals or birds. Make a plaster cast of three tracks.</p>
Outdoor life	<p>Participate in a two-night camp out. Describe six points of a good campsite.</p> <p>Plan and cook two meals.</p> <p>Pass a test in Explorer first aid.</p> <p>Explain what a topographical map is, what you can expect to</p>

	<p>find on it, and its uses. Identify at least twenty signs and symbols used on topographic maps.</p> <p>Review the basic lashings and build one article of camp furniture.</p> <p>Plan a menu for a three-day camping trip for four people, using at least three different dehydrated foods.</p> <p>Be able to send and receive the semaphore alphabet, or be able to send and receive the international Morse code by wigwag, or know the alphabet in sign language for the deaf, or have a basic knowledge of procedures of two-way radio communication.</p>
<p><i>Lifestyle enrichment</i></p>	<p>Complete one Honour in Household Arts, or Arts and Crafts not previously earned.</p> <p>Complete one Honour in Outreach Ministry, Health & Science, Vocational or Outdoor Industries not previously earned.</p>

Appendix E

2.5.2.4 Ranger class requirements (13 years old)	
Area	Requirements
<i>General</i>	<p>Be a teenager 13 years of age, and/or in Grade 8 or its equivalent.</p> <p>Memorise and understand the Adventist youth aim and motto.</p> <p>Be an active member of the Pathfinder club.</p> <p>Select and read three books of your choice from the teen book club list.</p>
<i>Spiritual discovery</i>	<p>Discover in group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What Christianity is. What are the marks of a true disciple? The forces involved in becoming a Christian. <p>Participate in a Bible marking programme on the inspiration of the Bible.</p> <p>Enrol at least three people in a Bible correspondence course.</p> <p>Have a current Memory Gem Certificate.</p> <p>Complete the Christian Citizenship Honour if not previously done.</p>
<i>Serving others</i>	<p>Under the direction of your leader, participate at least once, in two different types of outreach programmes.</p> <p>With the help of a friend, spend a full day (at least 8 hours) working on a project for your church, school, or community.</p> <p>Conduct two Bible studies with non-Seventh-day Adventists</p>
<i>Friendship development</i>	<p>In group discussion and by personal inquiry, examine your attitudes to two of the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-confidence The social graces

	<p>Friendship</p> <p>Willpower</p> <p>Role-play the story of the Good Samaritan, and think of ways to serve neighbours, and then do so.</p>
<i>Health and fitness</i>	<p>Participate in one of the following:</p> <p>Discuss the principles of physical fitness.</p> <p>Provide an outline of your daily exercise programme.</p> <p>Write out and sign a personal pledge of commitment to a regular exercise programme.</p> <p>Discuss the natural advantages of living the Adventist Christian lifestyle in accordance with Biblical principles.</p> <p>Participate in one of the following activities:</p> <p>Hike 15km and keep a log.</p> <p>Cycle 80km.</p> <p>Ride a horse for 15km.</p> <p>Swim for 1km.</p> <p>Go on a one-day canoe trip.</p> <p>Discuss the concept, types and purpose of dating.</p>
<i>Organisation and leadership development</i>	<p>Attend at least one church business meeting. Prepare a brief report for discussion in your group.</p> <p>With your group, make plans for a social activity at least once a quarter.</p> <p>Complete requirements 3 and 6 of the Drilling and Marching Honour if not previously done.</p>
<i>Nature study</i>	<p>Review the story of the flood and study at least three different fossils; explain their origin and relate them to breaking God's Law.</p> <p>Complete a Nature Honour not previously earned.</p> <p>Be able to identify through photographs, sketches, pictures</p>

	<p>or real life, one of the following categories: 25 tree leaves; 25 rocks and minerals; 25 wild flowers; 25 butterflies and moths; 25 shells.</p>
<i>Outdoor life</i>	<p>Build and demonstrate the use of a reflector oven by cooking something.</p> <p>Participate in a two-night camp out. Be able to pack a backpack or rucksack, include personal gear and food sufficient for your participation in a two-night camp out.</p> <p>Pass a test in Ranger First Aid.</p> <p>Complete the Orienteering Honour.</p> <p>Be able to light a fire on a rainy day or in the snow. Know where to get the dry material to keep it going. Demonstrate ability to properly tighten and replace an axe handle.</p> <p>Complete one of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know on sight, prepare and eat ten varieties of wild plant foods. Be able to read and receive 35 letters a minute by semaphore code. Be able to send and receive 15 letters a minute by wigwag, using the international code. Be able to send and receive Matthew 24 in sign language for the deaf. Take part in a simple emergency search and rescue operation using two-way radios.
<i>Lifestyle enrichment</i>	<p>Complete one Honour in Outreach Ministry, Vocational, or Outdoor Industries not previously earned.</p> <p>Complete one Honour in Recreation or Arts and Crafts not previously earned.</p>

Appendix F

Voyager class requirements overview

Area	Requirements
General	<p>Be a teenager 14 years of age, and/or in grade 9 or its equivalent.</p> <p>Through memorisation and discussion, explain the meaning of the Adventist Youth Pledge.</p> <p>Be an active member of Pathfinders.</p> <p>Select and read three books of your choice from the teen book club list.</p> <p>Make a written or oral presentation on respect for God's law and civil authority providing at least 10 principles of moral behaviour.</p>
Spiritual discovery	<p>Study the personal work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to mankind, and discuss His involvement in spiritual growth.</p> <p>By study and group discussion, increase your knowledge of the last-day events that leads up to the Second Advent.</p> <p>Through study and discussion of Bible evidence, discover the true meaning of Sabbath keeping.</p> <p>Have a current Memory Gem Certificate.</p> <p>Read the books of Proverbs, Habakkuk, Isaiah, Malachi, Jeremiah or complete the Junior Bible Year reading programme.</p>
Serving others	<p>As a group or individually, invite a friend to at least one of your church or conference teen/youth fellowship activities.</p> <p>As a group or individually, help organise and participate in a project of service to others.</p> <p>Discuss how a Christian Adventist youth relates to people in every-day situations, contacts and associations.</p> <p>Spend at least two hours with your pastor, church elder or</p>

	deacon observing them in their pastoral/case ministry.
<i>Friendship development</i>	<p>In group discussion and by personal inquiry examine your attitudes toward two of the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-concept Human relationships – Parents, family, and others Earning and spending money Peer pressure <p>List and discuss the needs of the handicapped, and help plan and participate in a party for them.</p> <p>Visit an institute for the physically or mentally challenged and present a report on the visit.</p>
<i>Health and fitness</i>	<p>Choose and complete any two requirements from the Temperance Honour.</p> <p>Organise a health party. Include health principles, talks, displays, etc.</p> <p>Study the effective refusal technique of Joseph and explain why it is important to use it today.</p>
<i>Organisation and leadership development</i>	<p>Discuss and prepare a flowchart on local church organisation, and list the departmental functions.</p> <p>Participate in a local church programme on two occasions each, in two departments of the church.</p> <p>Fulfil requirements 3, 5, and 6 of the Stewardship Honour</p> <p>Complete the Drilling and Marching Honour.</p> <p>Complete the Junior Youth Witnessing Honour.</p>
<i>Nature study</i>	<p>Review the story of Nicodemus and relate it to the lifecycle of the butterfly, or draw a lifecycle chart of the caterpillar providing the Spiritual significance.</p> <p>Complete a Nature Honour not previously earned.</p> <p>Plan a list of at least five nature-related activities that may be used for Sabbath afternoons.</p>
<i>Outdoor life</i>	<p>With a party of not less than four, including an experienced adult counsellor, hike 25km in a rural wilderness area,</p>

	<p>including one night in the open or in tents. The expedition planning should be a joint effort of the party and all food needed should be carried. From notes taken, participate in a group discussion led by your counsellor, on the terrain, flora and fauna, as observed on the hike.</p> <p>Complete one Recreational Honour not previously earned. Pass a test in Voyager first aid. Design and build five articles of camp furniture and design an entrance for your club camp that could be used for a camporee.</p>
<p><i>Lifestyle enrichment</i></p>	<p>Complete one Honour in Outreach Ministries, Health and Science, Household, Arts, Outdoor Industry, or Vocational categories not previously earned.</p>

Appendix G

Guide class requirements (15 year olds)

Area	Requirements
General	<p>Be a teenager 15 years of age, and/or in Grade 10 or its equivalent.</p> <p>Know and understand the AY Legion of Honour.</p> <p>Be an active member of Pathfinder club.</p> <p>Select and read one book of your choice from the teen book club list, plus a book on local church history (select book for your division or country).</p> <p>Complete the Stewardship Honour.</p>
Spiritual discovery	<p>Discuss how a Christian can possess the gifts of the Spirit as described by Paul in his letter to the Galatians.</p> <p>Study and discuss how the Old Testament Sanctuary Service points to the cross and the personal ministry of Jesus.</p> <p>Read and outline three stories of Adventist pioneers. Tell these stories during a Pathfinder club, AY or Sabbath school worship time.</p> <p>Have a current Memory Gem Certificate.</p> <p>Read <i>Steps to Christ</i> and write a one-page report/essay.</p>
Serving others	<p>As a group (or individually) help organise and participate in one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a friendship visit with a shut-in person. Adopt a person or family in need and assist them. Any other outreach of your choice approved by your leader. <p>Participate in a discussion on witnessing to other teenagers and put some of the guidelines into practice in a real situation.</p> <p>Complete one of the following:</p> <p>Bring two friends to at least two meetings sponsored by</p>

	<p>your church.</p> <p>Help plan and participate in at least four meetings of youth evangelism or similar events.</p>
<i>Friendship development</i>	<p>In group discussion and by personal inquiry, examine your attitudes to two of the following topics.</p> <p>Choosing your career</p> <p>Moral behaviour</p> <p>Sex and dating</p> <p>Choosing your life partner.</p> <p>Write (minimum of 750 words) or deliver an oral presentation (minimum 10 minutes) on the subject of 'How to make and keep friends.'</p>
<i>Health and fitness</i>	<p>Make a presentation to elementary students on the subject of the laws of good health.</p> <p>Complete one of the following activities:</p> <p>Write a poem or article for possible submission to one of the Health/Temperance Journals of the church.</p> <p>Individually or as a group, organise and participate in a fun run or similar activity. Discuss and record your physical training programme in preparation for this event.</p> <p>Read pages 102 to 125 in the book <i>Temperance</i> by Ellen White, and pass the true/false quiz.</p> <p>Complete the Honour in Nutrition or lead a group through the Physical Fitness Honour.</p> <p>Seeking God's plan regarding sexual behaviour – AIDS & STDs.</p>
<i>Organisation and leadership development</i>	<p>Following discussion, prepare a flowchart on denominational organisation, with special details for your Division.</p> <p>Attend a conference sponsored Basic Pathfinder Staff Training Course.</p> <p>Plan and teach at least two requirements of any</p>

	Pathfinder Honour for a group of Junior Pathfinders.
Nature study	<p>Read the story of Jesus' childhood in the <i>Desire of Ages</i> Chapter 7 and relate it to the place of nature study in His education and ministry by going orally before an audience on original nature lessons (parable) drawn from your study and observations.</p> <p>Complete one of the following Honours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecology Environmental conservation
Outdoor life	<p>Go on a two-night pack camp. Discuss the equipment to be taken.</p> <p>Plan and cook in a satisfactory manner a three-course meal on an open fire.</p> <p>Complete an object of lashings or rope work.</p> <p>Complete one Honour not previously earned that can count towards the Aquatic, Sportsman, Recreation, or Wilderness Master.</p> <p>Complete the Wilderness Master.</p>
Lifestyle enrichment	Complete an Honour in Outreach Ministries, Outdoor Industries, Vocational, Health and Science, or Household Arts not previously completed.

Appendix H
Master Guide

Area	Requirements
General	<p>Be at least 16 years of age.</p> <p>Be a baptised member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.</p> <p>Complete a Basic Staff Training Course in one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adventurer ministries Pathfinder ministries Youth ministries
Spiritual development	<p>Read the book <i>Steps to Christ</i>.</p> <p>Complete the devotional guide Encounter Series I, <i>Christ the Way</i>, or a Bible year plan.</p> <p>Keep a devotional journal for at least four weeks, summarising what you read each day.</p> <p>Demonstrate your knowledge of the 27 Fundamental Beliefs by completing one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a paper explaining at least 15 of the beliefs. Give an oral presentation on at least 15 of the beliefs. Deliver a series of Bible studies covering at least 15 of the beliefs. Conduct a seminar series teaching at least 15 of the beliefs. <p>Enhance your knowledge of church heritage by completing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading the Pathfinder story. Earning the Adventist Church Heritage Award. Reading a book on some aspect of church heritage.

<p>Skills development</p>	<p>Attend and complete a two-hour seminar in each of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership skills Communication skills Creativity and resource development Child and youth evangelism <p>Have or earn the following honours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian storytelling Camping skills II <p>Earn two additional honours of your choice not previously earned.</p> <p>Hold a current Red Cross First Aid and Safety certificate or its equivalent.</p> <p>Supervise participants through either an Adventurer Class or Pathfinder Class curriculum or teach a Sabbath School class for at least one quarter.</p>
<p>Child development</p>	<p>Read the book <i>Education</i>.</p> <p>Read at least one additional book on child development or attend a three-hour seminar dealing with child development within the age group of your chosen ministry.</p>
<p>Leadership development</p>	<p>Read a current book of your choice on the topic under the general category of leadership skills development.</p> <p>Demonstrate your leadership skills by doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and conduct three worships. Participate in a leadership role with your local church children's/youth group in a conference sponsored event. Teach three Adventurer Awards or two Pathfinder Honours. Assist in the planning and leading of a field trip for a group of Adventurers, Pathfinders, or Sabbath School class. <p>Be an active Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth club, Sabbath</p>

	<p>School, or AY Society staff member for at least one year and attend at least 75% of all staff meetings.</p> <p>Identify three current roles in your life, at least one of which is spiritually oriented, and list three goals or objectives for each.</p>
<p>Fitness Lifestyle Development</p>	<p>Participate in a personal physical fitness plan for a minimum of three months, and evaluate any level of improvement of physical condition.</p>

Appendix I

Pathfinder Leadership Award

Area	Requirements
Pathfinder Leadership Award Requirements	<p>Be a Master Guide.</p> <p>Have completed a Pathfinder basic staff training course within the past three years.</p> <p>Be an active Pathfinder staff member.</p> <p>Be an active Pathfinder class and/or Honour curriculum instructor.</p>
Personal Growth	<p>Complete a Bible year plan or the Encounter Series II, <i>Christ the Church</i>.</p> <p>Read a book on self-esteem, adolescent development or interpersonal relationships.</p> <p>Select and develop a new personal skill useful to Pathfinder ministry through reading, listening to tapes, attending a class or joining a specialised organisation.</p> <p>Hold a current Red Cross CPR certificate or its equivalent.</p>
Skills development	<p>Increase your Pathfindering skills by attending the following scheduled minimum hours for each seminar as sponsored by the conference Pathfinder Ministries personnel.</p> <p>Administration and human relations (8 hours)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Team Building (3 hours) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Goal setting b. Planning process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Motivating volunteers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Personal improvement (2 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Know your temperament b. Finding your purpose c. Conflict resolution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Development of faith in Pathfinder growth (1 hour) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preadolescent and adolescent growth patterns b. What makes adolescents tick c. Discipleship through mentoring.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Discipline (1 hour) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Understanding discipline b. Effective discipline c. Christian discipline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Current issues (1 hour) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Family violence, AIDS, child abuse, violence prevention, teen drug use, tobacco and your heart, alcohol, etc. b. Camp planning and programming (4 hours): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to camping –purpose, objectives, planning process 2. Hiking, backpacking, other forms of camping 3. Campsite – arrangement, environmental impact,

sanitation

4. Fires, first aid kits, safety, rescue
5. Cooking, menus, equipment, edible plants
6. Wilderness techniques and survival
7. Orienteering
8. Sabbath schedule and activities
9. Cold weather camping

Pathfinder and community ministry (3 hours)

1. What is Pathfinder ministry?
2. Pathfinder class curriculum applied to ministry
3. Service learning

Pathfinder drill and ceremonies (2 hours)

1. Commands
2. Individual drill
3. Basic club drill
4. Club Guidon drill
5. Flag customs and procedures
6. Program ceremonies
7. Club inspections
8. Advanced drill

Outdoor education (3 hours)

1. Concepts of outdoor education
2. Nature awareness
3. Spiritual applications of nature

Recreation (2 hours)

1. Philosophy of recreation
2. Types and guidelines for Christian recreation

	<p>3. New games and sports</p> <p>During your involvement as a staff member in the local Pathfinder club (prerequisite I.-3.), select any two areas listed above under requirement II.-1, and demonstrate the skills learned through application to specific projects, events, or situations in the Pathfinder club.</p>

Appendix J

Advanced Pathfinder leadership award

Area	Requirements
Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold a current Pathfinder Leadership Award certification. 2. Submit application for APLA/PIA to the conference/mission. 3. Pathfinder director.
Personal Growth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read a Bible year plan or the Encounter Series III or IV. 2. <i>Christ Our Redemption, Christ Our Hope 6.</i> 3. Read a book on leadership not previously read. 4. Prepare a Pathfinder article for publication.
Seminars	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete a minimum of three hours of leadership growth in seminars dealing with these topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Training instructors to train b. Dealing with attitude c. Using your influence 2. Complete 10 hours of APLA-level seminars covering the following topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management skills, methods of facilitation, effective meeting procedures, understanding temperaments. Optional Unit: Team building b. Training skills c. Presentation skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising your presentation visual aids
Preparation and presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare an outline or script, including visual aids and instruction/curriculum materials, for a presentation on one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A minimum of three hours on any seminar(s)

	<p>chosen by the applicant in the Pathfinder Basic Staff Training Course.</p> <p>b. One of the new skills development seminars in the Master Guide or Pathfinder Leadership Award curriculum.</p> <p>2. Within one year of the evaluation given in the requirement above, participate as a presenter in at least one sponsored leadership training seminar utilising at least a portion of the materials prepared.</p>
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