

**A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN[®] Training and
Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas:
A case study of its impact in the Christiana district of
South Africa**

FE FREEKS

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all farm workers in the Christiana District who gave me the opportunity and privilege to train and equip them with the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme, and whose cooperation and faithfulness have no monetary value. The Lord bless you richly.

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ABSTRACT

The youth in contemporary South Africa seemingly face immense challenges and experience severe problems. The farming communities in the Christiana District of the North-West Province South Africa, especially struggle with issues such as poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, violence, occultism and Satanism. Statistics obtained through empirical research prove a drastic decline in morals, values, standards, ethics, character and behaviour. This particular society seems to encounter one crisis after another. This is caused partly by millions of young people growing up as orphans and, even more so, without a father figure in their lives. The challenges are widespread with growing statistics of social ills such as substance use and abuse, violence, rape, child trafficking, or prostitution. As a result, the lives of numerous young people being destroyed.

The present research has focused on the youth of the Christiana District of South Africa as target for holistic missional outreach programmes. The aim is to give hope and enrich the lives of young people despite the dilemmas communities are facing. The study did a missiological evaluation of an accredited community-engagement programme, LIFEPLAN® Training, Equipping, Programme. This programme was assessed in a constructive, creative-critical way, from a *missio-Dei* perspective.

LIFEPLAN® focuses on various relevant aspects that deal with the above-mentioned problems. The programme seeks creative solutions to inspire and equip young people as responsible citizens in their communities. The goal is to provide a guide and aid for outreach to the youth of this district. This entails changing, resolving, improving, and enriching the lives of young people. The programme helps ensure a Christ-like behaviour as a valid alternative for destructive lifestyles and producing to a more meaningful and productive life.

After a critical evaluation of LIFEPLAN®, recommendations are made on amending the programme for use as a tool by churches and organisations. The tool should help them reach out to broken communities with holistic mission as instruments of God's transforming grace.

Key words: Missional, transformation, LIFEPLAN®, youth, rural areas, case study, father absenteeism, Christiana District, South Africa

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and problem statement – rationale

Since the beginning of the 21st century, societies globally, and in South Africa, has evidenced a decline in acceptable behaviour, character, values, standards, ethics and morals. This tendency is observed especially in the behaviour of young people and the current youth (Freeks, 2011:1-4a; 2013:1-3; Georgiades *et al.*, 2013:1473-1476; Logan-Greene *et al.*, 2012:373-374). South African news media report daily on aspects such as violence (Carstens & Zwecker, 2013:2, Lamprecht, 2013:4), substance abuse (Nel, R., 2013:14; Otto, 2013:4), crime (Boqo, 2013a:2; Essop, 2013:1), child trafficking, pornography (Anon., 2013a:1), sexual immorality, and rape (Anon., 2013b:2; Boqo, 2013b:5; Boqo, 2013c:4). The list further includes: prostitution, HIV/Aids, learners attacking teachers at schools (Zwecker, 2013:7), parents killed by their own children (Boqo, 2013c:3; Boqo, 2013d:3), and even killing among learners (Carstens & Van Rooyen, 2013:1).

Most of these problem behaviours from the youth are identified by phrases such as: “get drunk”, “lie to your parents or guardians”, or “skip school without an excuse”. (Georgiades *et al.*, 2013:1479). Studies from Taylor and Wood (2013:271-272) point out that low parental appraisal has a detrimental effect on the well-being of the youth. A comprehensive report by the Human Science Research Council point out the vulnerability of children who are drawn into various forms of human slavery in South Africa (HSRC, 2010:94-97).

According to Oladepo and Fayemi (2011:8), a grave reality is the growing number of girls engaging in sexual activity at a young age, which may result in teenage pregnancies, even before completing their high school education. Regarding the HIV/Aids dilemma in South Africa, it is estimated that the overall HIV prevalence rate is approximately 20%. This means the total number of people living with HIV was estimated at approximately 5.26 million in 2013 (Cilliers, 2013:14).

Brody *et al.* (2011:113) and Winstanley *et al.* (2012:310) report that substance use among the youth causes threats such as mental health, terminated school education, and destructive family relationships, while 15% of the youth receive treatment for behavioural

health. Research has proven that adolescence is a critical development with peak periods of violent victimisation and perpetration, family conflict, unprecedented risky situations, and radical cognitive and neurological changes (Logan-Green *et al.*, 2012:373-374).

In addition, child trafficking, another devastating dilemma, has attracted worldwide attention since the beginning of the 21st century due to the crime and violence factor. As a result, trafficking has become a current tendency to deal with (Shen *et al.*, 2013:32).

Most authors and researchers found that the contributing factor to most of the above-mentioned dilemmas is widespread unemployment among the youth. In an article in *Beeld*, Cilliers (2013:14) indicates that the percentage of unemployed youth in South Africa is extremely high, namely 31.6%.

1.2 Youth challenges in the Christiana District

The Christiana region in South Africa seems to be a typical example of youth facing enormous challenges within rural farming districts in South Africa. Preliminary qualitative empirical research through interviews was undertaken with key community leaders. These included the head of police, social workers working in the area, school principals and church leaders. The participants pointed out various endemic problems and challenges with which the communities are struggling. These are expounded below.

1.2.1 School performance

School performance in the area is a serious problem. Certain learners do perform well but many underperform. Numerous learners originating from various farms in the area are functionally illiterate, however others underperform due to a lack of vision, and simply laxity. Learners who are unable to read and spell and, therefore fail, often causes problems for teachers. Participants often mentioned underperformance as a source of disturbance in the school-system.

Furthermore, learners often do not receive efficient career guidance and make wise career choices accordingly. This leads to a negative attitude towards the future as well as a range of other “improper” attitudes. These learners are often experienced as rude, unruly, and disinclined to work in class. They often appear to lack positive values and are frequently disrespectful: an image seemingly escalating daily. Such students often drop

out of school and become involved in gangsterism, substance abuse and various criminal activities such as rape, theft and murder. Residents have reported to the police numerous instances of burglary and theft, in which learners have been involved.

1.2.2 ***Teenage pregnancy***

Teenage pregnancy is a deep concern and records indicate that its incidence is around 9%, particularly among girls between 16 and 18 years. One case involved a 16 year old girl giving birth to her second child; likely having had her first child at 14 years old.

1.2.3 ***Substance abuse***

Substance abuse among learners, especially drugs, is an additional, serious concern in the area. People have called this society *sick* as a result of the prevalent use of drugs. Learners are exposed to cannabis, glue and various tablets on the school grounds. Naturally, this condition affects their behaviour in class. The drug issue clearly does not only affect the schools, but the community as a whole.

Compounding the drug problem is alcohol abuse among learners. This form of abuse is one of the main problems in the schools, seeing that learners spend the majority of their time at drinking places such as taverns instead of in the classrooms.

1.2.4 ***Gangsterism***

Gangsterism is generally unobtrusive on the school grounds but it presumably functions, operates and develops clandestine. Gangs operate in communities in such a way that learners are directly or indirectly influenced by the activities of these gangsters. Learners have been found carrying dangerous weapons in their school bags, for example, knives, sticks and even pangas. Other reported incidents include learners fighting in class, stabbing other learners and teachers, and even attempting to shoot other learners. As result, a number of teachers have begun protecting themselves with weapons.

1.2.5 ***Low church attendance***

The lack of involvement of the youth in church-life is a serious concern to most of the Christian pastors who have been interviewed. Young people often flatly refuse to attend church, and extremely low church-attendance is the norm. It would appear that

participation in church activities is of no importance to a large number of youths. Instead, these youths appear to be driven and influenced by politics; a fact which often causes tension and severe disruption in certain churches. The alleged involvement of young people in Satanism is also a dire issue for the churches and within the communities. Churches seem to lack relevant youth programmes and trained youth leaders who could facilitate outreach to young people in the communities.

1.2.6 *Unemployed youth*

Unemployment among the youth is a highly problematic factor, not only in terms of its impact on the churches but also for the community as a whole. Approximately 50% of the youth in Christiana is unemployed (SAPS, 2013). In a sense, this unemployment is the underlying factor behind the other problems emerging among the youth in Christiana.

1.2.7 *Child neglect*

The number of orphans in Christiana is another burning issue for most of the relevant role-players, particularly over the last three years. Child-neglect occurs frequently in the community. Parents often do not care for their children. According to participants, child-headed households are the order of the day. The result is that several of these children do not make quality life-decisions.

1.2.8 *Health issues*

Abortion and HIV/Aids related-matters are additional concerns in Christiana. The prevalence is high of HIV infection and transmission. Participants warn that the life-expectancy of the population is receding alarmingly.

Pastors, school principals and the social worker who have been interviewed expressed the opinion that religion should be advocated as a beneficial option to help young people obtain basic life skills. Evidently young people are currently engaging in irresponsible behaviour because they have not been taught properly to follow certain values. These would include obedience, respect, honour, honesty, friendliness, peacefulness, forgiveness, discipline, thankfulness, forgiveness, or helping. As a result, they are irresponsible and often make destructive life-choices.

SAPS (2013) statistics, show that Christiana has youth problems that need urgent attention. Some of the mentioned criminal categories are murder (9%), sexual crimes (61%), robbery (44%), damage to property (67%), burglary (211%), theft (50%), drugs and alcohol (45%), or kidnapping (5%) (see Appendices 2 and 6 for more detail).

The preliminary qualitative research thus indicates that the youth in the Christiana District are facing numerous challenges that have also surfaced in the implementation of the LIFEPLAN® programme since it was launched in 2013. Therefore, more in-depth empirical research is needed on the challenges that Christiana church workers, educators at schools and social workers are facing. Such a research may unearth factors that, on the one hand, could help the LIFEPLAN® programme make a stronger and more effective impact. On the other hand, the factors may help the programme find ways to collaborate more extensively with a wider network of community workers and thus serve the community holistically.

1.3 The LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme

The LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme was developed by North-West University. The main aim is supporting the youth in the Christiana District of the North-West Province in South Africa to make healthy and quality life-choices. The mission of this programme is to strengthen, motivate, inspire and develop young people, especially in their choices and decision-making on behavioural challenges (Freeks, 2008).

1.3.1 *The history, goals and objectives of the LIFEPLAN® programme*

North-West aspires to be *a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge innovation and community involvement to contribute in providing solutions for reconstruction and development of communities*. The Africa Unit for Trans-disciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR) emerged from research of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU). The main motivation for this unit was the vision to contribute to a better quality of life for the people in the North-West Province.

FLAGH (Farm Labour and General Health) resulted from research undertaken during 1996-2000. This research has identified farm dwellers in the North-West Province as an extremely vulnerable group due to a deficient nutritional status, as well as poor physical and mental health. The main aim of the FLAGH programme is to improve the life and

health of people living and working on commercial farms in the North-West Province of South Africa through intervention programmes based on multi- and trans-disciplinary research. The FLAGH programme is one of the custodian projects of the North-West University. This programme commenced with a study on needs assessment in 2001 and 2002. This assessment was followed by in-depth research (2003-2007) on multiple aspects of general health and its interrelationships such as food insecurity, HIV/Aids infection and economic factors. Research was undertaken by scholars from several disciplines within AUTHeR (Nutrition, Social work, Psychology, Physiology, Nursing, Consumer Sciences, Economics and Theology). This research guided interventions and helped launch LIFEPLAN® (Life inequalities amongst persons addressed by means of purposeful living and nutritional interventions). The programme was presented in 2008, and has been running for the past six years. To date, LIFEPLAN® has reached more than 860 participants who were trained and equipped with a variety of life skills.

The LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme was accredited on 14 September 2010 by the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS). During this meeting, the goals and objectives of LIFEPLAN® were outlined and described clearly (NWU: Institutional Committee for Academic Standards, 2010).

1.3.2 *What is LIFEPLAN®?*

LIFEPLAN® follows a path of core lecturing exercises and activities. These practices build knowledge, promote interpersonal skills and trust through contact and sharing, build thinking and planning skills, and enhance motivation and commitment to action. The programme's activities comprise:

- presentations
- interactive activities
- discussions
- sharing
- exercises.

1.3.2.1 The aim, layout and design of LIFEPLAN® as a training and equipping manual

LIFEPLAN® is designed specially to guide and to assist participants and facilitators when offering or conducting training and developing sessions. These sessions target the youth, illiterate and semi-literate individuals, and farm workers who wish to be equipped and want to become knowledgeable and self-sustainable.

Quality of life is affected directly by various factors: people's physical health, the availability or absence of health services as well as quality of health services, available money and money spending practices. These include issues of family violence and people's coping mechanisms to deal with facets of life that also, to a large extent, determine mental health. Therefore, the activities focus fully on the holistic promotion of health in context, namely restoring, maintaining, and promoting bio-psycho-social health and health systems. The aim is adding the best possible quality of life and well-being for the population. This is done through research (*basic and applied*), training (*building capacity*) and improved service delivery.

The compilation of the framework for the LIFEPLAN® education and training programme was based on Maslow's assessment scale of hierarchical needs, and on in-depth research. Maslow proposed a hierarchy of five innate needs that activate and direct human behaviour (Schultz & Schultz, 2013:246). The theory of Maslow is used widely in educational areas. Maslow himself published aspects of his work in educational studies. The LIFEPLAN® programme addresses poverty amongst the most vulnerable groups through human development and training in life skills. This is done to improve their well-being in health, nutrition and choice, combined in a model where sustainability can be assessed in terms of the following variables: networks and structures for family and social support, behavioural, hygienic and nutritional practises and financial impact (Freeks, 2008).

LIFEPLAN® has a *prerequisite* training and developing manual for each group of volunteers. The manual helps them embrace the opportunity to be equipped, trained and developed in order to be skilled, self-sustainable, independent, and hardworking. The planned outcome after completing LIFEPLAN®, is that participants will have developed a valid self-image. This will help them take healthy pride in their personal ability, capability,

potential, skills, experience and co-operation. They will also develop a concern to care for others in their communities. An additional advantage and privilege for these participants will be the opportunity to launch their own business and direct their own affairs.

1.4 The importance of youth evangelism and missional outreach to the youth

Missions and evangelism originate in God. Young children are part of God's mission (the *missio Dei*). Throughout time, missions have been part of the Christian church. It originated from the apostolic movement's deployment of missionaries, which is the church's way to make disciples of all nations (Elton, 2013:64). To evangelise the youth implies a spiritual practice, based on the premise that God is at work among the young people (Kujawa-Holbrook, 2010:17-18). Ministering to the youth is primarily relational and informal. This activity takes place between childhood and adulthood and combines relational and evangelical impulses. In this regard, youth ministry helps people discover a Christian way of life (Elton, 2013:63-64). Steffen (2011:79) underlined the fact that the real mission of Jesus was to proclaim the Good News that God's reign has dawned. The Gospel must be proclaimed for God's honour and because of His grace demonstrated through Jesus Christ (Van Wyk, 2014:10).

In the present research it is vital to comprehend the importance of targeting the youth in disadvantaged communities through missions and evangelism. Furthermore, it is important to understand the goal and motivation for missions (De Beer, 2012:48). In this regard, it must be understood that the entire creation exists for the glory of God. Christian missions as actualisation of the *missio Dei* have the capacity to transform adolescents (Beyerlein *et al.*, 2011:783).

The approach is that human beings should participate in mission with the primary goal to bring glory and honour to God by serving fellow humans (Wright, 2010:53). May *et al.* (2005:3) point out that throughout the Bible, the matter of God's glory and honour forms the foundation of missions and evangelism. It is not unusual to assert that young children matter and are important because they are. Children matter to God, they are made in the image of God, and the church cannot be church without children and youth (May *et al.*, 2005:3).

Boyd (2010:53) confirms that young children are not only church of tomorrow, but already church of the present. Jesus Christ affirmed in Mark 10:14 that the children must come to Him and should not be impeded, seeing that the kingdom of God belongs to believers similar to these children.

Several people, however, have issues with child and youth evangelism and missions (Horton, 2010:30-32). Their contention is that children and the youth are too insignificant or immature to be included in such a mission. On the other hand, Evans (2012:84) pleads that the consequences of young children reading the Bible must to be researched urgently. Nevertheless, for matters of doctrine and practice, the Bible is considered as the authoritative source, especially to teach young people. This will ensure that they are grounded in biblical truth and thus establish a sound, solid, biblical foundation for life-choices (Widstrom, 2011:11).

According to Bisschoff (2014:15), young children should learn to serve God with their intellect or mind as well. Even if they are young, children should be taught the will of God through the Bible (Van der Kooy, 2014:17). Ward (2009:53-54) supports the notion of biblical formation and adds that the young children should be evangelised since it is crucial to teach them about the Bible and about worship. While understanding that the biblical message applies to young children as well, Beckwith (2004:123) cautions that the Bible should not be used to teach young children moral lessons. They should instead be introduced to God by conveying to them God's story and His ways (Beckwith 2004:126).

In the same context, Botma (2012:28) argues that all individuals at some point must make their own decisions. In this regard, missions and evangelism are vital avenues of empowerment for young children. All individuals are responsible for their own lives and thus spiritual development, but they require assistance. Such help can be provided through missions and evangelism (Botma, 2012:76). Through this assistance children must be educated and brought up in a Godly way, again through missions and evangelism. It should also be kept in mind that the Bible states explicitly that parents and the church have a responsibility to help the youth mature in Christ (Pr 22:6).

Often the youth have various queries about God and the Bible. Even if these young people have tattoos or piercings, it is important and necessary to reach out to them in love through missions and evangelism (Copeland, 2012:13). People's spirituality is

essential for their whole well-being (Hodder, 2009:197-199). This applies even more to a young person. The faith of a 15 year old is as important as that of a 65 year old (Snailum, 2012:171).

Missional outreach and evangelism to young children should, therefore, be a focal point in the kingdom of God, in order to glorify and worship God, as stated earlier (Wright, 2010:53-54).

It is evident that ministry among young people has exploded since the 1990's to deliver a form of specialised, professional ministry and also as a field of study in theological education (Dean, 2010:108). Youth ministry, missions and evangelism should not be considered as a form of coercion to pressurise the youth with the evangelist's own religious values, but as part of the *missio Dei*: performing God's mission. In the process, the youth is empowered as agent-subjects-in-relationships. This also helps advance fullness-of-life-for-all (Steffen, 2011:80). In this ministry, the agent should go where the youth are (Gouger, 2013:7) and convey the message that God loves them (Kennedy, 2010:40). It is after all, God who calls and gathers people, whether they are children or the youth, or others for his everlasting love and glory (De Beer, 2012:51).

The process of communication is vital and is one of the most rewarding experiences when doing mission and evangelism among young people. The message, through the communication channel, should be totally clear and transparent, seeing that the missionary ministers' God and Jesus Christ to the youth. This is more about practice than theory. The aim is to become involved and interact with other people, especially the young ones (Ward *et al.*, 1994:25). Evans (2012:86) points out that youngsters are searching for new ways of being religious. Thus, Christian ministers and missionaries must adjust the way in which they communicate the Christian faith to these youths and take their feedback seriously. Learning to listen is, according to Penner (2003:44), of utmost importance because the youth are better *talkers* than *listeners*. At this point numerous people find it extremely difficult to reach the youth through mission and evangelism (Penner, 2003:44).

In the 21st century, young children are described as the most sought-after generation and the most protected one as well (Beckwith, 2004:29). Young children should not be considered as parent's liabilities. These young people must rather be viewed as God's

reward, gift, grace, and favour to parents. God values the children, and so should the parents (Mueller, 1999:6). Although these young children mature and grow older, parents may find it difficult to view them as gifts. This is because of the challenges they bring, as well as their difficult periods of behaviour. However, Mueller (1999:6), asserts that the children's age does not matter. They remain gifts of God. Therefore, society should treasure the gift of the young children (Mueller, 1999:6).

1.5 Research problem, research question, aims and objectives

1.5.1 *Research problem*

It is clear that the Christiana District faces vast problems and challenges in developing the youth in this rural area. Christiana is an agricultural district with a population of 15 322 inhabitants. It is situated on the banks of the Vaal River in the North-West Province of South Africa. Christiana is located on the N12 between Bloemhof and Warrenton, on the way to Kimberley in the Northern Cape. This town is the administrative centre of Lekwa-Teemane Local Municipality (Christiana, 2013).

It seems that the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme in the four years of its implementation in the Christiana area is making an impact and making inroads to alleviate challenges concerning the youth. The LIFEPLAN® programme has been presented at ten different farms in the Christiana District (see Appendix 1) for approximately 486 participants (Nieuwoudt, 2013).

From a preliminary investigation, it appears that LIFEPLAN® made a positive impact on participants. Witnesses such as the coordinator of the LIFEPLAN® programme in Christiana and management from the various farms at Christiana where the programme are being presented, confirmed this impact. This is observed in positive changes in the conduct and behaviour of their workers on the various farms. In this regard, the present study aims to evaluate the programme more in-depth and thoroughly.

Preliminary achievements from the coordinator in Christiana indicated that both managers and workers from the different farms experienced the programme positively. The following aspects (see Appendix 3) from LIFEPLAN® impacted the lives of workers: respect for self and others, positive self-image and trust, personal hygiene, healthy

lifestyle, decreased alcohol use, improved financial management, better family relations, control of emotions and rage, responsibility, and strength in their faith.

The workers also indicated that they benefited and were educated by specific themes in the programme (see Appendix 4): God and the Bible, 65% benefited from a total of 71 participants; the use of alcohol, 11% from 71; personal hygiene, 33% from 42; healthy diet, 90% from 10; respect, 31% from 71; relationships and marriage, 50% from 10 participants.

This raises the question to what extent the programme meets the standards of sound missiological principles and of its possible relevance for other rural districts in South Africa.

1.5.2 **Research question**

From the background above and the preliminary research, the main research question could be formulated:

To what extent does the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme for young people in the Christiana District of South Africa provide a tool for effective Christian missional outreach to the youth in disadvantaged communities?

Secondary questions arising from this main research question were as follows:

- What are the main characteristics of the challenges that youth development is facing in the Christiana District?
- What are the goals and objectives of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme?
- What impact has the programme had thus far in the Christiana District?
- Why is holistic missional and evangelistic outreach to the youth a vital aspect of God's mission?
- Could the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme be part of God's mission as a tool for Gods people in the Christiana District reaching the youth?

- How could the programme perhaps be improved, and be helpful for youth ministry in other rural areas?

1.5.3 *Aim*

The main aim of the present study was to evaluate the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme from a missiological perspective. This assessment focused on the programme's impact and effectiveness in the Christiana District and its possible wider use as a tool for churches in reaching the youth and communities who are struggling with multiple challenges in rural communities.

1.5.4 *Objectives*

To reach the above-mentioned aim, the following objectives were formulated:

- Identify the main characteristics of the challenges that youth development are facing in the Christiana District.
- Summarise the goals and objectives of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme.
- Evaluate the impact the programme had made thus far in the Christiana District.
- Point out that holistic missional and evangelistic outreach to the youth is a vital aspect of God's mission.
- Evaluate whether the LIFEPLAN® could be part of God's mission and be used as a tool for God's people in the Christiana District aiming to reach the youth.
- Improve the programme to be helpful for youth ministry in other rural areas.

1.6 **Central theoretical argument**

The central theoretical argument of the present study is that the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme may provide a *buffer* against the mentioned challenges facing the youth and servant to churches as well as Christian ministries. Their main aim is to enhance their youth outreach in the present South Africa.

1.7 Methodology

The method employed in the entire research project was the one that Osmer (2008) established for Practical Theology. This method comprises the basic theory, meta-theory and the praxis theory.

1.7.1 Basic theory

The research project investigated relevant Bible passages and deduced relevant biblical-theological principles. There are various ways of approaching and interpreting the biblical text. The present research project did a cursory exegesis of selected biblical passages by applying the grammatical-historical method.¹ In addition, literature studies were undertaken to compare the findings of biblical scholars. Although the present study was done in the field of Missiology, this theme is dealt with best in a more multi-disciplinary approach. The researcher drew theological principles after reading passages of the Old and New Testament in the context of the grand narrative of the Bible (Wright, 2006:33-74) as well as from the fields of Missiology, Cathegetics, and Educational Sciences. Even key aspects of community development and other related sciences were considered.

1.7.2 Meta-theory

In discussing valid approaches of evangelistic and missional outreach to the youth, a literature survey was conducted. Apart from general missiological and Christian-educational literature within the discipline of theology, the study consulted the general literature dealing with the care of orphans and vulnerable teenagers as well as missional pastoral counselling. Since several of the literature involved has been written from outside the continent of Africa, their relevancy to (South) African contexts cannot merely be assumed, the researcher utilised this literature and interacted with the scholars in the light of the Southern African realities.

¹ The literal feature and socio-historical context was studied using the hermeneutical principles as expressed by Jordan, G.J.C., Van Rensburg, F.J. & Breed, D.G., 2011, "Hermeneutiese vertrekpunte vir gereformeerde eksegeese", *In die Skriflig*, 45(2-3):225-258.

1.7.3 *Empirical theory*

An empirical research project was undertaken by employing both qualitative and quantitative analyses. New information was gathered through structured interviews, questionnaires, naïve sketches and statistical results of the LIFEPLAN® programme's impact in the Christiana District. The selection criterium for the data gathered through the empirical analysis were feedback of various people in Christiana who have participated in some way or other in LIFEPLAN®.

1.7.4 *Praxis theory*

The data from the basic theory, the meta-theory and the empirical theory were processed interactively through interpretation, reformulation and readjustment to suggest a new praxis. Such a praxis focuses on the role of missional vision in youth ministry in previously disadvantaged communities. These youths struggle with challenges of poverty, unemployment, immorality and criminality.

1.7.5 *Feasibility*

The result of the basic, the meta-, empirical and praxis theories was processed for a constructive critique on LIFEPLAN® and suggestions to enrich and improve the model. The aim was to promote mission through holistic youth ministry in disadvantaged communities. From the findings of the research, key aspects of a model were presented for consideration to enrich and amend the mentioned programme.

1.8 **Concept clarification**

1.8.1 *Youth*

Youth describes a life-phase between childhood and adulthood (maturity) or being fully grown. Other terms used are adolescent, teenager, kid and young person.

1.8.2 *Missio Dei*

Missio Dei is a Latin Christian-theological term that can be translated as the “mission of God” or “the sending of God”. The classical doctrine of the *missio Dei* as God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit, was expanded to include yet another “movement”: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world (De Beer, 2012:4).

1.8.3 **Youth development**

Youth development is the on-going process in which young people are engaged to meet their basic personal and social needs. These are to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and be spiritually grounded. Furthermore, the development aims to build skills and competencies that allow young people to function and contribute in their daily lives and that of others.

1.8.4 **Outreach**

Outreach entails providing services to populations who may not have access to such services. This includes providing training to and equipping young people. On a deeper level, this implies conveying hope and God's grace and helping those in need. Outreach has an educational focus: raising recipients' awareness about the purpose of these services, teaching and equipping.

1.8.5 **Evaluation**

Evaluation means systematically establishing a subject's merit, worth and significance, by using criteria governed by a set of standards. It also means considering a phenomenon to decide how useful or valuable it is.

1.8.6 **Training**

Training means acquiring knowledge, skills, and competencies through the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge about specific useful competencies. This may imply a process of training (young) people personally, or by a training manual or programme, to be better and reliable citizens. Training has specific goals to improve people's capability, capacity, productivity and performance.

1.8.7 **Equipping**

Equipping is to provide young people with training material for a particular type of activity, in this case to be better persons in life. Equipping also means to prepare someone for a particular activity or problem.

1.8.8 **Values**

Values are established beliefs and standards about right or wrong and serve as determinants that influence individuals' choices in life. Values give purpose to life and should contain a religious or spiritual element, which give meaning or direction, or help individuals' make sense of their life (Freeks, 2011a:74). Thus, values also provide ideals that people can live up to, and it determines individuals' actions and views. Values thus implies worth, goodness, importance and excellence.

1.8.9 **Character**

Character is the building block of life and the foundation on which good values are based, applicable to all human beings. Character entails the unique combination that creates a particular type of person. It also provides a foundation on which people can build respect for human dignity, and determines how one behaves when no one else is watching. Sound character traits are: integrity, courage, respect, honesty, helpfulness, humbleness, kindness and accountability. Christians should bear fruit in character and in service to others, seeing that Christ lives through them.

1.8.10 **Fatherhood**

Fatherhood can be derived from the Scriptures. This notion does not only refer to an authoritative source of admonition, correction and teaching. It provides exceptional measures and guidelines that attest to the uniqueness of God as Father while highlighting the worth of an earthly father within a family system. The highest honour God can bestow on a man is to call him a father (Munroe, 2001). *"The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge (Jr 31:29)*. This quote represented the power of the father as the primary authority of the family. However, there was radical changes in the function and structure of the family, and significant shifts in the authority of the father (Oliker, 2011).

1.9 **Ethical considerations**

The ethical considerations safeguard the rights and integrity of the participants and the researcher. The individuals or participants are anonymous, and have the right to self-determination, a right which should be respected (Burns & Grove, 2005:186). Informed

consent thus had to be obtained, which entails informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:70). Thereafter, a consent form was issued to the potential participants. The purpose and nature of the research was explained clearly and concisely in the consent and during the briefing and debriefing stage. Participants were afforded the right to withdraw from the study at any time they feel uncomfortable. Participants also had the option to choose the place of interview and after obtaining the information, they had the choice to withdraw information if they felt inclined to do so.

The confidentiality in the research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be disclosed, and participants were informed about their right to confidentiality (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:72). It is also important to ensure participants that any harm or risk factors will be prevented during their participation. After explaining the purpose of the study, the benefit of the study will be emphasised, namely that the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme can make an impact and visible change in the lives of young people.

The role and function of the researcher and his integrity is critical to the quality of the scientific knowledge and the soundness of ethical decision in qualitative inquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:74). The researcher also required sufficient knowledge of data collection, in order to reach (and publish) findings that are as accurate and representative of the field of enquiry as possible. The researcher also undertook to maintain honesty, fairness, truthfulness and confidentiality throughout the entire study.

1.10 Research schedule followed

Problem statement	Research objectives	Methodology
What impact and visible change can the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme have and make on the youth in South Africa at present?	The main aim of this study was to evaluate the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme from a Missiological perspective, examining its impact and effectiveness in the Christiana District and its possible use as a tool for churches aiming to reach the	Throughout the entire research project, the model was followed as proposed by Osmer, (2008) for Practical Theology. This method consists of the basic theory, the meta-theory and the praxis theory.

Problem statement	Research objectives	Methodology
	youth and communities, who are struggling with various challenges in rural areas.	
What are the main characteristics of the challenges that youth development is facing in the Christiana district?	Identify the main characteristics of the challenges that youth development is facing in the Christiana district.	The research project involved interacting with certain Scriptural passages and summarising relevant biblical-theological principles. This research project did a cursory exegesis of selected biblical passages by employing the grammatical-historical method together with literature studies to compare the findings of biblical scholars.
What are the goals and objectives of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme?	Summarise the goals and objectives of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme.	In discussing valid approaches of evangelistic and missional outreach to the youth a study was done through a literature survey. Apart from general missiological and Christian educational literature within the discipline of theology, the study consulted general literature dealing with caring for orphans and vulnerable teenagers through missional pastoral counselling.
What is the impact of the programme thus far in the Christiana district?	Evaluate the impact the programme had thus far in the Christiana District.	Empirical research employed both qualitative and quantitative analyses. New information was gathered

Problem statement	Research objectives	Methodology
		through interviews, questionnaires, naïve sketches, and statistical results of the LIFEPLAN® programme.
Why is holistic missional and evangelistic outreach to the youth a vital aspect of God's mission?	Point out the holistic missional and evangelistic outreach to the youth as a vital aspect of God's mission.	Data from the basic theory, meta-theory and empirical theory were processed interactively, through interpretation, reformulation and readjustment to construct a new praxis. This praxis focused on the role of a missional vision in youth ministry in previously disadvantaged communities who struggle with challenges of immorality and criminality among young people.
How could the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme be part of God's mission as a tool for the church in the Christiana district to reach the youth?	Assess whether LIFEPLAN® can form part of God's mission and be used as a tool by the churches in the Christiana District to reach the youth.	The results of the basic, meta-, empirical, and praxis theories were used to offer constructive critique on the LIFEPLAN® programme, as well as suggestions to enrich and improve the model, which could be used for promoting mission through holistic youth ministry in disadvantaged communities.
How could the programme be improved and be helpful for youth ministry in other rural areas?	Improve the programme to be helpful for youth ministry in other rural areas.	Suggestions were made on amendments to help enrich the programme.

CHAPTER 2: THE BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL MISSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF EVANGELISM IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Abstract

This chapter investigates the biblical-theological and missiological basis of evangelism in disadvantaged communities. It is important that the *missio-Dei* perspective is key to all areas within the present study. Mission is the concern of the Triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the whole of His creation. The Father sent the Son and the Son sent the Holy Spirit. Through Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, God, for His own glory, unite people from every tribe, nation, kingdom, and language to worship Him forever in the New World. The Gospel of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed. Therefore, it is crucial that churches should wholeheartedly partake in the mission of God in the world.

The church is the instrument of God to proclaim his kingdom in all parts of life. Therefore, believers should be faithful to the calling of God. They do this by following Jesus and partaking in the *missio Dei*, bringing love, hope and peace to a lost broken world. God chose people to build his kingdom and he blesses them in order to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. The kingdom heals and ultimately brings reconciliation between God's humanity and God's whole creation. Through Jesus Christ, people can receive the Good News of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. According to New Testament testimony, people without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for to them it is foolishness. They are unable to understand the Spirit's work, because they are not spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14).

2.1 Introduction

The focus of the present research is a missiological evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme. This is a model for youth development in impoverished communities within South Africa. The focus of this chapter is to provide a basis and theoretical principles of holistic mission. The theological origin of *missio Dei* has an extended history, and is to be found in Reformed theology of the Reformation (Arthur, 2013; Bosch, 1991:8). The concept *missio Dei* is Latin, and was already used early in the fourth century by Aurelius Augustine to describe the sending acts within the Triune God. Since then, *missio Dei* became a vital term in Catholic and Orthodox

dogmatics (Buys & Jansen, 2015:228). "Missio" as an activity of God was also articulated by the theologian, Karl Barth (Dames, 2007:41). Barth's influence was critical for missionary theology. The WCC Missions Conference in Willingen of the IMC in 1952 adopted the term and it became popular in Protestant missions theology through George Vicedom's book, *Missio Dei* in 1958 (Buys & Jansen, 2015:228). Furthermore, mission was understood as the very nature of God (Bosch, 2009:390), and the doctrine on the *missio Dei*, as God the Father sending Jesus Christ the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit (Arthur, 2013; Buys & Jansen, 2015:228; cf. also Is 6:8 Jn 20:21).

According to De Jong (1996), mission is not only *missio Dei* but also *missio Christi* with reference to John 20:21, where Christ sent out the apostles to plant churches (Ac 13:1-2; cf. also Jansen, 2015:21). God redeems the nations and reconcile them with Him in a covenant relationship with the aim to bless them (Jansen, 2015:19).

Mission is an extension and amplification of God's being (Niemandt, 2016:85-87). It is, therefore, an action of God. Thus, God should be seen as the Great Missionary (Bosch, 2009:519; De Beer, 2012:5). The final goal of the *missio Dei* is that God will be everything for everyone (1 Cor 15:28).

Christ reconciles his people with God, after which the Lord lives in them through his Holy Spirit. To grow in the expectation of God's great future believers receive the Holy Spirit. To receive and be filled with the Holy Spirit is to taste the beginning of eternity here and now. Believers filled with the Holy Spirit become and act as his instruments to awaken hope in a world with various ills and wounds of the past. Biblical hope is to experience that God's tomorrow already breaks today. Believers have the assurance they move towards total and radical renewal and restoration of creation as a whole. Real Christian hope is, therefore, also a longing that grows in people's hearts for the mentioned great day. Through their words and deeds, believers erect signposts of the definite coming of the kingdom. In this regard, the Holy Spirit is a guarantee and foretaste of God's great future.

The church reaches out and develops its community through the work of the Holy Spirit in cooperation with the community. In this way, it becomes a Christian community. The church performs the mission, and God uses the church that employs people in the

community to help transform them into being Spirit-filled believers. However, the kingdom of God is broader than the church, even though the church is central in this process – God does not operate without the church. The significance of the church is that it integrates the whole community. This can be explained by the image of a river that runs into the Dead Sea, which becomes alive.

Ezekiel 47 presents the image where the church grows as water flows. In the same way, the influence of the church in the community flows and thus the Church of Christ grows.

In John 7:37-39 Jesus uses the following image: On the last and most important day of the festival Jesus arose and said in a loud voice, “Whoever is thirsty should come to me, and whoever believe in me should drink.” As the scripture says, ‘Streams of life-living water will pour out of His side.’” Jesus said this about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were going to receive. At that time, the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not been raised to glory.

From the above is it clear that there is a close relationship between the church and the community, where the church influences the community as a whole. The church is the body of Christ, which means that not all people in a community are Christians and belong to this body. Therefore, the church co-operates with the community to enrich the lives of non-Christians, to transform broken relationships and attract people to become Christians. This is the core principle of understanding the *missio Dei*, and both images are perspectives of a basic theory for holistic mission.

2.2 Background and scriptural perspectives for a holistic *missio-Dei* vision in missions

With the rise of post-modern paradigms, theology as well as missiology have become highly complex (Bosch, 2009:262-276; Hirsch, 2006:16).

If people within a community wished to function as a missional church (*missio ecclesia*) and be part of the *missio Dei*, they have to grow in missional spirituality and live in the fear of God (Ac 9:31). God’s honour and his praise are basic motifs that provide the driving force behind involvement in the *missio Dei* (Jansen, 2015:21). In this context, churches should honour God, even if they are poor or disadvantaged. The reason is that they do not belong to themselves, or even to others, but to God. Therefore, if churches partake

in the *missio Dei* with the aim to honour and respect God as churches, they become part of God's blessing to the world. Should God's people honour God in their words and deeds, God's honour will become vivid and visible, and above it all, they will grow in holiness (Eph 5:27). If churches turn back to the Scriptures, and adhere to the biblical principles of God, they will gain perspective on ways to take part in the *missio Dei*, and thereby fulfil their calling. Biblical principles tend to break down obstacles which in many instances are a hindrance to people's spiritual development (De Beer, 2012:61). The perspectives mentioned below are crucial in this chapter.

2.2.1 Churches and the mission of God (Mt 28:18-20)

If churches are taking part in the *missio Dei*, they represent God's mission in the world. However, it is important that the churches should understand that mission is the concern of God. Therefore, if believers partake in the *missio Dei*, mission will become part of their work and existence. It is crucial for the researcher that churches should understand the concept "missio" from a Trinitarian perspective, which is God the Father who sent Jesus Christ His Son, and God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son who sent the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:18-20; Gl 4:4; 1 Pt 1:12; 1 Jn 4:9). In this context, the Triune God sends the church to partake in his mission, and to recognise Jesus as their Lord and Saviour since He delivers transformation.

2.2.2 Churches as co-workers of God (Rm 10:14-15; 2 Cor 6:1)

Churches can be considered as co-workers in God's mission and as his fellow-workers. This means believers should not receive God's grace in vain (2 Cor 6:1; De Beer, 2012:62). Spirit-filled churches should grow in faith and in wisdom, thereby being equipped as disciples of Jesus Christ. As members of a church, believers must build and support one another with their gifts and service they received from God (Ac 2:38; 1 Cor 12:11; Ja 1:17). Receiving the gifts of God, will ensure that members of a church become equipped and trained to partake in the *missio Dei*, and bring God's message of good news and reconciliation to a lost and broken world.

2.2.3 The church and the care of God (Jn 17:11-24; Eph 4:7; 12-16; Jn 13:34-35)

The church is God's covenant people, and God takes care of his people, as He promised (Mt 28:20; cf. De Beer, 2012:62). Therefore, if the churches partake in the *missio Dei*

wholeheartedly, they can depend on God who will take care of them and provide in their needs (Mt 28:20; 1 Pt 5:7).

2.2.4 *The church and the kingdom of God (Col 3:1-4)*

God chose people to build his kingdom and blesses them so that they could be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. If churches partake in the *missio Dei*, their focus should be on Jesus Christ (De Beer, 2012:63). It is important in this research to understand the reason why Jesus came to earth. It was to announce the good news, which is the Gospel of the kingdom, and its purpose. The primary purpose of the kingdom is that people should acknowledge the kingship, the rule of God, over all of creation. Healing and reconciliation are the gifts of God resulting, from the rule of God and not the purpose of ministry. Otherwise people would want to receive God's gifts without seeking his rule. Significantly, the kingdom of God is a process that cannot be halted (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:46).

The task of God's people in the various churches is rooted in the mission of Jesus Christ since He preached the good news of the kingdom through word and deeds. Therefore, the church should emulate their Lord. The church exists not only as the fruit and sign of the kingdom but also functions as God's instrument to proclaim his kingdom in all parts of life. Therefore, it is crucial that churches are faithful to the calling of God, follow Jesus Christ, and take part in the *missio Dei*.

The researcher underwrites the argument of Corbett and Fikkert (2012:37) that prosperity, growth and progress of any church has no purpose in itself. Only love for the Gospel carries weight. Therefore, churches are obligated to bring love, hope and peace to a lost and broken world. Furthermore, churches should focus continually on building the kingdom of God and leading people to Christ. Should churches wish to be part of the *missio Dei*, they should abide by the prerequisites of the kingdom. One of these is submitting to the King, Jesus Christ Himself (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:37).

2.2.5 *The Luke-Acts perspective on mission and evangelism*

For the present study, it is crucial to understand the Luke-Acts perspective of mission and evangelism. These two Bible books belong together since they give account of the ministry and mission of Jesus on earth (De Beer 2012:38). Practically, these books tell

the story of Jesus and salvation, and introduce Christ to the nations. The Luke-Acts perspective provides the ideal view of mission in the biblical testimony.

Jesus is the sent One, as well as the One who sends others, according to the book of Luke (De Beer, 2012:38). The Luke-Acts testimony is clear on mission and evangelism. Bosch (2009:84) explains that Luke's view has become highly prominent in the debate about a biblical foundation for mission. It is essential to understand the significant mission of Jesus Christ: the sent One is also the One who is sending (Lk 9:1-6; 10:1-6; 24:46-48). This significance is also strongly evident in the Gospel of John (Jn 20:20; 21 – 23; 25 – 29; 31).

Bosch (2009:84) explains that the theme "salvation" is central to the work of Luke. De Beer (2012:38) describes this aspect further by pointing out that the words *soteria* and *soterion*, which means salvation, appear six times in Luke and Acts, and not a single time in Mark or Matthew but again, once in the book of John. The word *soteria* has a significant meaning of *redeem, recover or purchase back* (De Beer, 2012:38; cf. also Lv 25:26, 32; Rt 4:4, 6; Ex 6:6; Ps 77:14). Bosch (2009:84) is explicit in his research about the meaning of salvation. In this regard, salvation has a dual dimension: liberation from all bondages and entry into a new life in Christ. The researcher concurs with this holistic meaning, in light of the biblical testimony that there is only new life in Jesus Christ, and the old things such as sin, habits, conduct, behaviour, mindsets and lifestyles have passed (2 Cor 5:17).

Since the notion of salvation is crucial to the present study, it is important to elaborate on this topic. In the Old Testament, the term for "salvation" is *yêsa*. The basic meaning is "bring into a spacious environment" (Ps 18:36; 66:12). The word also carries a metaphorical sense of "freedom" from limitation, with the connotation of deliverance from factors which constrain such as disease (Is 38:20), trouble (Jr 30:7) or enemies (2 Sm 3:18; Ps 44:7). It is important to note that the usage of this word is synonymous with *yêsa* in the latter part of Isaiah (41:14; 44:6; 47:4).

In the New Testament, and especially the synoptic Gospels, Jesus only once mentions the word "salvation" in Luke 19:9, where it may refer to himself as the embodiment of salvation imparting pardon to Zacchaeus. The Lord also used the term "save" to indicate firstly his intended earthly mission (Mk 3:4), and did it by direct statement (Lk 4:18; Mt 18:11; Lk 9:56; Mt 20:28). Secondly, Jesus explained what is demanded of humans (Mk

8:35; Lk 7:50; 8:12; 13:24; Mt 10:22). Luke 18:26 indicates that salvation requires a contrite heart, childlike, receptive helplessness, and the renunciation of all for Christ (Walters & Milne, 1996:1046-1050).

The Lukian version of the verb “salvation”, according to Witherington (1998:829), refers to healing since for Luke this is an essential part of Christian salvation. Witherington adds that salvation in the book of Luke also has the meaning of *rescue* or *deliverance* and *protection* from harm (Ac 7:25; 27:10). Salvation also entails a benefit based on God’s gracious act of forgiving sins through Jesus (Witherington, 1998:837). Important for the present study, Luke’s version of *salvation* is universal, in the sense that it includes both Jews and gentiles, which signify that all humankind must see the salvation of God in Jesus (Witherington, 1998:840; *cf.* Lk 3:6).

Furthermore, the word “salvation” in the Gospel of Luke should be interpreted in light of the overall message of the Gospel, which centres on Jesus. Luke presents Jesus from start to finish as the Saviour, (Messiah). Salvation is used five times in the book of Luke besides the other verses that also explain salvation such as the following:

- 1:77: Showing the way to find salvation through forgiveness of sins.
- 2:30: Jesus is viewed as salvation Himself.
- 3:6: Salvation, which is Jesus, is sent from God.
- 19:9: Jesus announced that salvation has come to the home of Zacchaeus.
- 19:44: Jesus stated that those who had not responded to the offer of salvation would be crushed, because He was that offer.

From the four Gospels in the New Testament, Luke places the most emphasis on salvation (Scott, 2014). Salvation is also an opportunity through the words and work of Jesus on the cross. Therefore, humans must not refuse the opportunity for salvation that Jesus presented to them. Significantly, the book of Luke is a clear presentation of Jesus being affirmed as the Son of God. Thus, however it is stated, it should be kept in mind that God is the Author of salvation, and there is no other Saviour besides Jesus (Is 43:11).

Luke indicates clearly that the salvation of Jesus Christ was not limited to the Jews, but was meant for all people (De Beer, 2012:39). Salvation is tied to Jesus Christ. Bosch (2009:107) underlines this aspect strikingly:

The disciples those of both the gospel and Acts, turn their backs on their previous life and lifestyle because their extraordinary encounter with Jesus, for the reign of God is already present in Him (cf. Lk 17:21)... Jesus is, really, the person who invites the cripples and the outcasts to a banquet. He is the Samaritan, who takes pity on His Jewish archenemy. He is the father, in whose home and heart there is room for both lost sons. Only in his name and his power are true repentance, forgiveness of sins, and salvation to be found (cf. Acts 4:12). Seen from this perspective, Luke-Acts becomes a paeon of praise to the incomparable grace of God, lavished upon sinners.

From the above, it is evident that Luke has a specific interest in the social outcasts of society. The Luke-Acts perspective focuses on forgiveness to and solidarity with the poor (Bosch, 2009:84-117). Bosch asserts that when Luke writes about the relationship between poor and rich, he has a particular interest in economic justice (De Beer, 2012:39; cf. also Lk 4:18-19). In this regard, Luke is calling the rich to show solidarity with the poor. In this context, for the sake of argument, the poor can either be Christian, or non-Christian.

Acts 10:36 emphasises preaching the good news of peace by Jesus Christ. However, currently people live in a world ravaged by violence, hate, crime, war, poverty and terrorism, to name a few (De Beer, 2012:40). It is, therefore, crucial to grasp the fact that the mission of Jesus Christ is about peace-making. Churches take part in this peace process since it is their calling (Mk 9:50; Jn 14:27; 20:19; Rm 10:15; 15:33; 1 Cor 7:15; Gl 5:22; Eph 2:14; Php 4:7).

In light of the above, the Luke-Acts perspective shows a clear view of the *missio Dei*, which imply that churches have a vital role to play in holistic mission.

2.3 Theological considerations of holistic mission and evangelism in a *missio-Dei* perspective

Mission and evangelism are part of God's great plan and purpose to redeem the whole of creation, which was broken by sin and evil, and transform it into the new creation (Wright, 2012:1-6; cf. Ac 20:27). Most people use "mission" and "evangelism" interchangeably since it involves the total Christian ministry to the world outside the church (Bosch, 2008:4). However, it should be realised that mission has a broader application than evangelism. This is because the former includes testimony of social justice, work of mercy, services of love, mission and evangelism to the centre (Wright, 2012). Evangelism is central in the process of transformation within the community. God

is already at work in mission through his Spirit in every life, culture and community. His Spirit leads in all truth, and convinces people of sin, iniquity and future judgments (Booker & Ireland, 2003:1; *cf.* Jn 16:13). The Holy Spirit operates through the preaching of the Gospel and the Word of God in people's lives. In Ephesians 2:4-5, Paul explains that Jesus Christ brought hope while people were spiritually dead in their disobedience, and the Spirit brought them to life with Christ. It is because of God's grace and mercy that they have been saved.

In 1948, the World Council of Churches (WCC), since its establishment, has produced two statements based on mission and evangelism to change landscapes (Jongeneel, 2014:273). The WCC position on the topic *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* was approved by the Central Committee in 1982. Thereafter, the affirmation of *Mission and Evangelism* was reconstituted following the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Porto Alegre in 2006. The enduring validity of the 1982 document was recognised by the current commissioners (Kim, 2012:316).

Since the document was written 30 years ago, when the global landscape was different, an important and urgent current ecumenical theology of mission was considered (Kim, 2012:316). To fulfil the mission of Jesus Christ, the new statement is intended to stimulate reflection on mission in a wide scope. The overall goal of mission can be understood according to Jesus statement in John 10:10: "That they may have life ... in all its fullness." This new statement further aims to promote renewed appreciation of the mission of the Spirit, the Life-giver (Kim, 2012:316).

Mission is the activity of God that lies at the heart and core of God's mission and of the church, namely the Gospel (De Beer, 2012:55; *cf.* Wright, 2012:2). There are five markers of mission, namely (1) proclaim the good news of the kingdom; (2) teach, baptize and nurture new believers; (3) respond to human need by loving service; (4) seek to transform unjust structures of society; and (5) strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain the life of the earth (Wright, 2012:3). These five markers are interconnected, such as the rim of a wheel, which is united by its hub. In the same sense, the Lordship of Christ reigns over all aspects of life and mission. These five markers could also be summarised in a number of key words: evangelism, teaching, compassion, justice, and care of creation.

Evangelism in the context of the present study means “gospelling” the good news, which God has promised and effected through Jesus Christ. This entails narrating the whole story of what God has done by using the Old and New Testaments, proclaiming the good news that the God who created the world has acted to save it from the consequences of human sin and evil. This salvation was brought about through His Son, Jesus Christ (Booker & Ireland, 2003:2). People respond to this good news of God’s salvation through Jesus Christ, by turning to Christ in repentance. In other words, evangelism forms the centre of the fully-integrated scope of all mission through Jesus Christ (Wright, 2012:6-7).

Furthermore, the English word “evangelism” derives from the Greek word *euaggelion*, which means “gospel” or “good news” in the noun form, and the word is also translated as “preach” (Miano, s.a.). But in the verb form (*euaggelizesthai*) it means to “announce” or “bring good news” of Jesus who died for our sins (Baker illustrated Bible dictionary, 2013:534). This Greek word appears 55 times in the New Testament. Evangelism which entails the communication of the Gospel message, includes a warning, namely about sin and its consequences (Jn 16:8; Ac 24:25; Rv 20:11-15). It also provides an explanation of God’s remedy for sin as conveyed by the Gospel (Ac 8:29-35; Rm 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:21). This includes the clear call to repent, or return from sin and turn toward God; and believe the Gospel by faith (Mk1:15; Lk 13:1-5; Ac 17:29-31; Rm 1:17; 10:9-13). Based on the Markan version, evangelism points to a personal conversion (Barrett, 1987:9; DeMoss & Miller, 2002; Farrell, 1996).

The researcher argues that the whole church should be mission-driven and evangelising since it exists for the sake of God’s mission, and mission is not a specialist activity for a few professionals (Wright, 2012:18). The risen Christ gave the Great Commission to all his disciples to proclaim the good news to the world (Barrett, 1987:20).

2.4 The mission of God in disadvantaged communities

A profound question about disadvantaged communities and poor people was asked over the years, “Have you ever done anything to help poor people?” (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:9). These authors point out that most Evangelicals and missionaries would have answered “No” to this specific question. They also indicated that humans live in a world of urgent spiritual need, and to respond, the church takes the Word of God as point of departure. Followers of Jesus Christ are compelled to have grace, show compassion and

love for the poor and their physical needs (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:11). The grace of God is the heartbeat of integral mission. Believers are obligated to convey God's grace, generosity, by assisting the disadvantaged (Micah Declaration on integral Mission, 2001:2).

The church should take the lead and work with the relevant stakeholders in communities to tackle poverty and show compassion to the poor (Mt 25:31-46), seeking justice and encouraging the oppressed (Is 1:17). The Scriptures relate God's call to care for the poor, and material possessions should be shared with those in need so that the love of God can be seen in the life of that poor person (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:13; Barram, 2011:558-560; *cf.* 1 Jn 3:17).

According to these authors, no section in life can alleviate poverty on its own. All people are in debt to God to help the poor. Impoverished and destitute people need interventions in areas such as economic development, health, education, agriculture, or spiritual formation. It is, therefore, the responsibility of every Christian to help the poor in order to fulfil this biblical mandate (Barram, 2011:558-560; Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:14).

Believers should take cognisance of Isaiah 61:1-3 according to which the prophet was anointed to preach the good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed and proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

The mission of Jesus Christ was, and is still to preach the good news of the kingdom of God, which implies that He must be revered as the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. All things broken and defiled, which means that the whole of creation will be restored with the return of Jesus Christ, and Christians now already experience a foretaste of His coming glory, even those living in poverty. Ailments, sorrow and unfreedom are turned around, and under his rule and authority and power, and are restored to health, beauty and freedom (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:32).

According to Colossians 1:5-20, Jesus Christ is described as the Creator, Sustainer, and Reconciler of all things. He died for all humans to reconcile them, in other words putting them into a right standing or relationship with God. This is part of the good news, however, the greatest part is the promise of making all things new. If Jesus Christ made all things new, and preached the good news among the hurting, the weak, and the poor, the church

should follow suit. They should be involved in disadvantaged communities, and especially among poor people (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:37). Believers have been commanded to follow the King, Jesus Christ, into places of brokenness, poverty and injustice.

In the present study, it is imperative to understand that the care of the poor should be a vital concern for churches working in disadvantaged communities (Mt 25:31-46; Ac 6:1-7; Gl 2:1-10; 6:10; Ja 1:27; cf. Barram, 2011:558-560). In this regard, 1 John 3:16-18 states clearly:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters, who are our fellow believers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.

Corbett and Fikkert (2012:41) point out that God's people in both the Old and the New Testament showed true concern for the poor during eras of relative economic equality. According to them, this highlights God's desire not only for other current churches, but for all disadvantaged communities. Those who have material possessions must care for the poor, and share of their possessions with those in need. Although this is not the whole solution to helping the poor, it shows God's love in a concrete way.

The ultimate task of the church that represents God's kingdom on earth is to embody Jesus Christ by doing what He did, and what He continuous do through his people. This is done through both word and deeds to proclaim and demonstrate concretely that Jesus Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is the only One bringing righteousness, justice and peace. Therefore, the believers who proclaim his kingship should follow where Jesus operated, among the blind, the lame, the sick, outcast and the poor (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:41).

It must be remembered that God chose those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him (Ja 2:5). Furthermore, "God chose that which seems foolish for the world, to shame the wise. He chose weakness within the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly and despised things, and even the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, in order that no one may boast before Him" (1 Cor 26-29).

God chooses the foolish, weak and despised objects

God has deliberately chosen to work in the world starting with the weak who are on the “outside”, and not the powerful ones on the “inside”. The poor are not more righteous or sanctified than the rich. The biblical testimony does not consider poverty is as a desirable state, or view material thing(s) as evil. Wealth, which is the opposite of poverty, is viewed as a gift from God. The point to be made is that God chose for his own glory to reveal his kingdom in a “certain place” where the world with all its pride would not expect it, namely among the poor, the weak, the lowly, the foolish and the despised (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:42).

As evangelicals and missionaries minister to the poor, so should families who are part of the local church and even governments. They should cater for the spiritual and physical needs of the poor seeing that they also have huge responsibilities for the poor in disadvantaged communities. The care of the poor is not an exclusive task of the church but an important task, which must be fulfilled in co-operation with other role-players in society (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:44; *cf.* also Mt 25:31-46; 1 Tm 5:8; Dn 4:27; Ps 72).

Community workers, academics, educationalists, researchers, and others should fulfil this task wholeheartedly as well. They should minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the poor in disadvantaged communities, whether through projects, programmes or intervention. The biblical testimony is clear in Isaiah 61:1-3, where the prophet confirms that God had anointed him to preach the good news to the poor, bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim freedom for the captives and prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and comfort those who mourn.

This verse is not only meant for the prophet Isaiah's audience at the time, but for all people who are willing to participate in God's mission to churches that are impoverished. It is paramount to acknowledge Jesus Christ before others, otherwise He will also not acknowledge them before the Father, if they are ashamed, and do not acknowledge Him (Lk 12:8-9; Mk 8:38; Rm 1:16; 2 Tm 1:8; 2 Pt 4:16; 1 Jn 2:28).

In the present study, it is necessary to view poverty according to a broader perspective in terms of disadvantaged communities:

2.4.1 *Poverty according to a biblical framework (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:54)*

To diagnose the “disease” of poverty, firstly, the fundamental nature of reality should be considered by starting with God the Creator of heaven and earth. God reveals Himself as a relational Being and exists as the three-unity. Human beings are relational because they are made in the image of God. God established four foundational relationships for every person, namely with God, with oneself, with others, and with the rest of his creation. These relationships can be considered the building blocks of life. If these relationships are functioning well, human beings experience the fullness of life, seeing they are what God created and intended to be. Christians can have these relationships in place, but they can also live in a context where social injustice has become the overarching system around them and others.

A closer view at the basic relationships according to Corbett and Fikkert (2012:55):

- (a) Relationship with God – primary and important, from where the other three relationships flows. In this relationship, human beings glorify God because they were created to serve and to give God praise through thoughts, words and actions.
- (b) Relationship with oneself – people have worth and dignity because they were uniquely created in the image of God. They have a high calling, namely to reflect God’s being; they are superior to the rest of the creation but should remember they are not God.
- (c) Relationship with others – God created human beings to live in a loving relationship with one another. People should keep in mind that they are not islands, created for themselves; they are made to know, love, encourage one another, and use the gifts and talents God has given them to fulfil their calling in life.
- (d) Relationship with the rest of creation – according to Genesis 1:28-30, God created human beings to be stewards, in other words, people who understand, protect, subdue and manage the world that God has created. The aim is to preserve creation and produce bountiful. God called humans to interact with his creation, turn possibilities into realities, and be able to sustain themselves through the fruits of their stewardship.

As mentioned previously, foundational relationships are the building blocks for all of life. Human beings create culture that include economic, social, political, and religious systems. These systems reflect people's basic commitment to God, themselves, others and the rest of the creation. It must be emphasised that human beings create culture and this culture are formal institutions such as governments, schools, businesses, or churches. They also construct cultural norms such as gender roles, attitudes toward time and work, or understanding of authority. These systems reflect the nature of people's four foundational relationships as mentioned above.

People affect systems, and vice versa. Systems are broken, reflecting distorted relationships and evil, destructive forces, cause havoc in both individuals and systems (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:59).

Human beings are spiritual, social, psychological, and physical beings. Their efforts to alleviate poverty will, therefore, be more holistic in its design and execution. They must engage with the entire creation, including culture, seeing that God the Creator is deeply involved with it. Poor communities are part of the good world that God created and still sustains. Christ has not been introduced to poor communities only during his life on earth. The Lord has been active in all of creation (including such communities) since the creation of the world, and is sustaining them through his powerful Word, according to Hebrews 1:3 (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:57).

Those working in poor communities, discover and appreciate God's active involvement in this context for a long time. When one enters such communities, it provides sense of humility and awe, because what is observed reflects the hand of God. Nevertheless, a significant part of the church's task should be introducing the community to God. These inhabitants may not even know who God is. They should be helped to appreciate what God has been doing for them since the beginning of the world. Furthermore, they should be led to discover their own gifts and talents as well as their calling.

The fundamental nature of poverty

According to Myers (1999:4, 65-66), poverty entails more than a mere material condition; and implies the absence of things such as money, water, food, housing and the lack of social systems, skills or knowledge. Poverty is also a deficit or a lack where poor people for example, do not have enough to eat or a place to sleep, or clean water. Poverty is

associated with low-income where people feel inferior to others. Shame is also a major part of the brokenness that low-income people experience in their relationship with themselves. Such people do not view themselves as created by God.

Corbett and Fikkert (2012:59) indicated that relationships play a major role in poverty. According to them, poverty is the actual result of relationships that did not work, are not just, are not for life, and are not harmonious or enjoyable. For these scholars, such relationships are typified by the absence of *shalom* (all-encompassing peace) in all its meanings (Myers, 1999:86). It is important, however, not to focus only on life's worse-scenario cases. The reason is that Jesus Christ holds together all things and sustains them by His powerful word (Col 1:16-17). The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ focused on people who are in need, poor people, people who suffered. This provides good news for the poor as well as for the rich, the sick, or strangers, et cetera. Jesus Christ died for believers and non-believers, and His mercy and grace is for all men (Bosch, 1990:18; cf. Lk 4:18; Is 61:1; 58:6).

2.4.2 *The causes of poverty according Myers*

Myers (1999:83-86) identifies the following causes of poverty:

- Physical – people require food, clean water and shelter, the basic needs according to Maslow. Money, land, and livestock are helpful assets to have and if absent, poverty is the result.
- Social – the physical aspect is intensified by the social causes of poverty.
- Mental – certain causes of poverty are linked to the mental condition of the poor. Poverty is caused by lack of knowledge and technical information. Mental states are due to poor nutrition, illness, alcohol or drugs.
- Mentality – poverty can also exist within the mind and spirit in the form of a poverty of being, for example if people lie, they disempower themselves.
- Spiritual (Van der Walt, 2008:167-168) – worldviews inevitably cause poverty. Miller *et al.* (2005:16-17) define a worldview as the total set of assumptions about the world and how it works, and sometimes it is termed a “belief system” or “mind-set”. Van der Walt (2001:58) argues that a worldview is people’s perspective on created reality, a

place in the world where they have to fulfil their cultural task. A Worldview can be contributing or detrimental and can have positive or negative consequences. In other words, it can light up a person's life, or darken it (Van der Walt, 2008:2, 58).

Van der Walt (2001:58) raises a concern that a worldview can be dangerous. The reason is that it can degenerate into an ideology, which is an absolutised, hardened, closed, dogmatic orientation about the world. Van der Walt identifies the risks of a worldview. However, despite its definition and dangers, a worldview is important (Miller *et al.*, 2005:19; *cf.* Van der Walt, 2008:2). In the context of the present study, a biblical worldview (Miller *et al.*, 2005:12), or Christian worldview (Van der Walt, 2008:230-278; Van der Walt, 2010:46) is recommended.

However, even these worldviews can be detrimental if it has become an ideology (Miller *et al.*, 2001:34, 58). Thus, people have to repent or accept Christ as their Saviour so that our mind-sets can be renewed. Believers must have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). Repentance in this context, means viewing the world the way God created it. This means they must not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of their mind (Rm 12:2) (Miller *et al.*, 2005:13; Van der Walt, 2001:111; Van der Walt, 2008:111).

Among the African cultures, poverty increases by the day due to a distorted worldview and a lack of knowledge. To prove this statement: Money is often spent on charms for protection, and spiritual causes of poverty are often overlooked by development aid organisations. Academics often ignore the power of the spirit world where phenomena exist such as witchcraft, ancestral and other spirits, fear of demons and evil. The cause of poverty is fundamentally spiritual:

- What causes injustice in human relationships?
- What stands between God and people?
- What works against life, against *shalom* (peace)?

The root cause of deception, distortion and domination is *to miss the mark* (sin²). It should be realised that every aspect of human life, including the body, mind, will and the emotions, all of life and all the earth, has been distorted and damaged by sin. This has alienated men and women from God, themselves, others and from the environment. Therefore, since the fall of Adam and Eve, futility is built into the universe and sin is a universal trait of humanity – rich and poor alike. Sin also penetrates people's cultures and societies, affecting their social, economic and political systems. Poverty, unemployment, HIV/Aids and its consequences are mere symptoms of total depravity (MCDC, 2007a:1; MCDC, 2007b:1; MCDC, 2008:1; MCDC, 2009:1). The suffering caused by these symptoms are experienced as consequences of personal sins, but sometimes people are victims of sins caused by others.

The researcher's understanding of this universal effects of sin led him to view community transformation as the reversal of sin and its consequences, and the restoration of God's order in creation, including God's intent for humans to live as his image bearers in all aspects of their lives. The transforming grace of the Holy Spirit works powerfully through the Gospel that are conveyed to people through word and deeds. Such transformation will turn people into worshippers of God, and thereby, make them fully human.

Doing missionary work, based on the presupposition of the reality of total depravity, leads to the understanding that transformation of individuals and poor communities must reach much deeper than merely *changing conditions of poor socialisation, releasing untapped potential in people and communities or changing environmental conditions*. Presuppositions that merely focus on superficial transformation in community development are in danger of not being holistic, comprehensive, long lasting and sustainable. An unbiblical and limited understanding of the causes for people's problems will misdirect the church in its approach to community development.

The church should avoid imposing a framework based on reductionist presuppositions foreign to the Scripture's message about the brokenness in communities and the lives of individuals. Such an approach can inevitably lead to a disregard for and even the discarding of particular needs that do not fit into such a framework. This will ultimately

² Both Hebrew (*chata* and *het*) and Greek (*hamartia*) has the meaning of *missing the mark, go wrong, to error, to fail, guilt, fault* (aiming for the wrong target or not hitting it at all) (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:1546; cf. also Ex 34:9; Dt 9:18; Lv 4:2-31; Nm 15:30.)

hinder the possibility of real holistic, comprehensive and long-lasting change. The correct, biblically sound presuppositions are outlined below.

(1) In obedience to the commission of God, the church should integrate words as well as deeds of God's love in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to all people crossing their way. This should be done through the following actions:

- Present the Gospel, calling people to repentance, faith and eternal reconciliation with God through Christ.
- Show deeds of mercy and compassion, extending the goodness of God's kingdom on earth in the name of Christ. This example was set by Christ himself. It conveys the message that believers are being conformed to the image of Christ and have received the Holy Spirit as the first fruit and guarantee of God's new creation.
- Disciple new Christians and plant churches that will be lighthouses of God's transforming grace, by providing an atmosphere of mutual care and fellowship and provide a foretaste of God's new creation.

(2) God commands the believers to clothe themselves with compassion. This is a calling to walk with the poor and suffering, and convey the transforming grace of God through a quality spiritual life that allows them to serve their community, not as saviours, but as servants of Christ, the one, true Saviour.

Through Jesus Christ there is good news since there is a way to overcome sin toward transformation. However, the bad news is that this *news* is not accepted, seeing that people refuse, therefore they remain in chains of self-imposed limitations (Myers, 1999:88-90).

2.4.3 *The true identity of the poor*

The poor as is the case with all people bear the image of the Creator. Thus, treating the poor with respect means enabling them to function as architects of change within their impoverished communities (Micah Declaration on Integral Mission, 2001:2). Myers (1999) addresses poverty and human transformation from a Christian perspective. Every human being is poor due to the affect and nature of the Fall in the beginning (Gn 3) in the sense

of not experiencing the four basic mentioned relationships as God intended. In this regard, poverty is physical, spiritual and social (Myers, 1999:64-65).

From the above, it is evident that every human being is suffering from a poverty of spiritual intimacy, of being, of community and of stewardship. All humans are incapable of being what God created them to be, and are unable to experience the fullness of joy that God designed for them through the four basic relationships (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012:59). Human beings are embedded in families, communities and social systems. They are created in the image of God and have gifts, skills and potential to become part of the kingdom of God.

The poor are also part of households, which are the building blocks of larger social systems. The poor are those who are always among others who are not poor. They do not only attend certain, impoverished churches. In this regard, poverty and poor people can only be understood by keeping the relationships between the poor and the none-poor in mind (Myers, 1999:61-64). In this context of the study, it is thus necessary to examine the concept *transformational development*.

2.4.4 *What transformational development entails*

Transformation implies the changing of people's choices, and the aspects underlying those choices. This also entails a worldview (mind-set), and the values flowing from it. As indicated by Romans 12:1-2, believers should present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which practically implies their reasonable service. Believers should be transformed and their minds renewed to assess what the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God entails for their lives. Therefore, transformational development should reflect the church's concern for positive change in the whole of human life, namely materially, socially, and spiritually. Transformational development is a lifelong journey, and does not end in this life (Myers, 1999:3).

2.4.5 *Christian views of the poor*

According to Meyers (1999:4), believers have different views of the poor:

- Made in the image of God – this view is based on the creation story which indicates that their poverty is due to a lack of opportunity, knowledge and skills.

- People in rebellion – this specific view draw on the Fall of humankind in creation. Thus, the reason for poverty is that is lack of initiative, laziness and bad choices. They, therefore, need to accept the Gospel, and make better life-choices.
- Christ incarnate – according to Matthew 25 where Christ places Himself in the distressing guise of the poor. A practical example would be Mother Teresa’s ministry to the poor. People lack love and relationships and do not belong, whereas they need accompaniment and should bare their suffering just as Christ.
- God’s blessed – based on the prophetic literature and the Exodus account. The poor are blessed and the kingdom are meant for them. The reason for their poverty is that they are oppressed by social systems to keep them poor for the benefit of the non-poor. It is, therefore, vital that they receive justice and assistance in finding their voice and place in the economic and political system.
- Lost souls – this view draws selectively on the Gospels and posits a dualism between the spiritual and the physical realms of the modern world. The poor are lost, and the kingdom is coming; with Jesus’ second coming (which is imminent) the poor need to be saved.

Christians are compelled by love to share, and declare the Gospel through their lives, words and deeds by testifying of Christ’s victory over all evil.

2.4.6 ***Who the poor are not***

Many view the poor as merely lazy, fatalistic, improvident, ignorant, and arrogant, but this is a misconception. Interestingly, all people suffer from these problems, poor and non-poor alike (Myers, 1999:64). God is deeply concerned about the poor. This concern is summarised in Deuteronomy 15:11: “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be open-handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land” (*cf.* also *Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:1339).

Poverty entails pain since such people suffer physical pain, for example, scarcity of food to feed the family, and humiliation from others. The church should show compassion for poor children and youth in their communities because as believers they are urged by the love of Christ to be a blessing to others, concretely (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*,

2013:1339; cf. also Job 29:12; 30:25; 31:16; Ps 112:9; Pr 19:17; 22:9; 28:8, 27; Is 58:5-7; Jr 22:16).

Significant to the context of the present study: Believers' care, compassion, help and outreach to poor, disadvantaged and unprivileged children and youth could be more credible if the aid of churches, government and societies were more than metaphors. Christian transformation should make God and His Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit part of the intervention, training, equipping, developing and empowering of children and youth by God's Word.

2.5 LIFEPLAN® should incorporate a *missio-Dei* perspective

The aim of the LIFEPLAN® programme was to train and equip people to become knowledgeable and develop skills. The programme also aims to address poverty amongst the most vulnerable through human development and training in life skills, thereby improving people's well-being. After having completed the LIFEPLAN® programme, participants will have developed a valid self-image to take healthy pride in their personal ability and develop a concern for others in their respected communities (Freeks, 2008). However, it is important for the present study that LIFEPLAN® should aim and strive to incorporate a *missio-Dei* perspective.

It is crucial to understand what God's mission is, and how the programme should be amended to fit and to find a clearer holistic, biblical foundation. For an educational programme such as LIFEPLAN® to be part of the *missio Dei*, the practitioners must realise that God transforms people for his honour, holiness and his name's sake. Therefore, the main purpose of LIFEPLAN® should be to honour and praise God. This should be its point of departure and the rationale behind its actions. To a certain extent the programme took part in the *missio Dei* by finding its identity in Jesus Christ and his kingdom according to John 20:21. However, unfortunately, the organisers did not take this notion to its fullest consequences.

The LIFEPLAN® programme³ is, therefore, insufficient, and needs to be modified and amended to become an effective tool. This programme can only be effective for mission

³ Later in (chapter 7) it will be shown how the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme is enhanced and expanded to include evangelism and mission.

and evangelism when it is expanded by a pertinent focus on these two motives. If *missio Dei* defines the identity, place and task of Jesus Christ within the mission of God, the same should apply to the LIFEPLAN® programme. The church is God's instrument to reach all people with the Gospel. LIFEPLAN® should strive to work with Christian churches to reach communities, which include farm workers, children and the youth. The aim should be to bring God's mission to these groups since the programme has the potential to do so.

If LIFEPLAN® has the potential to reach these communities, it should also consider vulnerable people. The organisers should ask themselves: Who are the vulnerable people in communities and what caused this condition?

2.5.1 ***Vulnerable children***

Sin disturbed the splendour of creation. People fell outside of familial bonds and became victims in a broken world. These are the fatherless, widows, orphans and foreigners (Yeats, 2011:9). However, these victims should be moved by actions of love that break down the differences within human society (Nwaigbo, 2015:98). God has a particular concern for the poor, orphans and widows who are in need. In this regard, it should be noted that "poor" is an umbrella term for those who are physically impoverished or of diminished spirit, which include most orphans and widows (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:1339).

Furthermore, the researcher underwrites the fact that love should be the primary action by which God empowers and develop the youth (including children) in the LIFEPLAN® programme. This group are affected the most whenever destructive conduct are promoted such as hate. Evidently, society views and treats children differently (Swart & Yates, 2012:1). Children are often viewed as estranged, hurt, marginalised and alienated. Therefore, several youth ministries and development programmes advocate a "care-filled" ministry (Blevins, 2014:13). Notwithstanding these initiatives, the victims still remain marginalised in society, are often abuses, exploited, demeaned and constantly at risk (Greener, 2016:161; Knoetze, 2015:220). Irrespective of how children are viewed and treated, they seemingly are the "great omission" in theology (Botha, 2016:1; Rosalee, 2014:10-20).

Youth and children (esp. orphans) are the focus point in the LIFEPLAN® programme. Poverty, HIV/Aids, fatherlessness and abandonment by fathers are the numerous causes of orphans in South Africa. Thus, there should be an urgent initiative of reaching out to these orphaned children since the majority are left behind in an impoverished household (Meyer, 2013:1).

In light of the above, it is essential to view the significance of fatherless children, orphans, widows and the poor in spirit from a biblical viewpoint. In this regard, in biblical times, children, whether orphans or fatherless, were considered primarily as blessings from God, despite their lowly social status in society. From earliest times, the care of the fatherless (welfare) was a concern of the Israelites (*New Bible dictionary*, 1996:853). Currently, family breakdown and separation of children from parents have a strong link to poverty (Singletary, 2011:101-102). In this regard, the biblical testimony is clear about God's concern for the fatherless, needy and alienated people, as indicated below.

Proverbs 23:10 cautions: "Do not remove the ancient boundary stones nor encroach on the fields of the fatherless." Fatherless children lack the provision and protection of a father, therefore, they become needy members of society. In this regard, they are grouped together socially with the widow, the alien (displaced person, seeking refuge), the poor, and/or the innocent. It should be noted that the status of being an orphan appears to be a primary example of suffering (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:574; Lm 5:3; Jn14:18).

In response, the concern of God for the fatherless is evident in descriptions of his character and commands for their protection and benefit. God cares for the fatherless and gives them justice (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:577; Dt 10:18; Ps 10:14-18; 68:5; 146:9; Jr 49:11; Hs 14:3). Orphans are also in need and without parents, specifically those who are "fatherless". The Hebrew word for orphan is *yáthôm* and in Greek *phanos* (*New Bible dictionary*, 1996:853).

This theme is prevalent in the Old Testament narratives. Exodus 22:21-22 commands: "Do not exploit widows or orphans because they are precious to God, and He will judge those who fail to account for their needs" (also Yeats, 2011:9). Verse 23-24 adds: "If you do exploit them and they cry out to me, I will surely help them. My anger will blaze forth against you, and I will kill you with the sword. Your wives will become widows and your

children will become fatherless.” This indicates God’s serious concern for the orphans (“fatherless”) and widows. Widows and orphans have direct access to God. He hears their cries and appeals for help and promise action (Yeats, 2011:9; *cf.* Ps 10:14, 18; 146:9; Jr 49:11; Hs 14:3). Isaiah call God’s people to “learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, pleads for the widow”.

In the New Testament testimony, the theme also emerges. In James 1:27, the believers are commanded to care for the widows and the orphans. In the same vein, the community are also commanded to protect the rights of the orphans (Yeats, 2011:10; *cf.* Dt 26:12-13; 16:11, 14). Care for the widows and the orphans in practice implies social justice or hospitality but Paul shifts the notion to make the rationale of this argument a biblical framework of redemption (Yeats, 2011:10).

In the Bible, orphans are given special consideration. The *Torah* required that remnants of the harvest should be left in the fields for the orphans to reap and every third year, a special collection of tithes was collected for their care (VanZant, 2003:343; *cf.* Dt 14:28-29; 24:19-21; 26:12; 27:19). It is important to know that God is the Father, Provider, Helper and Protector of orphans and widows (those bereft of their husbands and thus similar to orphans in vulnerability and need) (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:1340; *cf.* also Ps 10:14; 68:5; Heb 68:6). Thus, oppression of orphans, fatherless children and widows in any way, was strictly forbidden (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:1339-1340; *cf.* also Ex 22:22; Dt 24:17; 27:19; Is 1:17; 10:1-2; Zch 7:10).

It should be noted that orphans found their protection within the community, and where the community allowed them to participate in the celebrations they held (Ex 22:22-24; Dt 24:17; 27:19; Ps 82:3; Pr 23:10; Heb 22:23-25). The poor in spirit was the “beggars”, and were in an extreme state of deprivation, destitute, totally dependent on others for their survival (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:1340; *cf.* Ex 23:11; Is 14:30; Lk 16:20). Jesus however, pronounces blessing for the “poor in spirit”, and claims that they possess the kingdom of heaven (*Baker illustrated Bible dictionary*, 2013:1340; *cf.* Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20). Jesus also promised not to leave his followers as orphans, which implies that He would not leave them unprotected (Jn 14:18).

The commission to care for orphans, the poor (and those in spirit), widows and the fatherless is clear from the Bible. A biblical mandate for Christians to respond to the needs

of the poor, the orphaned and the widow should be a recommendation in the LIFEPLAN® programme. According to Scriptures, the believers are ordered pertinently to defend, rescue, and liberate children and youth who are poor and parentless. The researcher emphasises the fact that orphans and vulnerable children and youth who are living in extreme poverty conditions in their respected communities should be a deep concern for churches, NGO's and governmental entities. In the context of the present study, this raises a crucial question: What is the church's contribution in these cases?

2.5.2 *The church's missional contribution*

The church must respond to the *missional* call of God. The researcher is fully aware that the stakes are too high for communities to follow the status quo where the poor and destitute are concerned. Christians must become involved to give hope for these vulnerable children in the orphan crisis, that are facing Africa and other regions (Singletary, 2011:103).

The church should learn to be faithful to God's call since it is the duty of Christians not to sit idle while children struggle to make it in life. The role of children in the church, which part of youth ministry, is important. However, at present that role tend to disintegrate into issues with children, and they become more vulnerable (Makant, 2012:4). Furthermore, there are young people who are not even involved in churches. The question is: What should be done?

The complex answer is outreach through developments, interventions, training and equipping as well as education in mission. The church should embrace development on a psychological, social, and spiritual dimension with regard to the children (Going, 2011:50; Greener, 2016:161). Leaders should be developed to help the church grow. The youth are the future of the church, and this institution is of intrinsic value to God. However, churches often fail to develop their youth (Bergler, 2010:7; 21).

Spiritual development is of essence to children and the youth. The significance of spiritual development is a *change* in the individual's awareness of and relationship with God as Father. Such development deals with identity of the children, and accepts that each relationship with God is initiated by God in Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Since spiritual development is unique, it provides an anchor to all human development (Greener, 2016:161). Developing the youth relies on the activities of the

church to support and assist young people in their moral and spiritual growth (Roebben, 2012:194).

Intervention that supports the efforts of guardian families in communities is needed for the orphans and vulnerable children (Olsen & Hybels, 2011:78). By remaining within their communities, these children retain a sense of belonging and identity, and benefit from the support against risks within the community (Singletary, 2011:102).

Training and equipping is crucial to the youth. It teaches them personal and social responsibility, accountability and citizenship. The youth must be trained and equipped to exercise their responsibility within the community (Bergler, 2010:21). In this regard, the LIFEPLAN® programme can assist significantly. The youth should be trained, equipped and empowered to use their gifts in honouring God by serving their community. They have to be trained and equipped to cope with difficult situations and dilemmas. In order for them to grow, the youth should be guided by the Word of God. This will teach them to be resilient, spiritually strong and confident (i.e. in faith) that their situation and circumstances will be changed (Dillen, 2012:62). Building and understanding resilience is an important aspect in the context of the present study. Resilience is the motivational force within each individual that drives him/her to pursue wisdom, self-actualisation and altruism, and to live in harmony with a spiritual source of strength (Richardson, 2002).

Mission education in this context means conveying the Gospel of Christ to children and youth and make them aware of the importance of *missional* work. Furthermore, it is to educate them about God's Great Commission, involving their lives and their salvation through Christ. The topics should include repentance, baptism and how to be a living testimony for Christ. In this regard, the church is supposed to play a vital role, seeing that it is the locus of God's renewing work (Goheen, 2011:192). If the churches are committed to their children and youth, then it follows that mission education is an important element in the church for the sake of this group. The reason is that they are affected and shaped by their environment and are surrounded by external influences such as the media, electronics, digital appliances, et cetera (Ayo-Obiremi, 2010:183). It is the researcher's view that the children and youth should be educated *missionally*. This will help them understand mission better, and empower them to use their gifts in the service of the *missio Dei* (Shaw & Constantineanu, 2016:208-209). Therefore, it is crucial that the church

should do everything in its power not to lose the initiative and commitment of the children and youth.

To win the hearts of children and young people, they should be loved unconditionally (Vallgård, 2015:595). Jesus loved children and the church should follow suit. This theme is prevalent in the biblical testimony. The following biblical examples illustrate the point:

- Genesis 33:5: Children are graciously given by God.
- Psalm 127:3-5: Children are a heritage from the Lord.
- Matthew 21:15-16 and Psalm 8:2: Praises directed to God from the lips of children and infants.
- Matthew 18:2-6: Believers must become as children to enter the kingdom of heaven.
- Matthew 18:10: People dare not despise the little ones, because God loves them.
- Mark 10:13-16: Jesus was indignant when his disciples rebuked the children who wanted to come to Him.
- John 3:16: Because of love, God gave his only Son, Christ to die for the world (Miller-McLemore, 2010:1).

Considering the above, the LIFEPLAN® programme should adopt a compassion ministry for the poor and orphaned children. Compassion is important in this context since it originates from God's character. All virtues begin with God, who is the essence of goodness, according to Mark 10:18. For example, goodness, mercy and grace indicates love, and compassion, which is an element of true goodness – one of the attributes the Scriptures ascribes to God. Compassion also refers to feelings of love, pity, kindness, tenderness to others (i.e. the poor; the orphans, the widows, the fatherless, etc.) who are in distress (Brown, 2011:44-45; *cf.* Is 54:8). According to Deuteronomy 10:17-19, God provides justice for the fatherless and the widow.

God is not only concerned about the children, the orphans, the poor, and the widows. According to the biblical testimony, God also cares and provides for them in unusual ways due to his compassion for them. God also requires from them to live holy and act righteous in their ways before him and others.

God set the example of compassion for the poor, the orphan and the less fortunate. This example is where God points the way for humans to act caring towards others, thereby

following the way of the Lord. Furthermore, God motivates people through his Word to help the disadvantaged, the poor, the children and orphans (Brown, 2011:51-52).

The main focus of this discussion on compassion is the fact that Jesus Christ's ministry was centred on this act (Brown, 2011:47; *cf.* also Mt 9:36; Mt 20:34; Mk 1:40; Mk 5:19; Mk 6:34; 9:32; 15:32; Lk 7:13). Jesus related to children and they formed an integral part of His ministry (Grundmann, 2016:165; *cf.* also Mt 18:3-5; 19:14; 21:15-16).

Thus, in the present study it is important to remember that children often are the unfortunate omission in missiological studies. In this regard, caring for widows and orphans signifies true Christianity, love for God and a relationship with God (Ja 1:27).

The LIFEPLAN® programme teaches the importance of these mentioned relationships: ***We are creations of God, we are relationship people, we live in a relationship with God*** (Freeks, 2008:1). In other words, the theme of relationships is a fundamental issue in the LIFEPLAN® programme. The programme refers numerous times to healthy relationships with God, oneself and others (Freeks, 2008:22-38).

Poverty is the result of a distorted relationship with God. To have a relationship with God, it is important to study His Word. God reveals Himself mostly, and specifically in and through his Word. People can understand God by knowing what is written and is revealed about God in Scripture (Is 53:1-12; Mt 4:4; Lk 17:30; Gl 1:16; 1 Pt 1:23; Rv 19:13).

A missional programme should allow the mission of God to permeate all aspects of life. Training, equipping and developing farm workers can help teach people about God's redemptive plans for their lives. When it becomes a missional community, they should regard the *missio Dei* through the LIFEPLAN® programme as an important intervention in their lives. This should lead them to become witnesses with testimonies that concretely reflect in the present study (to Ac 1:8).

In this study, it is crucial that *missio Dei* and the LIFEPLAN® programme must be directed and shaped by God's Word. As the term *missio Dei* means the sending of God, so should LIFEPLAN® be concerned with the mission of God. In other words, the way this training and equipping programme relates to the mission of God, must be evident from the responses. "Mission" is in essence, what *God does* in the world (*missio Dei*). This entails

God who instructs people about what they should do, namely *reach out* to the whole world (Ayo-Obiremi, 2010:184).

LIFEPLAN® should be adapted and amended, and have the direction of taking part in the mission of God. It should strive to bridge the gap between outreach and church life. To a lesser extent, LIFEPLAN® is shaped to participate in the transformational mission of God. This means the programme must be able to help rectify people's broken lives, and should be adjusted to help restore what God intended in people lives.

The researcher is of the opinion that poor communities should not only turn back to God, but grow towards the *missio Dei*. Poor communities need to reform back to the Scriptures to fulfil their calling in life. LIFEPLAN® should in this case be adapted and adjusted to be a distinctive example that help transform peoples' lives and help them discover what it means to be the body of Christ within their social context.

Furthermore, LIFEPLAN® should also be amended to apply sound biblical principles that would enable poor communities to break down obstacles impeding them from developing psychologically, socially and economically. Currently, the programme only gives a generic foundation of who individuals are, and from where they originate (Freeks, 2008:1). The programme should be amended to help poor communities function Christ-centric. There is currently a dire need for impoverished communities in South Africa to reconsider biblical principles, reformation, transformation, and even growth, which help them become a missional community.

In this light, LIFEPLAN® should be re-structured to function as a missional programme. This would include biblical principles to address these issues and offer solutions to certain problems, especially on a spiritual level. Affected communities should awake from their spiritual "death" which is a result of poverty, and deal with these problems in order to liberate people (DeBorst, 2007:30-33; *cf.* also 2.4.1; 2.4.2). Spiritual death can be detrimental for the progress of the community. If a community is spiritually degenerated, the best way for renewal is revival. Buys (2011) explains that a renewal is described several times as a resurrection from death. He proposes *revitalisation* as a comprehensive term for revival, repentance, transformation and reformation.

2.6 The LIFEPLAN® programme should be adjusted, adapted and restructured to be a missional and evangelising tool

It is a tendency to view mission as an initiative that began with the church, and a task which individuals as missionaries performs (Messenger, 2004:27). However, it is evident that mission is an action from God, and thus originates from God (De Beer, 2012:47).

The researcher concurs with De Beer that mission is “something that God does”. Therefore, the Bible should be one of the important themes in the LIFEPLAN® programme, and not only a limited section as the case is currently. LIFEPLAN® only indicated in general how God created humans as unique and special, and how He provided them with responsibility to take care of themselves and others (Freeks, 2008:22-26). It was explained previously that God reveals Himself through his Word. From a missional perspective, the LIFEPLAN® programme should be restructured to lay the foundation for God’s mission. For the purpose of the present study, it is important to know that God has a mission. The researcher is convinced that God chooses to fulfil this mission through the church, certain role-players and educational programmes such as the LIFEPLAN® programme. This would, however, only be possible if people and institutions are willing to participate in this *missio Dei*.

The LIFEPLAN® programme has no meaning as such, unless it is adjusted and adapted as a missional and evangelising tool, and observed as participating in the sending by God. The programme should be restructured to declare the Word of God, as the church is called to do. Within this context, Christians must serve through word and deeds, and apply justice where injustice took place (Jansen, 2015:21; cf. Keller, 2011:216-218).

Word and deeds is inseparable combined in the mission of the church, and is an integral part of *missio Dei*, by focusing on each individual’s place in God’s mission. This unity points to a lifestyle that could fit into God’s mission, and functions to the benefit of creation as a whole (Jansen, 2015:20-23; cf. Buys & Jansen, 2015:225-227).

Integral word-and-deed ministry considers the contextual application of the *missio-Dei* motive and challenges the listeners to submit the different areas of their lives to God’s kingdom (Jansen, 2015:24-25). Integral mission or holistic transformation entails the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel, that call people to love and repentance in all areas of life (Micah Declaration on Integral Mission, 2001:1).

The church is an instrument in the *missio Dei* and functions as a holistic body of God through heart, voice and deeds. In the same sense, the LIFEPLAN® programme must be adapted to function as a missional and evangelising tool in poor farm communities where people are broken (Ac 1:8).

It is the intention of the researcher, but not included in the LIFEPLAN® programme yet, that farm participants should be equipped and trained to interpret and engage the culture in terms of the Gospel. The LIFEPLAN® should be adjusted, and should provide for these participants to live through word and deeds in their own context and workplaces (Doornenbal, 2012:19).

A church that declares mission as priority should integrate evangelising into its compassion ministry (Ja 1:19-27; 2:14-26). The reason is that mission and evangelising are God's ways of handling the problem of broken people in a spiritual and practical way (Wright, 2011:328). The preaching of the Word focuses on the life of human beings as well as forgiveness of sin. Thus, after its restructuring the LIFEPLAN® programme should make people aware of God's redemption and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The Word is essential since the Gospel is the good news of the active presence of God's reign over all of creation (Jansen, 2015:24).

Suppression and injustice exist globally. In contrast, the plan of God for impoverished communities is justice and righteousness since these communities can also be a blessing to the nations (Wright, 2011:369). The LIFEPLAN® programme should implement this objective to be a missional and evangelising tool that teach farm participants about the mission, message and purpose of Jesus for their lives. In this case, LIFEPLAN® should also be adapted to teach poor communities the following truths:

- Who is God?
- What is the purpose and will of God for their lives?
- How does God look at people and what does He expect from them?
- The importance of families.
- The plans of God for people (Jr 29:11).

Currently, the programme lacks the mentioned aspects regarding the poor communities and should be amended further to include following objectives:

- Bring the light of God to people who are living in darkness (1 Pt 2:9).
- Empower people through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and enlighten their mind about the bestowing of spiritual gifts (Ac 1:8); help them understand that God shares power with human beings to help them participate in His mission.
- Train people to be strong in times of adversity and during crisis circumstances because mission is Word-based and God's Word sustains life (Is 55:10-11).
- Equip people for every good work (2 Tm 3:16).
- Transform people's lives and reconcile them with God (2 Cor 3:18).
- Introduce people to God's restoring relationship (2 Cor 5:19).
- Proclaim service as an integral part of mission and an essential expression of *diakonia*, which is interrelated with *koinonia* (sharing at the table), by tackling poverty (Messenger, 2004:37).

2.7 The need for spiritual formation and prayer in LIFEPLAN®

By way of introduction, the use of Scripture alone in the lives of people is not sufficient for their spiritual growth. The LIFEPLAN® programme should be adjusted to emphasise the importance of spiritual formation and prayer. In the empirical research (chapter 3, point 3.8.2.6), the spiritual part of the participants is seemingly not important since their spirituality was based on the worship of ancestral spirits, traditional healers, badimos and sangomas. Therefore, the LIFEPLAN® programme should be amended to teach these critical issues, namely spirituality and prayer.

Prayer was one of the important elements which emerged strongly from the empirical research (chapter 3 point 3.8.2.3; chapter 4 point 4.8.2). In this regard, the LIFEPLAN® programme must be adjusted to accommodate this vital notion. Using LIFEPLAN® as a tool for mission and evangelism, it is essential that the programme confirms the essence of mission and evangelism as true spirituality. Furthermore, the programme should not hesitate to mention and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the fundamental Person who can change peoples' lives. To use a practical example, this should be someone who is full of joy, reverence, worship and admiration for Jesus Christ as his/her mighty Saviour (Buys, 2014:135; cf. Green, 1992:8).

For the purpose of the present study, it is important to elaborate on the two important concepts, namely spiritual formation and prayer. These notions should be an ideal

reference for mission and evangelism in the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme.

2.7.1 *Spiritual formation*

2.7.1.1 What spiritual formation entails

For clarity on the term *spiritual formation*, it is essential for the researcher to refer to the human spirit. Spiritual formation concerns the inner being, and lead to the transformation of the whole person (i.e. body, soul/mind, spirit). This formation focuses on personal change and renewing one's mind (Porter, 2014:250; cf. Rm 12:2). Furthermore, it also entails the deepening of an individual's faith to grow spiritually. The spirit of the human being also includes the heart, which is the same as the spirit, will, or mind, is where the work of spiritual formation takes place (Porter, 2014:250). Therefore, to speak of spirituality does not refer merely to a part of human life but rather the whole of an individual's life (Buys, 2014:135).

Spirituality focuses on the whole of one's life. However, spiritual formation is insufficient without the practice of faith formation. Therefore, faith is of essence in the spiritual formation since the focus is on a person's inner being. In other words, it should speak to the heart, soul and spirit of the human being. People's spirituality should take form in the world, by becoming followers of Christ, be prepared to bear the cross of discipleship (Lk 14:27), and being fully transformed only in Christ (2 Cor 5:17; Rm 12:2).

Formation means "heart work", therefore, the human heart is the well-spring of all human action, and *heart work* is *hard work* indeed. The heart is being formed into a dwelling place for God, and should be kept with God (Foster, 2011:27). Spiritual formation entails the initiative and presence of God, without which all human efforts are in vain. In the path of spiritual formation there is a real possibility of meeting this need for transformation (Willard, 2016).

In the LIFEPLAN® programme, spiritual formation should be addressed as the spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself and his deeds (Willard, 2016).

2.7.1.2 Spiritual formation is grounded in Scripture

In the present study, it is crucial that spiritual growth starts with the pre-eminent role of God's Word in the lives of his people. Spiritual formation is further reference to the dynamic means of sanctification and it deals mainly with the on- going work of the Holy Spirit to bring about spiritual growth in the lives of the participants. Such formation is grounded in Scripture and inspired by the Holy Spirit:

He may grant that you be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love (Eph 3:16-17).

Spiritual formation is outlined in various passages of the Old and New Testaments (e.g. Pr 4:20-24; Mk 7:15, 20-23; Lk 6; 2 Pt 1:7; Col 3:14; Rm 5:5; 1 Cor 13). Spiritual formation is a dynamic process of participants' spiritual shaping and growth. In this regard, the LIFEPLAN® programme should also be adjusted to focus on the daily maturing of the individual's relationship with God through his Word.

2.7.1.3 Spiritual formation focuses on Jesus Christ

In Christian spiritual formation, the focus is continually on Jesus Christ. Therefore, in the context of the present study, spiritual formation is considered as a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others. Jesus Christ is the Shepherd and care for sheep by interceding for them (Mt 6:25); heal hem (Ac 3:16); convict and forgive them (Jn 16:8 & Ja 5:16); cleanse them (2 Pt 1:19); and comfort them (2 Cor 1:3) (Barber & Barker, 2014:272).

Those who are followers of Jesus will do what He commanded them to. In other words, it is a progression of life in which believers are brought to do what Jesus taught them. The desire to become like Jesus Christ makes spiritual formation a life-long process since its practice eventually leads to Christian devoutness. This formation has its roots in basic Christian actions: prayer, Bible study, fasting, confession, worship, service, et cetera. Furthermore, true Christian spiritual formation helps those, who follow Jesus Christ, to walk and live in God's presence with body, mind, and soul amid the suffering and struggles of this world. Believers reflectively embodies the character of Jesus Christ where He is formed in their lives (Willard, 2016; cf. also Gl 4:19).

2.7.2 *Prayer*

2.7.2.1 **Prayer and the role of Jesus Christ through prayer**

A simple yet a powerful definition of Christian prayer is a child of God talking to his heavenly Father (Rm 8:14-16). The Triune God are involved in believers' prayers. Although their prayers are directed primarily to God as Father, the other Persons, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are also listening to these prayers. Believers pray to the Father because He is their Provider as attested by these selected Scriptures:

- John 16:23: "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."
- James 1:17: "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow."
- Ephesians 1:17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him."

Believers' prayers are to be addressed to God by using the term, "Father". The basic plan of prayer for the New Testament saint is not to address Jesus, but the Father. He is the one to whom they must pray. They pray to God in the name of the Son – He is their Mediator who guarantees access. They pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. This process becomes clear from the following Scriptures:

- Ephesians 2:18: "For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father."
- 1 Timothy 2:5-6: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time."
- Galatians 4:6: "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father'."
- Jude 20: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit."

Furthermore, prayer is a general human phenomenon which is universal and occurs in all nations and religions, and is also connected with worship (Miller, 2009:21-21). Prayer also means to speak with the mind into the heart, and stand before the face of the Lord, ever-present, all seeing, living within them (Foster, 2011:35). Prayer was from the beginning man's ultimate report in times of trouble, guilt and the need for forgiveness, but

it is also a powerful instrument and spiritual weapon that God grant believers (Barnard, 2004:7-13).

The basis for prayer is that God yearns to communicate with those who belong to Him. He longs to hear from them and desires their presence in Jesus. Jesus Christ showed the believers God's yearning for the gathering of all people with God himself, and that He is the Sustainer of all. On a daily, if not hourly, basis, Jesus searches believers' hearts, longing to commune with them. Jesus Christ established a living fellowship that would know God throughout. This type of intimate relationship of Jesus Christ with the Father constantly modelled this life of *hearing* and *obeying* (Foster, 2011:15-26).

2.7.2.2 Prayer gives spiritual strength

Prayer gives a person spiritual strength and affects the attitude of the one who prays. A person who prays is able to cope better with the issues of the world, and experiences increased spiritual strength (Brümmer, 2008:12). Prayer creates an emotional and spiritual space that allows God to construct an inner sanctuary in the individual's heart. Through Jesus Christ who is the cornerstone (Is 28:16; Mt 21:42; Eph 2:20), is the "whole structure joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom we are built spiritually into a dwelling place for God" (Foster, 2011:26; cf. Eph 2:21-22).

For example, the whole book of Psalms can be considered a book of prayer, and contains an element of spirituality that captures people's emotions (Barnard, 2004:15; cf. Persaud, 2015). Prayer strengthens people's relationship with God and build their as their religious life, inner unity, practical faith, leading to a total surrender and change. This action also causes the relationship with God to grow, and keeps it healthy (Barnard, 2004:16-17). Prayer does not only strengthen the relationship with God and people, but also affects the relationship from both sides (Brümmer, 2008:89).

2.7.2.3 The way to pray

Learning to pray does not offer a person a less busy life, but it offers a less busy heart. In this regard, prayer in practice reflects a real relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ (Miller, 2009:25). Jesus encourages his disciples to become like little children (Mk 10:14-15). Children learn about God's love for them but also how to return this love (Becker, 2016:28).

Prayer was mentioned as an important lifestyle for farm participants in the LIFEPLAN® programme, but was not expounded as a full chapter (Freeks, 2008:1, 22-31). Therefore, LIFEPLAN® should be amended to include such a section for participants. During the training and equipping of farm participants, it was basically a norm and principle to open and close in prayer after a session. Several participants indicated during and after LIFEPLAN® training sessions as well as in the empirical research, that prayer is paramount in their lives because it is the *instrument* or *element* they use to communicate and to be in contact with God.

2.8 Conclusion

The mission of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme is to participate in God's mission. Therefore, the practices in LIFEPLAN® regarding mission and evangelizing through Jesus Christ should reflect and embody what God Himself is doing in people's lives. The programme should focus strongly on disadvantaged communities who have nothing, and yet everything because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Believers' social involvement has certain gaps to fill, but also holds missional and evangelistic consequences since they bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. God's work of reconciling the whole creation to himself should be a main concern in the LIFEPLAN® programme and an instruction that stir the belief in Jesus Christ. The participants should live a life devoted to God's vision for all humans. LIFEPLAN® in its limited capacity and significance, strives to fill some of these mentioned gaps but should be adjusted and amended to its full capacity, to be effective within this context.

CHAPTER 3: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LIFEPLAN® PROGRAMMES IN RURAL AREAS: THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

ABSTRACT

The main focus of this chapter is to determine the effectiveness of the LIFEPLAN® programme by employing quantitative research such as questionnaires distributed to selected candidates. The participants were the farm workers who attended the LIFEPLAN® training and who forms part of the intervention programme. An exploratory, interpretive as well as descriptive quantitative contextual design was followed. The results from this quantitative pattern indicated that participants are convinced their life is on the right track after the LIFEPLAN® intervention. In conjunction with this belief, participants indicated that their life has gained a sense of direction or meaning due the LIFEPLAN® programme. Their spiritual well-being, for example, are enriched where 80% indicated that they have a personally meaningful relationship with God. According to participants this meaningful relationship contributes largely to their sense of well-being.

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a description is given of the empirical process to determine specific deductions by using a quantitative research design. The empirical data were interpreted with the holistic missional outreach to the contemporary youth of South Africa in mind. Against this background, the LIFEPLAN® programme was assessed and its strong and weak points investigated.

The most suitable and recognised design for this research is the model of Osmer (2008). This model provides a clear method to move from an existing praxis to a new one based on a theological and situational analysis. In the present study, the new praxis focused on the role of a missional vision in youth ministry in previously disadvantaged communities who struggle with challenges of poverty, unemployment, immorality and criminality.

The objective of this empirical research was to evaluate the LIFEPLAN® programme and its impact and effectiveness as a tool for churches to reaching the youth and communities, who are facing the above-mentioned multiple challenges. This purpose forms part of the descriptive-empirical task of Osmer (2008:31).

In this study, the empirical research is closely connected to theological theories. Therefore, is it essential to make use empirically of other sources additional to literature, namely interviews and naive sketches.

The aim of this chapter is to give a clear description of the entire research process and its results measured against the aim and objectives of this study. The first part of the chapter describes how a research design is structured. From the research method that was used a discussion follows where the research results are explained.

3.2 Research design

In the present research, an exploratory, interpretive and descriptive quantitative as well as contextual design was used (Thorne, 2008). An exploratory approach investigates the experience of the participants (farm workers). Such a research was necessary since, to date, this experience has not been investigated yet. The researcher attempted to explore the experiences of participants (farm workers) by using questionnaires. A descriptive approach is normally followed for quantitative research, but can also be used in a qualitative design (Vyhmeister, 2008:151). All studies present some descriptive data while others break down the entire unit into smaller and diverse sections that could be studied (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:53; Sheridan & Kisor, 2000:102).

According to Evans (2014:107, *cf.* Burns & Grove, 2005:29) it is preferable that research on a phenomenon takes place within the relevant context. Thus, by conducting the present research, the feedback of managers from the various farms was described within the unique context of their farm workers (participants) who attended the LIFEPLAN® programme.

Linked to this above-mentioned approach, the model of Osmer (2008) was used. This model (see Figure 3-1 below) offers four distinctive steps or tasks to missiology as a model with guides to interpret incidents, situations and events into which a situation may unfold. These four (4) steps is an answer to a specific question:

- Descriptive-empirical task – *What is going on?* This step analysed the current situations and contexts of the youth in rural areas in South Africa enabling the researcher to describe and understand them. This investigation was conducted firstly through quantitative (questionnaires) research focusing on youth in rural areas.

- Interpretive task – *Why is this going on?* This investigate the reasons for what is going on, for example interpreting why the present situation exists and how it impacts participants through a specific training and equipping programme.
- Normative task – *What ought to be going on?* The researcher views the Bible as the authoritative and the normative standard. This provides the basis for evaluating what is going on and suggesting appropriate responses and feedback. Relevant biblical principles were applied to the situation of the youth in rural areas and communities in South Africa.
- Pragmatic task – *How might we respond?* An interpretation of the situational and normative data, suggests and provides a tool for churches that help them reach the youth and communities who are struggling with the mentioned multiple challenges. It is envisaged that this will impact and influence the current situation and lead towards desirable outcomes for the youth and communities in these rural areas.

As is indicated in the diagram depicted in Figure 1 (Osmer, 2008) below, the focus of this chapter is on the normative as well the pragmatic task. The model of Osmer used in the present study correlate with other models such as that of Zerfass (1974), Browning and Van der Ven (1993), Heitink (1999), Lotter (2007) and Swinton and Mowat (2007). These models help missionaries and practical theologians understand and gain insight in the lives of people to whom they are ministering (Lotter, 2007:2-7).

The phenomenon that was explored and described was about the evaluating of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme from a Missiological perspective to its impact and effectiveness as a possible tool for churches in reaching the youth and communities in rural areas. The context of this study is within the Christiana District with the participants (farm workers) who attended the LIFEPLAN® training and the managers of the various farms in this region.

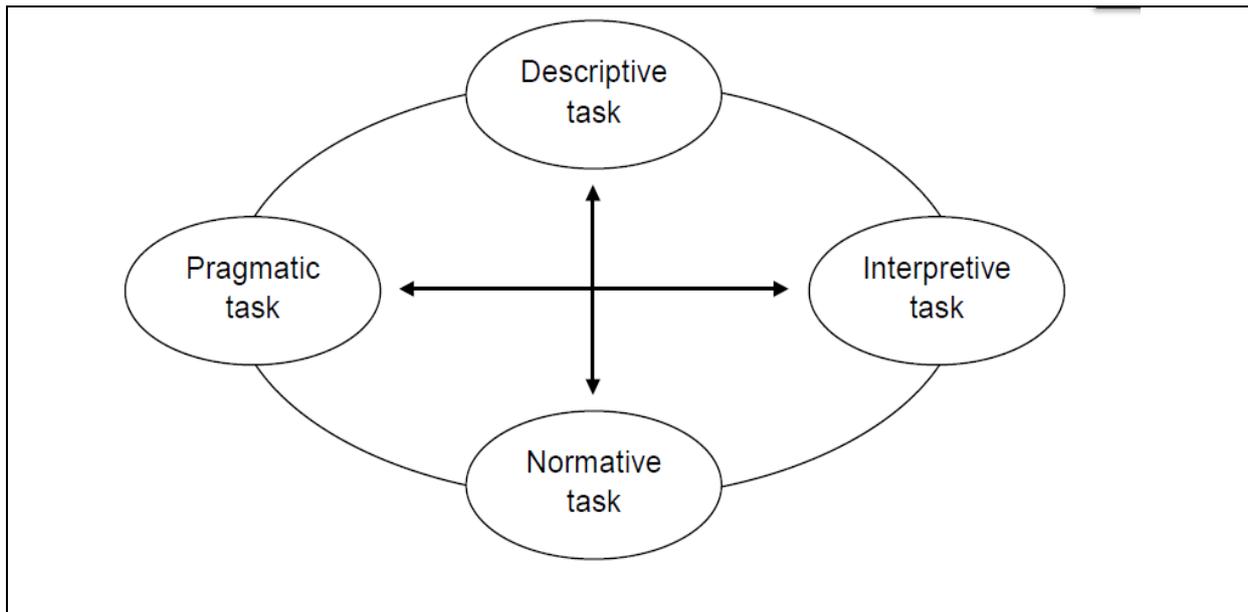


Figure 3-1: The model of Osmer's four-tasks interpretation

3.3 Research method

The method of research used to gather data was a quantitative design (questionnaires) involving 151 participants (farm workers).

3.3.1 *Permission to conduct research*

Permission to conduct the qualitative research with participants was granted by the following stakeholders: Research Committee of the Faculty of Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee, the municipality of Christiana, the police department in Christiana and the individual participants and managers who partook in the study (see Appendices 7-10). Permission was granted by the individual participants and managers through informed consent (Botma *et al.*, 2010:12, 16-17). Letters (Annexure A) was written to each participant and manager in the broader Christiana District explaining the study. Thereafter each participant and manager were requested to sign a consent form (Annexure B) that they would partake in the research voluntary.

3.3.2 Sample

3.3.2.1 Population

With respect to the present study, the population consisted of participants (farm workers) for the quantitative research (questionnaires). All participants in the research were selected from the broader Christiana District in the North-West Province. The demographic layout of the Christiana District is Black and Coloured people (farm participants) and White people (farm managers).

3.3.2.2 Sampling

Participants (farm workers) were selected since they were trained and equipped with the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme. Farm managers were selected since they required the training and equipping programme for their workers.

3.3.2.3 Sample size

The participants (farm workers) for the quantitative research (questionnaires) were 151 in total.

3.4 Data gathering

The researcher and the coordinator for the various farms identified the participants (farm workers) and farm managers from the selected farms in the Christiana District. They were contacted telephonically and an appointment made for the time and place where questionnaires were going to be completed. Factors were discussed beforehand such as anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, risks, withdrawal and even possible termination (Botma *et al.*, 2010:13-14). The physical setting where questionnaires were completed was at the various farms in the private training areas of the participants' choice. The settings were private, pleasant and comfortable with little or no distractions (Pinkoane, 2005:293).

The quantitative research consisted of five questions (i.e. general well-being, 10 sub-questions; relationships, self-image and self-esteem development, 10 questions; emotions, 10 questions; quality of life, 16 questions and spiritual well-being, 12 questions). These questions and sub-questions were formulated from the themes of the

LIFEPLAN® programme. The researcher also conducted a pilot study testing the questionnaires with 5 participants in each of the identified populations. The data were found to be usable and were included in the total data set.

3.5 Data analysis

The quantitative research (questionnaires) were analysed by the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus (see Appendix 5). The data are presented in tables and figures.

3.6 Trustworthiness of the research process

Trustworthiness of the quantitative study was ensured by adhering to the ethical considerations described below.

3.7 Ethical considerations

3.7.1 *Informed consent*

Before the research commenced the researcher approached the various farms, participants (farm workers) and farm managers, and explained their crucial involvement and participation. Thereafter, the researcher held different meetings with the participants and farm managers where he explained to them the letter (Annexure A) and consent (Annexure B) as vital proof of their permission to be part of this valuable study. The researcher also explained the ethical considerations and provided participants with information on the purpose of the research, its procedure, and general details about the protection of confidentiality (Annexure A, D).

3.7.2 *Right to self-determination*

The right to self-determination is based on the ethical principle of respect for people. In this regard, the researcher treated all participants as autonomous agents who have personal freedom and rights. The researcher also informed co-researchers about the proposed study and that their participation was completely voluntary. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without a penalty (Brink, 2007:32).

3.7.3 *Anonymity and confidentiality*

The researcher and the promoter handled participants' information confidentially. This was done by protecting their anonymity after participants had given the necessary authorisation for the researcher to use and disclose their personal information (Strydom & Delpont, 2004:61).

3.7.4 *Privacy*

The researcher respected each participant's right to privacy, especially when they shared highly personal information. He also ensured that the participants' names were not be mentioned as part of their responses.

3.7.5 *Right to fair treatment*

The researcher treated all participants fair and with dignity, whether they were young or older (Burns and Grove, 2005:107).

3.8 Results of the research

3.8.1 *Introduction*

Chapter 3 discusses data collected from the quantitative research (questionnaires). The data is presented by way of figures and tables. Based on the findings, this study evaluates the LIFEPLAN® programme in terms of its strong and weak points. This chapter used a quantitative (questionnaires) approach involving participants of the various farms in the Christiana District in South Africa.

3.8.2 *Results of the quantitative research (questionnaires)*

3.8.2.1 Demographic information: Gender and age

In the present study both male and females participated in the research. This information is presented in Table 3-1 below.

Table 3-1: Gender

Gender	N	%
Male	87	57.6
Female	64	42.4
Total	151	100

From Table 3-1 above it appears that 23 more male participants participated in the quantitative research (questionnaires). The male participants were the dominant group with 57.6% against the 42.4% of female participants. This is demonstrated by Table 3-2 below.

Table 3-2: Age

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Age	151	21	62	35.81	10.407

The age according to Table 3-2 above is 21 years minimum and 62 years maximum. The youngest participant was 21 years old and the oldest 62 years old. Average age of participants was 35.8 years old.

3.8.2.2 General well-being

This specific question in the questionnaire investigated the effect of the LIFEPLAN® programme on the general well-being of participants. Participants had to indicate whether they disagree (1), slightly agree (2) or strongly agree (3) on the questions regarding the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme. The results can be seen in Table 3-3 below.

Table 3-3: General well-being

Questions	Disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
Bright	3.3%	11.9%	84.8%
Satisfied	0.7%	14.7%	84.7%
Future	2.0%	12.1%	85.9%
Right track	1.3%	11.4%	87.2%
Failure	2.7%	14.0%	83.3%
Interest	2.7%	8.7%	88.7%
Clear goals	0.7%	17.9%	81.5%
Good relationships	2.0%	11.3%	86.7%
Fun	2.0%	10.8%	87.2%
Strength	3.3%	6.6%	90.1%

From Table 3-3 above about general well-being only 3.3% of the participants disagreed that their life seems brighter after the LIFEPLAN® programme; 11.9% slightly agreed against the 84.8% who strongly agree that their life seems brighter after the training programme. Participants indicated further that their life is on the right track (87.2%), full of interest (88.7%), enjoying good relationships (86.7%), and their life is so much fun (87.2%) after the programme. It is significant that 90.1% (strongly agree) and 6.6% (slightly agree) indicated that they find strength in their faith and spiritual beliefs after the programme was presented.

3.8.2.3 Relationships, self-image and self-esteem development

On the questions of relationships, self-image and self-esteem development, participants indicated not at all (1), somewhat (moderately) (2) and certainly (3) on their answers. The results are presented in Table 3-4 below.

Table 3-4: Relationships, self-image and self-esteem

Questions	Not at all (1)	Somewhat (moderately) (2)	Certainly (3)
Positively	4.0%	14.7%	81.3%
Emotional	5.3%	15.9%	78.8%
Solutions	2.0%	19.9%	78.1%
Hobbies	4.6%	27.8%	67.5%
Unpleasant	2.0%	16.0%	82.0%
Something good	4.6%	15.2%	80.1%
Feeling sad	3.3%	16.0%	80.7%
New friends	8.6%	21.2%	70.2%
Getting friends	6.0%	21.2%	72.8%
Pray or meditate	0.7%	11.9%	87.4%

According to Table 3-4 above regarding participants' relationships, self-image and self-esteem, 81.3% was very positive about themselves in contrast to the 4.0% who were not and 14.7% who were moderately positive about themselves. From the 151 participants, 78.8% indicated that they get emotional support from their family and friends, and 82.0% mentioned that they take their mind off unpleasant thoughts. Most participants (80.7%) keep themselves from feeling sad. It is further striking that 70.2% of participants indicated that they make new friends, whereas 8.6% do not, and 21.2% make new friends moderately. It is also significant that 87.4% of the participants pray or meditate when they have a problem against the .7% who do not, and 11.9% who moderately pray or meditate when they experience a problem.

3.8.2.4 Emotions

On the questions of emotions, participants have indicated never (1), once or twice (2) and almost every day (3). These were their responses on their feelings in the past three months after the LIFEPLAN® programme was implemented. The results regarding the emotions are presented in Table 3-5 below.

Table 3-5: Emotions

Questions	Never (1)	Once or twice (2)	Almost every day (3)
Satisfied	1.3%	26.0%	72.7%
Interested	0.0%	11.9%	88.1%
Happy	1.4%	15.5%	83.1%
Important	7.3%	37.3%	55.3%
Community	9.4%	24.8%	65.8%
Better place	6.0%	18.7%	75.3%
Direction/meaning	3.4%	7.4%	89.2%
Basically good	5.4%	28.9%	65.8%
Personality	1.3%	4.0%	94.7%
Society	6.0%	29.8%	64.2%

In Table 3-5 above, 88.1% of the participants indicated that they feel interested in life, almost every day, against the 11.9% who feel interested in life, once or twice. Most of the participants (83.1%) asserted that they felt happy in the past three months, and 55.3% feel almost every day they have something important to contribute to society. This contrasts with the 37.3% who had this feeling once or twice. It is evident that most participants (65.8%) felt that they belong to a community, whereas only 9.4% never felt that way.

From the 151 participants, 75% remarkably indicated that they feel their society and communities are becoming a better place to live with other people, against the 6.0% who never feel that way. Significantly, 89% of participants feel that their life has a sense of direction or meaning, against the 3.4% who do not feel that way. It is also striking that 97.7% of the participants indicated that they liked most parts of their personality, in contrast to the mere 1.3% who did not.

3.8.2.5 Quality of life

On these questions, participants have indicated aspects such as health, self-image, goals, money, learning, helping others, love and friend as the most important elements in

the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme. In this case, participants had to gauge the elements as not important (1), important (2) and very important (3). The results are presented in Table 3-6 below.

Table 3-6: Quality of life

Questions	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)
Important health	1.3%	11.3%	87%
Satisfied health	2.0%	11.9%	86.1%
Important self-esteem and self-image	2.0%	10.6%	87.4%
Satisfied self-esteem and self-image	2.7%	10.0%	87.3%
Important goals and values	.7%	11.3%	88.1%
Satisfied goals and values	1.3%	21.2%	77.5%
Important money	0.7%	17.2%	82.1%
Satisfied money	4.0%	44.7%	51.3%
Important learning	1.3%	7.4%	91.3%
Satisfied learning	1.3%	17.2%	81.5%
Important helping others	0.0%	17.9%	82.1%
Satisfied helping others	2.6%	10.6%	86.8%
Important love	0.0%	9.3%	90.7%
Satisfied loving others	0.0%	15.2%	84.8%
Important friends	2.6%	43.0%	54.3%
Satisfied friends	0.0%	40.4%	59.6%

From Table 3-6 above the focus falls on the four core aspects for quality of life, namely health, money, learning and helping others, seeing that these form the fundamental and basic foundation of the LIFEPLAN® programme. Of the 151 participants, 87% indicated health is very important, against the 1.3% who claimed that it is not important. As many as 86.1% confirmed that they are satisfied with their health, whereas 2.0% were very

dissatisfied. Regarding money, 82.1% of the participants indicated that money is important, in contrast to the 0.7% who indicated that it is not important. Only 4.0% of the participants indicated that they are very dissatisfied with the money they have, against the 51.3% who indicated that they are very satisfied with the money they have.

Remarkably, 91.3% of the participants indicated that learning is very important, whereas only 1.3% indicated that it is not important. Surprisingly, regarding the question of helping others no participant indicated that it is not important. From the 151 participants, 82.1% indicated very important and 17.9% indicated that it is important to help others. Participants were also very satisfied (86.8%) in helping others, against the 2.6% who were very dissatisfied in helping others.

3.8.2.6 Spiritual well-being

This specific question was based on the importance of God, one’s relationship and one’s faith in Him. Participants differentiated in their responses as follows: not at all (1), somewhat (2) and certainly (3). This is indicated in Table 3-7 below.

Table 3-7: Spiritual well-being

Questions	Not at all (1)	Somewhat (moderately) (2)	Certainly (3)
Loves and cares	.7%	3.3%	96.0%
Who am I?	1.3%	3.3%	95.3%
Impersonal	63.5%	14.9%	21.6%
Personally	6.0%	6.7%	87.2%
Personal strength	54.7%	20.0%	25.3%
Problems	.7%	9.9%	89.4%
Relationship	46.4%	13.2%	40.4%
Feel lonely	2.7%	4.7%	92.6%
Well-being	2.6%	7.3%	90.1%
Purpose	2.0%	4.0%	94.0%
Ancestral spirits	27.8%	21.9%	50.3%
Traditional healers	47.7%	17.2%	35.1%

In Table 3-7 above, questions 3; 5; 7; 11 and 12 about God is impersonal: they do not get personal strength and support from God; do not enjoy a relationship with God. In these responses, ancestral spirits and traditional healers are indicated low, while questions 1; 2; 4; 6; 8; 9 and 10 indicated high.

It is notable that 96% of the participants indicated that they believe God loves them and cares about them, against the 0.7% who do not believe this at all. However, is it disappointing that 21.6% believe that God is impersonal and not interested in them, in contrast to the 63.5% who do not believe this at all; and 14.9% who moderately believe that God is not interested in their life. Even regarding personal strength and support from God, 25.3% indicated that they certainly do not get it from God, against the 54.7% who do not agree.

However, from the 151 participants, it is comforting that 95.3% indicated they know who they are and where they came from, which is a central theme in the LIFEPLAN® programme. Participants also indicated that 87.2% of them have a personally meaningful relationship with God, in contrast to a mere 6% who do not have a relationship and 6.7% who moderately have a relationship. About God being concerned with their problems, 89.4% indicated that God is, whereas the 0.7% believe God is not and 9.9% who moderately believe God is interested. It is further overwhelming to see that 90.1% indicated that their relationship with God contributes to their sense of well-being, and 94% who believe that there is a real purpose for their life.

In contrast with the above, 50.3% honour, worship and ask blessings from their ancestral spirits (badimos), against 27.8% who do not and 21.9% who moderately do. The same scenario occurred regarding the traditional healers (sangomas and inyangas): 35.1% indicated they consult them for advice about their life and future, against the 47.7% who do not and 17.2% who moderately do that. In general, seemingly to a number of the participants spirituality is not as important as the other aspects.

3.8.2.7 Reliability and descriptive of factors

Regarding reliability and descriptive factors, Cronbach's alpha was indicated in percentages. All sub-scales were reliable, therefore, it was possible to calculate the sub-scales. The spiritual factor was divided into two aspects due to the different belief systems of the participants. The first aspect was taken as the participants' Christian perspective

and the second aspect their ancestral perspective. The reliability and descriptive factors are presented in Table 3-8 below.

Table 3-8: Reliability and descriptive factors

Descriptive factors	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	Std. deviation
Well-being	0.719	2.83	.252
Relationships, self-image and self-esteem development	0.726	2.73	.280
Emotions	0.677	2.71	.261
Quality of life	0.793	2.78	.223
Spirituality (God)	0.620	2.71	.276
Spirituality (spirits)	0.725	2.05	.780

From Table 3-8 above, it was clear that the following factors were close to a 3-point scale: well-being (2.83); relationships (2.73); emotions (2.71); quality of life (2.78); and spirituality (God) (2.71). These factors were marked very important, very satisfied and certainly for participants. Spirituality (spirits) (2.05), however, measured on a 2-point scale, which was indicated as moderately or somewhat important to participants.

3.8.2.8 Correlations between the descriptive factors

Table 3-9 below indicates the correlations that were found between die descriptive factors.

Table 3-9: Correlations between descriptive factors

Descriptive	Age	Well-being	Relationships	Emotions	Quality of life
Well-being Correlation coefficient	0.072	1.000	0.538**	0.342**	0.286**
Relationships Correlation coefficient	0.173*	0.538**	1.000	0.534**	0.506**

Descriptive	Age	Well-being	Relationships	Emotions	Quality of life
Emotions Correlation coefficient	0.195*	0.342**	0.534**	1.000	0.609**
Quality of life Correlation coefficient	0.201*	0.286**	0.506**	0.609**	1.000
Spiritual (God) Correlation coefficient	0.037	0.192*	0.203*	0.049	0.084
Spiritual Correlation (spirits) coefficient	0.093	0.016	0.012	0.034	0.020

The correlations between descriptive factors in Table 9-3 above point out high and low relations between the factors.

The following factors scored high: age and relationships (0.173*); age and emotions (0.195*); and age and quality of life (0.201*). It seems that age has a definite influence since the older participants gave higher importance to sub-scales in the research than the younger participants. This could be due to the older participants' experience, decision-making and quality choices. Between the factors of relationships and well-being, the scores indicated 0.538**, which is high. The same applies to well-being and emotions (0.342**); and well-being and quality of life (0.286**), which also scored high. Relationships and well-being (0.538**); relationships and emotions (0.534**); and relationships and quality of life (0.506***) scored very high. Emotions and well-being (0.342**), emotions and relationships (0.534**) and emotions quality of life (0.609**) also scored high.

Significant relations were also found between quality of life and well-being (0.286**); quality of life and relationships (0.506**); and quality of life and emotions (0.609**).

Between spirituality (God) and well-being (0.192*) and spirituality and relationships (0.203*) the scores indicated a high relation.

This means that all the above-mentioned sub-scales were inter-related. However, spiritual (spirits i.e. ancestral spirits such as badimos and traditional healers such as sangomas and inyangas) were not correlated with any of the other factors.

3.8.2.9 Difference in gender

The difference in gender was measured and scored by considering the descriptive factors: well-being, relationships, emotions, quality of life and spirituality. The results are presented in Table 3-10 below.

Table 3-10: Difference in gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	P-value	Effect size
Well-being 1 M 2 F	87 64	2.8255 2.8514	0.23165 0.27885	>0.05	0.09
Relationships 1 M 2 F	87 64	2.7347 2.7406	0.27256 0.29207	>0.05	0.02
Emotions 1 M 2 F	87 64	2.7020 2.7281	0.26063 0.26418	>0.05	0.10
Quality of life 1 M 2 F	87 64	2.7696 2.8039	0.19231 0.26109	>0.05	0.13
Spiritual (God) 1 M 2 F	87 64	2.6862 2.7313	0.26456 0.29213	>0.05	0.15
Spiritual (spirits) 1 M 2 F	87 64	2.0402 2.0625	0.79321 0.76894	>0.05	0.03

Evident from Table 3-10 above, no significant difference was found between the male and female participants.

3.9 Strong and weak points of the LIFEPLAN® programme

3.9.1 *Strong points of the programme*

The following strong points of the programme could be pointed out:

- LIFEPLAN® in its current state is effective particularly in the South African context, where 80% of the population identified themselves with the Christian faith, especially those living in poor previously-disadvantaged areas and districts of South Africa.
- The programme was developed only to be used in the context of African young people, therefore its success and effectiveness in rural areas.
- From the 151 participants who participated in the LIFEPLAN® training, 90% and more indicated that they experienced a positive impact from the programme in their lives.

3.9.2 *Weak points of the programme*

The following weak points of the programme could be identified:

- LIFEPLAN® do not deal effectively and explicitly with the fundamental aspect of spirituality. From the empirical research, it was clear that spirituality is not that important to a number of participants in the Christiana District.
- The programme may not have the same impact and effectiveness in other countries with a different religious demographic context than the Christian faith. Therefore, the programme was not tested nor placed within other contexts to measure its effectiveness and impact in an urban context. It should also be adapted for other developing countries, and even First-World countries such as the Netherlands, Portugal, or Brazil.
- The programme was not tested in the *Two-Thirds World*, *Three-Fourths World* and *majority world* in Africa, such as the main Southern African states where it may be beneficial. This reason is that LIFEPLAN® is based on Christian as well as general living values.

- The question remains whether LIFEPLAN® can be effective within a context where participants show higher levels of literacy. The current programme was designed, developed and compiled to support participants who are under-developed, unemployed, illiterate, semi-literate. They are trained and developed to become skilled, self-sustainable, independent and hard-working to direct their own lives.
- The programme may develop more guidelines and a training manual for facilitators of the programme. In such a manual the underlying philosophical goals and expected outcomes must be explained in more detail to motivate the facilitators in their presentation of the programme.
- In contextualising the programme, it may be necessary to consider the different learning styles of people from diverse backgrounds, i.e. *field dependent* and *field independent* learning styles.⁴

3.10 Conclusion

From the empirical investigation (quantitative research) it was found that the participants (farm workers) comprehend the essence of the descriptive factors that LIFEPLAN® pointed out. These were, namely general well-being, relationships, self-image, self-esteem development, emotions, quality of life and spiritual well-being.

General conclusion

For the purpose of the present study, it is significant that more than 90% of the participants strongly agreed that they do find their strength in their faith and spiritual beliefs. Most of them pray or meditate when they are confronted with problem situations as pointed out to the effectiveness of the programme. An important Christian characteristic or biblical

⁴ When adding the findings of educational psychologists who are concerned with describing *how* people learn through behaviour, two learning styles emerge, which appear to correspond well to the functions of the left and right-brain. Based on the social environment preferred by each style of learning, these two basic learning styles are called “field-independent” and “field-dependent”. The field-independent learners “approach their tasks analytically, separating the elements. They pay close attention to internal referents and are less influenced by social factors” (Earle and Dorothy Bowen, “Contextualizing Teaching Methods in Africa,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, July, 1989, p. 272). On the other hand, field-dependent learners “approach situations ‘globally,’ that is, they see the whole instead of the parts. They rely on external referents to guide them in processing information. They have a social orientation.”

guideline is to help others, which more than 87% of the participants indicated as important to them.

Significant for the present study is the fact that a similar percentage of participants (87%) indicated that they do have a personally meaningful relationship with God and that this relationship contributes to their sense of well-being, as enhanced by the LIFEPLAN® programme. In contrast to this relationship toward the Christian faith, is more than 50% of the participants indicated that they honour, worship and ask blessings from their ancestral spirits such as the badimos, sangomas and inyangas.

CHAPTER 4: THE IMPACT OF THE LIFEPLAN® PROGRAMME IN RURAL AREAS: THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this chapter is to determine the impact of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme by employing a qualitative research pattern, namely naïve sketches from the farm workers and structured interviews from managers. These participants were the workers who attended the LIFEPLAN® training and participated in the research project, and the managers of the various farms. An exploratory, interpretive and descriptive qualitative contextual design was followed.

The results from this qualitative pattern indicated that participants felt strongly that they had a life-changing experience through the LIFEPLAN® programme. The reason was that the programme helped them return to God and therefore their lives changed for the best. Managers from various farms indicated that the LIFEPLAN® programme made a huge impact and difference in the lives of participants. Significant to the present research is the fact that more than 50% of the participants showed a high interest in Christianity and to practice Christian values.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the empirical process to make specific deductions by using a qualitative research pattern. The empirical data were interpreted considering the holistic missional outreach to the contemporary youth of South Africa by evaluating the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme.

The most suitable and recognised design for this research was found to be the model of Osmer (2008). This model provides clear methods for moving from an existing to a new praxis based on a theological and situational analysis. In the present study, the new praxis focused on the role of a missional vision in youth ministry in previously disadvantaged communities. These participants are struggling with challenges of poverty, unemployment, immorality and criminality among young people.

The objective of the empirical research was to evaluate the LIFEPLAN® programme and its impact and effectiveness as a tool for churches to reach the youth and their

communities facing the mentioned multiple challenges. This purpose forms part of the descriptive-empirical task of Osmer (2008:31).

In the present study, the empirical research was regarded as closely connected to theological theories. Therefore, it was essential to utilise other empirical sources in addition to literature, namely structured interviews and naive sketches.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the entire research process and the research results measured against the aim and objectives of this study. The first part of the chapter discusses how a qualitative research design is structured. From the research method that was used, a discussion follows where the research results are explained.

4.2 Qualitative research design

In the qualitative research approach to the present study an exploratory, interpretive and descriptive contextual design was used (Thorne, 2008). An exploratory approach investigates the experience of the participants (farm workers and managers). This research was necessary seeing that, to date, this context has not been explored yet. The researcher attempted to gauge the experiences of participants (farm workers), by using naive sketches; for farm managers, structured interviews.

Typically, a descriptive approach is used for quantitative research, but can also be employed qualitatively (Vyhmeister, 2008:151). According to Evans (2014:107, *cf.* Burns & Grove, 2009:29), it is preferable that research on a phenomenon takes place within the relevant context. Therefore, by conducting the present research, the feedback of managers of the various farms were examined within the unique context of their farm workers (participants) who attended the LIFEPLAN® programme.

Linked to this approach, the model of Osmer (2008) was used. This model (see Fig 5.1) offers four distinctive steps or tasks to missiology as a model, which guides can be used to interpret incidents, situations and events in which a situation may unfold. These four steps provide an answer to a specific question:

- Descriptive-empirical task – *What is going on?* This step analysed the current situations and contexts of the youth in rural areas in South Africa. The researcher had to be able to describe and understand their condition. This task was conducted

through qualitative (structured interviews and naive sketches) targeting youth as well as the farm managers from the rural areas.

- Interpretive task – *Why is this going on?* This implied finding reasons for the state of affairs, for example interpreting why the present situation exists and how it impacts participants through a specific training and equipping programme such as LIFEPLAN®.
- Normative task – *What ought to be going on?* The researcher accepts the Bible as the authoritative and the normative standard, providing the basis to evaluate what is going on and suggesting appropriate responses and feedback. Relevant biblical principles were applied to the youth in rural areas and communities in South Africa.
- Pragmatic task – *How might we respond?* The situational and normative data were interpreted to propose a tool for churches that would help them reach the youth and rural communities who are struggling with the mentioned challenges. It is envisaged that this will impact and influence the current situation and lead towards desirable outcomes for the youth and communities of the targeted investigation.

As seen in the diagram (Osmer, 2008) the focus of this chapter (article) will be on the normative-as well the pragmatic task. Such a model helps missionaries and practical theologians to understand and have insight into the lives of people (Lotter, 2007:2-7).

The phenomenon explored and described according to the model of Osmer (see Fig 3:1 in chapter 3), was the LIFEPLAN® programme. This programme was evaluated from a missiological perspective to determine its impact and effectiveness as a possible tool for churches to help them reach the youth and communities in rural areas. The context of the present study was the Christiana District, with the participants (farm workers) who attended the LIFEPLAN® training as well as the managers of the various farms in this district.

4.3 Research method

The method the researcher used to gather data was a qualitative research. This involved participants (farm workers and managers) through structured interviews and naïve sketches by farm managers and farm workers.

4.3.1 *Permission to conduct research*

Permission to conduct the qualitative research with participants was granted by the following bodies and individuals: Research Committee of the Faculty of Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, Institutional Research Ethics Committee, as well as the individual participants and managers to the study (see Appendices 7-10). Permission was granted by the individual participants and managers through informed consent (Botma *et al.*, 2010:12, 16-17). Letters (Annexure A) was written to each participant and manager in the broader Christiana District explaining the study. This was followed by each participant and manager signing a consent form (Annexure B) confirming that they would partake in the research on a voluntary basis.

4.3.2 *Sample*

4.3.2.1 *Population*

For the qualitative research in the present study, the population consisted of participants farm workers (naïve sketches) and managers (structured interviews). All participants in the research were selected from the broader Christiana District in the North-West Province. The demographic layout of this district is Black and Coloured people (farm participants) and White people (farm managers).

4.3.2.2 *Sampling*

Participants (farm workers) were selected since they were trained and equipped with the LIFEPLAN® programme; farm managers on the other hand, acquired the training and equipping programme for their workers.

4.3.2.3 *Sample size*

Naïve sketches were used for the participants (farm workers); for the farm managers who were 9 in total, structured interviews were used.

4.4 *Data gathering*

The researcher together with the coordinator for the various farms in the Christiana District identified possible participants (farm workers) and farm managers. They were contacted telephonically and an appointment arranged for the time and place where

structured interviews and naïve sketches were to be conducted. Factors were discussed with the participants, namely anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, risks, withdrawal and even possible termination (Botma *et al.*, 2010:13-14). The physical setting where the naïve sketches and the structured interviews took place was in the private training rooms and offices of farm managers of their choice. These settings were private, pleasant and comfortable holding little or no distractions (Pinkoane, 2005:293).

4.5 Data analysis

For the data analysis, the researcher formulated themes and sub-themes from the naïve sketches by moving from descriptive to interpretive analysis (Botma *et al.*, 2010:2-4). Verbatim quotes provided richness in the study and the use of literature helped control and validate the findings from the naïve sketches. The aim of this control was to compare the findings with existing literature and to draw conclusions (Botma *et al.*, 2010:196-197). From the structured interviews, several conclusions and a general conclusion were drawn that give significance to the present study.

4.6 Trustworthiness of the research process

Trustworthiness of this study was ensured where the researcher applied Lincoln and Guba's model (as cited in Botma, Greeff, Mulaudzi, & Wright, 2010). Truth value was ensured by prolonged engagement with the participants during the intervention, the LIFEPLAN® training project, questionnaires, naïve sketches and structured interviews. Reflectivity was achieved by guiding participants to write naïve sketches before, during and after the training, and by conducting structured interviews with farm managers. Regular discussions with the coordinator and managers from the various farms improved the credibility of the research.

4.7 Ethical considerations

4.7.1 Informed consent

Before the research commenced, the researcher approached the various farms, participants (farm workers) and farm managers. The significance was explained of their involvement and participation. Thereafter, the researcher held different meetings with the participants and farm managers explaining the letter (Annexure A) and consent

(Annexure B) as proof of their permission to partake in the study. The researcher also explained the ethical considerations and provided participants with information about the purpose of the research, its procedure, and general details concerning the protection of confidentiality (Annexures A, D).

4.7.2 *Right to self-determination*

The right to self-determination is based on the ethical principle of respect. In this regard, the researcher treated all participants as autonomous agents enjoying personal freedom and rights. The researcher also informed co-researchers about the proposed study and stressed that their participation was fully voluntary. Participants had also the right to withdraw from the study at any time without further repercussions (Brink, 2007:32).

4.7.3 *Anonymity and confidentiality*

The researcher and the promoter dealt with participants' information confidentially. This was done by protecting their anonymity after their consent for the researcher to use and disclose their personal information (Strydom & Delpont, 2004:61).

4.7.4 *Privacy*

The researcher respected each participant's right to privacy, especially the personal information. He also ensured that the participants' names were not mentioned on their information. Participants' information was treated confidentially by protecting their anonymity after they had given authorisation that the researcher may use and disclose such information (Strydom & Delpont, 2004:61).

4.7.5 *Right to fair treatment*

The researcher treated all participants fair and with dignity, whether they were from the young or older group (Burns & Grove, 2005:107).

4.8 Results of the research

4.8.1 *Introduction*

Results obtained from the qualitative research (naïve sketches and structured interviews) were from participants (farm workers) and farm managers. The data were presented by

forming themes and sub-themes from the naïve sketches (farm workers) and impressions, comments, opinions and suggestions from the structured interviews (farm managers). Richness was provided by verbatim quotes and a literature control to validate the findings drawn from the naïve sketches. The aim was to compare the findings with existing literature and to draw conclusions (Botma *et al.*, 2010:196-197).

From the structured interviews with farm managers, feedback was given by making a summary. Based on the findings from both the naïve sketches and structured interviews, this study evaluated the LIFEPLAN® programme's strong and weak points. This article used a qualitative approach involving participants from the various farms in the target area.

4.8.2 Results from the naïve sketches of participants (farm workers)

Six themes emerged from the participants' (farm workers) naïve sketches about their lived experiences of LIFEPLAN®.

1. the essence of LIFEPLAN®;
2. LIFEPLAN® in correlation with the Bible;
3. healthy relationships;
4. LIFEPLAN® in practice;
- 5 respect for self and others; and
6. knowledge and feelings from participants about the LIFEPLAN® programme.

Each theme is discussed below including the various sub-categories. A bullet is used to indicate a sub-category under discussion.

4.8.2.1 Theme 1: The essence of LIFEPLAN®

Theme 1 portrays the importance of the LIFEPLAN® programme to the participants. This theme has six specific sub-category findings: the value of LIFEPLAN®; the role of LIFEPLAN® in my life; and God's role in LIFEPLAN®.

- The value of LIFEPLAN®

Most participants valued the LIFEPLAN® programme extremely high. They expressed their feelings with phrases such as: ***“LIFEPLAN® taught me to invite God in my problems”***; ***“I value LIFEPLAN®”***; ***“I took LIFEPLAN® and make it my own friend.”***

Frecks (2008) confirms the findings in his research by indicating that most people in life have a distorted view of themselves, which leads to a distorted view of how God sees and looks at them. The LIFEPLAN® programme has the potential to teach participants about God and enable them to make quality decisions about their life, especially when faced with a crucial decision. The LIFEPLAN® course taught numerous participants about the importance of prayer, especially when faced with several problem situations. It was crucial during the training that participants understand they should “spend time on their faces before God” when facing challenges and problematic circumstances (Jakes, 2008:434).

- The role of LIFEPLAN® in my life

Participants were extremely grateful that they were trained and equipped with the LIFEPLAN® programme. They expressed this experiences through the following responses: ***“I thank LIFEPLAN®, it is something that has been missing in my life”***; ***“I took LIFEPLAN® to be part of my life.”***

These findings are in line with those of Frecks (2008) who indicated in his research on LIFEPLAN® that the programme provides multiple and unique opportunities to make external investments in the lives of participants. People can become specialists in whichever field they work, since no individual is insignificant, every person is valuable in life.

- God’s role in LIFEPLAN®

Farm workers indicated that God has a role in the LIFEPLAN® programme. They expressed their views as follows: ***“LIFEPLAN® took me back to God”***; ***“LIFEPLAN® taught me how important God and life is.”***

These findings are confirmed by the LIFEPLAN® programme, which considers humans as creations of God and thus, godly people, made in the image of God. People live in relationship with God, themselves, others, and the world around them. God made humans

and, therefore, they are created as God's inherently good people (Freeks, 2008). It is further paramount to know that all life started with God and finds its purpose in God (Col 1:16). Therefore, God is most important for humans in their life, due to the fact that human beings were made by God and for God's pleasure. Until people understand this fact, life itself will not make sense to them (Van der Walt, 1999:328-329; Warren, 2002:17-18).

4.8.2.2 Theme 2: The LIFEPLAN® programme in correlation with the Bible

The second theme assessed the LIFEPLAN® programme in accordance with the Bible. Participants indicated that the programme provide important and relevant information, which is also what the Bible intends. Specific sub-category findings include: LIFEPLAN® taught valuable learning lessons regarding the Bible; A life-changing experience through the LIFEPLAN® programme; and LIFEPLAN® increased trust in God.

- LIFEPLAN® taught valuable learning lessons regarding the Bible

Participants indicated that the LIFEPLAN® programme taught them valuable lessons about the Bible. They expressed the following view: ***"LIFEPLAN® taught me about the Bible."***

This finding about the Bible is in line with that of Van der Walt (1999:117-118), who substantiates that this is a book of faith and the central message is the kingdom of God. The Bible provides a central narrative of God's acts in the history of humanity and all of creation (Van der Walt, 2001:68). The significance of the LIFEPLAN® manual is that it includes biblical principles in the themes of the programme. It taught numerous participants that they are unique individuals who are loved by God and should view themselves in the way God created them, not through their own eyes or that of others (Freeks, 2008). The LIFEPLAN® course provided the right words for the right purpose and occasion (Pro 15:23) because participants were taught that the Bible as the Word of God is progressive. This is because the message of the Bible buds, grows, develops, and ultimately yields to a harvest in the people's lives (Jakes, 2008:186).

- A life-changing experience through the LIFEPLAN® programme

Farm workers indicated that they experience a life-changing process because of the LIFEPLAN® programme. They expressed their experience through the following responses: ***“The Bible change my life.”***

Participants interpreted and experienced the LIFEPLAN® course as pointing them to the Bible with solutions to their problems and situations. The programme changed several farm workers' lives for the better because it was presented from a biblical point of view (Freeks, 2008). In the Scriptures, Paul teaches that humans' lives are changed through Jesus Christ (Phl 3:21). Van der Walt (2008:15) sheds more light on the finding by indicating that the Bible is God's written revelation where God reveals to humans the meaning of phenomena, which would otherwise remain unknowable. Limke and Mayfield (2011:123) take this discussion to a more practical context by indicating that attachment to God predicts psychological well-being, especially where the use of religious activities mainly forms part of this attachment, which helps a person cope with life experiences.

- LIFEPLAN® increased my trust in God

Participants indicated that the LIFEPLAN® programme increased their trust in God. They expressed their opinion through responses such as: ***“The Bible makes me to believe in God”***; ***“The Bible makes me to believe in myself.”***

It was discovered that through LIFEPLAN®, participants started to believe in God and to rely on Him for their daily needs. The chapter on needs was one of the crucial discussion points. In this regard, participants committed them to believe more in the Bible and God. They also moved away from a point where they view themselves as failures, and began to believe in themselves (Freeks, 2008). This finding is in line with that of Van der Walt (2010:22) who affirms that the Bible is a book of faith and relevant for an individual's entire life. Significantly, God's Word teaches that people who believe in God will not only stand firm, but will succeed in life (2 Chr 20:20).

4.8.2.3 Theme 3: Healthy relationships

Theme 3 demonstrates the aspect of healthy relations with God, family and others. Specific sub-themes are: healthy relations with God; healthy relations with my family; and healthy relations with others.

- Healthy relations with God

Participants expressed their views about their relationship with God clearly: ***“I am the creation of God”***; ***“LIFEPLAN® took me back to God”***; ***“I have a healthy relationship with God.”***

These findings are in line with those of Munroe (2001:57). He points out from the perspective of a relationship with God, that people can know the true meaning of their existence by understanding who they are in relation to God's creation of mankind as a whole (*cf.* also Gn 1-2). Through spirituality people can enjoy a healthy relationship with God. In this regard, Christians have a personal relationship with God through Christ. This relationship lies at the heart of their religious beliefs, experiences, and practices (Calvert, 2010:22-23).

- Healthy relations with my family

Participants mentioned that their relations with family members is vital and therefore expressed in the following response: ***“I have sound and healthy relations with my family.”***

Research within the family context has revealed that supporting families lead to more constructive relations and better understanding among members (Howieson & Priddis, 2014:178). In this regard, Neufeld & Davis, views the family as a unit created and institutionalised by God as part of the coercively-maintained basic structure (2010:102). However, this is taking it too far: The family is not a forced structure, but a love unit based on God's covenant. Sound relations with family members have an important impact on children's social behaviour and their psychological development (Berndt & McCandless, 2009:63). If this does not occur, family life can become less important in the broader social realm (Allan, 1990:14; Van Rooi, 2011:45). God expects from a family to function as a higher dignity and power, seeing that it family life is part of God's holy ordinance (Bergh, 2002:47).

- Healthy relations with others

Participants were of the opinion that healthy relations with other people is crucial since they believe that one is what one is today because of other people. This can be inferred

from responses such as: ***“I have a healthy relationship with other people and that’s why, am I a better person today.”***

This finding is in line with that of Rae *et al.* (2005:45-52), who indicate that healthier relations with others contribute to positive relationships, which help makes people better human beings. In other words, on-going relations with others will make crucial contributions to humanity as a whole (Yee *et al.*, 2015:216). In this regard, Young (2004:160) points out that mutual trust and respect develop healthy relations between people, even couples, without the fear of being judged, evaluated, or ridiculed.

4.8.2.4 Theme 4: LIFEPLAN® in practice

Theme 4 highlights the need for LIFEPLAN® programme to be applied practically. Under this theme, a specific sub-category was found: The practice of LIFEPLAN®.

- Applying LIFEPLAN®

According to most participants LIFEPLAN® should be applied in their daily lives. They expressed their feelings as follows: ***“I have to apply LIFEPLAN®.”***

The researcher confirmed this finding in his qualitative research (naïve sketches and structured interviews). Most of the participants indicated that the LIFEPLAN® training provided them with valuable knowledge. Therefore, it is their responsibility to put the knowledge into practice and apply what they have learnt from the LIFEPLAN® course (Freeks, 2008).

4.8.2.5 Theme 5: Respect and self-respect

The fifth theme reflects the aspect of respect, respect for God, oneself, family members and others. Specific sub-category findings include: respect God is principle; self-respect, family and love; and treat others with respect.

- Respect God is principle

A lack of respect damages relationships and co-operation. Often this attitude results in bad conduct and behaviour among workers – as participants pointed out. This situation also influences their relationship with God. Participants expressed their opinions in the following response: ***“Respect God first.”***

According to Van der Walt (2010:25), the Bible has a moral facet which lays out the foundation of respect for God. Isaiah 17:7 commands that people should first pay respect to their Creator, the Holy One of Israel. Therefore, should people honour and respect God, He will honour and respect them in turn (1 Sm 2:30). Furthermore, in the New Testament, Jesus confirmed: If people honour and respect the Son, they honour and respect the Father (Jh 5:23). When people obey and respect God's guidelines, laws or ordinances, they enjoy a blessed and fulfilled life (Van der Walt, 2010:183).

- Self-respect, family and love

Most participants stressed the importance of self-respect, respect for family members, and the love for one another. They explained that respect and self-respect determine and influence one's entire life. Participants expressed their feelings in these responses: ***“Respect yourself and love yourself”; “Respect your family.”***

These findings connect with those of Oosthuizen (2006:5) who indicated that respect fosters reciprocal respect. However, people should respect themselves first, and put in effort to earn the respect of others. Hendrick and Hendrick (2006:883) is keen on the concept of self-respect and family. They postulate that respect is an essentially implicit “rule” for close relationships such as families. Regarding love, the biblical testimony stresses that people's lives should be controlled by love because Christ loved them and He gave his life for them as a sweet-smelling offering, and a sacrifice that pleases God (Eph 5:2; Jh 3:16).

- Treat others with respect

Participants were keen on the subtheme of treating others with respect. They affirmed that the LIFEPLAN® programme emphasises strongly how to respect other people and how one can build one's self-image and the self-image of others by showing respect. They expressed the following response: ***“I learn how to treat others with respect.”***

This finding is in accordance with that of Hendrick and Hendrick (2006:882). Their research identifies respect as an important aspect of interpersonal relationships and personal self-identity. The reason is that this is an emotion-based concept, which over the past decades was considered an important aspect of individual identity. Respect is an important facet in the lives of humans, especially in a marriage situation. Frei and

Shaver (2002:121), for example, found that couples have two basic needs in their marriage, namely love and mutual respect. Respect for others is a concept that is highly recommended by biblical testimony (Rm 12:9).

4.8.2.6 Theme 6: Knowledge and feelings

Twin core words (knowledge and feelings) emerged as Theme 6, indicating that participants gained extensive knowledge, developed appreciation and a positive outlook towards life due to the LIFEPLAN® programme. Specific sub-category findings include: self-knowledge; thankfulness; life-changing and a positive attitude toward life.

- Self-knowledge

Participants indicated that they were fully aware who they are after the LIFEPLAN® programme. They also mentioned that they know how their relationship should be and how to take care of themselves. This subtheme was expressed by the following responses: ***“I know who I am”***; ***“I know my purpose in life”***; ***“I don’t feel self-pity anymore.”***

The mentioned findings can be corroborated with those from Rae *et al.* (2005:18), that people who are emotionally literate are also able to get on with other people. Therefore, they will resolve conflicts, motivate themselves and even achieve most of their goals in life. Most people in life struggle with the issue of *“Who am I?”* and their purpose in life (Warren, 2002:312). To know one’s purpose will simplify one’s life. The reason is that individuals’ purpose defines what they do and do not strive for. A purpose becomes the standard a person can use to assess which aspects in life are essential, or not (Warren, 2002:31). If individuals are honest and open, their personality will reflect their true self, which is the essence of who someone really is and how such a person actually behaves. It should be kept in mind that one’s true self gives meaning in life (Schlegel *et al.*, 2011:1-2). The reason is that the true self comprises the characteristics and attributes that define who the person really is (Schlegel & Hicks, 2011:991).

People’s true self is essentially God’s gift to them; what they do with themselves is their gift to God (Warren, 2002:249). According to the biblical testimony, humankind is created in the image of God and are functioning parts in Christ’s body (Gn 2:26-27; Rm 12:5). The LIFEPLAN® programme teaches participants not only to mature and grow in secular

knowledge or self-knowledge, but also in the knowledge of the Bible. Through Jesus Christ, people can grow in grace and knowledge and discover who they are and what their purpose entails (2 Pt 3:18). God's goal for people is to mature, grow spiritually and develop the characteristics of Jesus Christ. His purpose prevails, irrespective of people's numerous plans and life designs (Warren, 2002:179; Eph 4:15; Pro 19:21).

- Thankfulness

The participants indicated that they learnt through the LIFEPLAN® programme how to be thankful and appreciate life. They also mentioned that they feel grateful for the programme and that it is an education tool toward success. They expressed their views as follows: ***"I feel very grateful"; "I am a better person now."***

These findings are in line with those Ahrens and Forbes (2014:342), who view the emotions of being joyful and pleasant as aspects of a thankful person; and gratitude is the foundation to well-being when a need or desire is fulfilled and it provides mental health throughout one's lifespan (Smith *et al.* 2014:19). Most people wish to experience happiness instead of the opposite, and even value positive emotions such as enthusiasm and excitement (Livingstone & Srivastava, 2014:84). It should also be kept in mind that thankfulness produces sound health (Battié, 2015:557). According to biblical teaching, God expects from people to be thankful in all circumstances within their life (1 Ths 5:18). Believers should give thanks for everything to God the Father (Eph 5:20).

- Life-changing and a positive attitude toward life

Participants made it clear that their lives changed for the better and that they felt highly positive toward life. They also indicated that they accepted themselves as a person and are not waiting for someone to change their lives. They expressed the following responses: ***"I feel very positive toward life"; "I am not giving up in life"; "I have a vision for my life."***

These findings are affirmed by those of Livingstone and Srivastava (2014:84). They found that most people want to experience happiness and positive emotions, instead of the opposite, and value highly positive emotions such as enthusiasm and excitement. It is of the utmost importance that participants should understand that a positive attitude and personality lead to healthier outcomes (Kato *et al.*, 2012:359). This understanding

explains one of the important modules in the LIFEPLAN® programme. If individuals have a negative attitude due to incidents they live through, it is likely that they will give up, seeing that they are focusing on the negative instead of the positive and constructive side (O’Baugh *et al.*, 2008:111). Besides the negative attitude, if people do not have a vision, according to biblical wisdom, they will not make it (Pro 29:18). Therefore, it is vital to have a vision, a purpose in life.

4.8.2.7 Summary of farm workers’ responses regarding the LIFEPLAN® programme

It is crucial to consider that the responses of the participants form an integral part of the central theoretical statement of the study in chapter 1.

Firstly, participants focused strongly on five important points of the study, namely the value of the programme; the significance of the Bible through the programme; respect; gratitude; and a life-changing experience. Their entire view is based on the impact the LIFEPLAN® programme had in the context of its value and role for their daily lives.

Secondly, their focus was on God’s role in LIFEPLAN® and the correlation between LIFEPLAN® and the Bible. Participants emphasised that the programme provided valuable learning lessons about the Bible. They showed throughout the study that they had a life-changing experience. They confirmed this state of affairs by indicating that the Bible through the LIFEPLAN® programme changed their life and that they experienced more trust in God.

Thirdly, participants emphasised the importance of healthy and sound relationships between themselves, God, family and others. Such relationships helped made them better persons at present. Therefore, they could attest that the programme helped them return to God.

Fourthly, participants felt strongly that the LIFEPLAN® programme should be put into practice. According to them, the programme should be applied in their daily lives, enabling them to live in peace and harmony with all people (Rm 12:16-18; 1 Pt 3:8; Col 3:12-13).

Fifthly, the participants mentioned two crucial aspects from the programme, namely respect and self-respect. They were clear and keen on the fact that respect for God is

essential. God must be respected first, then one will have respect for oneself, one's family and other people. It was also promising to observe after the programme that participants do know their purpose in life and that they did not feel self-pity anymore. In this regard, they are trained and equipped to take care of themselves and strive toward a godly lifestyle. Participants expressed their gratitude for the programme by indicating that they are better persons than before. They did not only appreciate life after the programme but were also positive and testified to having a vision for their life.

The overall view of participants was that they enjoyed a life-changing experience through LIFEPLAN® because they mentioned that the programme took them back to God and re-emphasised the importance of the Bible in their lives as Christian believers. They expressed this lived experience as follows: ***“It is because of the programme that we now know the importance of the Bible and therefore our lives changes for the best.”***

4.8.3 Results from the structured interviews of farm managers

For the qualitative research (posed to farm managers), ten open-ended questions were formulated to ensure similar exploration of farm managers' lived experience (Botma *et al.*, 2010:134-135). Feedback were given in the form of a summary. The open-ended questions were first evaluated by experts in the field of Missiology and Pastoral Theology to determine whether these questions (Annexure C) were clear, understandable and appropriate. The questions were refined and adjusted by applying this feedback (Botma *et al.*, 2010:207-208). The researcher also conducted a pilot study by testing the structured interviews with one participant in each of the identified populations. The data were found to be usable and were included in the total data set.

Subsequently, the open-ended questions are presented and discussed under the following subsections.

4.8.3.1 Question 1

What are your general impressions and comments with regard to the LIFEPLAN® programme?

Most of the farm managers responded highly positive to Question 1. They confirmed that the LIFEPLAN® is an effective course and they will recommend it to any institution.

However, a small percentage of farm managers remarked that the programme discriminates against farm workers (participants). Overall, farm managers were convinced that farm workers were enriched through the programme, especially in the way these workers learnt to care for themselves and others. Managers also mentioned the fact that LIFEPLAN® is an informative programme because workers learnt important values such as a positive attitude, a positive self-image, respect and appreciation. The managers also indicated that the LIFEPLAN® programme impacted and made a major difference in the daily lives of numerous farm workers.

4.8.3.2 Question 2

What behavioural changes were you able to observe in workers during the presenting of the LIFEPLAN® programme?

On Question 2, three managers indicated that they observed none behavioural changes whatsoever during the presenting of the LIFEPLAN® programme. The reason was that certain workers were not interested in the programme. The other seven managers, however, indicated that most of the workers were very keen, interested and participative in the programme. Managers observed that most workers applied the majority of the themes they learnt during the presenting of the programme. They mentioned especially crucial points such as politeness, friendliness, positivity at work, good communication, accept responsibilities and budget control, that emerged in the behaviour of workers. Managers indicated further that workers are less negative, especially toward their employers, and behave more responsible than before.

4.8.3.3 Question 3

What behavioural changes were you able to observe in workers after the LIFEPLAN® programme?

The managers responded to Question 3 with different answers. Four managers indicated that they observed no changes from the workers, while the rest of the managers mentioned that change began developing slowly and it was observed in the workers' lifestyle. The managers affirmed that workers showed more interest in their work and were conscious of their health, improved relationships between themselves and managers, and their behaviour toward others. Managers also found that farm workers

improved themselves by practising sound Christian values. These managers observed further that their workers operate more effectively in a group and show a positive outlook on life. They work hard to improve their life and aim to give their children a better future and education.

Not only did the farm workers' lifestyle change; managers mentioned that workers have become more respectful individuals. They developed a self-confidence and became more responsible after undergoing the LIFEPLAN® programme. Managers also indicated that the programme was for the workers' own benefit. For example, the use of alcohol decreased because this scenario was observed in the Monday situation where most of the workers were absent due to this problem. The programme also had a huge influence on the worker's family. Significantly, in answer to the question above, a manager observed that one specific family began attend church services regularly.

4.8.3.4 Question 4

Did the LIFEPLAN® programme, according to you, make a significant difference in the life of the workers and their families? Motivate.

On this specific question, three managers indicated that there was no significant differences. The reasons they provided was: The farm workers did not take the LIFEPLAN® training seriously; the programme was too difficult to understand; and workers are still negative toward their managers after the training. However, seven managers answered "Yes" to the question. They affirmed that the LIFEPLAN® programme did make a significant difference. These farm managers found a significant difference in the positive behaviour from the workers.

Linked to positive behaviour of farm workers was the principle of appreciation and respect for their work and love for their families. The managers indicated that farm workers are deeply concerned about the welfare of their families. A number of families enjoy a high standard of living after the programme, which is increasing, and was not the case previously. Currently, aspects such as personal hygiene, handling of stress, alcohol use, budgeting, better communication, respect for others, religion, church attendance and God are of essence. Managers also mentioned that workers started to read and write, to improve their education and skills level. It was mentioned further that the programme

motivated workers to such an extent that they began to believe in themselves and in their abilities.

4.8.3.5 Question 5

Have you seen any participants in this programme becoming more interested in Christianity?

All the farm managers answered “Yes” to Question 5. Their responses indicated that 90% of a group of 90 participants from a specific farm showed a high interest in Christianity. From another farm, one participant out of five practice and exercise Christian values. The interest in Christianity was noticed by managers during the Monday morning prayer and Scripture reading by participants. It was evident that participants became more involved in Christianity with the main focus reading their Bible regularly and praying for one another. Managers also indicated that the programme depicts morality in humanity. It is further mentioned that farm workers indicated the “biblical part” of the LIFEPLAN® programme made workers more interested in Christianity. One worker, for example, was baptised in the Apostle Faith Mission Church and became a born-again Christian.

4.8.3.6 Question 6

Have you seen any participants who have not been believers in Christ before coming to faith in Christ through this programme?

In response to Question 6, there were only two cases where managers indicated “No” and explained that they were unaware of any participants coming to faith in Christ through this programme. It was indicated from a certain farm that, for the past two years, three out of five participants attended less church services. However, the overall feedback from farm managers indicated that workers were not believers before, but were coming to faith in Christ through this programme.

It was also mentioned that 30% of participants has joined churches and regularly attend Sunday morning services. Managers also indicated that three out of 23 participants from a certain farm currently are more involved in Christianity, due to the initiatives of the LIFEPLAN® programme. Participants have come to realise the true nature of sin and its consequences. Other participants, for example, quit smoking and reduced the use of

alcohol. Certain workers were baptised and they accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Others were participating in evening prayers, attending church worship and praised God for the work of Christ in their life.

4.8.3.7 Question 7

Do you know of any participants becoming more involved and active in Christian churches through their involvement in this programme?

All the farm managers answered with a definite “Yes” on the question above. They indicated that 80% of the participants (farm workers) have joined Christian churches because of their involvement in this programme. Participants were becoming more engaged in Christian practices, to such an extent that certain individuals even took the initiative to preach at funerals.

It was found that other participants are involved fully in church life that they raised money to buy musical instruments for the worship part in the church. Furthermore, it was mentioned that farm workers participate in sensible conversations about the wrong and right paths of life and are reading the Bible to one another. It was indicated further that almost 40% of the farm workers frequently testify in their conversations with one another about their deliverance from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ.

4.8.3.8 Question 8

Is there a possibility that this programme may be used by churches to strengthen their missional outreach to communities?

All farm managers responded positive to this question. They affirmed that there is a huge possibility for the LIFEPLAN® programme to be used by churches. Managers mentioned that there are approximately 59 Christian churches in the specific area and the programme can be adapted for preaching. Managers were fully convinced that churches could benefit from the programme since it has the potential to change people’s wrong lifestyles into improved ones. It was confirmed that the programme can teach people how to accept Jesus Christ as Redeemer in their lives. Managers proposed that members of the different Christian churches should get involved and pay regular visits at farms because they believe that this programme has the possibility to transform lives.

During the group discussions with participants, managers indicated clearly that churches could use certain modules of the programme. Therefore, it is possible that the programme can impact strongly on churches and help them strengthen their missional outreach to communities.

4.8.3.9 Question 9

How do you see this programme being used by churches?

Managers indicated that churches can incorporate this programme in their Bible study sessions and prayer meetings to teach the members of the church about the love of God and the essence of prayer. Bible studies provide the best opportunity to teach church members about certain Christian moral values, for example respect, love, or caring for the poor. The programme can be used for the spiritual growth of church members and help motivate them to trust and believe in God. Other managers suggested that small parts or sections of the LIFEPLAN® programme can be used in public worship to edify church members.

4.8.3.10 Question 10

How did you personally benefit from the LIFEPLAN® programme? Motivate.

Out of the ten farm managers, two indicated that they learnt nothing from the LIFEPLAN® programme and did not benefit at all from the programme. In contrast, the other eight managers indicated that they benefited tremendously. They explained that LIFEPLAN® taught them to know who they are, and to appreciate, respect, love themselves and others. Managers also indicated that they can manage their time better as well as their finances. Most of them attested that the programme helped them forge better relations with their workers. They can also refer back to the LIFEPLAN® programme to address unacceptable behaviour among workers.

Certain managers mentioned that they benefit for the mere fact that their workers are more motivated, skilful and developed. They expressed their feelings through responses such as: ***“The uplifting of people are very close to my heart”***; ***“If it goes well with my workers, it goes well with me”***; ***“It is nice to see the joy, happiness and excitement among my workers.”***

Managers even allowed an “open-door” policy to farm workers allowing the discussion of problems or issues with the managers. They explained that this type of openness between them and the workers lead to a more positive attitude among the workers, which makes them more productive.

4.8.3.11 Summary of the managers’ responses regarding the LIFEPLAN® programme

Overall, it must be mentioned, firstly, that not all the farm managers agreed on all the open-ended questions. For example, on question 2 about the behavioural changes, three out of the ten managers did not observe any behavioural changes or significance during their training. Thus, the feedback and results received from the LIFEPLAN® programme were not all positive. For example, certain participants responded totally negative: ***“LIFEPLAN® taught me nothing”, “I learn nothing from the programme”***. However, this type of response was the exception rather than the rule.

However, secondly, it was evident that the rest of the managers observed a definite change in the life of farm workers. From the sample size of 151 participants, 90% and more indicated a positive impact of LIFEPLAN® on their daily lives. Therefore, most of the managers are of the opinion that the LIFEPLAN® programme made a significant impact and difference in the lives of numerous farm workers. Managers mentioned that workers improve themselves by practising good Christian values.

It is, furthermore, striking to note that 90% of a group of 90 participants from one specific farm showed a keen interest in Christianity where prayer meetings and Scripture readings became the order of the day. Other participants were so convinced by the LIFEPLAN® programme that they decided to be baptised and become born-again Christians. Certain managers indicated no behavioural changes among participants and pointed out that participants rather attend less church meetings. Nevertheless, significantly to this study, 80% of the participants joined and attended church services regularly, especially Sunday-morning services. These participants attest that presently, aspects such as religion, church attendance and the essence of God is vital in their daily lives.

Managers even advised churches in their area to use this programme during their Bible studies, as well as prayer and worship meetings. The programme was found not only a motivation and inspiration to managers but also to workers. Managers’ overall opinion

was that they benefited from the programme due to improved and sound relations with workers. Workers, on the other hand, are more positive toward managers because of the “open-door” policy the managers implemented. This policy changed workers’ attitude, which made them more positive and productive.

4.9 General conclusion

Both groups of participants (farm workers and farm managers) agreed on the impact, significance that the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme had and the difference it made to their lives. Both groups indicated that the programme may function as a *buffer* against the challenges and problematic issues which face most of the South African rural youth in society. This indication is in correlation with the central theoretical argument of the present study namely that the LIFEPLAN® programme may function as a *buffer* against the mentioned challenges facing the youth and be a servant to churches and Christian ministries helping them enhance their youth outreach in present South African society.

CHAPTER 5: HOLISTIC MISSIONAL OUTREACH TO THE CONTEMPORARY YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA

Abstract

Holistic missional outreach to the contemporary youth of South Africa is crucial. This is because missions form an integral part of the redemptive plan of God according to the Scripture. Early Christian mission was portrayed in the book of Acts with leading figures such as Paul and Peter whom God sent into the world to herald His grace in Christ as part of His mission to the lost. Although the word “mission” is not found in the Scriptures, the concept originates from God’s sending of his Son, Jesus Christ, who died to save the lost (Jn 20:21).

The mission of God is one of mercy and grace to people who have no hope and are without God in the world. This includes a lost generation of young people. Therefore, holistic mission is the primary objective of God, and every Christian should be devoted to this endeavour. This is not a mere programme or project, but a visible and evident result of Jesus Christ who is enthroned as Lord and Messiah in one’s life, according to Acts. God glorifies Himself through people who worship Him and who participate in his liberating holistic mission. The good news of God’s love should always be presented for the sake of the lost, the youth included.

5.1 Introduction

The essence of God’s holistic mission is to unite people with God through Christ, and the Holy Spirit transforming their hearts, minds and will to worship God in a restored creation comprising every tribe, nation, kingdom, language. This includes the youth with their problems and challenges (De Beer, 2012:50; *cf.* Glenn, 2007). Holistic mission is concerned with ministry to the whole person through the transforming power of the Gospel.

While holistic mission affirms the functional uniqueness of evangelism and social responsibility, it views these aspects as inseparable from the ministry of the kingdom of God (Presler, 2010:195-204). Therefore, holistic mission is the intentional integration of building the church and transforming society (Moreau *et al.*, 2000:448). When the underlying philosophy of the LIFEPLAN® programme is evaluated from a biblical

perspective, the mentioned principle of holistic mission can be highlighted as the proclamation of the good news of God's kingdom.

"Holism" as it relates to Christian mission means that the church's mission in the world includes not only proclamation of the Gospel but also socio-political, economic, and health dimensions. Therefore, mending social ills and alleviating political injustices are integral to Christian mission (Moreau *et al.*, 2000:230).

In terms of the traditional view of mission, those who oppose the concept of holistic mission, attempts to distinguish the cultural mandate from the redemptive or evangelistic mandate in Scripture. According to Genesis 1:28; 2:15 and 9:1, 7, the traditional view holds that the cultural mandate is addressed to people as persons, while the redemptive mandate is addressed to those who become members of the people of God. The cultural mandate is fulfilled by qualitative and quantitative improvement in culture; it is preservative in a fallen world and thus non-redemptive. The redemptive mandate is fulfilled by obedience in proclaiming the Gospel to a lost world. It offers hope to a fallen race and is, therefore, redemptive and transformational (Moreau *et al.*, 2000:230).

Several scholars question the use of John 20:21 as the basic statement for the Great Commission. They contend that this violates the hermeneutical principle of using the more complete and more obscure passages to understand the less complete as well as less obscure passages, in this case Matthew 28:19-28 and Luke 24:47 (Hesselgrave, 1990:3).

People also argue that the socio-political action advocated by proponents of holistic mission is contrary to the examples of Christ and the early church. Opponents to the position of holistic mission believe that using the so-called Great Commandment as a part of Christian mission is unmerited. Loving one's neighbour is the duty of the individual believer according to Galatians 6:10, and not a part of Christian mission as such (*ibid.*, 4).

In summarising this position of the two-fold mandate, Peters (1972:170) states, "Only the second mandate [the redemptive mandate] is considered missions in the strict biblical sense. The first mandate [the cultural mandate] is philanthropic and humanitarian service rendered by man to man on the human level and as from members of the same "family" (Gl. 6:10, Lk 10:25–27)". The great plan and purpose of God for mission (the activity of God), is to bring unity and healing to the whole of creation through Christ. In other words, this entails building the church through evangelism and teaching, bringing people to

repentance, faith and obedience, and serving society through justice and compassion (Je 29:7). This includes caring for the creation which is godly use and careful stewardship of the resources of the earth in brief (Van Rooy, 1994:241; Wright, 2012).

Although the views of Peters (1972) and Hesselgrave (1990) are outdated, the researcher concurs with Peters on the biblical sense of missions that indicates the original plan of God. The view of Wright is more representative in terms of church, society and creation. The church should be built further and expanded because Jesus Christ is the Lord of the church. Society should be served because Jesus is confessed as Lord of every nation, government and culture. Creation should be taken care of because Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth, and the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. However, the present tendency is to deviate from the biblical testimony about missions. Often people perform missional work from the human understanding and not the way God intended to be.

God is a sending God, or rather, a missionary God, who gathers people from all over (Ursinus & Olevianus, 1563:54). A prevalent point of view is that the mission of God takes place in a particular social, economic, political, religious, and cultural context, even in rural regions (Lk 2:1-2). Although the present contexts are different from the time of the Bible (Messenger, 2004:10), the reign and power of God is still working in specific contexts currently, even in a rural context such as the Christiana District where destructive youth problems occur.

5.2 Biblical-theological foundations of holistic missional outreach

5.2.1 *Holistic missional outreach*

Holistic mission, as discussed in chapter 2, can cover all aspects which people describe as mission. In the Acts 2 is clear that even the witness of the church must be holistic. This implies taking part in fellowship, needs of others (i.e. sharing in meals, belongings and prayers) for the purpose of praising and glorifying God (Ac 2:42; 46-47). The researcher takes cognisance of the fact that Christianity is not limited to a particular race or group of people. All people are the heirs of Christ; no one is more privileged than or superior to another (Gl 3:28). Christ offers salvation to all people without regard to nationality. No matter what their race, colour, nationality, or language may be, God engages all people because of his plan and purpose with humanity and creation. Therefore, it is vital to understand God's greater plan and purpose to restore humanity's brokenness, which is

caused mainly by sin. And to restore this brokenness, it is crucial in this study to realise that holistic mission is mainly part of the redemptive work of God (Van Aarde, 2015:361).

5.2.2 *Meaning of holistic*

People have the tendency to reflect on what holistic mission means. And in the process, they can easily become confused with the actual meaning of evangelism, or what discipleship or social justice implicate. Understanding holistic mission should not be complicated because the *missio-Dei* perspective (as explained in chapter 2) offers a solid basis. As mentioned previously, this perspective covers integral mission in terms of the multiple dimensions of heart, voice, and hands (also discussed in chapter 2). This perspective prevents mission from declining into a modernistic formality that is bound to a Western or Third-world culture or form (Jansen, 2015:15).

The concept of *mission* is rather inherently biblically holistic. The reason is that the church exists biblically founded in history for the sake of God's global mission involving people and their brokenness, inhibitions, failures, shortcomings, challenges and needs. Holistic mission concerns itself with the basic needs of humans (Wright, 2012). This includes personal needs and functions such as hospitals, medical clinics, health care centres, schools and educational projects. It also entails academic needs, personal welfare, water and sanitation projects. Furthermore the focus is on projects for children at risk, sex trafficking, anti-drug projects, abuses of human rights for the individual, as well as personal illness and social injustices, and many more. All these are aspects of holistic mission (Woolnough, 2010:6).

5.2.2.1 Why mission is holistic

God is on a mission to restore the whole of creation ultimately. He starts the process here and now by transforming broken lives through the power of his Holy Spirit who works through the proclamation of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit who transforms the lives of redeemed people is a foretaste of the new creation where people, communities, societies and the whole of creation will be transformed totally. In this sense, mission is holistic because the whole person, spirit, soul and body and the society and community in which the person lives, is transformed.

God's mission is, therefore, contextual since it addresses the challenges of complex contexts, especially in terms of its aim, practice and location. The whole of creation, the whole of life (social, political, economic and cultural) and the whole human being (all people, individuals with spiritual, mental, relational, physical and environmental needs) are included in this mission of God (Messenger, 2004:36).

Clearly holistic mission addresses the body, mind and spirit of a human being. It does not only deal with the social aspect of humans by only caring for people's physical needs and welfare, it also focuses on and address the spiritual dimension.

Holistic mission is not only engaging a group of people in a community but calls individuals to be reconciled to God. Therefore, the community should be seen as the fundamental unit to which each person belongs (Woolnough, 2010:6). However, long-lasting and sustainable transformation of communities only happens when individuals as members of the community are transformed. Such an on-going change in communities will only take place when the lives of the youth in a community are enriched, guiding them to become responsible stewards and servants in their community.

According to Haw (2012:1), holistic mission means to bring hope, faith and love to a community for the glory of God. Even though Haw does not indicate that the church should be a major role-player, it is the researcher's view that the church should live out its primary task (the Great Commission – Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:47; Jn 20:21). This means reaching out and proclaiming the love of God to a world in need of love. In this context, the task is to help redeem and transform the lives of a young generation. The church should be the institution in a community that brings hope, builds faith, offers love to those who feel outcast, unites the divided ones and shares with those who do not have.

The church cannot only preach about salvation with a goal to lead people to assurance of the eternal life hereafter, and then ignore its social surroundings. The holistic approach in the present study is multifaceted. This involves teaching, preaching, mentoring, transferring of skills and character formation as well ministering to the needs of others, connecting word and deeds (Stephanous, 2014).

5.2.2.2 The approach that make holistic mission significant

Holistic mission is significant, especially in the sense of doing good to all people, and to honour and glorify the Lord (Jansen, 2015:16). In Mark 1:38 Jesus planned to preach to the people but was faced with a hungry crowd. He gave his disciples the assignment to find the people something to eat. The significance is, however, that the Lord was not only preaching to people, but He was also concerned about their needs and well-being. Thus, an intention of presenting a programme with a missional purpose, especially to a rural community, should be concerned about the needs and well-being of that community, as Jesus was, and God is concerned about his creation.

According to Ephesians 1:10, God has a encompassing purpose for holistic mission, which is “to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, Christ. God aims to redeem the whole of creation broken by sin and evil into the new creation through the cross and resurrection of Christ”. Holistic mission is the God’s overarching plan for his people. This plan is on course to challenge the *status quo* of any place, environment or human condition (Woolnough, 2010:4).

5.2.3 Mission should be integral combining word and deeds

The mission of the church should be integral by combining word and deeds. This process must include aspects such as the social patterns, for example dealing with poverty – as mentioned previously (Maggay, 2007).

5.2.3.1 The meaning of word and deeds

Word and deeds as unity form part of the church and its purpose regarding people (Jansen, 2015:22-23). The biblical testimony provides examples where Jesus heals a sick child, attends to a woman’s need (Lk 8:40-56), and feeds the hungry (Mk 8:1-9). Sometimes people do not factor in these miraculous works of Jesus in their understanding of what His mission entailed. Jansen (2015:25) however, lays a solid foundation for the integration of word and deeds in mission, by explaining that integral word-and-deeds ministry means applying the heart of the Gospel to a specific context, from the perspective of the *missio Dei*.

Jansen's view is in line with that of Maggay (2007:6-7), when he underlines the issue by indicating that word and deeds comprise integral (holistic) mission. Integral mission (also termed holistic transformation) means proclaiming the good news (the Gospel) by involving the various dimensions of life. Therefore, *doing, saying and being* should be at the heart of the integral task with people, as was the case in the life of Jesus (Maggay (2007:11).

It is clear that the church should be doing missional work the way Christ did, and not deviate from any important aspect.

5.2.4 **Contextual**

All things in creation belongs to God and everything gives account to the Lord (Ps 24:1). The ultimate reason for saying this, is that God wants to effect change in this fallen world. The Lords wants to restore the lives of people and live in a relationship with them. In this regard, the Lord wants people's community life to be a sign and foretaste of his eternal glory. In essence, mission is God's way to handle the problems of a broken humanity, spiritually and physically (Wright, 2011:271 & 328). God's aim is to restore order in the world, and He does it through his Son, Jesus Christ.

When presenting the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme to communities, the presenter should explicitly mention Jesus Christ as the One who can bring hope to the youth and communities in South Africa. The programme teaches that ... *we are creations of God, godly people, made in the image of God, and live in a relationship with God* ... (Freeks, 2008:1). This means, the programme should indicate pertinently the crucial aspect of hope in Jesus. The LIFEPLAN® programme proved over the years, since its implementing period in 2008, that it has the potential and effect to change and impact people's lives (Bonthuys *et al.*, 2011:424-427). The findings in the present research and interventions indicated the following gains:

- Physical well-being: Participants became more aware of what a healthy lifestyle entails.
- Social well-being: Participants understood social functioning as the result of working together and creating a better community by applying problem-solving and handling conflicts. An important factor among participants was helping others in the community

and teaching them the skills they obtained through LIFEPLAN®. Participants found forgiveness as an essential aspect in their social well-being after they completed the LIFEPLAN® programme.

- Psychological well-being: Participants learnt to stand up for themselves, looking after themselves, working towards the future and reaching their goals. This achievement was significant in the lives of participants.

The LIFEPLAN® programme appeared to have positive effects for the participants. In this regard, the church can use the programme as a missional tool to reach people who are not yet part of the Christian community. Therefore, the programme should first be adjusted, changed and amended to be a missional approach that targets the youth.

God engages the church through His Word and by the Holy Spirit if He wishes to address certain issues such as politics and social, emotional aspects of life. In following the Lord, the church must be a unity, not divided. As a result, when the church is ... *walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it is multiplied.* (Ac 9:31; cf. Ja 1:27; Is 58:6ff; Jansen, 2015:18).

5.2.5 *The importance of spiritual growth and sanctification*

Focusing on spirituality and sanctification, Buys (2014:133) indicates that spirituality has a vital impact on the zeal, motivation, perseverance and practical methods of doing missions. *Why then do several authors and researchers who are writing on missional spirituality indicate that spirituality is struggling to integrate the emotional and spiritual aspects of spirituality with real life issues?*

The researcher concurs with Buys that spirituality is a fundamental and crucial aspect in a person's life since it impacts on the whole life of a person, not just a part of an individual's life (Buys, 2014:134).

If this impact is vital, as indicated by Buys, then, it should also influence the youth who are struggling with challenges. Spirituality should be important in the LIFEPLAN® programme, seeing that it impacts the whole life of a person. Currently, unfortunately the LIFEPLAN® programme does not emphasise the crucial aspect of spirituality. The programme should make room for such an important aspect when targeting the youth

who has its challenges. The programme should be adjusted and amended to incorporate the notion of spirituality as a major element next to hope, faith and love, when holistic mission is dealt with.

The LIFEPLAN® programme should be a missional tool that churches, schools, NGO's, organisations, institutions, local government and correctional services can use. This will help them deal with the challenges the youth are facing.

In the quantitative research (chapter 3) findings on the spiritual well-being of participants seemingly indicated that spirituality was not important to certain participants. However, it was notable in the empirical research that 96% of the participants indicated they believe that God loves and cares for them. Nevertheless, only a small percentage (25.3%) indicated that they received personal strength and support from religion. Very promising to the study is that 87.2% of the participants confirmed that they enjoy a personally and meaningful relationship with God, and 90.1% indicated that their relationship with God contributes to their sense of well-being.

The same impact was also evident in the qualitative research (chapter 4) where participants indicated that the LIFEPLAN® programme taught them about the Bible. Participants mentioned that the Bible changed their lives and increased their trust in God. Furthermore, it was also noted in the empirical research (naïve sketches) that most of the participants indicated that their interest grew in the practice of Christianity, and currently they exercise Christian values. Three participants repented and gave their lives to the Lord. They let them be baptised, and currently attend Christian churches. It should be kept in mind that all churches are called to work and cooperate with God in the transformation of the world. This includes the youth with challenges and is effected through the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel (Haw, 2012:1; Jansen, 2015:104).

How the youth choose to live and build their personal world view is often in accordance with their hearts' priorities. According to Matthew 6:21, Jesus asserted that people's treasure is where their heart will be. The point to consider is: *This view has a spiritual inclination*. This insight connects to Proverbs 4:23, reminding readers: ... "above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."

5.3 Holistic missional outreach to the youth

5.3.1 *Mission focusing on the youth*

Holistic mission should have a specific focus on the youth who are dealing with unique challenges in their environment. Service rendering to the youth through LIFEPLAN®, a developmental, training and equipping programme, is in a smaller way an example of a holistic mission project. LIFEPLAN®, works from the premise that mission entails more than merely “saving souls”, especially where poverty is the main destructive factor in numerous less-developed communities. Poverty entails distorted relations with God, fellow human beings, society, and creation. This condition is also a detrimental factor in several rural areas and thus, can't be ignored. Therefore, it is important that a missional church should understand the meaning and causes of poverty (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012; Goheen, 2011:217-220; Jansen, 2015:127; cf. Rhee, 2012:19-27; Van der Walt, 2008:169-172).

Holistic mission dealing with youth challenges should build bridges where the voice of these youth can be heard. Those who are unable to speak for themselves such as the orphans, the drug addicts, molested one's, abused children, just to name a few, should be heard and attended to. These challenges cannot be ignored. Jesus Christ can bring hope, salvation and reconciliation in the lives of these young people. This requires that the mentioned youths should acknowledge the Lord (1 Pt 2:24; 3:15). Jesus Christ died for people's sins, trespasses, wrongdoings and iniquities; God raised Him from the dead to bring hope to a lost world. For the youth, God can build within them a Christ-like spiritual character. The crucified and resurrected Christ is God's decisive and greater Yes to humankind (Keith *et al.*, 2014:12, 119).

Holistic mission targeting the youth implies suffering with Christ and sharing in his resurrection (Keith *et al.*, 2014:112). If the churches are not dealing with the youth through holistic mission, they may experience what Luther related: “*There is again and again an absence of God, of health, of life and of goodness*” (Keith *et al.*, 2014:114).

The churches' task is to listen until they understand like Christ did, which means to take the suffering of the youth on themselves. The youth seek holistic assistance, because they are victims of multiple forms of abuse and neglect, even in places where churches and Christian organisations have been active for long periods. The youth's suffering and

cry for help is not theological fiction. Risks must be taken, believers must be part of the process to reach out, seeing that this is what holistic mission or Christian mission actually means. By engaging them, these youths can find God through faith where He can restore their lives, give hope to the hopeless and forgive their mistakes (Keith *et al.*, 2014:114-119).

Mission with children and youth is often referred to as *holistic transformation* because it is a descriptor of outcomes that lead to development and progress (Prevette, 2014:97). If this holistic mission is proclaimed as God's good news, especially in the context of the present study (youth with challenges), it can possibly transform them, the whole person (body, mind and spirit). To this end Woolnough (2010:4-5) indicates that holistic mission (or integral mission) addresses the body, mind and spirit of a person and his/her community. A person is thus seen in a holistic way, as being one, comprising all aspects of life (body, mind and spirit and his/her functioning in the community).

Both Prevette and Woolnough indicate and confirm that holistic mission can transform the whole person (body, mind and spirit). The researcher concurs with both authors, however, in the context of the present study, relationships must be emphasised. The reason is that this is a fundamental aspect and forms part of a person's constitution. Relationships are one of the main problematic aspects, especially among the youth with challenges, as was found in the preliminary research (chapter 1) as well as in the outcomes and results of the quantitative and qualitative empirical research (chapters 3 and 4). This is also a vital theme in the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme. LIFEPLAN® teaches: ... *God made us special and unique, and provide us with human company because we are created as people who relate to others for example, couples whom are important in the eyes of God ...* (Freeks, 2008:22-36). Therefore, it is crucial that holistic mission should seek to heal broken relationships as described by Corbett and Fikkert (2012:55) (see chapter 2).

From the discussion above, the focal point should be on Jesus Christ who can heal people's brokenness. Christ is the true answer to the youth, where believers need to become like the children to enter the kingdom of God. Therefore, communities should be willing to welcome all children and youth in the name of Jesus Christ.

5.3.2 Biblical and theological foundations for youth ministry

5.3.2.1 Biblical foundations

In Mark 6:37 and 10:13-16 the disciples attempted to prevent the children who wanted to come to the Lord. However, Jesus rebuked his disciples and affirmed that the children and the kingdom of God go together. In the researcher's opinion, any child or a young person should be welcomed in the name of Jesus since being a child is the essence of greatness in the eyes of the Lord (Lk 9:46-48).

A noticeable approach and important principle of holistic mission and particularly youth outreach according to this study, is that Jesus Christ is Lord over everything and all creation. This is the mandate of the church to demonstrate this vision in practice (Haw, 2014:104).

According to Matthew 4:19, Jesus Christ asks people to make a commitment. In the context of the present study, the same question is relevant to the youth who have challenges. Jesus Christ stands central in an integral or holistic mission, and his life and sacrifice form the pattern of Christian discipleship, especially where the Lord associated himself with the poor and destitute (Jansen, 2015:109).

The approach would be for the youth to make a commitment, irrespective of the challenges they are facing. God is able and powerful to step into these distress situations through Jesus Christ to heal the one who suffers (2 Chr 7:14). The researcher has the firm belief that God has a special role in the *missio Dei* for the youth in Christiana, but they must be willing to participate in God's mission. Borthwick (1987:13) indicates that God has a special role for the young people within the *missio Dei* but they must be willing to engage with the Lord and allow Him to work in and through their lives.

5.3.2.2 The essence of youth ministry

The nature of youth ministry

Youth ministry prepares the youth for life, and builds them as disciples for Jesus Christ (Robbins, 2011:14). It is also important to note that there are certain stages of youth ministry such as building the support base, research, networking and collaboration, activities, or counselling (Borgman, 2013:296-298). This raises the question: *Who are the*

youth? The youth are adolescents, teenagers, students, high school learners, junior high students – any young person between puberty and fully adulthood. They are involved in youth-based ministry (Dean, 2001:21). Confirming this fact, youth-based ministry, as the name suggests, focuses on young people (Schultz & Schultz, 1987:16).

Jesus Christ is the focal point in youth ministry and youth evangelism (McGonigal, 2001:130). This means children's ministry can be a significant part of progression and changing people's lives (Lovaglia, 2016:23). In the life-stages of children and young people, youth ministry fundamental since God's plan for any human being is the one to follow (Jessen, 2016:129).

Youth ministry is important for the church since the biblical testimony focuses strongly on the youth's religious development (Dt 6:4-9; cf. McGonigal, 2001:125). Without young people, there is no need for ministry. Therefore, biblical wisdom attests to a high calling of ministering to the youth, for example, in Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years draw near when you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" Currently, the Christian calling regarding the youth finds its focus area in the Third World and especially Africa (Van Rooy, 1994:251).

From the researcher's viewpoint, youth ministry matter. When such ministry reflects Christ, it will make a lasting impact on young people's lives (Bronwyn, 2013; cf. Dean, 2010:6-7; Peterson *et al.*, 2014:37-40). The youth need to experience Jesus Christ fulfilling their lives as much as anyone else. They should thus be helped to reach their full God-created potential, embrace their gifts and learn to be their true selves before God (*coram Deo*). The youth are in Christ since they are part of the body of Christ (Goheen, 2011:168-169; cf. also Ro 12:5). The researcher agrees with Dean that all actions should reflect Christ, especially the calling to transform the lives of young people. According to the Christian belief, all things in heaven and on earth (i.e. creation) is in a process of recapitulation under one head, Jesus Christ (Eph 1:10). Only Jesus can offer a *real calling* to the youth, which holds a challenge for young people. Therefore, even if this call seems impossible, challenging and difficult, it will deliver for the church, seeing that God calls his people to be fruitful in any situation or circumstance (Gn 41:52).

De Vries (2008:15) argues that youth ministry should be built on Jesus Christ's ministry, however, churches often are impatient to build a sustainable youth ministry. De Vries

point out how churches focus on hurried, “quick-fix” solutions. Confirming this argument of De Vries, Borgman (2013:289) finds in his study that the most neglected mission of the church is the youth (Borgman, 2013:289). The researcher concurs with both authors. This is based on two considerations. Firstly, churches who deviate from the core focus, which is Jesus Christ, tend to neglect the youth. Secondly, if the youth are not relevant and significant to the church any more, a future church becomes impossible, which can be detrimental to any community. The youth should not be neglected but rather nurtured, seeing that this group are relevant and form an integral part of the congregation.

It is the researcher’s opinion that youth ministry entails more than “doing something” to the youth. The focus should rather be nurturing and assisting them with delicate aspects such as decision-making processes, leadership tasks and responsibilities. These are crucial aspects in the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme (Freeks, 2008:1-6; 22-24; cf. Trimmer, 1994:20-21). This programme is based on the belief that God has placed the church on earth to make a difference in the life of others, in this case the youth (Borgman, 2013:287).

Youth ministry’s specific focus

Youth ministry should focus on families, churches, institutions, refugees, street kids and youth offenders. The reason is clear. Various challenges impact the youth negatively in South Africa. These include family breakdown, HIV/Aids, globalisation, poverty and corruption (Baleke, 2011:87).

At the beginning of the 21st century, De Vries (2004:21) diagnosed a shortcoming in youth ministry. The reason was that the youth (already at that time) were described as outrageous, wild and out of control. Furthermore, people deviated from the traditional aspects of youth ministry. This raises the question about the true nature of such ministry, as examined below.

The aspects of traditional youth ministry

According to De Vries, traditional youth ministry focuses on the place of teenagers in the community of faith. Currently, however, there are increasing isolation of teenagers from the adult world and from their own parents. The work of De Vries is thus not as relevant for youth in poor and previously-disadvantaged communities in Christiana. Nevertheless,

De Vries's belief in a family-based youth ministry is applicable. This entails a ministry where parents are involved in the lives of their children. The researcher concurs on the motive of family-based youth ministry. Such ministry is essential for the transmission of values. When teenagers become adults, they will eventually return to the core values their parents instilled in them due to the continuous parental involvement (De Vries, 2004:97-104; *cf.* also Freeks, 2011a:67-97).

Besides transferring values, parents are tasked to share their faith (belief system) with their children. In this regard, parents play a significant role in effective youth ministry due to their support and active involvement. For example, aspects valued at church may be insignificant in the home, if parents neglect this focus (Keefauver, 1986:24-25). Involving and supportive parents become partners in the success of youth ministry. The reason is that their support and involvement determines the level of growth, especially spiritually, that their children will experience in youth ministry (Schultz & Schultz, 1987:147).

The researcher underwrites the view of De Vries and Keefauver regarding the role and function of parents. It is important to know that values and character are crucial elements in the lives of children. However, the researcher follows the additional dimension of Schultz and Schultz of growth, especially on a spiritual level. The motivation is that parents' involvement and supportive role should not focus merely on values and faith, which clearly are important aspects. However, parents' engagement should include spirituality, which also is a main focal point in the present study and essential in the lives of young people (chapter 1 [1.4]; chapter 2 [2.8]; chapter 3 [3.8.2.6]; chapter 4; chapter 5 [5.3]; chapter 6 [6.9.6]).

The youth has a dire need of meaningful relationships with God and others (Keefauver, 1986:10). After 25 years of research, Robbins (2011:5-56) confirms that youth ministry concerns relationships with others. To elaborate: Relationships are an indispensable and necessary element in youth ministry. In the present study, the LIFEPLAN® programme is evaluated, and relationships is found to be a core theme in this programme (Frees, 2008:1, 22-31; *cf.* also chapter 4 [4.8.2.3]).

The argument above implicate *what was*, and *what is currently*, youth ministry is still one of the largest challenges, but also greatest opportunities for the church presently. In the view of the researcher, the emphasis should be more on Jesus' presence in and through

the youth. Youth ministry must focus on the biblical message of Jesus Christ' life, death, and resurrection, and should aim to help young people build their faith in Jesus Christ (Linhart & Livermore, 2011:28; *cf.* also Ac 10:43, Rm 10:9-10, Eph 2;8-9). Without faith, it is impossible to please God, even with the best-planned and implemented youth ministry programme (Heb 11:6). From a different angle, Baleke (2011:92) is of the opinion that the tool of life-skills education in a programme can make a significant difference in local communities.

5.3.2.3 Biblical view of youth outreach

There is no biblical reference or model for youth outreach, but rather biblical principles that could be vital to the local church, poor communities and the youth. Youth outreach need to follow the reference in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which is the ideal model of Jesus Christ according to Matthew 28:18-20 (Got Questions Ministries, 2017). Reaching out to the youth is essential but they should be equipped, affirm and inspired for discipleship and Christian leadership (Bronwyn, 2013; *cf.* Lk 11:1).

It is the view of the researcher that the youth should become change “agents” within their families and in their community. It is important that they take part in serving their community where they reside. In this regard, the LIFEPLAN® programme can be of special significance, and an aid assisting the youth in this endeavour. The programme can provide young people with life skills and the experience they need to emerge as future leaders, and help them make a valuable contribution to their community. The programme can enable them to collaborate with their community to identify challenges, and develop strategies to address these issues. Such a programme can also empower the youth to create solutions for their community (Peterson *et al.*, 2014:37-40).

5.3.2.4 The purpose of youth outreach to poor communities

LIFEPLAN® aims to capacitate young people who are committed to Jesus Christ to make a difference in poor communities. Thus, the purpose of youth outreach is to integrate the youth into the body and mission of Jesus Christ. The youth should be prepared and trained for effective ministry to lead the course of Christ, and apply Christian values to various aspects of their life. Youth outreach should be a *bridging* ministry of formation, transformation, education and connection. In reaching out to the youth, practitioners should response to the spiritual needs of young people. This applies especially to

relationships, which is a fundamental aspect in the LIFEPLAN® programme (Freeks, 2008:22-38). The purpose of youth outreach is further to recognise young people's gifts for ministry and their level of spirituality. The following guidelines are vital in terms of gifts and spirituality:

- Their gifts should be shared among others
- They should grow in life skills.
- They should develop a positive self-image.
- They should learn respect for differences.
- They should serve those in need.
- They should take part in the Sacraments.
- They should develop a personal spirituality and prayer life.
- They should foster a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The researcher is aware that youth outreach to poor communities entails far more than programmes, such as LIFEPLAN®. Youth outreach is a missional ministry, not a mere programme. However, the expectation will still be that the youth must grow stronger spiritually and more devoted to Jesus Christ, even amid challenges in their poor communities. In such a case, LIFEPLAN® can have an essential function in youth ministry. The youth should find their place within the church, the community, and a relationship with Jesus Christ. They should live according to Jesus Christ's model and example for his followers. In other words, such ministry would entail inviting others into the plan of God and becoming part of his mission, namely to reconcile the world to the Lord.

To summarise, youth ministry is fundamental whether it is executed through programmes, educational tools or activities. Therefore, being a part of youth ministry is to be in harmony with the whole. In other words, young people should find their place within the larger picture: to know Jesus Christ, follow Him, and lead the life He preferred. Jesus Christ has

modelled the fullness of life, and his followers must become part of this new existence, the youth included.

5.4 Youth challenges in South Africa

5.4.1 Critical youth problems in South Africa

The causes of youth problems in South Africa

It is important for the researcher to determine the main causes of youth problems in South Africa. This is linked to the belief that family life is vital in the eyes of God. The researcher is of the opinion that the Word of God is still relevant in the lives of families today. This raises the following questions:

- Have parents move away from the Word of God?
- Why did parents' stopped consulting God about their children?

Firstly, the researcher is qualified in family studies, youth and fatherhood as well as values- and character education (Freeks, 2004; Freeks, 2007; Freeks, 2011a; Freeks, 2013; Freeks, 2015a; Freeks, 2015b; Freeks & Lotter, 2011b; Freeks, 2016a; Freeks, 2016b; Freeks, 2016c; Freeks & Lotter, 2009; Freeks & Lotter, 2014; Freeks *et al.*, 2015; Freeks *et al.*, 2015; Pretorius *et al.*, 2016), In light of this experience, the researcher has to acknowledge that family life in a country such as South Africa is not a simple matter to understand.

Therefore, secondly, this section discusses and elaborates on the main problematic incidents of youth problems in South Africa, which relates to most of the challenges that the youth are facing currently. These factors can be outlined as follows: the HIV/Aids epidemic, single-parenting, orphans and child-headed-households; moral decline and a lack of positive values; irresponsible and risky sexual relationships and behaviour; teenage pregnancies; poverty and unemployment; poor academic performance; school violence among learners; substance abuse; religious affiliation and poor church attendance; Spiritism and worldviews, father absenteeism. These mentioned issues will be grouped under several subheadings and discussed below.

5.4.2 ***The HIV/Aids pandemic and the problem of single-parenting, orphans and child-headed households in South Africa***

HIV/Aids: It is evident that, globally, South Africa has one of the largest burdens regarding this pandemic. Statistics from 2015 indicated that 55% of females and 37.8% of males are HIV-positive (Meintjies *et al.*, 2015:34; Richter & Sherr, 2008; Shisana *et al.*, 2014:xxxvii). The Aids epidemic is unsettling the care of children (Richter, 2004:5). In 2012, South Africa has already experienced declines in morality and fertility which resulted in a reduction in the young dependent population (NPC, 2012).

A major risk factor for HIV infection is having multiple sexual partners. In the previous national surveys of 2014, the HSRC indicated that people are living with HIV globally and annual growth of 12.2% (Shisana *et al.*, 2014:1 & 35).

An estimated 2.1 million people died due to Aids, of which 76% occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa as early as 2007. Southern Africa has also the largest incidence of HIV/Aids in the world. In South Africa, 1 out of 8 children are infected with the HIV virus and 90% of children who are infected live in the Sub-Sahara region where Aids continues to be the leading cause of mortality (UNAIDS & WHO, 2007). This pandemic also affected the health and well-being of family members (Eddy & Holborn, 2011). The effect of the pandemic on children and youth as well as families are reflected by the increasing numbers of orphans and child-headed households. The majority of orphans currently are due to HIV/Aids (UNAIDS & WHO, 2007).

Single-parenting: This social problem is increasing rapidly in South Africa (5.5.12). It is important to understand that children are the most affected ones in a single-parent structure (Deal, 2010:50). The researcher is aware for the present study, that single-parenting results from divorce, death of a spouse, or unmarried parenthood (Welch, 2007:10-11).

Orphans: According to the national statistics of 2012, there were approximately 3.37 million to 4 million in South Africa. This entails a distinct increase by 13% since 2002, with 380 000 more orphaned children in 2013, than in 2002 (Meintjies *et al.*, 2015:104; Ratele *et al.*, 2012:553).

In 2014, the overall level of orphans (0-18 years and younger) indicated 16.9%, paternal 9.3% and maternal 4.4% (Shisana *et al.*, 2014:xxxix). In 2015, a vast majority of orphans in South Africa indicated 60% paternal and 3% maternal (Meintjies *et al.*, 2015:104).

Approximately 570 000 children in South Africa lost one or both parent/s. Orphaned children have a high risk of missing out of schooling, living in households that have less food security, suffering from anxiety and depression, and being exposed to HIV infection. These risks are higher if a mother died, rather than a father (Eddy & Holborn, 2011; Meintjies *et al.*, 2015:104).

The above-mentioned implies that 15% and more of the children in South Africa do not have a living biological father and 7% lack a living biological mother. The numbers of paternal orphans are high due to the higher mortality rate of men in South Africa and the frequent absence of fathers in the lives of children. This is because of HIV/Aids, poverty, negligence, physical and sexual abuse, abandonment and death (Meintjies *et al.*, 2015:104).

Child-headed households: A youth problem in South Africa is the rapidly increasing number of these households, due to various social factors (e.g. death of parents, absent fathers and single mothers). In 2008, approximately 98 000 (0.5% of the population) children were living in child-headed households. This causes lower school attendance rates in contrast to the children living with parents (Eddy & Holborn, 2011).

Furthermore, parents also died due to the HIV/Aids pandemic (5.5.4.1), and this results in high incidences of child-headed households in South Africa. This is the reason why children in such households are mostly teenagers (Makinwa, 2012:51).

Across South Africa during the period 2002 to 2013, it was indicated that 61 000 of the total 85 000 households in South Africa, were child-headed. Such households in South Africa escalated even more since 2015. It is, therefore, estimated that 46% of all children in South Africa at the age of 15 years and above are being reared in child-headed households (Meintjies *et al.*, 2015:105-106). This means that these children grow up without parents to support them and teach them life skills.

5.4.3 *The problem regarding children in South Africa*

The total population of South Africa's in mid-2013 was estimated at 53 million people. This number increased to 53.7 million in 2014, of whom 18.6 million were children under the age of 18 years. Therefore, children constitute 35% of the total population (Meintjies *et al.*, 2015:102; StatsSA, 2015a:16). In the previous year (2012) there were approximately 5.3 million young children in South Africa, which represented 10.1% of the total population (StatsSA, 2011; StatsSA, 2013:19).

Irrespective of the large representation of children in the South African population, it is not uncommon for children in South Africa to live separately from their biological parents. National statistics from 2013 indicated that 42.5% of children aged below five years lived only with their biological mother, whereas 2.0% lived only with their biological fathers. The statistics of 1998 was even worse and indicated that 42% of children lived only with their mother and only 1% of children lived with their father. This negative trend is related to several factors, including historic population control, labour migration, poverty, housing and educational opportunities, low marriage rates and specific cultural practice (Meintjies, *et al.*, 2015:103).

Evidently, this is a serious concern since the contact of the father and his support to children could improve the child's socio-economic circumstances considerably. A more problematic fact concerning the context of the present study, is that 18.7% of children lived with neither of their biological parents (Richter, 2004:5; StatsSA, 2013:25).

Despite the above-mentioned disturbing percentages, children are considered as the future. What happens to them in their first period of life, affects their development, the development of society, as well as that of the world around them (Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2004:1). Considering that the first four life years entail the period of rapid physical, mental, emotional, social, moral growth and development for the child, then experiences in these years will have the largest impact on their brains' later development (StatsSA, 2013).

5.4.4 *Moral decline and a lack of positive values among the youth in South Africa*

Researchers who studied impoverished communities and youth problems in South Africa found that the youth in these communities attest to having no hope. As a result, the youth

act irresponsible and often make bad life-choices. As a result, South Africa experiences a value dilemma and a lack of values among the youth (Abdool, 2005; Challens, 2008; Freeks, 2007; Freeks, 2011:1-4; Freeks, 2015a:1-3; Freeks & Lotter, 2011:578-581; Lepholletse, 2008; Llale, 2003; Rens, 2005).

According to the early statistics of 2004, South African society showed increasing signs of moral decline. The Human Sciences Research Council sounded an urgent alarm that, annually, more than 25 000 children in South Africa are sexually abused (Richter, 2004:5).

In 2013, most societies within the South African context has evidenced a decline in acceptable behaviour, character, values, standards, ethics and morals. This tendency is observed in the behaviour of young people and the present youth (Freeks, 2011a:1-4; Freeks, 2013:1-3; Freeks, 2015a:1; Georgiades *et al.*, 2013:1473-1476; Logan-Greene *et al.*, 2012:373-374).

5.4.5 *Irresponsible and risky sexual behaviour*

The HSRC indicated that 10.7% of young children (aged 15-24) have their first sexual experience, even before the age of 15 years (Shisana *et al.*, 2014:xxxix). To make matters worse and riskier, the HSRC reported that 12.6% of young children (aged 15 years and older) had multiple sexual partners (Shisana *et al.*, 2014:xxxix). This form of behaviour from the youth in South Africa can lead to destructive consequences, such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and syndromes such as HIV/Aids (as mentioned previously).

5.4.6 *Teenage pregnancy*

Disturbing statistics about pregnancy among teenagers in South Africa indicated 5.6% in the age group 14-19 years. The occurrence of pregnancy has increased further from 0.8% (aged 14 years) to 11.9% (aged 19 years) (StatsSA, 2015b:30).

5.4.7 *Poverty and unemployment*

It was found that 60% of South Africans live in poverty, predominantly in the Black population and rural areas. In this regard, the level of poverty in South Africa is proven to be extremely high as compared to other countries (Mensah & Benedict, 2010:139).

In South Africa, it is evident that the youth face high levels of unemployment, and most of these children reside mostly in households that have to deal with poverty, unemployment and severe disruption. As a result, 11.9 million (64%) of the children in South Africa face income poverty, with the key driver unemployment, where approximately 4 out of 10 children live that way. Therefore, it is found that, globally, 75 000 children die before their fifth birthday (UNICEF, s.a.:21-22; 31).

Poverty is a devastating state and children and the youth are the most vulnerable and the ones who are affected the most. It is, therefore, important to care for children and the youth, especially those in impoverished communities and rural areas (Long, 2011:418).

5.4.8 *Poor academic performance*

A further problem is deficient academic performance (23.5%) and poor school attendance among the youth. This tendency is caused mainly by the lack of finances, which is another reason why learners are not studying and drop out (17.7%) (Black, 2008:28-30). Illiteracy did decline from 27.3% to 15.8% between 2002 and 2014. However, this implies a disparity, where older individuals from the age of 20 years and older did not receive sufficient schooling and did not complete grade 7 (StatsSA, 2015a:11; 25). Furthermore, there is increased illiteracy among the youth due poor academic performance and poor school attendance.

5.4.9 *School violence among learners*

Violence is currently a problematic issue among the youth of South Africa. A clear example is the campaign of *#Fees must fall*, with incidences of intimidation and violence among students and staff at the various higher education institutions in South Africa during 2016 (UNICEF, s.a.:47). Violence among learners is a serious impediment to quality education. It is estimated that 27% of high school learners feel unsafe at school, while 16% of them attest to having been threatened with a weapon (UNICEF, s.a.:47).

5.4.10 *Substance abuse*

The use and abuse of alcohol and drugs among school learners in South Africa is a destructive tendency. It is indicated that 1 out of 10 high school learners has taken at least one illegal drug such as cannabis, heroin, or cocaine (UNICEF, s.a.:59). However,

regarding alcohol use and abuse, young people indicate the following responses: “get drunk”, “lie to parents or guardians”, and “skip school without an excuse” (Georgiades *et al.*, 2013:1479).

5.4.11 **Religious affiliation and poor church attendance**

Religious affiliation is a youth problem in South Africa. In this regard, 85.7% of all South Africans are affiliated to the Christian faith while 5.1% professed to ancestral, tribal, animist and other traditional religions. A further 2.2% of the population confess themselves as being Muslims, 1% as Hindus, while 5.5% of the population do not follow any religion (Stat SA, 2015a:12, 34).

In terms of church attendance, the youth are leaving the church since the church failed to convince young people to stay. The youth are no longer active in church activities, church attendance, nor praying or reading the Bible. The church even failed to preach how important youth ministry is. The problem is that most church members are concerned with the health of the institution, the church, instead of the health of the youth and youth outreach (Root, 2015:30). Traditionally, people viewed youth outreach as wholly separate actions from the church. As a result, there is no holistic understanding of youth outreach (Yi, 2013:i).

The researcher argues that the youth are part of the church and should function just as missional as the church. This means that young people should also be sent out as part of the incarnating life of Jesus Christ in the world (Grant & Niemandt, 2015:3). Being missional is based on believers understanding of the Triune *missio Dei* as well as the “sending” posture of the Church, as it continues the work of Christ. The reason is that mission is both an originating (Triune) and organising (church) principle (Hendry, 2012:10).

The idea is not to make the church attractable for the youth, but rather enhance its missional character. A *missional renaissance* means taking Jesus to the youth in poor and disadvantaged communities with the Holy Spirit as the effective Agent in missions, and changing the way the youth thinks about God (Pollock, 2014).

Engaging the youth in mission is challenging (Austnaberg, 2014:83). However, the *missional renaissance* has activated South African believers to investigate new ways of

being church when focusing on youth challenges (Pillay, 2015:1). Churches in South Africa are making missional overtures, however, these actions are insufficient to embrace the significance of the youth. Churches and denominations should have a missional perspective which impacts its ecclesiology and polity (Pillay, 2015:2).

It should be remembered that *missional* is (in the view of the researcher) not only a trendy *buzz* word, but it describes the action that God intended in the first place for humankind. An essential point in this study is the fact that children and youth ministry are definite areas of grave concern. Therefore, probing questions were posed such as: “*Where have the church, parents and society gone wrong?*” (Hendry, 2012:295-296).

The researcher believes churches should understand what the youth are experiencing in their daily lives, besides the often life-changing challenges they are facing. The church should not only understand the youth through these transition stages, but should have positive conversations with them about their challenges (Nel, 2013).

5.4.12 *The problem of ancestral spirits, spiritism and worldviews in South Africa*

It is paramount for the present study to know that ancestral spirit veneration and its influence still affects numerous people, especially the youth, in South Africa (Van Rooy, 1994:242-243). The belief that ancestors can determine prosperity or adversary can be confusing to the youth (Van Rooy, 1994:248).

Spiritism is a belief based on communication with the dead (Mashau & Nqobobo, 2016:37). This belief is an aspect of the African Traditional Religion and surfaces in several animistic religions. For example, spiritual beings and spiritual forces are afforded certain powers over human affairs (Wiher, 2002:283-284; Van Rooy, 1994:262; Van der Walt, 2004:33). The term “animism” derives from the Latin word *anima*, which means soul and belief in the existence of spiritual beings (Wiher, 2002:284). Animism a belief system according to which reality is perceived: the observed world is related to the unseen world. This system also entails a belief in beings and forces such as a higher being, gods, ancestors, ghosts, totemic spirits, nature spirits, demons, witchcraft and black magic, angels and Satan (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:38; Van Rheenen, 1991:19-23; Van Rooy, 1994:235; Van Rooy, 1994:262; Van Rooy, 1995:40).

An apt example is the belief in witchcraft, black magic, involving jealousy. When people prosper due to hard work, they often are suspected of witchcraft. Furthermore, the belief is that someone should carry the blame for individuals' misfortune (Van Rooy, 1999: 238-242).

The African Initiated Churches such as the Zionism and Apostolic Churches often show syncretistic tendencies, mixing Christian beliefs with African Traditional Religion. For example, certain churches believe in the ancestral spirits and practice this as a holy sacrament unto God. Even believers in mainline churches are still found to act syncretistic because they worship the God of the Bible in the church, and their ancestors in their backyard (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:37; Van Rheenen, 1991:95-99; Van Rooy, 1995:36-38; Wiher, 2002:296-297). Most Black communities are involved in spiritism (ancestral spirits or forefather spirits) and occult powers, which deals with the slaughter of cows and other livestock to cleanse individuals from bad luck, or assure them a future, prosperity, et cetera. (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:39). The belief is also that the ancestors have certain dealings with human life, and sustain themselves through life (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:37). From a Christian viewpoint, it should be understood that ancestors are not givers of life, although they have dealings with human life, and live in the memories of the one's they leave behind (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:36-37). Only God through Jesus Christ gives life, and more abundantly (Jn 10:10).

Black communities often experience unhappy family relationships, and aggression, and are also impoverished because they spent large sums of money on these mentioned forms of religions or belief systems (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016; Van der Walt, 2008:180-182). It is the researcher's view that the youth should be encouraged to connect with God and make the church an important part of their lives. They should not be misled by worldviews that could be extremely harmful for their spiritual growth.

Most churches and denominations within the Black rural context are found to hold the mentioned worldview, and are attached to practices involving ancestral spirits and traditional healers (Wiher, 2002:286). They also believe that the two worlds, spiritual and physical, interact. Thus, those alive connect with the dead (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:37; Wiher, 2002:285). Believing in ancestors and the death is their traditional African worldview. Therefore, it is not surprising that there is a creative tension between African worldviews and Christian mission (Mashau & Ngobo, 2016:34). Deep-rooted belief in the

ancestors (*amadlozi*) may well hold negative consequences, especially for young people (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:36; cf. Van der Walt, 2008:175).

Van Rooy (1994:248) is strongly of the opinion that no believer should trust in ancestral spirits, communicate with them, or expect any form of salvation from them. However, indigenous people believe that ancestral spirits play an important role in their lives. They believe that God is unreachable, unapproachable and unknown. Therefore, they approach the ancestors (forefathers), especially during times of illness, disasters, prosperity, good luck, et cetera (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:39; Van Rooy, 1995:36).

Van Rheenen (1991:21) explains how people believe that ancestors are beings, in actual fact personal spirits that influence the lives of human beings. Therefore, these ancestors have first to be consulted for all decisions. In the traditional African worldview, authority is important, and respect, reverence and obedience essential (Van der Walt, 2008:175-180). These forefathers also act as protectors and benefactors (Mashau & Ngcobo, 2016:39; cf. Turaki, 1999:175). This is the reason why people honour them by partaking in certain rituals and initiation ceremonies, in the belief that the ancestors accept these rituals (Wiher, 2002:286).

It is the researcher's opinion that this practice confuses young people. They are left in doubt about which belief is more important or more truthful. There is a clear indication that the African concept of God is wholly different from the God proclaimed in the Bible. The youths must seek their salvation in God through Jesus Christ, seeing that redemption takes place only in Jesus Christ (Van Rooy, 1994:248; cf. Van Rooy, 1994:264; Jn 11:25; Dt 18:9-15). There is hope for the youth when they decide to listen to the Gospel message. God lets his sun rise on the evil and the good, and He sends his rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. In these acts of God lie the ultimate hope for South Africa, especially the youth (Van Rooy, 1994:24; Mt 5:45).

5.4.13 *The problem of father absenteeism in South Africa*

Statistics that were already provided make it evident that practitioners of youth ministry are called and sent by God with solutions to families that are disrupted and fathers who are more absent than before (6.3.2).

Research has shown that dysfunctional family life is a major problem, with fatherlessness at the centre (Carstens, 2014:9-11; Freeks, 2004:1-6; Freeks, 2011:1-4; Freeks, 2013:8-18; Freeks, 2016a:6-7; Freeks *et al.*, 2015:22-24; Freeks & Lotter, 2009:520-524; *cf.* Richter *et al.*, 2012). The following statistics reflect certain of the disturbing factors in South Africa:

- 63% of suicides originate from fatherless homes.
- 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions are products from fatherless homes.
- 80% of rapists motivated by displaced anger come from fatherless homes.
- 40% of all children in this country do not live with their biological fathers.
- 85% of children with behavioural problems come from homes where a father is absent.
- 90% of homeless children are from fatherless homes.
- 71% of children who do not finish school come from such homes (Carstens, 2014; StatsSA, 2015b; Goodsell & Meldrum, 2010; *cf.* 6.3.1 & 6.3.2).

From the statistics above it seems that most major social pathologies have been linked to fatherlessness or absent fathers. Men must understand that they play a vital role in the welfare of their family and society. If they do not fulfil this role, the following statistics may keep on rising:

- Men commit 90% of major crimes.
- Men commit 100% of rapes.
- Men commit 95% of burglaries.
- Men commit 91% of the offenses against the family.
- Men comprise 94% of drunk drivers (Carstens, 2014:10; *cf.* 6.3.2).

Statistically, it is evident that there is a tendency akin to “fatherhood disease” in the world and a rapid increase in single-parenting. Seemingly this fatherless epidemic is defining a generation of children in South Africa.

The issue of absent fathers is becoming a serious problem in South Africa. The reason is that children are growing up increasingly without a father figure. This problem is not only impacting family life severely; it is a worrying trend second to a major disease such as HIV/Aids (Eddy & Holborn, 2011; Ratele *et al.*, 2012:554).

The number of children living without their fathers increased unabated for almost two decades of democracy in South Africa (StatsSA, 2010). The absence of fathers has been constructed as socially detrimental and as a dilemma for most children in South Africa (Ratele *et al.*, 2012:553; StatsSA, 2010).

In 2011, it was estimated that 54% of men in South Africa, especially between the age of 15-49 years, were fathers, but 50% of these fathers did not have daily contact with their children. This lack of contact, or children growing up without their fathers, causes a serious disadvantage, seeing that the ensuing poverty exacerbates the impact of family breakdown, especially on children (Eddy & Holborn, 2011).

Fathers' absence is the ultimate cause for the rising incidence of single mothers and also child-headed households in South Africa (Freeks, 2016a:7; Ratele *et al.*, 2012:553). Single-parent households is not only a serious concern but it has become a norm in South Africa where the 'typical' child is raised by only the mother (Eddy & Holborn, 2011).

It stands above argument that it is not ideal for any child to live without parental care or without an adult resident. The LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme teaches that parents are a gift from God to children. Nevertheless, numerous children have been raised in families where fathers have neglected their responsibilities towards them. Fathers have a God-given role to fulfil in the family life (Freeks, 2008:28).

The above-mentioned problems are devastating to the youth in South Africa. These problems cause large numbers of youth to withdraw from church and blame God for ills and misfortune in their lives. Moreover, these youths indulge in destructive behaviour and make bad choices for their lives.

As was asserted previously, the researcher firmly believes that the youth are valuable to God, irrespective of the challenges they face and problems they have to deal with. The youth should be advised, and even provided with God-given solutions in the LIFEPLAN® programme. To accomplish this, the LIFEPLAN® programme should first be adjusted to

deal with such crucial aspects. The programme should also be amended to give the youth a platform which allows them to partake in discussions about the importance of God, church life, and youth impact in South Africa.

5.5 Most recent missiological research on holistic youth outreach to poor communities

By way of introduction, it should be mentioned South Africa is a youthful society with approximately 54% young people who are below 24 years (Hart, 2012). Youth outreach is of essence and necessary when impoverished communities are considered. Through youth outreach young people should be empowered, trained and equipped to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the present world. The reason is that the devil focuses his warfare especially on the youth, seeing that this group comprise the church of today and tomorrow; the church cannot be *church* without the youth (May *et al.*, 2005:3).

In light of the above, youth outreach is crucial, and the church should be more caring and accommodating towards this group. In other words, the church should accept them with their mistakes and shortcomings, and allow God to change their lives in imitation of Jesus Christ, and through the work of the Holy Spirit. In this regard, it is vital for the present study to examine the findings of recent missiological research on the youth.

5.5.1 Youth participation in HIV-prevention programmes

The findings on the participation of young people in HIV-prevention programmes (Gibbs *et al.*, 2010:156-160) are as follows:

- Spaces to speak about HIV/Aids – young people were content that they had the opportunities to discuss this pandemic openly.
- Having fun – young people indicated that they wanted fun in life by participating in sports or activity clubs. However, aspects of this “fun” was their involvement in sexual activities, which are actually risky behaviour because of teenage pregnancies, danger of SDIs, and Aids-related deaths among the youth.
- Unemployment – given the high levels of poverty and unemployment many young people want jobs but lack basic skills.

- Skills training – this is essential for young people is and the accompanying education as a route to securing a job in future.
- Involvement in community affairs – the youth want to become more involved in their community but they are excluded from involvement and are side-lined in discussions.
- Lack of recognition for young people in the community – there is a low level of respect for youths and lack of recognition of their value to society, therefore, their views are ignored (Gibbs *et al.*, 2010:156-160).

The youth are called to become involved and active in the prevention of HIV at a global, national and local level. This is due to the fact that this group is at risk of HIV infection since 45% of new HIV infections are among people at the age of 15-24 years.

5.5.2 *Participation in sport to promote health and education*

Findings in the field of sports in South Africa (Burnett, 2010:29; 32-33) to help promote health development and education, are as follows:

- Teenage pregnancy indicates a rate of an average of 9.4 per annum for secondary school girls and 1.2 for primary school girls – a social reality.
- Poverty is a result of poor health, criminality, deviant behaviour and low literacy levels.
- Participation in sports can stimulate, sustain and develop a sporting culture among the youth.
- Sports promote youth and community development in disadvantaged communities (Burnett, 2010:33-38).

5.5.3 *Bridging levels of illiteracy among the youth*

Findings on literacy levels (Hart, 2012:5-9) to bridge the level of illiteracy among the youth, are as follows:

- It is important to erect libraries that could serve young people and improve reading skills.
- Electronic access to information should be provided to improve study facilities.

- Outreach activities are necessary such as computer literacy and literacy classes.

5.5.4 ***Sports and music ministry***

Findings in terms of sports ministry and music (Tucker & Woodbridge, 2012:5-7) are:

- Sports creates an environment for outreach.
- The sports arena is an ideal place for reaching people indifferent to the church.
- Soccer helps promote the Gospel.
- Playing sports with Christians from other cultures promotes unity.
- The church could use the language of sport to convey the Gospel.
- Sports ministry helps connect believers with the real world.
- Teamwork and leadership skills are learned through participation in sport.
- Sports metaphors are excellent tools for teaching life skills.
- The sports field is an ideal place for training the youth in life skills.
- Sports ministry breaks down various barriers to evangelism.
- Sports bring people of different cultures together.
- Sports ministry helps the church to be socially relevant.

5.5.5 ***Access to health services***

Health services in South Africa has become a barrier to young people, and is difficult to improve young people's health. Findings on the health of the youth (Geary *et al.*, 2014:3-8) are:

- Adolescent access is needed to health services and facilities.
- The importance highlighted of youth-friendly health services.

- Facilities should be provided for family planning, HIV testing, pregnancy testing and health education.
- Friendly health services promote safe sexual behaviour and HIV prevention by engaging with young people in schools, clinics, youth centres and youth groups.
- Human resource issues create barriers to provide health services to young people.
- Infrastructural issues must be addressed: such as young people wanting their own space at the clinic.

These findings demonstrate that youth-friendly service programmes are limited and below targets set by the Department of Health. The main barrier to providing health services to young people were found to be the lack of trained staff and the lack of a space dedicated to young people.

5.5.6 *Spirituality and positive life attitudes*

Furthermore, research was done in positive youth development and spirituality (Lerner *et al.*, 2010:75-77). The aim was for young people to discover their life's purpose by receiving proper guidance to become positive contributors to society. The findings from this research are as follows:

- The adolescents engage in the process of change, which moves them to make contributions to self, family, community and society.
- Young people move into planes of transcendence where actions and contributions create results on the horizontal plane (impact in the world) and the vertical plane (connection with the Creator). These factors are connected by spirituality as the emotional "fuel" that energises the process, where spirituality is indicated as the transcendent dimension.
- The youth can embrace spirituality, which will allow them to experience themselves in relationship to God, and to enjoy a personal relationship with Christ. A personal and direct experience with Christ can open up spirituality, which promotes transcendence and faith.

- An experience of transcendence with the Divine have implications for their identity as sons or daughters of God (Gl 3:26), or being the chosen one's of God (Eph 1:4).
- Transcendence is experienced through a connection with others by participating in religious congregations.
- Transcendence is experienced through spiritual incidences in nature, for example outdoor experiences which may promote a sense of purpose and well-being.
- Transcendence is experienced through worship and religious rituals. By engaging in worshipping the youth become aware of the Divine. Through participation in rituals such as the Lord's Supper, they identify with believers and their union with Christ.
- Transcendence can be experienced through spiritual practices, for example fasting and praying generate devotion to one's practice of spirituality.
- Spiritual practices such as service to the poor is constructive for the youth, seeing that it teaches them the intrinsic values of living for others, gratitude and self-sacrifice.

It is evident from the findings above that spirituality is a core factor for positive youth development. Although spirituality can be a vague term, for the purpose of the present study its meaning is found in spiritual [trans]formation, as was discussed in chapter 2 under 2.7 – focusing on the need for spiritual formation and prayer in the LIFEPLAN® programme. Spirituality in this context, implies being transformed into the image of Christ and becoming a disciple or follower imitating the Lord (Knoetze, J., 2015:163).

Spiritual transformation suggests the element of *caught* and not *taught*: caught in making disciples of Jesus Christ. Spiritual transformation is also part of the formative process and part of an activity of the Holy Spirit, where people should be taught to live in total dependence of God's Spirit (Knoetze, J., 2015:163). The Holy Spirit as the third Person in the Trinity has a missional role, which is to reveal God's will, equip people (Ac 2:1-41), as well as empower believers for mission and developing their character (White & Niemandt, 2015:431).

Research indicated that outreach to the youth is crucial, especially by focusing on their spirituality. It is also necessary that they should reach out to other young people and engage them in the ultimate mission of disciple-making (Bergman, 2010:21; Canales,

2010). This specific research of spiritual growth and spiritual formation was aimed at leading the youth to be life-long disciples of Jesus Christ (Flemming & Cannister, 2010).

Spirituality was shown as a deficiency (gap) and problem in the quantitative and qualitative empirical research among the youth in Christiana (as mentioned previously in chapters 3 and 4). In this regard, spirituality is crucial since it deepens a person's connection with Christ, as the LIFEPLAN® Programme indicated.

Recent research proved that results for the growth and development of youth ministry (including youth challenges) improved through programmatic approaches. In other words, programmes were used to address poverty, as in the case of LIFEPLAN® (Freaks, 2008). These programmes were also used for spiritual formation, education and outreach to bring hope to the youth (Linhart, 2010:172). A controversial aspect about the present study, is that the current youth do not have time to undergo another programme (Melheim, 2012:23). However, programmes and events was implemented more than eight years ago to attract the youth, and prophetic and priestly functions were used to motivate such efforts, especially among Black youth (Barnes, 2008:97).

5.5.7 School safety and commitment to learning

Furthermore, research was done to improve school safety and prevent drop outs due to school violence, aggression and victimisation (Astor *et al.*, 2010:69; Black, 2008:28-29), activities which frequently occur among learners in school. Findings were as follows:

- Understanding school violence: The school context should be a central focus of school violence and safety theory, seeing that this is the milieu where social dynamics of learner criminalities and victimisation occur.
- Defining and assessing behaviours: Behavioural anchors must be developed to categorise concepts about various types of youths, e.g. being a bully or aggressive personality.
- Policies influence school safety: Children cannot learn when their school environment is unsafe.
- Evidence-based programmes: Institute programmes to point out and prevent school violence and enhance school safety.

- Monitoring systems: Install surveillance systems to monitor children victimisation, drug use and health-related behaviours.

5.5.8 *Young people having a voice and organising their life*

Research was also done among the youth with the aim to give young people a voice and support them in their moral and religious development (Roebben, 2012:194). This included taking cognisance of their values and norms. The following findings emerged:

- Adults want to know how young people organise their lives, witness to their values, norms, and spirituality.
- Develop new ways of carefully examining and getting to know the world of young people.
- The voices of young people should be heard in all stages of youth.
- Give young people a real voice by listening to their longings and dreams.
- The importance must be acknowledged of the spiritual dimension in the lives of young people.
- Young people should be invited to become real agents of perception, interpretation and change, in order to understand what the young people really believe, hope and love.
- The voices of young people that are heard bring a central value to a community.
- Ministry to adolescents is about creating personal relationships.
- The focus should be on the essence of research on spirituality regarding children and young people.
- Globalisation – compressing time and space.
- Vulnerability of young people – they search for meaning in life.

5.5.9 *Youth and church attendance*

Findings of research done in terms of the youth and church attendance in South Africa (Root, 2015:30) are the following:

- Many young people feel marginalised in the community.
- The church should be a safe haven for youths with problems, but this is not always the case.
- The church has lost touch with the affliction of young people.
- The youth (Millennials) are seeking authenticity, that accepts and loves them beyond worship or church.
- The youth cannot save the church, seeing that the church is the body of Christ in the world; the church can save the youth by leading them to faith in Christ.
- The youth are in the church but they are not loved or cared for, seeing that most churches seek the passion of young people, but not who they are as complex human beings.
- The youth are not reading the Bible since they model on the adults from the congregation who is lax in reading the Bible.

5.5.10 *Relating to the Gospel and understanding their calling in life*

Research was done to determine how the youth perceive themselves and their calling, including their critical thinking. The research also investigated how the youth relate to the Gospel, to the world, and how they respond within their context when faced with challenges (Dodrill, 2013:17-20). The following findings were made:

- The youth should be accepted unconditionally as lovable persons even when their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Relationships with the youth are of the utmost importance. Therefore, the ministry should focus on building and strengthening such relationships.
- It is crucial that the church should listen to young people and share their pain.

- The love shown to young people must be unconditional.

5.5.11 *Engaging the youth in Bible study and teaching*

The research also investigated ways in which to engage the youth in the study of the Bible as a means of passing on Christian faith to the next generation (Hendry, 2015:22-23). The findings were as follows:

Engage young people (Millennial generation) in the study of the Bible and help transfer the Christian faith to the next generation. The impediment is that the Bible and its message are disconnected to the young people's life experiences. The reason is mainly that the youth find the teachings from the Bible irrelevant to their daily lives. Thus the teaching from the Bible fails regarding the youth. The biblical teaching should engage more by addressing social justice, seeing that these issues need closer attention. In general, the youth tend to have particular socio-political concerns. They also become targets of oppression and violence. Traditionally, biblical studies with the youth has overlooked this focus and attempted to pass on the faith to young people in a top-down manner.

To recap: The churches should rethink how they can engage the youth with the Word of God. A probable answer would be to use Scripture readings as exercise, especially in communal spiritual discernment (Nel, M.J., 2013:2).

5.5.12 *Praise and worship and the impact of music*

The research also focused on holistic youth outreach by introducing praise and worship activities, music and prayer. The aim was to help the youth cope with challenges in their life (Tshabalala & Patel, 2010:76-79). The findings in this regard are:

- Music plays a central role in the lives of young people, especially in their spiritual well-being.
- Ranking of praise and worship activities – the youths view prayer and singing as important aspects of the service in church.
- Worship is a way of connecting spiritually with God, and the social context provides a means for the Holy Spirit to work through its worshippers.

- Sense of connection – it maintains a growing and sustaining relationship with God, and help the person to know God more.
- Growth and guidance – it helps them grow in faith, spiritually and in their relationship with God.
- Praise and worship activities – deeper inner experience helps youth cope with problems at home, stress. They find comfort, conquer their fear and feel relaxed and free. Renewal and connection uplifts and motivates them. Music revives their heart, lifts their spirits, leading to spiritual revival, reminding them of God’s love, and helps them focus on God.
- Music in the youth group – provides upliftment and transformation, for example as empowering them and lifts them up when spiritually down. It revives their spirit, gives them strength; for this person life has changed and the individual is taken to another level.
- Feeling of well-being – when singing, one feels content, well, joyful, peaceful, comfortable and safe.
- Improves relationship – the music brings people closer to God, experience God’s presence. They are able to connect with God spiritually; it keeps their relationship with God secure and foster care for others.

It is evident that people (esp. the youth) experience music as uplifting and transforming. Furthermore, it has the potential to impact the lives of people positively. In this regard through music, religion and spirituality play a significant role in the lives of the youth in South Africa (Tshabalala & Patel, 2010:74).

5.5.13 *Investing in the future of the youth*

Further research was done on the youth crying out for people to invest in their lives and their need for personal guidance (Newhouse, 2013:16-17; Miller, 1999). The findings are as follows:

- The youth (Millennials) who do not attend institutions of higher education tend to be less religious.

- There is less church involvement from the youth.
- Those with at least a Bachelor's degree are more likely to attend church.
- Colleges make the most sense if a ministry for young people are set up.
- Working young adults tend to be more socially isolated and less connected to the church.
- Working millennials (youth) are more vulnerable to poverty and unemployment because they face the hardest obstacles transitioning to adulthood.
- Most of these young people must deal with crises such as the death of parents, or pregnancies.
- Many of the youth experience an absent father.
- Religious organisations overlook young college groups.
- The youth need a supportive community, mentoring as well as courses in life skills and career skills.
- The youth currently need more prayer and intercession by the church and believers.

The findings above, clearly indicate a gap between adults and the youth. The reason is that adults have insufficient information about the present youth. The youth want to be part of society and contribute. However, adults are unable to provide this opportunity due to a lack of information about young people. Therefore, young people need guidance that is direct and personal, namely through focused youth ministry.

5.5.14 *Young people's faith in relation to their parents*

Findings on the faith and religious life of young people in relation to their parents (Melheim, 2012:22-25) are as follows:

- Parents are the most influential and important figures in the lives of children.
- Parents are the fundamental faith guides, mentors and teachers to whom children will have access.

- Parents are responsible for forming their child's faith.
- Parents are the most important part of family systems.
- Worship within a family is important and parents who worship with their children is vital. Engaging children in worship, education, youth ministry and discipleship connects them with God.
- Parents are the perfect students for remedial Christian education and the Bible is an essential resource.
- Modelling by parents are crucial because children still need champions, encouragers, someone in their face, and in their faith, namely their parents
- The youth need to become part of the (youth) ministry, not further programmes. It is evident that young people do not have the time for another programme. The findings showed that they are programmed out, overbooked, overstressed, and are not impressed by programmes. They need new meaning to their lives.
- It is crucial that Christ should be made central again in the lives of families, where families are brought back to Christ.

From the discussion of recent missiological research on holistic youth outreach to poor communities above, it became clear: The present research was not only paramount but relevant and necessary for ministering to the youth in South Africa. Youth outreach is crucial since young people must be empowered, trained and equipped, mainly with the Word of God.

The LIFEPLAN® programme can play a vital role in this regard. The youth are important contributors to their society, seeing that they are not only the church of tomorrow but of today. Therefore, they need to be transformed. In this regard, the Holy Spirit plays a major role to change their lives for the best, and give them a purpose in life. For true transformation, the youth must discover their life purpose and become positive contributors to society. This is only possible if young people receive proper guidance.

In light of the above, the LIFEPLAN® programme can be an effective tool for churches to employ. The youth must be given a platform, and a voice to raise and question activities

that they find detrimental. Furthermore, children should be seen as a promise of hope in every community. They should be the tangible hope, the current future of renewal of a community beset with problems and challenges.

It is the researcher's belief that God wants to use children and the youth in building his kingdom on earth since the Lord delights in children being active in his new world. In this regard, the church should become more responsible by reaching out and engaging with children within their respected communities. The church should be aware of the calling of the instrument that God can use to restore and transform his image – also children show the image of God (Lk 2:52, NIV). Every child, regardless of colour, culture, race, religion, sex, class, or even age, has value in society. Therefore, they should be respected, appreciated and served, not misused and exploited.

5.6 Youth challenges in the Christiana region

The above-mentioned destructive patterns (discussed under 5.5) are common and evident in the Christiana District. The focus will be on prevalent problems and challenges among the youth in the target area. These problems and challenges are presented and discussed under the subheadings below.

5.6.1 *School performance and dropout rate*

School performance in the Christiana District is a serious concern (Christiana, 2013). Most learners are illiterate and underperform in school. This is also caused by a lack of vision and mere slackness. Learners' who do not have the skills to read or spell, often fail and cause problems for teachers. As a result, underperformance is mentioned as a source of disturbance in the school-system. Learners also are not provided efficient career guidance and thus make unsound career choices. This leads to negativity towards the future as well as a range of other "improper" attitudes. Such learners drop out of school and become involved in destructive behaviour patterns, which will be discussed later.

5.6.2 *The lack of positive values*

Empirical research has indicated in chapter 1 that the youth in the Christiana District are not only facing severe challenges in moral values; they lack positive values (Christiana,

2013). Learners are rude and unruly, and disinclined towards working in class. Teachers and co-learners find them frequently disrespectful, a condition that seems to be escalating by the day. The youth are presently engaged in irresponsible behaviour, and have not been taught properly to follow certain values such as obedience, respect, honour, honesty, friendliness, peacefulness, forgiveness, discipline, thankfulness, or helping. As a result, they are irresponsible and often make bad life-choices.

5.6.3 ***Teenage pregnancy***

Another serious concern in the Christiana area is teenage pregnancies. Records show that the incidence is approximately 9%, particularly for girls between 16 and 18 years. There was a serious case where one learner, a girl of 16 years old, gave birth to her second child, probably having had her first child when she was a mere 14 years old (SAPS, 2013).

5.6.4 ***Substance abuse***

Drug abuse by learners is a serious matter to the schools and in the area. As was mentioned, the community has been dubbed as *sick* due to the prevalent use of drugs. Disappointing to most teachers and disrupting classes is the incidences where learners smoke cannabis, glue and use various types of pills on school grounds. These activities affect their behaviour in class. This drug problem of learners impacts not only the schools but the broader community. Compounding the drug problem, is alcohol abuse by learners. This is turning into one of the major problems in the schools since these learners spend much time at drinking places such as *taverns* instead of in the classrooms (Christiana, 2013).

5.6.5 ***Gangsterism***

Gangsterism among learners operates and develops in secret, however, learners are directly or indirectly influenced by these activities. Most of those involved have been found carrying dangerous weapons in their school bags such as knives, sticks and pangas. Other reported incidents were learners fighting in class, stabbing other learners and teachers and even trying to gun down other learners. It is understandable that certain teachers have resorted to protecting themselves with weapons (Christiana, 2013).

5.6.6 Church life and church attendance

There is a distinct lack of involvement of the youth in church-life. This tendency causes a serious concern to most of the Christian pastors in the community. These young people refuse to attend church, which makes low church attendance the norm in the community. Most of the youth do not find it necessary to participate in the activities of the church. Instead, several youths rather appear to be driven and influenced by political concerns – which often causes tension and disruption in several churches.

5.6.7 Unemployment among the youth

The unemployment among the youth is a huge problematic factor, not only due to its impact on the church life, but also for the community as a whole. Currently (2017), approximately 50% of the youth are unemployed in the Christiana District. In a sense, this unemployment can be considered the underlying factor behind the other problems among the youth in Christiana (SAPS, 2013).

5.6.8 The problem of poverty in Christiana

In the Christiana District, poverty is one of the major challenges among the Black youth (Christiana, 2013). These youths experience difficult challenges due to racially-based legislation from the previous dispensation and the failure of the current government to provide sufficient services and an improved education system, thus reducing the youth's life options. As a result, hopelessness further threatens young people's development. Therefore, research was undertaken, challenging Black churches to provide ministries that address critical realities and concerns of Black teenagers. In this regard, the present research followed the viewpoint of Wimberly (2014), which according to the researcher, can be relevant for the Christiana District.

5.6.9 The issue of orphans in Christiana

The number of orphans in Christiana is a dire issue to most of the relevant role-players in this area. Child-neglect occurs frequently in the community since parents do not care for their children. This leads to child-headed households, which are the order of the day in this district. As a result, numerous children do not make quality life-decisions (Christiana, 2013).

5.6.10 *Abortion and the problem of HIV/Aids in Christiana*

Abortion and HIV/Aids related-matters are grave concerns in the Christiana District. The prevalence of HIV infection and transmission is high and the life-expectancy of the population is receding alarmingly (see chapter 1).

5.6.11 *Crime and violence in Christiana*

School violence in the Christiana District was identified as an acute issue in the empirical research and a definite negative factor among learners (see chapter 1).

There are numerous instances such as burglary and theft, in which learners are involved. Furthermore, activities of gangsterism, substance abuse and an array of criminal activities such as rape, theft and murder have been reported to the police. The statistics of 2013 from the South African Police Services (SAPS) show that Christiana has youth problems that need urgent attention. Some of the identified crime categories are murder (9%); sexual crimes (61%); robbery (44%); damage to property (67%); burglary (211%); theft (50%); substance abuse (45%); and kidnapping (5%). (SAPS, 2013: appendix 2).

5.6.12 *Spirituality, Satanism, religion and ancestral spirits*

Spirituality is a major problem and concern regarding the youth of Christiana. From the quantitative research (see chapter 3), it was evident that Christian spirituality is not important to a number of the youth in Christiana. The following statistics emerged, which may be a result of the above-mentioned problems, namely a lack of youth involvement in church life and low church attendance:

- 0.7% of participants do not pray when they experience problems or challenges.
- 0.7% of participants indicated that they do not believe that God loves them.
- 21.6% of participants believe that God is impersonal and not interested in their plight.
- 25.3% of participants indicated that they do not find personal strength from religion.
- 60% of participants indicated that they do not have a meaningful relationship with God.
- 0.7% of participants believe that God is not concerned about their problems.

- 50.3% of participants indicated that they honour, worship and ask blessings from their ancestral spirits (badimos).
- 35.1% of participants indicated that they consult traditional healers (sangomas and inyangas) about their life and future.

The involvement of the youth in Satanism is a devastating issue for the churches and in the communities. The churches in the community lack relevant youth programs and trained youth leaders to facilitate outreach to young people in the communities. Regarding religious activities and faith matters, religion should be advocated to help the youth to obtain basic life skills and to cope in life.

During the empirical research (see chapter 1), there was no mention of Bible studies, house altars or even prayer meetings among the youth. Evidently, from a Christian religious view, this is detrimental for the spiritual life of an individual.

The researcher also noted in the empirical research that the young people in the Christiana District do not only believe in witchcraft yet follow the custom. This leads to the need to address vital questions concerning the LIFEPLAN® programme:

- *Does LIFEPLAN® offer lessons teaching people to handle aspects such as witchcraft, ancestral spirits (badimos), traditional healers (sangomas), inyangas, devil worshippers and Satanism?*
- *How can LIFEPLAN® be adjusted to deal with such challenges and gaps in the life of young people?*

The LIFEPLAN® programme in the Christiana District was not only a means of training and equipping participants to be better human beings. It is a programme presented in correlation with the Bible. This was confirmed by participants who indicated in the empirical research that the LIFEPLAN® programme taught them more about the Bible and increased their trust in God.

It should be realised that the powers of witchcraft deliver no future vision. These fields of study should be explored, and LIFEPLAN® modules created that can deal with these problems. LIFEPLAN® should be adjusted to handle the mentioned problems among the youth. If LIFEPLAN® could provide the necessary correctives, the worldview of numerous people will change, especially in rural areas where people are still attached to the custom

of the spirits. In the African context and worldview, people believe that no one's power should be higher than the other. The LIFEPLAN® programme based on the biblical testimony of God's kingdom on earth, is the ideal and unique opportunity to change the worldview of these young people (Freeks, 2008:6-8).

5.6.13 *The problem of absent fathers in Christiana*

The situation in the Christiana District is that more fathers are absent from their families and this condition affects most children. Father absenteeism is a severe and devastating problem to most of the youth in the Christiana community. The reason is that children are increasingly growing up without a father figure and experience emotional depression and disturbances (Eddy & Holborn, 2011).

Fathers should be more present in the lives of these children to help build their life decisions. According to the biblical testimony, the lives of fathers should be taken over by a God-given mission to pour the love of Christ into the hearts of their children. Considering the serious problems or need in the Christiana community, fathers should be the first to sacrifice more of their time to help out.

The crucial role of the father will be viewed under the theme of missional fatherhood in chapter 6. The application of the LIFEPLAN® programme may find ways to collaborate more extensively and effectively with families to serve the Christiana community holistically.

Christiana seems to be a typical area where the youth experience immense challenges. They are confronted daily with the mentioned problems ranging from HIV/Aids, teenage pregnancy, poor church attendance, to poverty and unemployment. The LIFEPLAN® programme should be an ideal and effective tool for churches to deal with these challenges and problems effectively. The programme aims to change, resolve, improve, and enrich lives to ensure a Christ-like behaviour as alternative for destructive lifestyles.

5.7 Lessons to be learnt from examples of best practice (stories of hope)

This section focuses on youth development, hope and opportunities. Access to education, skills and opportunities is seemingly the key challenge facing most young people in South Africa currently. These crucial challenges affect most areas in the lives of the youth. The

lessons from stories of hope provide narratives about ordinary people who made significant achievements in life. Their lives in the respective communities followed a new path because of hope and due to social responsibility. People should be available for others, care for one another and support one another. The researcher believes that a person is a person because of other people (in Tswana the saying goes: *motho ke motho ka batho*). Therefore, these stories of other people can be fruitful and inspiring to the youth and the challenges they are facing.

In the discussion above, the problems and deep-set challenges were identified and discussed that the youth in South Africa experience. The focus was particularly on the challenges youth are encountering in the Christiana District. For the researcher, there literally seems to be a dark cloud hanging over this specific community. However, God's mission brings hope, even in the darkest and most problematic areas. This raises further questions about the youth in communities such as Christiana:

- Is the outreach to the youth in poor and disadvantaged communities not a bottomless pit?
- Is it possible that churches could contribute to integral mission and holistic change in the lives of young people in communities where the challenges seem to be overwhelming?
- Are there examples of best practices of God's transforming grace to learn from?

The final section of this chapter examines instances of integral mission around the world that may also serve as models for the evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® programme.

5.7.1 *The child of the favela and Christ of Luke 9:46-48*

This narrative is about a child named Abel, living in the *favela* of Jardim Olinda of the city of Sao Paulo. A *favela* (Portuguese pronunciation: [fa'velə]) is a low-income historically informal urban slum area in Brazil. The first *favela*, presently known as Providência in the centre of Rio de Janeiro, appeared in the late 19th century, built by soldiers who had nowhere to live after the Canudos War. Some of the first settlements were called *bairros africanos* (African neighbourhoods). Over the years, several formerly enslaved Africans

moved in. Even before the first *favela* came into being, poor citizens were pushed away from the city and forced to live in the marginalised suburbs.

However, most modern favelas appeared in the 1970s due to a rural exodus, when large numbers of people left rural areas of Brazil and migrated to cities. Unable to find places to live, many resorted to *favelas*. [1] Census data released in December 2011 by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) showed that in 2010, approx. 6% of the Brazilian population lived in slums. [2] These were areas of irregular occupation defined by lack of public services or urbanisation, referred to by the IBGE as “subnormal agglomerations”.

Abel saw Jesus reflected in a lady with the name of Sonia Costa who was in her forties, and who helped young children in the extreme poor slum area through integral mission projects with real love and service. Abel saw Sonia, and remarked: “Here comes Jesus.” The author believes Jesus made himself present to that child. Sonia acted to receive the child in the name of this Messiah. She opened her heart to receive the hopes and fears, pleasures and pains of the children of the Jardim Olinda *favela*.

Sonia made time for these children by giving her help and her resources from a commercial wood yard to remove adult refuge. She brought transformation of God’s kingdom into the world of children. Due to Sonia’s love and passion to help children she was perceived as the Saviour, Jesus Christ. This story of Sonia and Abel correlates with the story of Luke 9:46-48:

An argument among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts took a little child and made him stand beside Him. Then He said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all – he is the greatest.”

Luke presents his readers with a child, invited by Jesus to stand at his side in response to his follower’s discussion about grown-up greatness. With the child standing beside Jesus, the sent one who is received becomes the one receiving the sending out as well. The disciples were supposed to receive and welcome the child in Jesus’ name. Instead they questioned what constitutes the grounds of true greatness. In this situation, Jesus does not refer to an attitude towards, or imitating children, but to the act of receiving the child in his name. The child, an embodiment of weakness, vulnerability in the power-

status-dominated world of his day becomes a “lens thorough which to examine the transformative” nature of Jesus’ Messianic mission as affirmed by Luke. Luke 9:46-49 provides readers with a hermeneutical aid to understand Jesus and the nature of his missionary call to his disciples.

The question is what adults should do in this situation. Adults should stand alongside, and identify with the children in the on-going mission of Jesus. The well-being of children depends on adults’ attention and assistance. Children can become signs of hope for the community. In this regard, the church should express commitment to the children of the community. In this way, the Gospel of hope will be reaffirmed and the community will be encouraged to believe again.

The child that Jesus sets before his disciples according Luke 9:46-48, would be primarily a symbol of vulnerability and dependence on others for needs. However, it can become the child of transformation. Therefore, the church should accept children in the name of Jesus. The invitation of Jesus to receive the child does also echo his invitation at the last supper “to receive the cup” (1 Cor 11:20-27).

Clearly the disciples failed to recognise the value of children in the social order of their time. However, the current church should take cognisance that children and childhood represents a fundamental and universal dimension of human experience (Stuart, 2014:189-200). True greatness is defined where children are uplifted, in the midst of families or households, in communities, in churches, schools, and society at large – visualised at the right hand of Jesus (Stuart, 2014:189-200).

5.7.2 *Identities: Theology, mission and child in the upside-down kingdom*

The following narrative concerns a child who was born in poverty within the United Kingdom. This child was introduced to the story of the Carpenter from Nazareth, which he referred to as God’s “upside-down kingdom”. The story of Jesus as the Carpenter inspired this individual since it has the power to transform the lives of people. He was converted as a young boy in July 1980. His life turned around, his priorities changed, and his life was a renewed sense of purpose and direction based on the transformation that Jesus worked in him through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The challenge Jesus presented before his disciples and leaders of his time, was to place the child amid those present. This action of Jesus should be a wake-up call to Christians and to Christian communities even today. If these faith communities do not follow Jesus' lead in this regard, they run the risk, as the disciples, of placing themselves outside God's kingdom. The disciples failed to be active where the child stood.

Significant of the lives of young people in the Bible: they were transformed as agents of transformation in their time. For example, David who slayed Goliath the giant (1 Sm 17:40-51); the young bride Esther who saved her people from genocide (Est 5:10); and a teenage pregnancy (Mary) through which God was presented in human form (Mt 1:18-19; Jn 1:14-18). These young lives were transformed to give significance to the life of God's people. If we want to follow Jesus, we should submit humbly, empty ourselves, and become like a child to enter the Kingdom of God. It is important that children and youth should be welcomed in the midst of believers and the church to find encouragement and discipleship by imitating Jesus. Becoming like children ourselves, provides entry to the kingdom. This is Jesus' way of an upside-down kingdom.

God's upside-down kingdom implies learning to honour God and serve fellow humans. It is about participating in God's mission of reconciliation. This also means understanding the place of children in this in-between time and the theology that guides believers: How they shape and are shaped by both the children and the mission according to God's script (Wilmer, 2014:10-20).

When Jesus calls the children to Him, this points to the upside-down nature of the kingdom of God. Children are signs of how believers are called to live in that kingdom, here and now. They are not mere examples, but are the embodiment of the way believers are to participate in God's mission of reconciliation.

In this context, "greatness" implies: being humble like a child to be great in the kingdom of God. Jesus is not referring to the internal life of the child but to the child's lack of status in society at his time. Children lacked social, economic and political status, the actual aspects that lead to the exploitation of children. These children became the model for the disciples to emulate. The path to greatness in the kingdom according to Jesus, entails the mission of self-sacrifice. On this path, the child is not only a symbol of greatness, but

also a demonstration of hospitality. Therefore, if someone welcomes such a child, that person is welcoming Jesus himself (Mt 18).

Jesus had a radical message for his time. His teaching and the life he lived was consistent with this message, both challenging and comforting. Jesus gave comfort to those marginalised in society, for example, the poor, women, children, the sick and demon possessed, the sinners and tax collectors. The challenge was directed against the rich and/or powerful such as the priests, politicians, and the privileged rich. The radical message of the Carpenter promoted the kingdom of God in Jesus' discourses and actions.

The kingdom of God forms the centre of the proclamation of the Good News since it is associated with healing the sick and curing the afflicted. This kingdom is close to the people, and it grows, presenting a value system that differs from surrounding political and religion systems. In Matthew 20 Jesus confronted the religious leaders. He used a parable in which He emphasised that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of these religious leaders.

According to Mark 10, Jesus gives preferential treatment to children. In this situation, the disciples were rebuking parents bringing their children to Jesus to be blessed. Jesus responded by telling the disciples the children should be allowed to come to him and not be prevented, seeing that the kingdom of God belongs to them. Those who do not receive the kingdom of God like a child, will not enter it. In Luke 6, Jesus asserted that the poor are blessed since they will inherit the kingdom of God.

From the examples above, the subjects of the God's "upside-down" kingdom are clear. They are the marginalised, the least, the last and the lost. Controversially, the rich, the powerful, the political and the religious leaders were the ones having difficulty to enter the kingdom of God that has only one King, Jesus Christ (Baxter-Brown, 2014:149-162; cf. Wilmer, 2014:10-20).

5.7.3 *Stories of hope from KwaNdebele (PJ Buys)*

PJ Buys did mission work for 20 years in a community within the KwaNdebele region. In an interview, he provided examples of holistic mission among the poorest of the poor, the orphans, and vulnerable children (Buys, 2017). This interview is substantiated by formal

annual reports and news letters from 2007 – 2010. As a missionary, he had the conviction that young people who were orphans and vulnerable children must be guided to know their own gifts and talents. These groups had to be taught through in-service training, mentoring and modelling, how to use their own gifts and talents to serve God and others in the various aspects of their lives (2 Pt 4:10-11). Without such guidance young people could not grow spiritually. They must reach a point where they realise, “*I am someone in God's kingdom and I am on earth to serve.*” If this happens, they will develop a healthy biblically-based self-image and become part of the transforming grace of God in broken communities.

Buys related how he used to train young orphaned teenagers from five care centres for orphans and vulnerable children, which he helped establish at churches. At retreats during school holidays leaders from the daycare centres received training in evangelism, leading Bible study groups, and the basics of Christian counselling and Christian leadership skills. The centres also established opportunities for the youth to be involved in various self-developing activities: arts and crafts, entrepreneurship, vegetable gardening, sports, choir competitions, basic computer skills, and support with school work. Volunteer nurses and medical doctors were employed to provide basic healthcare to the children at the centres.

As a result, Buys was encouraged to see that a number of these young people developed into responsible adult Christian citizens making a constructive difference in their communities. A few individuals were even able to qualify and obtain scholarships for university-level tertiary education. They became engineers and businessmen. At the same time, local churches “bought into” the vision to make a difference in broken communities (MCDC, 2007a:1; MCDC, 2007b:1; MCDC, 2008:1; MCDC, 2009:1).

5.7.4 *Stories of hope from Christiana District (Anna Samane)*

For authenticity, the following narrative of hope from Christiana is provided in the participant’s own words (as it was transcribed).

My name is Anna Samane, and I am working in collaboration with the municipality and other community members in the Christiana District. We work as a team to provide food, clothes, and many times shelter for these children and youth in Christiana. It is very heartbroken to see children on a daily basis playing in the dusty streets, sometimes with no parental

guidance, and with no food. Often we come across children asking for bread because there is nothing at home. Most parents are not involved in the lives of these children, and other parents are unemployed. So, if we are not providing in the lives of these children, most of them go hungry to bed. Many times, it is disheartening to see the crying and begging faces of these children. But we love them and we continually trust God to provide in our lives so that we can provide in their lives.

As a team, we encourage many times the youth to take part in sports and other community activities. Most of them arrange their own gospel concerts and gatherings, and invite the community to come and support their efforts, and to come and see their talents and gifts. Some of the financial challenges the youth experience are met by the mayor and municipality. The mayor and the municipality are also providing bursaries to the youth who want to further their studies after they matriculated. In terms of unemployment, crèches are build, to give work to these young people.

Whether the work is temporary or on contract, they accepted it with such gratitude. I noticed in the past that some of these young people, are after a period of time, they are appointed as permanent personnel at some of these crèches. As a team in the Christiana community, we come to the following conclusion: irrespective of the background of these children, and to whom they belong to, they are a precious gift from God to society (Samane, 2017).

5.8 The answers of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme

Significantly, the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme deals with the aspect of healthy relationships (Freeks, 2008:22-38). The focus is on certain themes, namely couples (2008:22-26); parents (2008:26-31); healthy families (2008:31-36); and healthy children (2008:36-38). However, the programme does not explicitly address biblical parenting and the Bible message as answer to certain misconceptions regarding worldviews, ancestral spirits, occults, Satanism, devil worshippers, et cetera. Therefore, the LIFEPLAN® programme should be adjusted and amended to include these fundamental themes.

5.8.1 Biblically-based parenting

In terms of parenting, the biblical message clearly depicts the family as God's structure in society; God wishes to restore broken families within a community. Contrary to this message, there are detrimental factors such as the increase in absent fathers within communities. This is coupled with the most basic, unexpected and extraordinary social trends currently, namely the decline of fatherhood (Popenoe, 1996).

God commanded parents according to Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 20-25; 11:19 and Proverbs 22:6 to teach their children what He conveyed to them, for the children's own good. Biblical parenting is essential since it will assist and lead children and the youth in life's direction which they should follow. A major goal of the LIFEPLAN® programme regarding parenting would be re-introducing the Word of God and Christ to broken families.

Furthermore, parenting can be viewed as a double-edged sword, namely both a relation and an activity. Parents have the mandate to manage this system, the family, effectively and develop a unit that makes a difference in society (Freeks, 2017:20). The following saying is relevant in the context of the present study: "*It takes a village to raise a child.*" This is an old African saying, and the family should be considered "*the first village*" of religious and spiritual development of children (Boyatzis *et al.*, 2006:2).

God has provided his Word to help his people handle situations, challenges and problems. The Bible is the *nidus* and the foundation which offers guidelines for life issues. The principle of *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), can be applied to the challenges and problems that the youth are facing. The Bible is the main source of authority for the church and, in the context of the present study, the intention of *sola Scriptura* is Christ-centric application since the Word is revealed in Christ.

According to 2 Tm 3:16-17, the Scripture is useful for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (Life Application Bible). In the book of Ephesians 6:10 it is made clear that believers should clothe them with the full armour of God, enabling them to stand up against the devil's evil plans. A crucial factor should be LIFEPLAN® teaching that the devil is a thief aiming to steal, kill, and destroy, but that Jesus Christ came to give life in abundance (Jn 10:10).

5.8.2 *Confronting the occult and evil*

The various elements of the above-mentioned armour are metaphors, derived from the Old Testament (Is 11:5; 52:7; 59:16-17) as well as the New Testament (Rm 13:12; 1Th 5:8). These weapons are not human virtues, but rather the effect of God's own might, which provides protection against the invisible powers that causes tribulations and temptations. This takes place when Christians are equipped with the Gospel of peace and the sword of the spirit (God's Word). With these weapons, believers engage actively

in the cosmic battle (Dahl, 1988:1219) between the forces of good and evil. In this regard, an immense challenge faces the Christian church since the 1980s, and especially young people currently. This is the problem that thousands of people are interested in the supernatural, seeking answers to their problems in witchcraft, spirituality and even Satanism (Anderson, 1988:9; Gorgulho & Anderson, 1998:878).

In the early 1990s already 165 000 Satan worshippers were reported in South Africa (Seale, 1991:59). The youth are often drawn to involvement in the occult. This is usually through factors such as curiosity and experimentation, seeking power, satisfying their peers, finding status, and the need to be involved in an activity (Seale, 1991:59). Ouweneel (1978:54) confirmed that the occult was akin to the powerful spiritual revival that took place in the 19th century, after which, people are increasingly practising the belief. It became evident to the researcher that inhabitants in Black communities believe that the devil have the second largest power next to God Almighty. Therefore, people consult witch doctors who often involve them in the occult. These issues should provide ideal teaching topics in the LIFEPLAN® programme. Thus, a probing question would be: *Does LIFEPLAN® offer directions on how people can handle witch doctors?*

The LIFEPLAN® programme should provide answers to problems such as Satanism, spirituality, or the occults. The programme should also address detrimental youth influences such as questionable music themes, substance abuse, suicides, and typical challenges which the youth are facing. Satanism is found to be an acute issue in the Christiana District. Nevertheless, the youth can be rid of this influence by implementing a lifestyle of prayer which is not only a requirement but a fundamental element of religious life (Ps 32:6; Mt 7:7-11).

5.8.3 *Prayer and confession of sins*

Prayer and confession are interconnected. Confession of sins should be a compulsory lifestyle for Christians. The youth should adopt this lifestyle and confess their wrongdoings. The Gospel assurance is clear: If people confess their sin(s), God is forgiving and merciful. God will forgive people their sins and purify them from wrongdoings. (1 Jn 1:9; Ja 5:7-20).

According to the Gospel (1 Jn 1:5), *there is no darkness in God*. Therefore, certain people argue that God's people do not sin. The possible answer on this debate and argument

should be that people must understand that it does not mean believers cannot sin. Confessing sins means believers are God-fearing and His forgiveness of sin is possible for God. In other words, God offers assurance to those who recognize the presence of sin in their lives when they confess it to God through His Son, Jesus Christ. This means the Son acts as *Paraclete*, the Just One and advocate before God the Father, especially for those who confess their sin (Fontaine, 1988:513; 1 Jn 2:2; 1:10).

In contrast, those who prefer to live in sin cannot claim fellowship with God. Moreover, if they deny their sin, they deceive themselves and make Him a liar (Culpepper, 1988:1291).

The Good News is that God can be approached by humans. More surprisingly, God responds to such a submission and “draws near” according to James 4:8. God answers those who humble themselves before Him, give them gifts and raises them up (Johnson, 1988:1276). Resisting the devil is also a call for repentance. This implies returning to an original conversion, or rid oneself of evil, break intentionally with sin (Felder, 1998).

5.9 Evaluating the LIFEPLAN® programme’s offer to the Christiana community as a tool for integral mission

5.9.1 *The essence of holistic mission*

Holistic mission must be included in the LIFEPLAN® programme since this approach focuses on the body, mind and spirit of the human being. Holistic mission aims to bring hope, faith and love to communities, and is concerned with the brokenness, failures and needs of people. The church should play a significant role as institution in the community of Christiana. Its ministry should share love, build faith and bring hope, especially to the marginalised groups in Christiana. The priority should be to care for and minister the people in Christiana.

5.9.2 *The role of Jesus Christ*

Jesus Christ’s role should be highlighted in the programme. It should be emphasised that God wants to restore communities such as Christiana and does it through His Son, Jesus Christ and through the power of his Spirit. The youth should be led to accept Jesus as Saviour and the only one who can bring hope to the Christiana community. Jesus brings

hope through the church as his body that serves the young people who know Him. The church leads them to change their lifestyle in order to influence others that they may enter into God's kingdom as well.

5.9.3 *The necessity of spirituality*

Spirituality has a vital influence on missionary work in Christiana. It impacts a person's life dimensions: physically, spiritually and emotionally, and helps deal with the problem of poverty. In this regard, spirituality can be linked to resilience: helping the youth to understand the root causes of poverty and developing an ideal plan for spiritual growth. Spiritual strength can help the youths overcome their situation of poverty, difficult challenges, crises or loss.

The LIFEPLAN® programme should thus address poverty in rural areas within the Christiana District by building resilient life outcomes. To fight poverty, means restoring broken relationships with the self, God, others and nature, seeing that these have become distorted and unhealthy. In this regard, a missional church is obliged to understand the true meaning of poverty, which should be conveyed to the youth in Christiana. On the flip side of poverty is service rendering, which should be a high priority when developing the LIFEPLAN® programme.

5.9.4 *The voice of the youth in Christiana*

The voice of the youth in Christiana should be heard. This should be a crucial section added to the LIFEPLAN® programme. The groups who are unable to speak for themselves should be heard and their needs attended to. The programme should create the space to involve them and provide a forum for their views and suggestions.

5.9.5 *The importance of holistic transformation*

Mission focusing on children and the youth, means to convey the Good News that God can transform them, body, mind and spirit, to be part of his kingdom on earth. They need to be transformed and find a new life perspective for their purpose and calling within the kingdom of God.

5.9.6 ***Youth ministry and youth outreach***

Youth ministry and youth outreach is a vital action for the local church in the Christiana district. The youth should be prepared and developed for life by making them disciples of Jesus Christ. Christ should be the focus in youth ministry. With Christ as the focal point, ministry to children and youth can contribute significantly to change people's lives. Reaching out to the youth means to equip, inspire, motivate and affirm them for discipleship. The youth should be provided with life skills, for training them to be future leaders in their community in Christiana. Furthermore, they must be empowered to create their own solutions for challenges in the Christiana community.

Youth outreach entails a bridging ministry aimed at transforming the youth in Christiana. The purpose should be to recognise and acknowledge the gifts of the youth for ministry and spirituality.

5.9.7 ***Missional fatherhood as corrective to absent fathers***

The LIFEPLAN® programme should contain a section that teaches missional fatherhood. Father absenteeism is one of the most harmful demographic trends of the present generation and the main reason behind the increase in child welfare projects. The epidemic of absent fathers is a causal factor of the urgent social problems such as teenage pregnancy, child abuse, neglect and domestic violence, or crime.

Missional fatherhood can be a *buffer* to father absenteeism since missional fathers lead sacrificial lives for the sake of their families. The hearts of missional fathers are filled with a God-given mission aiming to instil a love for Christ in the hearts of their children. Missional fathers engage with their children on aspects in life that matters the most. This entails transforming their minds by the Word of God, serving God, or seeking God's glory (Rm 12:1).

A missional father accepts the responsibility to shape his children's worldviews. He should also transfer to his children the commission of doing missions. Such a father demonstrates certain characteristics, for example, being selfless and focus on others, give more to others, pray more for them, and invest more in the lives of others (1 Th 2:8). An outstanding trait of such fathers: they are disciple-makers in their home as well as community (6.2; 6.2.1; 6.2.2).

5.10 Conclusion

All humans are made in the image of God, which involve the entire human being as part of God's creation. The youth are valuable to God, and they can be infused with God-given solutions (biblically based) to the challenges they are facing. These youths need a platform to partake in decision-making and discussions at home, church, society and community – an opportunity that LIFEPLAN® aims to provide.

The present study focused on God's calling of each individual – children and youth as well – to be part of the Gospel and God's holistic mission. This is in response to Jesus's Great Commission to make disciples of all people whether they are rich or poor, those with disability, marginalised, senior citizens, suffering from HIV/Aids, drug addicts, victims of fatherlessness, or generally youth with problems. All who decide and turn to the way of Jesus Christ form part of the mission that God had given the Son.

CHAPTER 6: MISSIONAL PARENTING WITH THE FATHER AS LEADING FIGURE IN FAMILIES

ABSTRACT

Families remain the world's oldest, most basic form of relationship. However, in the 21st century, families are undergoing multiple crises. The fact cannot be ignored that numerous families experience no fatherly presence. Currently, there are globally seemingly endless activities outlined for the family. However, these activities are insignificant measured against the plan of God for families. Families are conceptualised as "havens" in a heartless world, a refuge from the seemingly brutal, uncaring and bureaucratic outside world. The world often understands families as units where violence occurs, individuals are abused and where fathers are not fulfilling their fatherly role in this socialisation process. This is, however a life-long process, and takes place at home where fathers, mothers and children interact and influence each other daily.

6.1 Introduction

Several missiologists emphasise that a church with an understanding and vision of God's mission (*missio Dei*) must train parents to take up the task of nurturing children in faith (Buys, 1983:320-328; Goheen, 2011:221-223; Nel, 1986:90-99). The term *missional* has

a true meaning. It is not merely a Christian buzz word or a catch phrase that families can use to act spiritual. Chapter 2 dealt extensively with the *missio Dei*, according to which mission is viewed as an activity of God (Dames, 2007:41), expressing God's nature (Bosch, 2009:39). The doctrine of *missio Dei* was explained as Triune: God the Father sending Jesus Christ the Son, and both sending the Holy Spirit (Arthur, 2013; Buys, 2015:228; Is 6:8; Jn 20:21). Therefore, mission is also *missio Christi* (Jn 20:21), where Christ sent out the apostles to plant churches (Ac 13:1-2; Jansen, 2015:21). The meaning is rooted in Scripture, and modelled by Christ. Furthermore, *missional* is the adjective form of the noun that is used to describe the church as a "missionary" entity (Brisco, 2016).

Colonisation and urbanisation transformed family arrangements extensively in the 20th century in South Africa, not to mention the roles that parents played, especially the crucial one of the father (Richter *et al.*, 2010:361-362). Nevertheless, God has a higher calling for humans to function as parents. God has not given up on the vital role of the family, therefore, family life requires the "proactive impartation of biblical principles" (Kimmel, 2010:8). The role of the family is accentuated within the biblical narrative and its importance is consistently brought to the attention of God's followers (Freeks, 2011a:83).

Missional parenting means parents model and educate their children in the conduct to embrace God's compassion for people who do not enjoy a living relationship with him. Furthermore, it implies that parents are the leaders of their family. Therefore, they occupy a powerful role in shaping the mood and quality of this interconnected, interactive and vital social unit, namely the family (Austin, 2007:4; Brooks, 2008:7; Freeks, 2011a:83-84). According to these scholars, it is evident that parents are the leaders and vital to help shape their families. However, it is also clear that not all families have *missional* parents, not even Christian ones.

In light of the above, families must be trained and equipped with the LIFEPLAN® programme. However, the LIFEPLAN® manual does not contain the important biblical and theological foundations of *missional* fatherhood, as it should be. Thus, it is important that the programme should be adjusted and amended to include the most important *missional* foundations. The programme only mentions specific aspects of fatherhood:

All fathers have a God-given role to fulfil in the family ... and the father is the priest and head of his family and must govern them according to the principles and regulations of the Bible according to 1 Corinthians 11:3 (Freeks, 2008:28-29).

For the present study, it should be kept in mind that fatherhood changed over time. As a result, most families are struggling with serious problems, consequences and challenges in their respective communities (Linn *et al.*, 2015:12-13). One of the serious problems in family life presently, is the fatherhood issue. Thus, it is crucial to discuss this current problem as it emerges globally.

6.2 The function of *missional* parenting and *missional* fatherhood

6.2.1 *Missional* parenting

In this context, *missional* parenting means the father and mother cooperate on behalf of their children to help realise God's greater plan for the world. The practical situation is that parenting can be difficult. However, parents should strive to be the guardians God wants them to be for their children. Furthermore, parents should take this responsibility seriously by seeking guidance from the Lord through his wisdom, grace and knowledge, and recognise parenting as their primary mission in life (Anon. 2016a; Wax, 2016).

6.2.1.1 The meaning of *missional* parenting

Being *missional* implies doing mission as parents within the family situation and acting biblically sound. Parents should keep in mind that God did not intend for them to do mission alone, but as a family together. Thus, *missional* parents must understand that their mission begins with Jesus Christ, and does not primarily lie with them as members of the family. Being *missional*, parents understand that Jesus Christ was the first and most complete missionary in history (Bevins, 2016).

Furthermore, being *missional* is to be active in mission, which means conveying the Gospel of Jesus Christ overall, whether at home, in church, or in the community. The researcher postulates that families can be *missional* in multiple ways, for example in knowing their neighbours; involving themselves in the schools their children attend; participating in community activities; helping those in need, either physically and spiritually; and praying, especially for those who have not yet received the Gospel (Magruder, 2014).

Wolter (2014) shares an interesting narrative of *missional* parenting. He points out that parents currently are more concerned to protect their children from the world, instead of preparing them to make a difference *in* society. The researcher concurs with Wolter that parents should prepare their children to contribute to society. This preparation should be done as mission and in line with the will and purpose of God for their lives. Parents should avoid over-protecting their children, or be fearful of what might happen when their children reach out to others. Fearful parents should be made aware that this emotion is detrimental since they cannot fulfil their parenting role effectively.

Furthermore, it is essential for parents to understand that *missional* parenting differs from other forms of parenting. *Missional* parenting is Gospel-centred. The analogy can be applied of fathers and mothers as courageous warriors releasing their children into *battle* (into a world of problems, challenges and choices). An apt image for this context, is provided by Psalms 127:4-5:

*Like arrows are in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.
Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to
shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.*

The Scripture indicates this image as a metaphor of *missional* parenting. Therefore, in context of the present study, the psalmist views parenting and family as the most important institutions in life. He emphasises that, without the Lord's involvement, human activities and institutions are in vain (Prinsloo, 2003:427).

The analogy of the arrows implies a guidance system for the children which signify the parents' mission. Therefore, it is important for parents to understand that they shape their young children during their formative years with sound discipline based on biblical guidelines (Wolter, 2014). The researcher concurs with Wolter that parents should position themselves to shape their children according to the Bible in aspects such as education, academic training and discipline.

Furthermore, parents should teach their children the Gospel by immersing them in Gospel relationships. They should also make the values and message of the Gospel part of their lives and model it to their children in their daily lives. It is crucial for parents to know that Gospel teaching should be done within the context of mission – conveying the Gospel to the world through heart, hands, and voice (Wax, 2016).

In *missional* parenting, parents follow Jesus Christ as their Saviour with the attitude of preparing, equipping and training their children for “battle”. In this regard, the researcher recommends that the LIFEPLAN® programme should be adjusted and amended. Children and parents should be guided to follow Jesus Christ in a broken world filled with problems and challenges. Such an environment often makes it difficult for parents and children to be effective and active Christians.

The broken world presenting these challenges to the youth was also the world into which Jesus entered. In John 17:18; 20:21, He emphasised the task: “*As the Father sent me, so I send you*” (Smail, 1980:86; Wolter, 2014). Therefore, parents and children enter the world with the mission to make disciples for the Triune God.

Furthermore, parents are compelled to prepare their children for mission by teaching them to carry their cross and follow Jesus (Mk 8:34). It is the researcher’s belief that *missional* parenting also implies a *spiritual* family. The father should spur on the children to embrace mission as a lifestyle. This can be done by, for example, praying regularly for unreached groups, lost people, missions and for missionaries. When done regularly during family devotions, this will install a vision for missions in children’s hearts (Goheen, 2011:221-223). Conversations about missions, modelling a missionary spirit, and guiding children through the missionary process, should be an ideal task for *missional* parents. The reason is that they fulfil this task to honour the Triune God, but also become part of the movement of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit in reaching out to the world (Dragt, 2016; Sowell, 2011).

Christian parents are accountable to train and to equip their children to be followers of Jesus Christ. As these children grow up and mature, parents should introduce them to the stages of discipleship. However, beforehand, parents themselves should cultivate a missionary lifestyle, as mentioned in the previous paragraph (Sowell, 2011).

Parents have the duty to teach their children the Gospel and prepare them to participate in the Saviour’s restored church. Furthermore, they should help their youngsters believe and understand the Gospel personally. In this context, it is imperative that children understand who they are, and what God their heavenly Father wants them to become. Parents must teach their children that they also form part of God’s mission. What parents

emphasise today in spoken words to their children will shape the latter's skills and priorities for tomorrow (Bevins, 2016; Hales, 2016; Sowell, 2011).

Spoken words have power, and words spoken out of love create life; but words can also cause serious harm. Therefore, parents should be careful how they use their words towards and in front of their children. Parents should practice a lifestyle in which their words verbalise love since such words bring healing and provide a balm for others (Dragt, 2016).

An important question in the context of the present study is: *How does missional parenting function in the different phases of a child's life?*

- **Pre-school:** Parents should allow their children to participate in donations. Children should be encouraged to give some of their possessions such as toys, money, or clothing, to other people.
- **Junior:** In the stage when children grow older, parents should ask them about their classmate's spiritual needs, and encourage them to pray for these mates, reaching them on behalf of Christ.
- **Teenager, adolescent:** Parents should have regular conversations with their children about the will of God for their future (Sowell, 2011).

Furthermore, in *missional* parenting, parents provide opportunities to their children, as they grow up and mature, to see and understand society around them. But this process should take place under the supervision and guidance of the parents when children are exposed to the broken world, and experience the dire need for the restoration of the youth.

From the above, the task of a Christian family becomes evident. Such a family should share the Gospel message with neighbours and other people in their respective communities. This should be done through their words and testimonies, and hospitality, by witnessing to others as a Christ-centred family (Bevins, 2016; Wolter, 2012).

In conclusion, the researcher believes firmly that heads of all believing families are called to be *missional* parents. They are called to share the good news, love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ with other families in their communities. The father should be the leading figure in this *missional* task. Therefore, it is also crucial to discuss the aspect of *missional* fatherhood subsequently.

6.2.2 *Missional fatherhood*

In the context of missional fatherhood, the father takes on the leading role as *missional* father within the family.

Missional fatherhood implies that fathers accept and follow a specific role. This means to live sacrificial lives for the sake of their families, and cater for the needs of others. The hearts and lives of these fathers are committed to a God-given mission where they model and inculcate the love of Christ into the hearts of their children. These fathers should also sacrifice their time to help the community (Waresak, 2016b).

Missional fathers can be called “Micah’s fathers”, as described in Micah 6:8:

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Furthermore, *missional* fathers must engage with their children about aspects that matter most in life, such as striving that their lives glorify God. In other words, these fathers should become *preoccupied* with the business of God the Father (Waresak, 2016b; cf. Rm 12:1; 1 Cor 10:31).

According to Greenland (2014), *missional* fatherhood has four significant ways to make it successful.

- Parents should shape their children’s worldview bite-sized. This means the father should expose children to the needs of others in the world, with the motivation to reach a lost and dying world for Christ.
- The father and family should meet the various needs together, for example, experiencing mission jointly as a family.
- A father should convey his passion for mission to the children by discussing it, and allow them to observe his excitement for missions.
- The father must ensure immediate obedience and response from his children in the home for assignments and suggestions. His children are allowed to ask questions, or disagree. However, it is vital that they first listen to his ideas, suggestions and for doing missions.

A *missional* father also shows specific characteristics. In this regard, Cousineau (2013) identifies five basic traits:

Mission is selfless: The father should explain to his family that making disciples should be a selfless undertaking. Furthermore, children must understand that Christ gave Himself to others. Fathers should follow this example by living a life focused on others to the glory of the heavenly Father. In this way, fathers teach their children to live and have a heart for mission.

Learn to be broken for others: This means giving, praying, and investing more in the lives of other people. It is crucial that children see the father giving to those who are in need and helping out others. A *missional* father should apply 1 Thessalonians 2:8 in his life as a father: emphasising love for others, and giving oneself to others.

Live Christ-focused: It is imperative that children should see their father being overwhelmed by Jesus in his life. The focus and motivation of the father should be on Jesus Christ, and his children should see him serving the Lord.

Be Spirit led: A father should follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all his ways, decisions, advice and lifestyle. He should share with his children the testimony of how the Holy Spirit answered their prayers as a family.

Be generous: He should constantly bless other people with the blessing with which Christ has blessed him. This father's time, money and energy should be used to help other people. The researcher suggests that the father encourages his children to adopt an attitude of giving their money, gifts and energy to the church and community.

In conclusion, *missional* fathers should live for God and other people. They should know that their lives are not their own but a blessing from God. Such fathers should thus be *missionally*-minded and disciple-makers in their homes and their respective communities. However, there is a serious issue of father absenteeism and fatherlessness in the world. Therefore, it is paramount to investigate this severe problem below.

6.3 The current fatherhood problem in the world

6.3.1 *Research done in the world about the fatherhood problem*

Father-absenteeism is a phenomenon that does not only occur in local communities, but is a world-wide tendency (Bartlett, 2013:1-3; Dobbs, 2013:2; Family life, 1998:1; Freeks, 2013:3; Popenoe, 1996; Staples, 1999; Williams, 2014).

Research was undertaken in 21 countries of the world, and in every country, four specific issues were identified as the most severe problems in society: drugs, violence, unemployment and fatherlessness (Carstens, 2014:9-11; *cf.* Freeks, 2004:1-6; Freeks, 2011a:1-4; Freeks, 2013:8-18; Freeks *et al.*, 2015a:22-24; Freeks & Lotter, 2009:520-524; Richter *et al.*, 2012). According to the researcher, fatherlessness is a serious concern, which Carstens (2014) identifies in his research as the fourth-ranked problem of the world. Evidently families world-wide suffer immensely due to this fatherhood problem.

Research confirms continually that fatherhood is paramount. Notwithstanding the changing world, fathers still play a unique role in the development of their children's behaviour, life choices, relationships and self-esteem (Waresak, 2016a; Waresak, 2016b; Vaughan, 2010).

Certain studies also found that fathers who are involved in family life and connected with family members are non-violent towards their children, do not abuse drugs and are more content, healthier and more productive at work (Levtov *et al.*, 2015:5-14). However, this finding does not apply to all families. Even if the father is not prone to substance abuse or acts non-violently, there are cases of abuse which are proven by research (Brelsford, 2011; Knafo, 2003; Williams, 2008).

6.3.2 *Fatherlessness: A root cause of dysfunctional families*

Dysfunctional family life is a major social issue, with fatherlessness often as the core problem. In chapter 5, worrying statistics were investigated (5.4.13), underscoring the seriousness of this concern. These statistics are compounded by the fact that men do not seem to realise the crucial role they play within the family as fathers.

A pattern emerged where social pathologies have been linked to fatherlessness. It should be expected that children who grew up in a household with an absent father did not have the example of what it means to be a true father themselves (Meintjies & Hall, 2013:86-89). On the other hand, it is a tendency that absent and abusive fathers themselves had no role model of paternity, to raise their own children. Statistically, families and society at large cannot escape the insufferable truth that there is a fatherhood disease in the world. This fatherless epidemic is defining a lost generation of children (Herald Reporter, 2002:18). If the situation regarding fatherhood globally seems acute, it is crucial in the

context of the present study to examine closely the current fatherhood problem in South Africa.

6.4 The current fatherhood problem in South Africa

6.4.1 *Statistics of children growing up without fathers in South Africa*

In 2012, South Africa was rated as one of the countries in the world with the highest figures of father absenteeism (Freeks, 2016a:6; Richter *et al.*, 2012:2). Therefore, it is not surprising that this is identified as one of the main causes placing family life in jeopardy (Bertelsmann, 2016). Since the beginning of the 21st century, South African society has neglected the importance of fatherhood (Ratele *et al.*, 2012). The researcher believes that in several cases the family is redefined and, significantly, the father does not even feature in this definition (Ford *et al.*, 2008). From a biblical point of view, this problem originated with the fall of humans into sin. This resulted in a cycle of problems caused by fathers who are not fulfilling their role presently (Gn 3:1-24).

It should also be pointed out that the LIFEPLAN® programme in various instances emphasises the important role of the father, for example:

The father is accountable before God to lead his family with sacrificial love ... children understand the concept of God better if they understand their earthly or physical father ... the father has to demonstrate a godly character and he must be a follower of Christ and must reveal certain characteristics such as humbleness, softness of heart and patience towards his children according to 2 Tm 2 (Freeks, 2008:28-29).

South African fathers do not differ that much from fathers elsewhere, however, South Africa has unique circumstances that impact families. For example, during the era of the migrant labour system, families were disrupted because fathers had to leave their immediate family and work in the mines and cities. They only returned home over the Christmas period (Frazier, 2015). It is shocking that South Africa has the second highest rate of father absenteeism in Africa after Namibia (Richter *et al.*, 2010:360).

To compound matters, father absenteeism is on the increase in the South African context. This tendency generates problems such as broken families, aggressive behaviour among children, as well as financial and social ills and poverty (Freeks, 2016a:2). The problem of father absenteeism escalated from 42% to 48% in 2011 in South Africa (Bartlett,

2013:1). In the present study, it is important to note that this mentioned absence is a desperate cry for help and a deep concern since numerous households are run by single mothers (Amoateng *et al.*, 2004; Herald Reporter, 2002). This matter is far-reaching and worrying since statistics revealed that 31% of mothers are raising their babies without a father figure.

Furthermore, 1.1 million births were registered in 2015, of which 64% indicated that information about the biological father is lacking. Such cases eventually result in single parenting. Significantly for the present study is that single parenting in South Africa is the leading cause of the fatherhood problem. In 2015, approximately 886 202 babies were born, and 50% of the women who gave birth were single mothers with no assistance from the biological fathers (Hawkins, 2015).

Another devastating problem of children growing up without fathers in South Africa is the fact that 5.3 million of these children are younger than five years, for whom both parents (93%) are alive (Mkhize, 2013:2). These children comprise approximately 10% of the population but numerous live in adverse conditions due to fatherlessness. Comparing this problem between the different races is disconcerting. Approximately 33%-38% of Black children lived with their fathers, and 79% with their mothers, compared to the 87% of White children who lived with their fathers (Mkhize, 2013:2). It is to be assumed that fatherhood is paramount for all races in society.

The increasing number of absent fathers had become not only a dilemma but caused a serious debate within South Africa. In 2010, the South Africa Institute of Race Relations related statistics indicating 56% of divorces by parents with children, where 48% of these children have no fathers. This resulted in a total of 3.95 million orphans, which is another disconcerting dilemma on the increase in South Africa (Frazier, 2015). Divorce caused an even larger catastrophe where 9 million children grow up without fathers (Frazier, 2015). The unfortunate reality for most of the children is that 50% of all fathers in South Africa do not have daily contact with their children (Richter *et al.*, 2010:361). A further negative aspect is that 63% of reported youth suicides in South Africa originate from fatherless homes (Frazier, 2015).

A further disturbing factor is that a third of the country's prisoners are at the age of 18-25 years who have children outside the prison walls. Research has indicated that if children

grow up without fathers, factors such as poor educational outcomes and anti-social behaviour may result in disrupted employment (Frazier, 2015). Furthermore, certain enhancing factors are directly or indirectly influenced by the presence of the father. These include health, well-being, academic performance, self-confidence and behaviour control in boys and girls (Frazier, 2015).

6.4.2 Reports on father absenteeism, children growing up without fathers and fatherlessness

In South African society, there is a distinct lack of positive father figures (as role models). Analysts refer to this problem of fatherlessness as a “fearless monster” and “corrosion of fatherhood” that destroyed families (Anon., 2008a:15; John, 2012:24; Swartz *et al.*, 2013). This corrosion is a major cause of the current societal ills in South Africa, seeing that 30% of children are born into single-parent homes. In Black communities, this figure is even more disturbing, increasing to 68% (Feni, 2016:2).

Considering the worrying statistics above, the researcher posed the question, “*What should be done in South Africa to help families against this dilemma of father absenteeism and fatherlessness?*” In this regard, the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme states:

The father is the teacher and the leader of his family, to give wisdom and to implement responsibility, and he is there to lead his family (Freeks, 2008:29).

It is crucial that fathers take on the role as teacher and leader in the home to guide their families. However, such guidance still is insufficient for *missional* parenting due to the high percentages of fatherly absence and fatherlessness. Therefore, the programme should be amended to address these serious issues. Furthermore, the programme should offer solutions for *missional* parenting.

Currently, it is estimated that 2.13 million children in South Africa are fatherless (Dube, 2016:2), according to statistics from 2013 (5.3 million) and in 2015 (9 million), as mentioned previously. These statistics hold an immense fatherhood challenge for the country. The figures were released by Statistics South Africa, and indicate further that many of these children are left without parents, while others are raised by single-parent mothers. The survey also found that paternal orphanhood is consistently higher than

maternal orphanhood. Orphanhood have also become critical due to the HIV-Aids pandemic in South Africa where both parents were deceased. Furthermore, the survey indicated that 1 651 adoptions were registered during the period of 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. This holds a critical risk factor for the development of *missional* fatherhood (Dube, 2016:2).

“South Africa is rapidly becoming a fatherless society with men behaving like monsters towards women and children.” This was one of the critical statements raised at a forum held in Mthatha in the Eastern Cape, investigating fatherless societies and the decline in fatherhood (Feni, 2016:2; Anon., 2004). Furthermore, it was stated that the influence of fathers in families has declined significantly since the period of democracy in South Africa. At this forum, men were urged to change since they have the capacity and willpower to reset their boundaries, restore their image, and start afresh with renewed values (Feni, 2016:2).

The researcher concurs with Feni that men should develop renewed values, however, change will not be possible if they do not experience a total change of heart. In this regard, the LIFEPLAN® programme established the following important principle that men should first renew their mind with the Word of God according Romans 12:2. Thereafter, they should allow the Holy Spirit to lead them in cultivating a Christian character as fruit of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22: faithfulness, self-control, patience, et cetera. These characteristics should be their new starting point. The most profound change in understanding fatherhood will come from knowing God as Father (Smail, 1980:10).

In addition, Smail elucidates that the ignorance about the biblical doctrine of God as Father in certain churches impede the members' missional activities. To this effect, Smail makes the challenging statement:

The charismatic experience can most certainly rejuvenate people and churches, but how much evidence is there that it can mature them, by delivering them from their insidious self-concern and making them profitable and outward-moving members of the body of Christ? The answer to that depends on considerable measure on how they relate to the Father (Smail, 1980:10).

It is important to understand that fatherless households are a fact of South African society and cannot be ignored any longer. The problem is complex since there are no clear paths or solutions to take on this detrimental societal problem. For example, during the

xenophobic attacks in 2008, the perpetrators were described as the “fatherless sons of violence” (Anon., 2008b:15). During these attacks, numerous people, especially men, were brutally murdered, beaten up, stabbed and raped, and more children were left fatherless (Hans, 2008:5). The negative impact of these attacks was that millions of children and adolescents were left without parents and during this time, South Africa was described as a fatherless society (Anon., 2008a:15; Anon., 2004).

Even psychologists argue that during this time a lack of adequate parenting caused the behavioural problems among the youth. Psychologists mention further that many Black men lack the capacity to be a father to their children because their own fathers were absent and deserted them. This situation caused severe family breakdowns and disrupted community structures seeing that young boys and men turned to gangs and crime, which destroyed social structures (Anon. 2008b:15).

The xenophobia attacks indicated the acute lack of father figures in the fragmented society (Anon., 2008b:35). Nevertheless, an urgent request was already made 12 years prior to the attacks to lessen the impact of fatherlessness, seeing that millions of South African children have little or no physical contact with their fathers. The Fatherhood Project by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) at that time (2002) was an initiative to lessen the impact of fatherlessness and encourage the development of social fathers (Herald Reporter, 2002:16).

The problem of absent parents, especially during a child’s upbringing, was highlighted in several local newspapers in South Africa (Fayo, 2008:4). Probing questions were posed during that time:

- Does a fatherless gap motivate men to pursue the political struggle?
- Was this the effect on political leaders of South Africa?

It is the researcher’s opinion that whatever questions investigate the political sphere, fatherless children are at a greater risk due to destructive aspects such as substance abuse, mental illness, suicide, poor education, and criminality (Feni, 2016:2). For a child to grow up fatherless or having no father figure at all, it can be an emotional challenge. Therefore, it is important that men should develop relationships with their children as fathers, and to bond with them emotionally (Botha, 2013:34).

If a child grows up without a father, this should not be considered a dead end. The notion must still be embraced that a fatherless child can be a *super dad*. This was an utterance from someone who believed that the absence of a father should give the child the opportunity to make a better effort with his present children, than his own father did previously. This author also indicated that anyone can be a *father*, but not everyone can be a *dad* (Rakoma, 2011:22).

Against the background of the above-mentioned challenges, the researcher strongly believes fathers should reach a point where they trust fully in the Triune God, namely God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. God the Father is the Source of all authority and lordship and the authority and lordship of Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit is derived from that of the Father (Smail, 1980:16). This authority and lordship does not imply self-sufficient autonomy, but is expressed in obedience to God the Father. God gives significance to the coming of His Son, Jesus Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit (Smail, 1980:16-17).

For the present study on the significance of fatherhood, the premise is that God the Son is subordinate to God the Father (Jn 14:28), and God elevates his Word above his Name (Jesus). Therefore, it is important for families to abide in the Word of God. They should believe He is faithful and will empower them through his Spirit to restore issues or difficulties that may occur in the life of a family.

In this regard, the LIFEPLAN® programme indicates that the father is God's instrument to lead and model the life and the example God intended him to be (Freeks, 2008:28). Therefore, the argument is that fatherhood stems from the Bible. This means the solution lies in God through His Son, Jesus Christ with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to deal with father absenteeism and fatherlessness.

6.5 The biblical presuppositions of fatherhood

The references about the Fatherhood of God in the Bible is explicit (Dt 32:6; 2 Sm 7:14; Ps 68:6; Is 63:16; Jr 3:19; Mi 2:10). The Old Testament testimony and narratives present God as a Father to Israel, especially through the Lord's fundamental roles as Creator, Protector and Saviour (Dobbs, 2013:43). The first specific reference to God as Father can be found in Deuteronomy 32:6 where Moses testifies that God is the Father who created all of humanity.

God is the Father of all flesh, including humans (Jr 32:27; Job 12:10). According to the researcher, this indicates that God presents a type of father image to all people (Is 64:8; Nm 16:22; MI 2:10). God is the ancient Father who honour his Fatherhood, and expects that humans should honour and respect Him as their primeval Father (MI 1:6; 2:10-11). Thus, the same honour and respect should be shown to earthly fathers (Freeks, 2016a:11).

Significantly, God is depicted as the Father of his creation and people. Therefore, the Lord's Fatherhood should be displayed so that the earthly parenthood can flow from it (Dt 32:6, 15, 18). Earthly fatherhood and parenthood and its origin thus derives from the Fatherhood of God (Steensma, 1995:183).

Furthermore, God proposed the image of earthly fatherhood at a very early stage of adulthood. According to Genesis 2:24, the man will leave his parents and be united to his wife to take up his role as the head of his house and to fulfil his position in society. For the researcher, in this example the Fatherhood of God can be seen as model indicating how the Christian earthly fatherhood should be pursued (Freeks, 2016a:9-11).

The Fatherhood of God is a central concept in the Bible, and knowing God as Father lies at the heart of the Christian Gospel (Rm 8:15; Gl 4:5-6). This concept can be understood better by focusing on Jesus Christ (Hoepfner, 2009:47). If Jesus speaks to believers, they can know and accept that God the Father is speaking to them through his Son Jesus Christ (Jn 14:16; Mt 11:27; Heb 1:1). A relationship with Jesus Christ should point towards the suitable solution for broken families with problems of father's absence and fatherlessness (Gerstenberger, 2009:44-47). Furthermore, the Fatherhood image of God can be presented analogically, where the man is the head of the family as Jesus Christ is the head of the church, according to Ephesians 5:23.

Subsequently, the Fatherhood of God is proclaimed in Jesus Christ seeing that Jesus called God his Father and the Father of all (Jn 5:18-47; 8:19; 25-30; 10:29-30). Jesus asserted in John 8:41 that God is the only Father that all humans have, and they are his true children (*cf.* also Jn 17:3). Calling God Father, believers must keep in mind that they are adopted by love into his family to become God's sons and daughters (Gupta, 2016).

God showed His love as a Father through Jesus. This implies that the earthly father can place his trust in God to help secure a hopeful future for him and his family (Hoepfner, 2009:61).

6.6 Restoring true fatherhood within the family

The researcher is convinced that the above-mentioned statistics of father absenteeism can be countered by restoring the role of fathers within the family, and re-addressing their true calling as men *coram Deo* (in God's presence). These negative statistics and downward trends can be reversed through by God as Father through Jesus Christ. God promised according to Malachi 4:6:

He will bring fathers and children together again; otherwise I would have to come and destroy your country.

Fathers should take responsibility for their dysfunctional families, disrupted society and crises in the country as a whole. They should adhere to Scripture and understand, and follow God's directive in 2 Chronicles 7:14:

If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

The question thus remains: *How can fathers break this sin* (of father absenteeism and fatherlessness)? The researcher is of the opinion that the only way for fathers and families to break this vicious circle is by knowing God as Father through Jesus Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit (Smail, 1980:64-65; 83-85). This entails faith in the Triune God: the Father sending the Son and both sending the Spirit to restore the rule of the Father over creation (Chandler 2015:314; Smail, 1980:87-88).

The way towards restoration is clear. Fathers should seek to know God as Father through Jesus Christ and experience the new birth given by the Holy Spirit through the Word (1 Pt 2). This means new life in them and their families, which will help break the epidemic of fatherlessness (Freeks, 2013:9-10).

The researcher is of the firm belief that Jesus Christ is the crucial Answer to the problem of father absenteeism and fatherlessness, seeing that He realises in people a relationship

with God the Father. In addition, the Trinitarian perspective as discussed above, will guide fathers and lead them in the truth of God.

In this regard, men should understand that such a relationship with the Triune God shows the way to live as fathers in their *missional* role. This is also the way to solve the fatherhood problem as it exists currently.

Fathers have the opportunity to be used by God to impact their family. It is essential for missional parenthood that fathers receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour and become children of God.

To all who did receive Him, who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God (Jn 1:12). Verse 13: ... who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

No father can be saved, and not intentionally seek to build Christ's love and presence into the lives of his family. Therefore, fathers should know that fatherhood is a God-given calling. They need to be a model that embodies the quantities and *missional* purpose of Christ's new commandment. In practical life, that implies loving others such as Christ loves them. If fathers succeed in this area, they have fulfilled their calling in life where it matters the most, namely family life (Waresak, 2016a).

6.7 Biblical instructions that fathers must follow within the family

By way of introduction, it must be mentioned that the Old Testament provides no word corresponding to the modern English of "family". The closest term is *bayit* ("house"), which means a group of people. The word "household" denotes a unit of society and it derives from the Roman, Hellenistic and the Jewish world of the 1st century AD. The term "father" (*ab*) were used frequently in the Old Testament (Mitchell, 1962:361; Robinson, 1962:363; cf. also Ps 68:6; 2 Chr 35:5).

Noticeably, in the New Testament the word "family" is mentioned three times but it is related to the notion of "house" or "household", in terms of the Greek *oikos* or *oikia*. A family should furthermore be understood in the context a "tribe" or "nation" (Robinson, 1962:363; cf. Ac 3:25). It is essential that the prominence of paternity is understood as originated from God since behind fathers, stands the universal Fatherhood of God (Robinson, 1962:363).

The mother, however, is not excluded. According to the custom, the father governed the education of the son, and the mother catered for that of the daughter. This places the focus on parenthood significantly, the mother was deemed as worthy of honour as the father, as is shown by the fifth commandment (Ex 20:12). The following subheadings examine Scriptures providing instructions and guidelines for fatherhood and parenthood.

6.7.1 Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger-do not exasperate them to resentment- but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord.

According to these directives from Paul, fathers should not provoke their children's anger, seeing that both of them are in a relationship with God the Father. The significance of this relationship must be understood in Jesus Christ the Son and through the Holy Spirit. The reason is that this relationship involves true human interaction where the Triune God is present (MacDonald, 1998:1670; Smail, 1980:33-34).

An important responsibility of children towards their parents, is to honour them, even if the latter are demanding and unreasonable. Parents, on the other hand, are responsible to raise their children with love, even if the latter are disobedient and unpleasant (Van Rensburg, 2009:1861). It is important that parents should understand that discipline and reprimanding can only help a child develop into adulthood successfully, even if it may hurt or discourage the child (Col 3:21). Furthermore, if children honour their parents, especially when they are old, they help contribute that the age of the parent become a blessing not a burden (Van Rensburg, 2009:1861).

6.7.2 1 Timothy 3:1-6

This is a true saying, if a man desires the office of a bishop, he desired a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice, less being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Paul's instructions above to guide elders in the congregation, can also be applied in a broad sense to fathers of households. The issue is: If a father does not know how to rule his own household, how will he (as elder in his church) be able to take care of the house of God? The scripture above provides qualifications for a godly man (father). He must be a husband of a single wife, sober, of sound behaviour, self-disciplined, cares for his family, discipline and teach his children, et cetera (as mentioned above).

These characteristics indicate that the man (father) accepts responsibility for his family, which naturally implies that he does not neglect his family. Important in this context, the father should not shirk his family responsibilities, of which the most significant one for fathers is that they should rule their own household well. In other words, they should display appropriate behaviour and reputation within the home.

Furthermore, fathers (as elders) should keep their children under control with true dignity, commanding and retaining their respect in every way. This also implies that the father should build sound relations in the home. The relationship of the father with his wife and children should reflect a Christ-like relationship with the church. The father should love his family, as Christ love the church, and the family unit should be Godly people living in peace and in harmony (Martin, 1988:1237-1241; Van Rensburg, 2009:1940).

6.7.3 *Psalms 44:2; 78:3*

What we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.

From the Scripture above, it is clear that believing fathers are responsible to tell their children about the good deeds of God, and what God did in the past for them as a family. The father should be a witness by teaching and testifying how God intervened in their lives; how God saved and helped them as a family. In the context of the present study, the purpose of teaching is to impress on children and the family the glorious deeds of the Lord, as well as his might (Martin, 1991). The father should remember and remind the family members of the works and greatness of God (Prinsloo, 2003:401). To make known and to know the greatness of God in practice is to give thanks and appreciation for the work of God. This reveres God as heavenly Father who heals brokenness, especially within a family context (Pelletier, 1998:957).

The father should also play an active role in the life of his children when he teaches them. All processes of life can be considered education as such. The father must take the lead in the content and life truths which his children are taught. Teaching, however, takes place more through actions than words. Thus, as teacher in the home environment, the father's first priority is to practise what he preaches (Farrar, 2003; Freeks, 2011a:208-209).

From the biblical guidelines, it is clear that God has placed the responsibility on parents, especially the father as the leading figure in the family, to teach their children (Dt 6:1). This responsibility implies taking the initiative to teach, for example, standing firm on a moral foundation. Furthermore, the father should teach children how to deal with temptation and control their anger. If fathers can fulfil such a role they will help their children embrace a godly life. God wants fathers to lead their children the same way as He leads them as fathers (Farrar, 2003).

6.7.4 Matthew 21:16

Do you hear what these children are saying? They asked him. "Yes", replied Jesus, "have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"

According to Jesus' saying above, fathers should teach their children how to praise God, and live for God's praises. Thus, fathers must teach their children to fix their eyes on God in praise and gratitude since this attitude will not come naturally. Children should understand that praise is a weapon and gift, which the father provides them to handle life's battles. He has to train their minds to live victorious (Williams, 2011). Through the praises of children and infants the family has established strongholds against its enemies, and silenced their foes and avengers (Ps 8:2).

6.7.5 Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go [and in keeping with his individual gift or bent], and when he is old he will not depart from it (cf. also Eph 6:4; 2 Tm 3:15).

This scripture commands the father to train his children the way or path they should follow in life. He should train his children not to divert from that road. In practical terms, walking on the wrong life path will destroy relationships between the father and children (Van Rensburg, 2009:889).

It is evident that teaching children will give them a solid foundation according to which they can succeed in life (Farrar, 2003). If fathers train their children in the way they should go, the latter must also involve every practical task of life. Fathers should teach their children from the Word of God and allow them to read for themselves, especially biblical guidelines they should know on this life journey. The aim is that the father makes the child part of whatever he should teach or expect from the child to do. Benjamin Franklin stated clearly: “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

6.7.6 Proverbs 13:24

Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

In the scripture above, the “rod” of discipline should be understood as a metaphor for the action of the father as parent that holds consequences for a child’s actions (*cf.* also Pr 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17; Eph 6:4; Col 3:21). If the father disciplines with an attitude of love and self-control, those consequences will be effective and not harmful. Thus, discipline should be understood as a form of teaching setting boundaries that guide and instil appropriate behaviour (Farrar, 2003; Freeks, 2013:26-27).

In the present study, it is important to know that discipline does not only refer to physical punishment, but also means encouraging children and rewarding them for correct or exemplary behavior (Farrar, 2003; Freeks, 2013:26-27). The purpose of discipline is, according to Deuteronomy 6:2, firstly to fear God, secondly to instil respect, especially for the father and other authority figures, and thirdly to be accountable for personal actions (Farrar, 2003). The religious dimension of physical punishment is, however, crucial and entails an inner recognition in order for justice to prevail in families, society, and globally (Clements, 2003:437).

6.8 The LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme’s guidelines for fatherhood

According to the LIFEPLAN® programme, fathers have a God-given role to fulfil in the family since this is the first and most meaningful group they join (Freeks, 2008:28). The problem is that, currently, numerous children have been raised in families where fathers have neglected their responsibilities towards their wives and children. According to the LIFEPLAN® programme, fathers fail to be worthy examples of Christian living; they

ceased to function as important role models for children, who need to see and follow (Freeks, 2008:28).

Significantly, LIFEPLAN® indicates that the father is the head of his house, and he governs his family according to the principles of the Bible because he is accountable before God (Freeks, 2008:29; cf. 1 Cor 11:3). Thus, the programme teaches explicitly that God approaches the father as the priest, ruler, educator and manager of his own family.

Furthermore, LIFEPLAN® teaches that the father is not only accountable before God to lead his family with sacrificial love. The children also have a better understanding of God the Father if they are able to connect with their earthly or physical father. Interestingly, the LIFEPLAN® programme (Freeks, 2008:28) points out that if children show trust and faith in their earthly father, they will learn to trust and have faith in God (Freeks, 2004:97). Therefore, it is fundamental that the father practice sound principles according to the Bible, demonstrate a godly character and be a follower of Christ. The father should also show characteristics such as humbleness, softness of heart and patience towards his children (2 Tm 2).

The father's main role is to provide at home by nurturing and taking care of children. This is according to the LIFEPLAN® programme and based on 1 Timothy 5:8. In addition, the father is also obligated to lead his family (Pr 1:9), and ensure that God is worshipped and obeyed. Furthermore, fathers should teach their children from the Word of God. They are led to practice Christian values such as honesty, discipline, obedience, justice, courage, diligence, kindness, generosity, gentleness, purity and patience (Freeks, 2008:29; Freeks, 2011a:81-83; Freeks, 2013:65).

Time management, healthy relationships and family are important themes in the LIFEPLAN® programme (Freeks, 2008:6; 11, 26). It is also beneficial if the father realises that he should spend effective and quality time with his family. He will get to know them better, and vice versa. LIFEPLAN® is clear on the fact that the father can discover his children's virtues, hopes, fears, aspirations and ideals the best if he spends adequate time with them (Freeks, 2008:6-11). Spending time with his children, will tends to improve the father's caring. The reason is that spending time together as a family makes the father more sensitive to his children's needs for love, attention, direction, and discipline. In other

words, to *father* one's children, one must make time to be available to them. Children need to know that they have priority in the life of the father (*cf.* also Farrar, 2003).

Furthermore, the researcher believes that God provides people with human company, in order to connect with others in the form of a family. Significantly, healthy relationships between family members are a gift from God, and behaviour patterns such as greetings and personal contact are ways of showing a special bond between family members.

In conclusion, after discussing the content of LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme in terms of fatherhood, the following question arises: *To what extent does the LIFEPLAN® programme help the father get to know God as Father better?*

The researcher's critique is that the LIFEPLAN® programme does not make sufficient provision for a personal relationship by which to know God as Father better. Thus, the programme should be adjusted and amended to emphasise the identity of the Triune God (Smail, 1980:24) as discussed previously (2.1; 2.2.1; 2.7.2.1; 6.6). In chapter 2, it was mentioned in particular that the church should have a Trinitarian vision of holistic mission. In the same context, the *missional* father must also cultivate a Trinitarian vision for his family.

Fathers will not serve their families adequately unless they get to know God better through his Son Jesus Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit (Smail, 1980:25). Jesus the Son commits believers to God the Father. Jesus confirmed in John 14:6 that no one comes to God the Father except through Him the Son, and no one can come to Him unless the Father draws that person (Jn 6:44).

Jesus gave those who believe in Him, access to the Father. Jesus' Father is also the believers' Father. Jesus commanded his followers to trust in Him and surrender to Him because what believers ask in the name of the Father, He will give them in order for God to be glorified (Mt 18:19; 21:22; 7:7; Mk 11:24; Jn 14:13-14; 15:7,16; 16:23; 1 Jn 5:14).

The Father sent Jesus to draw humans to God through the Holy Spirit to be called "sons of God". In Romans 8:15, 26, Paul uses the metaphor of adoption or "sonship" to illustrate the relationship of the believer with God the Father. According to Romans 8:16 the Holy Spirit is their witness that they are God's children. This means they are not left to their own resources and devices to cope with problems and difficulties. The Spirit started a

good work within the life of a person, and will also finish this development (Jn 1:12-13; 6:44; Phlp 1:6). The guidance of the Holy Spirit will not only be of great value to the Christian family. Reformed missiology accepts that the Spirit starts and finishes God's mission, and will help complete the *missional* father as well.

6.9 Proposed concept of *missional fatherhood* and its importance in families

6.9.1 *Becoming a father shaped by God the Father through His Word*

Fathers are not only parents, but are leaders of their own family. Therefore, they have a responsible role to shape the quality, mood, tone and texture of this interactive fundamental unit, the family (Brooks, 2008:7). Before parents can answer God's calling and care for their family optimally, they must first take care of themselves. Parents are responsible to God. This is a divine calling to be an example for their children. Biblical parenting entails covenant education involving the children (Bergh, 2002:105-110; 119 & 121-122; Morris, 2007:12; Steytler, 2007:28-30). The mentioned authors agree that parents should focus on themselves first. However, the researcher believes that fathers should first take care of "God's business" before taking care of their own business (Phlp 4:19).

Testimony in the Scripture is clear on the fact that God places high value on family life. For example, the Bible provides more information and commandments on the aspect of family than any other structure in society. Therefore, it is important that every believing family should understand their task and calling to participate in the Great Commission of God, namely winning over the world for Jesus Christ (Buys, 1983:320; Mt 28:19-20).

God should be an essential Presence within family life, seeing that the family are important in the eyes of God (Freeks, 2011a:155). Christian families have a *missional* task to serve the Lord, as Joshua confirmed to the Israelites: "... but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Jos 24:15).

According to the narrative, Joshua gave God's people a choice. They had to reach a point where they decide whether they would obey the Lord, or follow the local gods. The time arrives when families must make a conscious choice to serve the Lord, or those aspects in life that attracts them more than God. Families must choose who or what controls them. In this regard, the father must be the leading figure who decides on behalf of the family.

The choice will continually be: God or an imperfect substitute? For example, if they choose God's Spirit, families should reaffirm their choice daily. They should ask themselves: *As a family, what are we doing to help make disciples of all the nations?* (Buys, 1983:320; cf. Mt 28:19).

It is also vital to understand that parenting is a *relation* and an *activity*. When fathers and mothers manage their family, they must focus on building relations (McGraw, 2004:8). Important in such a situation, the father must function as role model and a follower of Jesus Christ where he cultivates in his family a love for God and his Word (Freeks, 2004:95-98). Furthermore, parents stand in a relationship with God. The results of their faith cascade down to the children, who are nurtured by the working of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is crucial for parents to understand that their religious life influences their children to seek the presence of God (Freeks, 2011a:156).

6.9.2 *The importance of the house altar or fellowship within the home*

House altar refers to family devotions, which entail daily sessions where family members hold fellowship within the home. They read and share Bible passages, discuss Christian doctrine, pray together, and sing Christian songs and hymns. This may include celebrating family members' days and commemorating special days: repentance and baptising "birthdays", as well as the Lord's Supper (Freeks, 2011a:165; Goheen, 2011:221-223).

In this context, the father acts as the priest in the family. His main task is the spiritual gathering of his family and instituting the house altar. Furthermore, it is crucial that the father takes the lead at the house altar. He should teach his family that God has greater plans for them as a unit and individually and that they should prosper in the various areas of their lives (Jr 29:11). House altar is not only important, but an effective way for the family to read and study the Word of God together (Bergh, 2002:168).

In correlation with the proposed house altars, family members should strive to base their actions, behavior and attitude on God's Word. They should consider God's guidance in the various areas of their life and follow the biblical perspective. Adding value to the present study, it is essential to elaborate on the elements of such a house altar. These aspects are discussed below.

6.9.2.1 Prayer meetings

In the prayer meetings, the father must lead his family and make the family's prayer requests known to God as their heavenly Father (Freeks, 2004:95-98). Such meetings are crucial building blocks for spiritual growth within the family as a unit. The father's task is to ensure his children apply this spiritual discipline (prayer), which will be a positive sign of their closeness to God as heavenly Father. If family members are unable to identify with God as Father, it may imply an inadequate relationship where they do not pray together with their earthly or physical father (Warren, 2005:53). The outstanding aspect of a prayer life is that it connects a person to God and builds that individual's faith to enjoy God as heavenly Father (Mt 5:6; 26:41; Mk 11:24; Lk 11:1; 18:1).

In conclusion, the father should confirm with his family that God will not only listen to their prayers as family members, but also answer them as a family unit (Ps 55:1; Mt 7:7-11; 11:22; 1 Pt 3:7).

6.9.2.2 Bible studies

Within the context of the house altar, the father must emphasise the vital point that the Bible is the constitution in the home. The family should not only love the Word of God but study it diligently (2 Tm 2:15). The family members should follow the biblical guidelines and cultivate a passion for God's love and His Word. Such an approach makes God the priority in their lives (Hart & Hart Frejd, 2010:8-9).

Furthermore, studying the Bible will make the family understand that they are fragile, fallible and liable to err. Therefore, they need to place their lives and trust in God as their heavenly Father who guides and provides (Freeks, 2011a:131; *cf.* also Jn 18:11).

In conclusion, to handle the word of truth correctly, the family needs to study the Bible. The members must be guided to apply biblical directives in their daily circumstances.

6.9.2.3 Singing songs and hymns

Christian families should also sing Christian songs and hymns. This is a way for the family to praise and worship God for his provision of and protection over their lives. This exercise is not only imperative for family spirituality, but such an attitude can inspire other families (Freeks, 2011a:127).

Significantly, the father can teach the children about the value of Christian music. He can motivate them to sing gospel songs and hymns, seeing that such music has the power to uplift people's spirit. This exercise can also provide a solid foundation for the family's house-altar environment, as discussed previously. To sing spiritual songs together can inspire and motivate a family when the members face life's challenges.

It is important to know that God is present in the praises of His people. The father should make it a priority and explain to his family that God "inhabits the praises of His people" according to Psalm 22:3. Furthermore, -singing, or "making music and a joyful noise unto God" is relieving and refreshing for a family's faith, helping them worship the Lord and honour his name (Ps 66:1-2).

Worship in the home is vital, seeing that children learn how to adore and appreciate God by worshipping Him through songs and praises. Often children are excluded from the worship and life of the local congregations. Thus, parents have the major responsibility to incorporate children in the worship at home. The father should take a leading role, encouraging the children to participate in the worship in church as well as at home. A suggestion would be for fathers to provide children with notebooks where they can write down aspects of a sermons which touches them. This will encourage children to be attentive in the local church and at the home altar (Goheen, 2011:223).

The father should guide the children to understand the importance of worship. This practice is the central calling of the church and at home. Worshipping together gives the family direction and focus in their lives (Goheen, 2011:202).

In conclusion, worship entails showing respect and reverence to God (Ps 29:2; Is 66:23; Mt 2:2; 4:10; Ac 24:14; Phlp 3:3; Rv 4:10). It is the researcher's belief that the family should be trained and equipped for this vital but difficult *missional* task. This is namely, nurturing children to worship God as their heavenly Father, through the stories of the Bible and the guiding example of the parents.

6.9.2.4 Significant salvation moments

Days commemorating family members' repentance and celebrating their "baptising birthdays" should be special within a Christian family. It is the father's duty to make these significant salvation moments memorable events in the home. Concomitantly, the father

should encourage his children to give their lives to Jesus Christ when they reach the proper age. Jesus requested from people to repent, which also applies to the children coming of age, if they were not baptised after birth. (Mk 1:4; Rm 6:4; 1 Pt 3:21; Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16).

The father should teach his family that repentance and baptism is visible signs that they as a family have decided to change their lives, giving up a sinful way of living and turning to God. Afterwards, the father should establish unique “birthdays” to celebrate repentance and baptism. This would be occasions where the family gather together as they do for other birthdays (with a cake, etc.) and celebrate these specific day(s). On such occasions the father leads the members to reflect on the significance of their renewal and the forgives of their sin (Ps 25:18; Mt 3:2; 6:12; 9:5; 9:6; Mk 2:7; 11:26; Lk 6:37; 7:47; 13:3; Ac 2:38; Eph 4:32; Col 2:13; 2 Pt 3:9; 1 Jn 1:9).

In conclusion, it is the father’s obligation to ensure the family members follow Christ by repenting and being baptised (if not done as baby). The family should understand that repentance means they must turn away from sin, change the direction of their life, focus on Christ, and depend solely on Him for forgiveness of their sin. Furthermore, the family members must be made aware that their baptism identifies them with Christ and with the community of believers. It is a condition of discipleship and a clear sign of faith. As a family, they should act in love toward their siblings in Christ, just as God acted in love by sending his Son to die for the sins of all people.

6.9.2.5 The Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper (also called the “Lord’s Table”) was instituted on the night when Jesus Christ and his disciples celebrated the Passover (Mt 26:19; Mk 14:16; Lk 22:13). The Lord’s Supper was designed to commemorate the death of Christ and the expectation of his return to earth. Within the family circle, it is crucial that children should be included to participate in the Lord’s Supper since it is an important practice confirming the Christian faith. The father should perform the Lord’s Supper on a regular basis, as prescribed in the Bible (1 Cor 11:23; Lk 2:13-20). The significance of this sacrament, is that it is a concrete celebration of the family’s deliverance from sin through the death and resurrection of Christ.

In conclusion, by taking the bread and wine, the family members identify themselves with death of Jesus Christ and his resurrection. It is also crucial that the father should teach the family that Christ is spiritually present when they consume the signs, and He strengthens them inwardly through his Spirit.

6.9.3 ***The father should underline the importance of children attending church***

The father should make it clear from the outset that it is essential for the children to attend church. Families must attend church as a unit, seeing that these times of worship influence their worldview and life view, which incorporates the family's view of God (De Beer, 2012:62-63; Jansen, 2015:104). Besides the home, the church is the most appropriate spiritual institution for children to learn about Christian values and the existence of God (Haydon, 1997:44). In this regard, the church is the main institution in society that deals with and serves in specific religious aspects such as prayer, spiritual character, faith and confidence (Lickona & Davidson, 2005:193-196).

If children learn Christian values from the church, this institution should be steadfast in its values, principles and norms. Setting the spiritual "benchmark" in society, the church's teaching and fellowship should outweigh the detrimental "themes and schemes" which children receive and adopt from the outside world. Often these children are perceived in a distorted way and treated negatively as "lost generation" by the outside world. Nevertheless, children should not be seen merely as the church of the *future*. They are the church of *today*, seeing that the church's influence can still change their lives, allowing them to make a difference in the world (Freeks, 2011a:131).

Furthermore, the church does not only focus on the existence of God, it entails a devotion towards spiritual life (Abdool, 2005:47). Therefore, it is crucial that the father should teach his children to view the church as the heart of the family's activities such as praising, worshipping, praying, offering, tithing, testifying, and thanksgiving (Bergh, 2002:160). Whether in church or at home, the father should be a follower of Christ and must portray the fruit of the Spirit (Freeks, 2004:97; *cf.* also Gl 5:22-23).

In correlation, the church should not only be considered a place that families frequent to praise and worship God. Families should also view the church as an avenue where they can be educated and taught and Christian values instilled into children. Furthermore, the church should be a dedicated sphere where information is exchanged and shared.

Families need to implement this lifestyle of exchanging and sharing information and should exercise the same religious activities at home (Pitout *et al.*, 1990:37).

In conclusion, the church should not always be viewed as the gathering of believers to praise and worship the Lord. The church also has to be a space where children can have fun and enjoy themselves in their relationship with the Lord. It should also be a safe haven where children can be themselves as God intended them to be, without pretensions or fear.

6.9.4 ***The missional and practical role of the father within the home***

People have different perceptions, ideas and suggestions about the family and the context of the father's role. As researcher in the field of fatherhood and families, it is almost too difficult to acknowledge that the traditional family is being eroded continually (*missing the mark*).⁵ Therefore, it is important that the father should understand his fundamental role expectations. This exceeds expectations about status symbols or the father's peers. In the context of the present study, the father's *missional* role does not entail accumulation of wealth, to be educated first, or have a certain position or work in society and bring home a salary each month. This *missional* role of the father focuses on responsibility, accountability, authority, modelling, spending quality time, positive relationships and respect. It entails honouring God for the task to be a father, by participating and proclaiming the good work of Christ, either verbally, or by lifestyle and conduct.

It is an obvious fact and natural instinct that a father's ultimate priority is to provide for and to protect his family. However, this role seemingly has changed over the years. This even applies to the traditional roles of mother and father in the family context. Distinctions have been blurred, especially regarding the identity of the breadwinner. Historically, fathers were viewed as main financial providers for their families, and even referred to as male heads participating on behalf of both women and children.

⁵ As explained previously, the Hebrew words for "sin" (*chata; het*) means to "miss, go wrong, miss the mark or to fail".-The Greek word for *sin hamartia* (*ham-ar-tee'-ah*) denotes a failure. Missing the mark is a form of guilt or a fault. In the context of the present study, the word does not imply committing a felony or misdeed, but rather to be absent, not to be there, and doing something without being present.

Regarding children, the father-child relationships at all stages of a child's life, have a profound and wide-ranging impact that lasts a lifetime. All men have virtually some connection to children – as relatives, teachers, coaches, or simply as community members. They may function as biological fathers, stepfathers, adoptive or foster fathers, or legal guardians, brothers, uncles, or grandfathers. Whether they live with their children or not, men's participation has a lasting influence on the lives of children, women, and other men. Furthermore, fathers have an enduring impact on the world around them (Levtov *et al.*, 2015:5-14). Thus, this applies even more to the fundamental role of *missional* fathers within families.

Currently however, the father role is in crisis, due to a social devaluation of the male gender. According to the researchers, this tendency undermines the family, society, and eventually the world, because any nation is only as strong as the family units living in it (Farrar, 2003). Since the 1990's, the South African educational systems, government agencies and the media built perceptions against the masculinity of men, and devalued the role of women. Fathers were told that they are in effect becoming redundant in the family context. In contrast to this gendered view, fathers are needed within families since they contribute significantly to the holistic mission of God to reach families.

Furthermore, fathers are important instruments for God since He chooses to work through them to raise righteous children within the family and in society (Farrar, 2003). Those who believe, are God's family according to His will (Eph 1:5). However, if the father is absent (emotionally or physically), the children will suffer the consequences.

God has given the father authority to lead his family to be faithful to God. The father should thus exercise this authority lovingly, with a serving and giving attitude – following Jesus Christ as the family's model (Eph 5:23-25; Col 3:19; Pt 3:7). Significantly, this authority relates to the wife as Christ relates to His church. Therefore, the father is commanded to treat his family as Christ treats the church, by giving his life. It is imperative that the father should use this authority to love and to serve his family, even to death (Eph 5:23-25). This is a mandate that involves responsibility rather than a privilege within the family. Responsibility in this context implies spending time with the family, thereby building and maintaining sound relationships.

Furthermore, fathers who spend adequate time with their children tend to be better at caring in the home environment (Freeks, 2008:5-9). Commitment to quality time spent with children should make a father more sensitive to their needs and direct his love, attention and discipline (Bingham, 2013; Freeman & Almond, 2010:243; Warren, 2005:18). Spending time will also allow the father to form a stronger bond with his children. In this way, a father can discover the children's virtues, fears, aspirations, ideals and hopes the best (Freeks, 2004; Freeks, 2011a:173; Steytler, 2007:77).

Another valuable aspect in this context is relationships – the golden thread in any family (Steytler, 2007:59). The father need to foster positive relationships with his family, especially his wife. It is essential that the mother should be treated with the necessary respect and consideration. Children who witness affectionate, respectfulness, and sacrificial behavior, especially from the father, are more likely later in life to treat and handle their own spouses accordingly (Freeks, 2008:22-24; Freeks, 2011a:212-213; Freeks, 2013:12-19; Freeks, 2016a:12).

Furthermore, it is crucial that society should understand: families need more good fathers. Both these fathers, and the children they lead and invest in, become assets to a society. Therefore, fathers must be sensitised about the important roles which cover the following dimensions: physical, spiritual, disciplinary and role-model.

6.9.4.1 Physical involvement

The father's *physical* involvement stabilises the family and makes it trustworthy to stand firm in the face of challenges. The father and his family can only form a strong bond and be pulled together by the father's physical presence (Freeks, 2004; Freeks, 2013:12-17).

Regarding the *spiritual* role, the father has the huge responsibility to portray Jesus Christ on earth, and to his family. The father is the one within the family context who must ensure God is worshipped and obeyed. Therefore, the father's status should be spiritual because people and spirituality combines at the closest level of interaction, which is known as the family (Bergh, 2002; Freeks, 2013:17-19).

Furthermore, the father should accompany, lead, and direct his family according to Proverbs 1:8-9 (his teachings, their crowning glory). Importantly, he should cultivate a love for God the Father and his Word, thereby encouraging his children to adopt the same

lifestyle. He should take the time to teach his family from the Word of God, guiding his children to practice and lead their daily lives according to biblical guidelines. The father can set such an example by being honest, giving discipline and showing obedience (Freeks, 2016:a9-10). It is important that a father understands his determining role in the forming of God's image in the lives of his children (Jordaan & Janse van Rensburg, 2007:33).

The *disciplinary* role is a principal function that sets limits to behaviour (Freeks, 2013: 26-27). Effective discipline from the father does not only require wisdom, but also patience and persistence (Euvrard, 2006; Rens, 2005). Discipline is one of the most important aspects that needs attention when training and educating a child (Mentz & Wolhuter, 2003). Euvrard and Rens mention patience and persistence as effective aspects of discipline. In turn, Mentz and Wolhuter indicate that discipline require training and educating. The researcher concurs, but leans towards the view of Henley (1997) that discipline, teaching and correction is a form of *discipling*, in other words making disciples or followers with good behaviour and conduct. Furthermore, the child is directed away from a wrong path onto a right one. In this regard, the father must be an ideal figure who disciplines his children in the fear of the Lord (Freeks, 2004; cf. Pr 1:9).

The father also needs to set an example which children can model. A Christian father can be a successful *role model* for his children if he adheres to the Word of God. It is interesting to know that children look up to people to whom they can relate and whom they can emulate in their development (Barker, 2008:1-3). Thus, children should look up to their parents for providing examples of true conduct. The children should also learn from the father's behaviour and attitude towards life (Freeks, 2004). The father's intentions and actions can influence the development of the child's personality significantly (Freeks, 2013:26).

In addition, the father can set an excellent example for other fathers by demonstrating how he assists and supports his children. It is also important to grasp the fact that an exemplary role model is not someone who is perfect, but who entertains basic values and is able to distinguish: right from wrong, good from bad, or valuable from which is not worth the trouble.

The researcher addressed the vital role of the father in several presentations on local, national, and international forums. The most responses focused on the striking question about the father's un-involvement within the family. The simple answer is that children are tired, frustrated and angry with their fathers for showering them with gifts and money instead of listening to their concerns and suggestions. These children require their father's physical presence; for him to listen to their cries, frustrations, questions and failures. These children's attitude is: "Dad we need your *presence* more than your *presents!*"

Significant in terms of the present study, the participation of fathers is vital in the family system. Should fathers engage in family matters, this will result in meaningful connections, happiness and positive attitudes among the children. Therefore, the father's physical involvement could help children thrive in life due to improved cognitive development and achievement at school (Levtov *et al.*, 2015:5-14). The father's involvement with his children may require sacrificial time, for example enjoying meals together and helping out with the homework. Furthermore, the father must be aware of what his children are reading, watching, and hearing. He should know the name of his child's teacher, the child's favourite television show(s) or radio station(s), the friends, movie star(s), or sports celebrities (Farrar, 2003).

6.9.5 *The father and his family should be involved in the needs of its community*

Primarily, every Christian family should be committed to mission and the needs of the community. The reason is that mission form part of the larger role the church plays in the story of God; also by establishing spiritual unity (Goheen, 2011:218-219).

Spiritual unity is essential in the context of the present study. If the church finds it hard to survive without spiritual unity, this applies even more to the family. Families should live in unity with God the Father and should understand the will and purpose of the Triune God. Jesus prayed according to John 17:21 that his followers all should be one, as the Father is in Him, and He is in the Father so that the world can believe that the Father sent Him (Eph 1:10; *cf.* also Stringer, 2009:102; Goheen, 2011:225).

Based on the above-mentioned spiritual unity, it is important that families should be united in their community involvement. They should give to others and share with them, thereby help eliminating poverty in their community. If families are not united, they are in disunity, which contradicts what the Gospel teaches (Goheen, 2011:225). Therefore, families who

are cared for, should not allow their fellow humans to suffer. The family should share and give voluntarily. It is important for families to adopt an attitude that testifies: Everything they have or did receive in life are from God. This also applies to the possessions they have: they are stewards of God's riches. This should be the mindset of a united family (Goheen, 2011:217; *cf.* also Ac 4:32-35).

Families who cater for the needs of the community, must first of all be a *missional* family, concerned to demonstrate the unity of the church in practice. Furthermore, the family members should commit themselves to seek and to express the oneness they share in Christ (Goheen, 2011:226).

The father should make his family aware of the fact that evangelistic activity in a community is driven by the life-transforming power of the Spirit through the Word of God. Therefore, the father should teach the family that words must be authenticated by deeds of mercy and justice. Such deeds are expressions of self-giving love, and can be a powerful testimony to the truth of the Gospel (Goheen, 2011:218).

Despite family difficulties in the home, the members should give themselves as a token of love and a witness to the truth of the Gospel. Communities have numerous needs, and churches are not always sensitive to the basic needs of the people within a community. Therefore, the family, with the father as leading figure, should be a welcome presence in society, giving and providing to people in their needs. The family as unit should take responsibility for the needs of their community (Goheen, 2011:17).

Furthermore, families should be pacesetters in their missionary encounter with communities. Such an encounter, in the context of the present study, means that a family do not live for itself, but it is involved in the matters and concerns of its community, which is part of the missionary task (Goheen, 2011:217 & 220), namely to establish a witness in society. For that reason, the family with the father as leading figure, can be the ideal witness of good news in its community. Missionary families should testify to other families in the community about God's grace, mercy and love (Goheen, 2011:217-220).

Regarding children and faith, the father should be trained to take on the task and responsibility of nurturing his and other children about their faith. Families transfer the faith to the next generation. The future of the church as a *missional* community will be bleak if families are not taught, trained and equipped to make commitments to nurture

theirs and other children, who can be considered the future of society (Goheen, 2011:221). As Goheen, aptly puts it: “What will it profit families, if they gain the whole world, but lose their children?” (Goheen, 2011:223; *cf.* also Mk 8:36-37).

The researcher believes that *missional* fatherhood should have a strong Trinitarian vision, which should be emphasised in Christian families. In this regard, the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme can help families gain this Trinitarian vision. To help families form such a vision, the programme must, however, be adjusted and amended. This can be done by including relevant material and information in the programme. The aim will be to teach, train and equip families about a Trinitarian vision for their important *missional* task within their community.

6.10 The ministry of churches in communities with broken families and fatherless children

God reveals himself as a Father of the fatherless and protector of widows from his “holy habitation, who settles the solitary in a home” (Ps 68:5 *cf.* also Is 10:1-2; Am 2:6-7). From the New Testament testimony, the Lord’s purpose is made clear. He wants to accomplish these actions through the ministry of the church. This is true religion before God the Father through loving care for orphans and widows in their affliction (Ja 1:27). The church, as the body of Christ on earth, are the Lord’s hands and feet and compassionate heart. Therefore, the church should equip its members (and esp. Christian families) to minister to these children at risk and bring them the hope of transformed lives (Stand4Kids, 2010).

6.10.1 *The church’s compassionate ministry*

The above-mentioned ministry of the church has three basic aspects:

- (a) **Be a family to those without families:** Churches ministering in impoverished and previously-disadvantaged, less-developed communities, must reach out to orphans and vulnerable children. The church should make every effort to be a family for those without families. This can be done by establishing and managing childcare centres in the church buildings. In such centres children can receive nutritious food, health care and assistance with school work. Their life skills can be developed and their gifts and talents stimulating by teaching them arts and crafts.

- (b) **Build sound marriages:** The church must ensure several ministries are in place to build a following generation of sound marriages and steadfast families.
- (c) **Build faith through worship:** Worship songs that enhance trust in God as the Father to the fatherless and Mother to the motherless, will provide comfort. Such songs will strengthen the faith that God is present in the powerlessness and abandonment of their life situations.

In an article examining the Afro-American understanding of Psalm 68, Gilkes (1989:134-152) explains how the words of Psalm 68:5 provided hope in the worst circumstances imaginable in their communities. Along with the assurance of Psalm 27 that if their mothers or fathers forsook them, God would surely “take them up”, they found the image of God that transformed their lives (Gilkes, 1989:134-152). Churches ministering to impoverished and deprived communities should consider teaching Christians to sing similar songs so that – as in the case of the Afro American communities – this *faith put into words* is heard throughout the prayers, worshipping, and the sermons in the churches.

The biblical vision of the priesthood of all believers and integral mission should lead local churches to identify the gifts and talents of all church members. This should be the basis to involve them in holistic ministries of mutual care and outreach to the poor and lonely in their communities (Roldán, 2004:151-177).

In light of the above, it is necessary to train and equip fathers as well as mothers and young married couples. This should take place through various strategies: workshops, road shows, seminars, conferences, seminars and camps on marriage and family enrichment, premarital counselling programmes, equipping events, as well as programmes and activities for community training. All these strategies should focus on building strong and steadfast families and train effective parenting.

6.10.2 **Amending LIFEPLAN®**

In this regard, there is a deficiency in the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme. This programme limits its focus to skills development of the youth in previously-disadvantaged, impoverished communities. Therefore, LIFEPLAN® is not adequate to deal with orphans and vulnerable children who has never known a father;

live in child-headed households; are left with a grandmother since their own parents have died of HIV/Aids; or where parents have merely deserted their families. Therefore, the church must find ways to equip parents, children and youth for this crucial life task (Goheen, 2011:223). Furthermore, the church is responsible to teach parents the importance of corporate prayer, worship, or house altars, as mentioned previously in this chapter (Goheen, 2011:222).

Although a major focus of the LIFEPLAN® programme is on families, it does not fully address the issue of *missional* families. Therefore, it is essential that LIFEPLAN® must be adapted and amended to emphasise *missional* fatherhood.

The church should urgently reach out to these families with assistance programmes. In this way, the local church becomes God's instrument bringing salvation and hope to people in poor communities (Lipscomb, 2015). Thus, the church demonstrates the love of God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ to help the disadvantaged and less fortunate. The aim should be to transform the lives of these mentioned groups with dignity, hope and respect. The focus of such programmes should be orphans due to HIV/Aids, fatherless children, child-headed households, sexually abused young girls, and vulnerable, abandoned children (Lipscomb, 2015).

According to the researcher, if the church fails to fulfil this mandate, it not only fails the children, but also grieves God the Father.

In communities where fathers are absent and there is a lack of father figures, camps should be organised. In these camps, young leaders should be identified and new fathers and mothers sensitised through relevant training courses. Furthermore, it is essential that the youth should be trained through fatherhood programmes. Growing boys and young men must be equipped through Bible studies and biblical courses to grasp and realise the notion of *missional* fatherhood.

The teaching should also focus on younger children, including those without fathers, orphans, also those due to the Aids epidemic, child-headed households and vulnerable children. Christian education will guide children to become part of the body of Christ – a view paramount in the present study (Goheen, 2011:223). Christian education based on the Word of God can shape the various aspects of people's life (Goheen, 2011:222).

Children and youth should be equipped with life skills based on Christian values for a positive change to influence the community as a whole. Examples of Christian values are obedience, prayer, sanctification, worshipping, assurance in faith, deliverance, purity, patience and humility (Freeks, 2011a:214). A further goal is that families should re-accept their God-given responsibility to nurture their children according to the guidance of God's Word.

The LIFEPLAN® programme should, therefore, be adjusted and amended, providing guidelines to reach the above-mentioned goals. If this is the case, the programme may deliver an instrument that churches could utilise in the mentioned impoverished and struggling communities. This programme should formulate goals to transform communities by serving children and their families. In every community, the churches, especially those with a *missional* vision, should minister to families without fathers, child-headed households, and vulnerable children. This should take place through holistic Christ-centred ministries focusing on fatherhood. A *missional* church must help develop committed fathers to be role models for their families. Such fathers should lead their families to fulfil a *missional* role in their communities.

The overall contribution of a healthy Christian church should be visible in its character which radiates a *place of belonging*. In this space, the following groups should find a safe haven: vulnerable, or abused children, those without parents, child-headed households, affected by the Aids epidemic, or from disadvantaged communities.

6.11 Conclusion

Society and communities are in desperate need of religious and committed fathers for their families. Such a father sets an example by following God as heavenly Father. Fathers are tasked in their *missional* calling to reflect the image of God. In this way, they demonstrate the true meaning of a loving (tri-une) relationship with God as heavenly Father through his Son Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit. A loving father mirrors the goodness, mercy and love of God in a unique way within the various life contexts: his family, in church, at work, among friends, and in his community.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND THE LIFEPLAN® TOOL FOR CHURCHES TO REACH THE YOUTH

7.1 Introduction

This thesis emerged from a case study of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme and its impact in the Christiana District. This region experiences widespread problems and immense challenges, which reflect the position and plight of the youth in rural farming districts across South Africa. The purpose of the present study was to develop a tool that would enable churches to reach the youth and the communities who struggle with the mentioned problems and challenges. The tool was developed after LIFEPLAN® was evaluated. This assessment was done from a missiological perspective to determine the effectiveness and impact of the programme in the target area.

7.2 Conclusions

The research question was formulated in chapter 1 as follows:

To what extent does the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in the Christiana District of South Africa provides a tool for effective Christian missional outreach to the youth in disadvantaged communities?

The study was confined to seeking specific answers to the research question based on the following points:

- **Chapter 1** introduced the research problem and provided a structure for the study. This chapter was designed to examine crucial matters such as the background to the research and the problem statement. It also focused on research questions, aims and objectives as well as the central theoretical argument and gave an overview of the methodology. The chapter also elucidated fundamental issues such as youth challenges, the LIFEPLAN® programme, youth evangelism and missional outreach and relevant concepts.
- **Chapter 2** established a biblical-theological missiological basis for evangelism in disadvantaged communities.

- **Chapter 3** reported on the quantitative design that investigated how effective the LIFEPLAN® programme was in rural areas.
- **Chapter 4** discussed the qualitative design by focusing on the impact of the LIFEPLAN® programme in the mentioned region.
- **Chapter 5** provided the theoretic foundation for a holistic missional outreach to the contemporary youth of South Africa.
- **Chapter 6** examined and discussed the corrective of missional parenting where the father functions as leading figure in families.

The final chapter proposes a training and equipping tool based on the findings of the empirical (quantitative and qualitative) results as well as the literature review on the Christiana context. The aim was contributing to the missional youth community in the Christiana District and elsewhere in South Africa, and to align this strategy with a biblical pattern.

In the light of the research question and the specific answers, the final conclusions can be drawn as presented in the subheadings below.

7.2.1 The youth society evidenced a decline in proper conduct and acceptable behaviour

Chapter 1 found that the youth in the Christiana district in South Africa experience devastating problems and face immense challenges. The LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme, however, since its implementation, made an impact and has shown effective results. The significance of the programme is that it enables the youth to make healthier and quality life choices. This is because the programme promotes skills and develop thinking, motivation, commitment and action. This programme addresses poverty among the most vulnerable groups through human development, training and equipping to improve the well-being of people. The programme was able to solve certain issues among the youth; however, it still needs to be adapted and amended to provide an improved missiological tool that could help the youth coping with their challenges more effectively.

Therefore, the aim was to evaluate the LIFEPLAN® programme from a missiological perspective and determine its effectiveness and impact for Christiana. The findings showed that the programme should be applied as a tool for churches to reach the youth and rural communities, and win them for Christ in a more effective way.

Findings also showed that LIFEPLAN® could act as a *buffer* against poverty and social ills related to youth issues in this context. An amended programme could provide a solution to the problems and challenges besetting the youth in the Christiana District.

7.2.2 Evangelism in disadvantaged communities

Chapter 2 investigated the biblical-theological and missiological basis for evangelism in disadvantaged communities. According to this basis, God sends the community to partake in his mission as the instrument to proclaim God's kingdom in the various aspects of life. In this regard, communities can be considered co-workers in God's mission, with the emphasis on *missio Christi*. Through Christ, God reconciled and redeemed humanity, which also applies to inhabitants from disadvantaged communities. They also partake in the *missio Dei* with the aim to honour God and serve their fellow humans.

The church's growth and progress has no purpose in itself. The whole church should be mission-based since it exists for the sake of God's mission to a broken world, which is represented by issues in disadvantage communities. This is done in the belief that the Lordship of Christ reigns over all aspects of life and mission. The church should demonstrate this belief through word and deeds in disadvantaged communities such as Christiana.

Furthermore, the church is commanded to show compassion to the poor, seek justice and encourage the oppressed. Material possessions should be shared with those in need, to make the love of God and his care visible. The task of the church in such a context is to embody Jesus Christ by doing what He did, and what He continuous to do through His people. God however, chose people who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and inherit the kingdom He promised to those who love Him. The focus for this choice is God's compassion. Thus, it should be kept in mind that the poor are not more righteous or sanctified than the rich.

Evangelicals and missionaries should not be the only ones who minister to the poor. Not only the local church must care for the spiritual and physical needs of the poor but societies, individuals, families and governments. These role-players have large responsibilities to the poor in disadvantaged communities. Even community workers, academics, educationalist, researchers, and others should fulfil this task. They should cater for the basic needs of the poor through projects, programmes or other forms of intervention.

The cause of poverty can be viewed as fundamentally spiritual. Furthermore, the root cause of deception, distortion and domination is *to miss the mark* (sin). Sin has alienated humans from God, from themselves, from others and from the environment. However, through Jesus Christ there is the good news of a way out of sin toward transformation. Transformation means changing one's choices, which is based on a worldview (mind-set), and the values flowing from it. In this regard, LIFEPLAN® can inform disadvantaged communities about this imperative in the Word of God and guide them towards true transformation.

The findings showed that the LIFEPLAN® programme must incorporate a *missio-Dei* perspective when focusing on the children and youth (especially orphans). The biblical testimony is clear about care for orphans, the poor, widows and the fatherless. LIFEPLAN® should thus be adapted and adjusted to respond to the *missional* call of God, and adopt a compassionate ministry for the poor and fatherless children.

It is crucial that the children and youth should undergo spiritual development. The significance of such development is the *change* in people's awareness of and relationship with God the Father. The youth should be equipped missionally and their resilience strengthened by guidance from God's Word. This will make them spiritually strong and confident (i.e. faith) that circumstances in their community will change.

By being a missional community, people must regard the *missio Dei* through the LIFEPLAN® programme as an important intervention in their lives. Furthermore, it was found that the programme has to bridge the gap between outreach and church life. LIFEPLAN® is, to a lesser degree, shaped to be part of the transformational mission of God in the world. This means the programme should address issues in people's broken

lives. Therefore, LIFEPLAN® must be adjusted to help restore what God intended in the lives of people.

There is a dire need for communities in South Africa to reconsider biblical principles, reformation and transformation, providing a missional focus. The LIFEPLAN® programme should be structured to have a missional application that could address these issues. LIFEPLAN® has no meaning of its own, unless it is applied as a missional and evangelising tool, and functions as part of God's mission in the world, in this case impoverished and disadvantaged communities.

For the participants in the empirical research, the spiritual aspect did not seem important. The reason is that their spirituality is based mostly on the worship of ancestral spirits (badimos), mediated by traditional healers, and sangomas. It is important that LIFEPLAN® should tackle this issue by emphasising the importance of prayer as the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self, conformed to the image of Christ.

7.2.3 *Effective implementation of LIFEPLAN® in rural areas*

The phenomenon explored in **chapter 3** was the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme viewed from a missiological perspective. The purpose was to assess its impact and effectiveness as tool for churches to reach the youth and communities in rural areas. The researcher described the empirical process utilised to make specific deductions based on a quantitative research pattern. Through this design, the researcher explored the experiences of the farm youth through questionnaires.

The evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® programme's strong and weak points was based on the findings of the quantitative results in chapter 3, which are as follows:

- The significance of the programme was the finding that 90.1% of the youth in the Christiana District find their strength through faith in God.
- In terms of their daily life, 84.8% of the youth mentioned that their outlook seems much brighter after the LIFEPLAN® training.

- The programme and missiology were valuable for teaching the youth about the importance of prayer, where 87.4% indicated that they pray when encountering problems.
- LIFEPLAN® motivated and inspired the youth of the Christiana District in their choices and life decisions. This took place to the extent that 55.3% mentioned that they have important contributions to society and their fellow-youth friends. In this light, 82.1% felt that it is important to help other people – an essential Christian characteristic in the LIFEPLAN® programme, and based on the biblical teaching.
- As many as 89% of the youth attested that their life has found a sense of direction and meaning after their encounter with the LIFEPLAN® programme.
- Regarding the spiritual well-being of the youth, 96.0% indicated they believe that God loves and cares for them. However, it is disappointing to note that 21.6% experience God as impersonal, and uninterested in their problems and challenges. Another concern was that 25.3% of the youth mentioned that they do not get support from God when faced with huge challenges.
- The central theme in LIFEPLAN® is, *“Who you are and where do you come from?”* In this regard, 95.3% of the Christiana youth asserted that they know who they are, and where they came from. This is meaningful for the missional focus since these youths confessed that they originated from God and belong to Him.
- It is interesting to note that 87.2% of the youth testified to having a personal, meaningful relationship with God. Overwhelmingly, 90.1% of them mentioned that their relationship with God contributes to their sense of well-being.
- A large number, 94.0%, of the youth indicated that they believe there is a real purpose for their lives, whereas 90% indicated that they experienced a positive impact due to the programme.
- In contrast with the above-mentioned gains, 50.3% of the youth still honour, worship and ask blessings from their ancestral spirits (badimos), while 21.9% consult traditional healers (sangomas and inyangas) for advice on their life and future.

As typical for spiritual and biblical programmes, LIFEPLAN® has also its weak points. It was clear that the major weak point was the inability to deal effectively and explicitly with the fundamental aspect of spirituality, a significant deficiency in the programme. The essence of spirituality was not emphasised sufficiently during the training and equipping of the youth in the Christiana District. In the empirical results, spirituality registered a mere 2 points on the scale (“somewhat important”), which is a worrying factor with a view to holistic mission.

Other factors such as relationships and quality of life scored high in the empirical results, but spirituality did not correlate with these factors. For a large number of participants, spirituality implied ancestral spirits (badimos) and traditional healers, (sangomas and inyangas). A great concern is that nearly a quarter of the youths (21%) indicated involvement.

The strongest point of the LIFEPLAN® programme is the fact that 80% and more of South Africans identify themselves with the Christian faith, especially those living in impoverished and rural areas.

7.2.4 *Impact of the LIFEPLAN® in rural areas*

Chapter 4 determined the impact of the LIFEPLAN® programme in rural areas by using a qualitative research pattern. This approach focused on young people from various farms in the Christiana District. The empirical data was interpreted according to a strategy of holistic missional outreach to the youth, by evaluating the LIFEPLAN® programme. The researcher employed naïve sketches (young farm workers) and structured interviews (farm managers) to generate findings that give significance to this study.

The impact of LIFEPLAN® on the youth was indicated as highly positive, seeing that they mentioned a life-changing experience due to of the programme. The fact that the programme took them back to God, was indicated as a highlight and a missional breakthrough. It is significant that more than 50% of the youth showed an interest in Christianity and its corresponding practice based on Christian values.

The following findings were drawn from the naïve sketches (farm workers):

- The youths showed their appreciation towards LIFEPLAN® and emphasised its value for them. They mentioned that the programme taught them to invite God into their problems.
- The participants emphasised that LIFEPLAN® revealed what was missing in their lives, thus they have begun incorporating this programme into of their daily lives.
- The youth were convinced that LIFEPLAN® helped them return to God, and taught them the importance of God's presence in someone's life. They confirmed their healthy relationships, and sound relations with family members and others. Due to these healthy relationships with God, family and others, they became better persons in the community.
- The findings from the naïve sketches of participants (farm workers) indicated that LIFEPLAN® does correlate with the Bible because the programme taught them valuable learning lessons about biblical motives. They also mentioned that the programme encouraged them to read and study the Bible, and their trust in God increased daily. The biblical testimony helped them believe in God and themselves. They are strongly of the opinion that the Bible through the LIFEPLAN® programme, changed their lives. Therefore, they endeavoured to apply the programme daily, by putting its principles into practice. This means being positive in life, and not giving up when encountering challenges and problems.
- The youth attested that the programme inspired them to have a vision and purpose in life.
- The findings showed that a main focus for the youth is respect for God. They mentioned that God should be respected first, which is paramount in their lives. The same applies to themselves and family. They added that the programme also taught them to treat others with the necessary respect.

The LIFEPLAN® programme guided the youth to strive towards a godly lifestyle. The following findings were gathered from the structured interviews in this regard:

- It is clear that the lives of the youth were enriched through the LIFEPLAN® programme.

- The youth attested to practising constructive Christian values after undergoing the programme.
- As many as 90% of the youth from a certain farm area in the Christiana District showed a strong interest in Christianity due to the biblical part of the LIFEPLAN® programme.
- Currently, opening with Scripture reading, prayer and singing hymns are fundamental aspects of their daily routine before they start working on the farms.
- Some of the youths were not saved; after the programme, they were led to faith in Christ by repentance. They accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, were baptised, and currently live as born-again Christians on the farms. Most of them quit smoking and reduced their use of alcohol.
- It was found that 30% of the youth from the various farms in the Christiana District has joined churches, and attend Sunday morning services regularly. They even participate in church worship and praise God for the work of Christ in their lives.
- The findings showed that 80% of the young people are involved in the churches within Christiana, and some even take the initiative to preach at funerals.
- According to the results, 40% of the youths on the farms frequently in conversations, testify about their deliverance from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- A number of farm managers suggested that the LIFEPLAN® programme should be used by the 59 churches in the Christiana District to reach the youth.
- Farm managers were also convinced that churches could benefit from the LIFEPLAN® programme since it has shown the potential to turn people's lifestyles around.
- The Farm managers pointed out that churches could apply some of the programme's modules to strengthen their missional outreach to communities. They felt that the programme should be adapted to teach the youth how to accept Jesus Christ as their Redeemer.

- The managers were also of the opinion that churches could use the programme during their Bible-study sessions and prayer meetings to teach people about the essence of prayer and the love of God. Thus, the programme could be used for spiritual growth, and motivate people to trust and believe in God.

The above-mentioned findings were positive but there were also negative points and comments by the farm managers. The following findings pointed to negative responses:

- Remarks were made that the LIFEPLAN® programme discriminate against the farm workers (e.g. due to age, status, and background).
- A number of farm managers remarked that they observed no behavioural changes, nor significant differences among the workers, seeing that they were not interested in the programme.
- It was mentioned that a number of workers did not take the LIFEPLAN® training and equipping seriously.
- Managers argued that the programme was too difficult to understand, and that some workers do still feel negative towards their managers after the training.
- A small percentage of managers who also attended the LIFEPLAN® training, indicated that they themselves learnt nothing from it, and did not benefit at all from the programme.

Despite the negative responses, farm managers overall felt positive about the programme. They emphasised that LIFEPLAN® could function as a *buffer* against the challenges and issues facing most farm workers in the Christiana District.

7.2.5 *Holistic missional outreach to the youth*

In **chapter 5**, it was stated that holistic mission is the primary objective of God, and in this context, God's mission entails bringing his grace and mercy to a young generation. God glorifies Himself through young people who are willing to participate in such a holistic mission.

The LIFEPLAN® programme should be in correlation with the redemptive mandate, which is to proclaim the Gospel to a lost world, and (in this context) offer hope to the youth of South Africa. God is still reigning in the present world, even in rural contexts such as Christiana where the youth must deal daily with immense challenges. God is on a mission to restore the whole of creation and human lives through His Son, Jesus Christ and the power of his Spirit.

God focuses on the group as well as the individual in this restoration process. LIFEPLAN® as programme should indicate how God can restore broken lives, even the youth who face severe challenges. Thus, the programme should motivate the young people to maintain healthy and sound relations with God and His Son. Relationships are fundamental and the LIFEPLAN® programme teaches that God is a relational Being. Therefore, it is crucial that holistic mission should seek to heal broken relationships and work against the challenges the youth are facing.

The findings clearly showed that LIFEPLAN® should be adapted and amended to address the above-mentioned deficiencies. In such a case, the programme will be much more convincing to the youth and they will be more willing to make a commitment. The children and youth should not be hindered, but rather be welcomed in the midst of the believers and the church. In the LIFEPLAN® programme, Jesus Christ should be depicted as the One who brings hope to the youth in South Africa.

In light of the above, research on youth outreach and youth ministry is not only relevant. Such research is crucial since the youth must be empowered, trained and equipped, mainly through the Word of God. The purpose of youth outreach is to make a difference in the respected communities and churches. The challenges and problems which the youth in South Africa are facing caused large numbers to withdraw from the church and to make destructive life choices. The LIFEPLAN® programme can be used as an effective tool to help change, restore, improve, and enrich lives and ensure a Christ-like behaviour among the youth.

From examples of “best practices” (*stories of hope*), it was learnt how children should be uplifted and recognised. Children are significant and valuable in God’s eyes and are a gift from God to society. In this sense, children embody the way to participate in God’s mission of reconciliation. The LIFEPLAN® programme should thus motivate and elevate

children and youth, and integrate them into the body and mission of Jesus Christ and the church. These findings underline the necessity for children and youth to find their place within the church as body of Christ.

7.2.6 *Missional parenting with the father as leading figure in families*

Chapter 6 examined *missional* parenting with the father as leading figure in families. It was evident from the findings that most families experience family crises due to the phenomenon of father-absenteeism. Although humans experienced this crisis, God still affirms them as parents to realise their calling from God. Therefore, *missional* parenting is suggested as a *buffer* against the crisis which families are facing. The limitation was mentioned that not all families are *missionally* oriented, not even Christian families.

A significant problem which the study encountered is that men do not realise their crucial role within the family. This was confirmed by statistics in chapter 6 which indicates that the phenomenon of absent fathers is a deep concern in society. The large number of absent fathers has led to a serious debate in South Africa. Research indicated that South Africa is one of the countries in the world with the highest incidence of father absence, which places family life in jeopardy. The further implication is that children who grow up in a home without a father have no example of what fatherhood entails. On the other hand, most absent and abusive fathers themselves did not have a role model of fatherhood, to raise their own children.

The findings revealed a fatherhood disease globally, which is defining a “lost” generation of children. Research indicated 3.95 million orphans and 9 million children growing up without fathers, which is an immense fatherhood challenge for South Africa. Furthermore, it was established that the problem is complex, with seemingly no clear paths or solutions to deal with this societal ill.

In this regard, the present research found and proposed a suitable solution to this problem, namely the Fatherhood of God, on which earthly parenthood models. Families should see the Fatherhood of God as the ideal model of how Christian earthly fatherhood should be pursued. True fatherhood can be restored in families, and the sin and vicious cycle of fathers’ absence and fatherlessness within families, can be broken. This can be achieved through a Trinitarian approach: by knowing God as Father, Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. Scripture provides clear instructions and guidelines for fathers

as heads of the family. These directions must be applied through *missional* parenting within the family context.

Missional parents should prepare their children for mission by encouraging them to pray for unreached people groups, lost people, or missions and missionaries. This should take place in the home during regular family devotions. Furthermore, parents should teach, train, and equip their children to be followers of Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and prepare them to participate in his restored church. The *missional* father should lead a sacrificial life for the sake of his wife, children, and the needs of others. He should engage with his children about what matters most in life, such as glorifying God, focusing on mission, and being disciple-makers in their home and community.

Institutions is necessary such as house altars (home fellowship) and prayer meetings. This should include Bible studies, worship and music, Christian singing as well as practices of repentance, baptising, and communing in the Lord's supper. Missional parents should stress the importance of church attendance and their involvement as family in the community.

In conclusion, the LIFEPLAN® manual should be adjusted and amended to include the most important *missional* foundations, for example the vital role of the father within the family context. Devoted missional families must be trained and equipped with LIFEPLAN® to be active and effective in the holistic missional outreach within their community, as signposts of God's mission in the world.

7.3 LIFEPLAN® as proposed missional tool

In the previous chapters, the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme was approached empirically. From the results, certain strengths have emerged, which made an impact in the community. However also gaps and weak points became apparent in the programme. Measured according to the missiological principles and reflection on holistic youth mission, it was evident that the programme need to be amended and supplemented.

The LIFEPLAN® programme must be complemented by a model that addresses the holistic approach more fully. Evidently, the expanded programme cannot not be presented fully in this final chapter as a complete course. However, the researcher

identified essential missiological principles (see Figure 7.1 below) to address the indicated gaps in the programme. This LIFEPLAN® Missional Tool can be used by churches, schools, correctional services, NGOs, other organisations, and in local government.

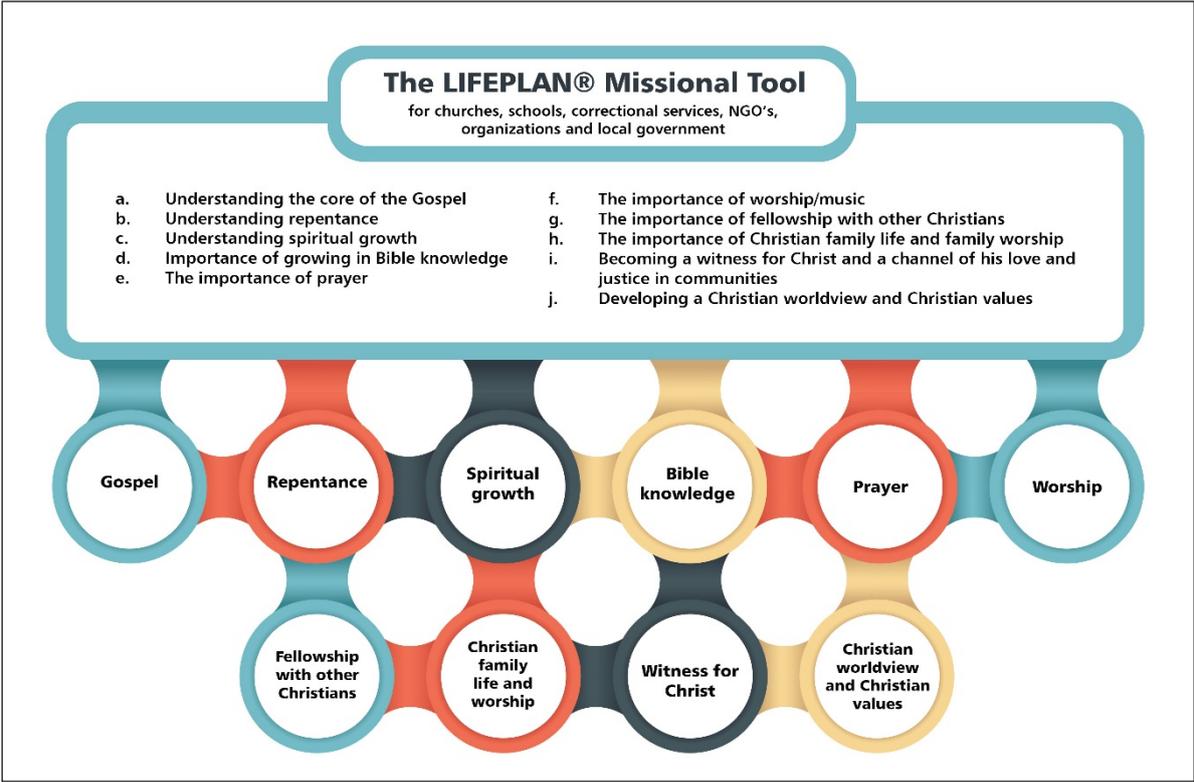


Figure 7-1: The LIFEPLAN® Missional Tool

7.3.1 The LIFEPLAN® missiological principles

7.3.1.1 Understanding the core of the Gospel

The core of the Gospel (2.3) is crucial in the context of mission. This especially entails the five markers (2.3) of the Gospel, namely to: proclaim the good news of the kingdom (5.2.3); teach, baptise and nurture new believers; respond to human need by loving service; seek and transform unjust structures of society; and safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain life of the earth. The focus of the Gospel is on making all things new (2.2.4, 2.4), but the significance is to transform the whole person (5.1, 5.5). The Gospel brings hope to people and must, therefore, be proclaimed to the honour of God (1.4).

People can be equipped with the Gospel against the attacks and invisible powers of evil (5.7.1; 6.7.1).

7.3.1.2 Understanding repentance

Repentance means giving up a sinful way of living, and turning to God. In other words, the person turns from a sinful lifestyle and changes the direction of his/her life, by depending on Christ for forgiveness of sin (2.2.5; 6.9.2). True repentance and forgiveness take place only in and through the name of Jesus since God reconciled the world through Jesus (2.3; 2.4.2; 2.5; 5.1; 5.8). In the context of the present study, it is of the utmost importance that the youths should come to repentance.

7.3.1.3 Understanding spiritual growth

It was suggested that the LIFEPLAN® programme should give guidance on spiritual growth (4.8.3.9). Although the programme did evoke a deeper experience in the lives of people, it was not sufficient in terms of spiritual growth. Character formation is needed to *transform* and not *conform* people into the image of Christ. Spiritual growth is essential for youth ministry. Evangelising young people means teaching them a spiritual practice (5.3.2.2, 1.4).

Spiritual growth is based on values that give meaning and direction to a person's life (1.8.8). Spiritual formation deepens a person's faith and growth in a relationship with God (2.7.1.1). Spiritual growth begins with the Word of God, the purpose being sanctification. This entails the on-going work of the Holy Spirit shaping an individual's life (2.7.1.2). Such growth can help build resilience, especially when dealing with poverty (5.9.3).

7.3.1.4 The importance of growing in biblical knowledge

The Bible is a book of faith with its central narrative of God's acts in the history of humanity (4.8.2.2). Therefore, it is essential that the Scripture should be the constitution in the home. Families should study God's Word in order to grow in biblical knowledge and increase their trust in God (5.2.5; 5.8). The knowledge of facts is not as appropriate in this case. The focus should rather be on God's *active plan* conveyed by Word to young people who are discouraged, depressed and without hope for a future. It was found from the biblical testimony that God places a high premium on families (6.4). In this regard, the

Bible is the authoritative standard according to which the youth may apply their daily lives. God's Word can change lives and it provides vital guidelines for the youth to make informed and quality life decisions (3.2; 4.8.2.2; 4.8.3.9; 5.5; 6.9.2).

Within the family context, fathers, for example, should govern their families according to the principles and directives of the Bible (6.4). Growing in biblical knowledge is paramount since it ensures a sound foundation of God's truth for young children. Therefore, they must be taught from the Bible in order to gain knowledge, and later be introduced to God (1.4; 2.7; 1.3).

A number of participants mentioned that the LIFEPLAN® programme, in correlation with the biblical guidelines, provided solutions (4.8.2.2) to their problems (4.8.2.2). In the empirical research, participants indicated that the Bible should be an important theme in the LIFEPLAN® programme (2.6).

7.3.1.5 The importance of prayer

Prayer gives guidance within believers' lives. Therefore, the importance of prayer should be highlighted in the LIFEPLAN® programme (2.7). Several participants pointed out this need (3.8.2.3) (4.8.2). From findings of the empirical research, prayer was mentioned as an important lifestyle for farm participants, especially as a coping mechanism in the face of challenges (2.7.2.3; 4.8.2.1; 4.8.3.9; 5.2.1; 5.3.2.4; 5.5). Prayer is people's resort in times of trouble, when there is need for forgiveness, or guilt. The prayer of a believer is also a powerful spiritual weapon (2.7.2.1). In essence, prayer entails spiritual communion with God. It is important to understand that prayer provides spiritual strength by building people's relationships and religious life with God through Jesus Christ (2.7.2.2; 2.7.2.3).

A lifestyle of prayer can provide a *buffer* against acute issues such as the youth being confronted by Satanism (5.8). In a family situation, for example, the father leads his family in prayer and makes the family's prayer requests known to God (6.9.2). From the various types of prayer, intercession can be considered the highest form, namely prayer on behalf of others, as modelled by Jesus.

7.3.1.6 The importance of worship and music

God lives among the praises of His people and to worship God through songs and hymns, means appreciating the Lord (6.8). In a family setup, it is imperative to teach children about the importance of worship and music since it glorify God (1.4; 4.8.3.7). Engaging in worship, promotes awareness of God, and His presence (5.5). The findings indicated that worship, music, and singing praises, are crucial for the youth since it help connect them spiritually with God.

Furthermore, the positive climate through worship and music helps the youth cope with challenges and stress, by bringing them comfort in God. Music has the power to uplift and transform the well-being of a person (5.5). Singing Christian songs and hymns, for example, in a family context can be inspiring, relieving and refreshing. Families should sing to honour, adore and appreciate God and his great acts of grace and love (4.8.3.6; 6.9.2).

7.3.1.7 The importance of fellowship with other Christians

Christian fellowship with others in society is fundamental due to the mutual care (2.4.2). Fellowship with other Christians means worshipping God together and know Him in all circumstances (2.7.2.1). This fellowship is significant by taking care of the needs of others, for example, sharing meals and praying together to deal with challenges (5.2.1).

Within a family context, relationships with young people are imperative. House altars or home fellowships is important for family communion and joint Bible study, prayer and Christian encouragement of each other. The father should take the lead to teach family members about the Holy Spirit, and how to lead a Spirit-filled life. Family members should also teach each other to be humble and submissive to one another (6.9.2). Such a family practice can expand to the entire community.

7.3.1.8 The importance of Christian family life and family worship

The LIFEPLAN® programme teaches that family life is crucial and the practice of building happy, healthy and stable families should be consistent within this context (1.3.2.1). Christian families should be committed to mission by sharing the Gospel with other families and other people in their community (6.9.4). They should also be united in their

faith and ministry (6.7.1). Loving other family members is important in light of Christ's love for all without exception (6.5). Nevertheless, family life is complex due to the enormous challenges most families are facing. Dysfunctional family life is a problem that is identified globally (5.4.13). For example, absent fathers put family life in jeopardy (6.3.1).

In contrast, Christian family life implies healthy relations with God and a sound understanding among family members (4.8.2.3). Families should be aware and careful of family breakdown due to poverty (2.5). The strength in families lies in the mutual emotional support of family members (3.8.2.3).

7.3.1.9 Become a witness for Christ and a channel of his love and justice in communities

In the context of present study, it is important to bear witness about the transforming grace of Jesus Christ (2.8). A powerful witness for the Gospel occurs when someone expresses self-giving love to others (6.9.4). Therefore, every believer should be a true witness for Jesus Christ, which implies sharing and declaring the good news of God (2.3, 2.4.5). In the context of the family, members should be witnesses to the truth of the Gospel (6.9.4). This does not only entail witnessing to family members in the home environment or other congregation members in church. The witness should ripple outward to others in the community, testifying through word and deeds of God's mercy, love and grace, which means his unmerited favour (6.9.4).

7.3.1.10 Develop a Christian worldview and values

A Christian or biblical worldview is recommended in the present study in the face of misleading worldviews, which may impede people's spiritual growth (2.4.2, 5.4.12). The LIFEPLAN® programme is based on Christian living values and aims to change the worldview of the youth (3.9.2, 5.6.12). A Christian worldview has the potential and influence to replace and correct other worldviews in the lives of young people (5.4.12). (5.8).

In a family context, parents with the father as leading figure are responsible to shape their children's worldview into a Christian or biblical one. Such a renewed worldview can be a solid alternative to clarify misconceptions about ancestral spirits, the occults and Satanism (6.7.2). Church attending is crucial because it helps shape the worldview of

children (6.9.3). Specific values flow from a worldview or mind-set, making life worth-while and give meaning as well as direction to a person's life (1.8.8; 2.4.4).

Christian values imply a worldview of ethics and norms based on God's ordinations for human life. The fruit of the Holy Spirit should be an ideal example (Gl 5:22). According to the empirical research, participants indicated a high interest in Christian values and practice. During interviews, farm managers indicated that farm workers improved themselves by practicing constructive and committed ("good") Christian values (5.2.5). It was found that the home and, especially the church, are the best spiritual institutions for children to learn about Christian values (6.9.3).

In conclusion, the findings indicated and it was recommended that the LIFEPLAN® programme should be adjusted and amended to be a missional tool to help enrich and transform lives, with particular focus on the youth in impoverished, rural areas.

7.4 Final conclusion

The researcher proposed and designed the LIFEPLAN® Missional Tool depicting the ten identified missiological principles of holistic mission (see Figure 7-1 above). This was suggested as resource for churches, schools, correctional services, non-governmental organisations, and local governments. The aim was contributing to the field of missiology through a useful model to guide and structure integrated mission that enhances the quality of life and human dignity of the youth in honour of God through Jesus Christ. This missional tool can help expand the application of reformed missiology in rural areas such as the district of Christiana.

This model can also be applied nationally, targeting other similar impoverished rural areas with a high-density youth population and corresponding problems and challenges. The application can also be relevant internationally within diverse missionary situations worldwide. The missional tool provides the incentive and application to practice the programme in diverse communities.

This missional tool contributes to the body of knowledge on integral mission by expanding the ten missiological principles in the light of the *missio-Dei* approach. The aim of such an expansion is to serve the youths in impoverished, disadvantaged communities in developing countries worldwide. The lives of these young people could be transformed to

live in honour and gratitude towards God and fulfil their purpose in life by ministering to other youths.

7.5 Limitations with recommendations for further investigation

The present study was part of a need assessment for integral youth mission by applying the LIFEPLAN® programme within the context of a specific community. The researcher attempted to ground the LIFEPLAN® programme in the biblical testimony, after which the programme was tested within the Christiana District, South Africa. The outcome was the development of a missional tool that could assist churches, as well as other organisations and institutions focusing on the youth, to plan to implement this missional strategy thoroughly. It is thus critical that this model should be tested for possible improvement and expansion. The findings have shown that further research is needed to make this current and potential programme more applicable.

Throughout the study, questions arose of related topics that require on-going research. This is also linked to certain limitations that became apparent. These limitations can be explicated as follows:

- A possible gap in the research was found, namely that the LIFEPLAN® programme is not entirely relevant and important for integral mission. *Thus, more in-depth exegesis and hermeneutics need to be done about the missional tool and the missiological principles to complement the existing study.*
- The researcher was unable to conduct interviews and distribute questionnaires with all the participants on the various farms, learners at the schools and leaders at churches in Christiana, to record their opinions and experiences. *Further research can supplement and improve the missional tool by including views of church leaders and learners at schools in the area to form a more complete image.*
- Due to its scope, the research focused mostly on the youths, namely farm workers in the area, which excluded, for example parents, in impoverished families. *Further research is needed among adults (especially fathers), families and other residents in Christiana to develop sustainable missiological studies, especially regarding the issue of father absenteeism.*

- Findings showed that the LIFEPLAN® programme did not deal sufficiently with the concept and practice of missional transformation. *Thus, there is a need to reflect on practical ways this integral missiological model can contribute to a substantial change, difference and transformation at all churches, schools and organisations in South Africa and similar contexts worldwide.*

In closing, integral mission aims to realise God's purpose and plan in human's lives. The proposed strategy offers a valuable holistic approach from the perspective of the *missio Dei*. The focus on youth does not make them mere objects of mission, but co-contributors, and co-workers in mission. They are involved as children of God's good will and his greater plan to renew and transform communities, the world and the whole of creation.

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ANNEXURE A: LETTER

PO Box 19466
Noordbrug
Potchefstroom
2522

14th Mar. 2014

Dear

I am busy with a Ph.D in Missiological Studies that I hope will make a positive contribution to youth development in rural areas. The theme of my study is **A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas. A case study of its impact in the Christiana district of South Africa.** The objective of the study is to evaluate the impact that the **LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas has already had in the Christiana district and how to perhaps improve it to meet more needs of more role players in the development of the youth in rural areas** so that it can serve the community. During our telephone conversations and open discussions, you have agreed to be a participant in the study and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your willingness and eagerness to participate in the research. If you should feel self-conscious or uncomfortable when answering some of these questions during the interview, you may withdraw from the study at any time. I assure you that all the information will be handled in absolute confidentiality and anonymity. The material will remain in the possession of the researcher and will not be published un-interpreted.

I would appreciate it if we can agree on the time schedule made for our interview questions. Please be so kind also to sign the attached **“informed consent form”** as required by the Ethics Committee of the North-West University.

After the interview, we will meet again to discuss any uncertainties you might have.

Yours faithfully

Fazel Ebrihiam Freeks

.....

Contact numbers: 0713197624 (Cell)
018-2994225 (Office)

ANNEXURE B: CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT TO VOLUNTEER AND PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH STUDY EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE LIFEPLAN TRAINING AND EQUIPPING PROGRAMME IN THE CHRISTIANA DISTRICT

You are kindly invited to take part in a research study about **A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas. A case study of its impact in the Christiana district of South Africa.** If you participate, you will be part of a study involving an evaluation of the impact and possible improvement of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in the Christiana district in the North-West Province. The person in charge of this study Dr Fazel Ebrihiam Freeks (Faculty of Theology of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. Dr Freeks is planning to reflect on the findings of this research in a doctoral study under the supervision and advice of Prof PJ Buys from the Missiology Department of the Faculty of Theology, of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus as his study leader.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact that the **LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas has already had in the Christiana district and how to perhaps improve it to meet more needs of more role players in the development of the youth in rural areas** so that it can serve the community. The ultimate hope is that a more effective youth development plan – especially in rural areas - will contribute to positive change and transformation of society.

The research will be conducted and scheduled during March - April 2014. If you participate you will take part in an interview where certain questions that will be asked regarding the objectives of this research project. This interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes of your time. There is no risk of revealing any information when answering these questions in the interview. If you should feel self-conscious or uncomfortable when answering some of these questions during the interview, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

If you decide to continue, it should be because you really want to volunteer and participate in the study and thus also make a contribution to youth development. There are no costs involved in taking part in this study and all the interviews will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Although your name is requested at the end of this form, no answers in the interview will be identified with a person. Should the need arise for further discussion with regard to the study you may feel free to contact me at any time.

I,..... hereby consent to be a participant in the research project about **A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas. A case study of its impact in the Christiana district of South Africa.**

Signed at

on the.....day of.....2014

.....

Signature of participant

Date

I undertake to treat the above participant's individual responses as anonymous and confidential.

.....
Signature: Dr FE Freeks

ANNEXURE C: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO FARM MANAGERS

1. What are your **general impressions** and **comments** with regard to the LIFEPLAN® programme?
Wat is u **algemene indrukke** en **opmerkings** met betrekking tot die LIFEPLAN® program?
2. What **behavioural changes** were you able to observe in workers **during** the presenting of the LIFEPLAN® programme?
Watter **gedragsveranderinge** kon u by die werkers waarneem **gedurende/tydens** die aanbieding van die LIFEPLAN® program?
3. What **behavioural changes** were you able to observe in workers **after** the LIFEPLAN® programme?
Watter **gedragsveranderinge** kon u by die werkers waarneem **na afloop** van die LIFEPLAN® program?
4. How did you **personally benefit** from the LIFEPLAN® programme? Motivate.
Hoe het u **persoonlik gebaat** deur die LIFEPLAN® program? Motiveer.
5. Did the LIFEPLAN® programme, according to you, make a **significant difference** in the life of the **workers** and their **families**? Motivate.
Het die LIFEPLAN® program volgens u 'n wesentliche **verskil** gemaak in die lewe van die **werkers** en hul **families**? Motiveer.
6. Have you seen any participants in this programme becoming **more interested in Christianity**?
Het u enige deelnemers in hierdie program waargeneem wat **meer belangstelling in Christenskap getoon het**?
7. Have you seen any participants **who have not been believers in Christ before, coming to faith in Christ** through this programme?
Het u enige deelnemers waargeneem **wat nie voorheen gelowiges in Christus was nie**, wat deur hierdie **program** tot **geloof in Christus gekom het**?
8. Do you know of any participants **becoming more involved and active in Christian churches** through their **involvement in this programme**?

Weet u van enige deelnemers wat **meer betrokke en aktief geraak het in Christelike kerke** deur hul **betrokkenheid in hierdie program**?

9. Is there a **possibility** that this programme may be **used by churches to strengthen their missional outreach** to communities?

Is daar dalk 'n **moontlikheid** dat hierdie program **gebruik kan word om kerke se missionale uitreik** na gemeenskappe **te versterk**?

10. How do you see this **programme** being **used by churches**?

Hoe sien u dat hierdie **program deur kerke** gebruik kan word?

ANNEXURE D: QUESTIONS TO FARM WORKERS

A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme for youth in rural areas. A case study of its impact in the Christiana district of South Africa

Student: Dr Fazel Ebrihiam Freeks

Promoter: Prof PJ Buys

We would like to do research on how the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme did impact and influence participants positively in the Christiana district. You are invited to take part in this research project as described above, by completing the questionnaires.

- 1. Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary, and no pressure will be placed on you.
- 2. You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time, without giving reasons for your decision. However, you are kindly requested not to withdraw from the research project without careful consideration.
- 3. By agreeing to take part in the research project, you are also giving consent for the data that will be generated to be used by the researchers for scientific purposes as they see fit, with the agreement that it will be confidential and that your name will not be linked to any data without your consent.

I, the undersigned.....have read the preceding information in connection with the research project.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Participants Information

Age	
Gender	

GENERAL WELL-BEING

Instructions: This questionnaire consists of 10 statements. Read the statement and tell us whether you agree, disagree or neither agree or disagree. Using the 1 – 3 scale below by crossing the appropriate number in line with that item. Please give only one answer to each statement.

Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree
1	2	3

1. My life seems bright after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
2. I am satisfied with my life after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
3. My future looks good because of the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
4. My life is on the right track after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
5. I don't feel like a failure anymore after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
6. My life is full of interest after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
7. My life seems to have clear goals and purpose after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
8. I experience good relationships after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
9. Life is so much fun after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3
10. I find strength in my faith and spiritual beliefs after the LIFEPLAN® programme	1	2	3

REALTIONSHPIS, SELF-IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM DEVELOPMENT

Relationships, self-image and self-esteem development are very important and relevant sections in the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme. Answer the following questions on behalf of that.

1 – cannot do at all 2 – do it moderately 3 – do it certainly

For each of the items, write a number from 1 – 3, using the scale above

1. I am talking positively to myself	
2. I am getting emotional support from my family and friends	
3. I find solutions and answers to my most difficult problems in life	
4. I develop new hobbies or creations	
5. I take my mind off from unpleasant thoughts	
6. I am looking for something good in a negative situation	
7. I keep myself from feeling sad	
8. I am making new friends	
9. I am getting friends to help me with the things I need	

10. I pray or meditate when I have a problem	
--	--

EMOTIONS

Please answer the following questionnaire about how you have been feeling in the past three months after the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme. Just write the number 1, 2 or 3 in the following column.

In the past three months, how often did you feel.....	Never (1)	Once or twice (2)	Almost every day (3)
1. Satisfied			
2. Interested in life			
3. Happy			
4. I had something important to contribute to society			
5. I belonged to a community (a social group, my neighbourhood or society)			
6. Our society and communities are becoming a better place to live with other people			
7. My life has a sense of direction or meaning to it			
8. That people are basically good			
9. I liked most parts of my personality			
10. The way our society works makes sense to me			

QUALITY OF LIFE

The following questionnaire consists of aspects such as health, self-image, goals, money, learning, helping others, love and friend, and they were some of the most important elements in the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme.

Instruction:

This survey asks how important and satisfied you are with your life and your health. For each question, cross the answer that best describes.

1.	How important is health to your happiness?	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)
2.	How satisfied are you with your health?	Very dissatisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Very satisfied (3)
3.	How important is self-esteem and self-image to you?	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)
4.	How satisfied are you with your self-esteem and self-image?	Very dissatisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Very satisfied (3)
5.	How important are goals and values to you?	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)

6.	How satisfied are you with your goals and values?	Very dissatisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Very satisfied (3)
7.	How important is money to you?	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)
8.	How satisfied are you with the money you have?	Very dissatisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Very satisfied (3)
9.	How important is learning to you?	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)
10.	How satisfied are you with your learning?	Very dissatisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Very satisfied (3)
11.	How important is it to you to help others?	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)
12.	How satisfied are you in helping others?	Very dissatisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Very satisfied (3)
13.	How important is love to you?	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)
14.	How satisfied are you in loving others?	Very dissatisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Very satisfied (3)
15.	How important is friends to you?	Not important (1)	Important (2)	Very important (3)
16.	How satisfied are you with your friends?	Very dissatisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Very satisfied (3)

SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

Instruction:

Circle the choice that best indicates your agreement or disagreement in the following statements:

A – Agree

D – Disagree

1.	I believe that God loves me and cares about me	A	D
2.	I know who I am and I know where I came from	A	D
3.	I believe that God is impersonal and not interested in me	A	D
4.	I have a personally meaningful relationship with God	A	D
5.	I don't get much personal strength and support from my God	A	D
6.	I believe that God is concerned about my problems	A	D
7.	I don't have a personally satisfying relationship with God	A	D
8.	My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely	A	D
9.	My relationship with God contributes to my sense of well-being	A	D

10.	I believe there is a real purpose for my life	A	D
11	I regularly honour and venerate my ancestral spirits (badimos) and ask blessings from them.	A	D
12	I regularly consult traditional healers (sangomas and inyangas) for advice about my life and future.	A	D

ANNEXURE E:

LETTER FROM STATISTICAL SERVICES



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Statistical Consultation Services

Tel: +27 18 285 2447

Fax: +27 0 87 231 5294

Email: monique.vandeventer@nwu.ac.za

Re: Thesis, Dr FE Freeks, student number: 10589686

We hereby confirm that the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University analysed the data involved in the study of the above-mentioned student and assisted with the interpretation of the results. However, any opinion, findings or recommendations contained in this document are those of the author, and the Statistical Consultation Services of the NWU (Potchefstroom Campus) do not accept responsibility for the statistical correctness of the data reported.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SM Ellis', is written over a horizontal line.

Dr SM Ellis (Pr Sci Nat)

HEAD: STATISTICAL CONSULTATION SERVICES

ANNEXURE F: CRIME STATS IN CHRISTIANA

Crime Research and Statistics -South African Police Service										
Crime in Christiana (NW) for April to March 2003/2004 - 2012/2013										
Crime Category	April 2003 to March 2004	April 2004 to March 2005	April 2005 to March 2006	April 2006 to March 2007	April 2007 to March 2008	April 2008 to March 2009	April 2009 to March 2010	April 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to March 2012	April 2012 to March 2013
CONTACT CRIME (CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON)										
Murder	5	6	12	5	8	11	6	4	11	5
Total Sexual Crimes	22	37	37	38	41	60	51	44	49	61
Attempted murder	4	3	1	2	8	8	5	1	7	4
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	133	138	141	138	172	121	117	173	144	129
Common assault	174	145	141	103	135	159	96	133	108	112
Common robbery	23	26	21	21	32	31	23	25	24	23
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	6	5	8	13	9	15	11	18	13	13
CONTACT-RELATED CRIMES										
Arson	3	4	1	2	2	3	2	4	4	2
Malicious damage to property	61	68	63	55	46	58	66	61	69	67
PROPERTY-RELATED CRIMES										
Burglary at non-residential premises	36	56	11	19	36	38	39	47	44	36
Burglary at residential premises	113	104	128	111	178	150	153	159	233	175
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	14	14	17	12	12	11	9	13	3	11
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	26	23	32	22	27	28	16	26	17	21
Stock-theft	53	34	17	26	29	17	14	9	16	18
CRIMES HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON POLICE ACTION FOR DETECTION										
Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition	3	1	3	1	3	2	2	1	0	0
Drug-related crime	35	48	45	43	62	73	45	22	20	11
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	11	12	6	8	8	20	15	15	20	34
OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES										
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	237	204	180	160	174	195	159	175	157	135
Commercial crime	15	14	14	12	16	17	13	34	21	27
Shoplifting	15	8	11	15	10	6	5	7	5	5
SUBCATEGORIES OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY FORMING PART OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY ABOVE										
Carjacking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Truck hijacking	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Robbery at residential premises	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	5	6
Robbery at non-residential premises	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	8	2	2
OTHER CRIME CATEGORIES										
Culpable homicide	14	10	10	10	9	8	1	6	7	15
Public violence	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
Crimes injuria	58	53	44	32	34	31	30	32	29	27
Neglect and ill-treatment of children	3	0	3	5	2	1	2	3	3	1
Kidnapping	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	5

ANNEXURE G: LETTER OF POLICE DEPARTMENT IN CHRISTIANA

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE



SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

P.O. Box 41

Verwysing Reference:	
Navrae	
Enquiries:	OD Letebele
Telefoon	
Telephone:	(053) 441 9219
Faksnommer	
Fax number:	(053) 441 2090 .

OFFICE OF THE STATION
 COMMISSIONER
 CHRISTIANA POLICE STATION
 CHRISTIANA
 2680

28 March 2014

Dr F.E. Freeks
 Subject Specialist
 North-West University
 Potchefstroom

LIFEPLAN AS TRAINING AND EQUIPPING PROGRAMMEI

1. Dr F.E Freeks once approached the Christiana SAPS with regard to the LIFEPLAN Training and its processes of training.
2. We acknowledges and aware of the programme outcome. The Information Management Centre also handed the reported stats which was required during the research phases.
3. The programmes will also be used as a social crime prevention mechanism in Christiana policing precinct.

Thank for your cooperation

 CAPTAIN

STATION COMMISSIONER
 28 March 2014

ANNEXURE H: LETTER FROM CHRISTIANA MUNICIPALITY



LEKWA-TEEMANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY "NW 396"

PO Box 13, Christiana, 2680, Cnr. Robyn & Dirkie Uys Streets
Tel: (053) 441 2208/3952 Fax: (053) 441 3735

Website: www.lekwateemane.co.za
Email: oosthuizen@lekwa-teemane.co.za

Your ref.:

Our ref.:

Enquiries: R.J. Oosthuizen

26 March 2014

North West University
Faculty of Health Services
Potchefstroom Campus
POTCHEFSTROOM

*Attention: Dr. F.E. Freeks
Fax no.: 018 299 2088*

Sir

LIFEPLAN®

I refer to our discussion on 20 March 2014.

The Lekwa-Teemane Municipality has knowledge of the programme being undertaken in the Christiana area.

We are aware of the presentations and research regarding the impact and progress of the programme in the Christiana district.

We wish you well with this task.

Yours faithfully

**MUNICIPAL MANAGER
M.A. MAKUAPANE**

ANNEXURE I: LETTER FROM POLICE DEPARTMENT IN CHRISTIANA

G.P.S. 002-2

SAP 21

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE



SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

P.O. Box 41

Verwysing	
Reference:	
Navrae	
Enquiries:	OD Letebele
Telefoon	
Telephone:	(053) 441 9219
Faksnommer	
Fax number:	(053) 441 2090 .

OFFICE OF THE STATION
COMMISSIONER
CHRISTIANA POLICE STATION
CHRISTIANA
2680

28 March 2014

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Subject Specialist
North-West University
Potchefstroom

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Thank for your cooperation

 CAPTAIN

STATION COMMISSIONER
28 March 2014

ANNEXURE J: ETHICS APPLICATION



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
INSTITUTIONAL OFFICE

Name of Project leader/Supervisor: **Prof. P.J. Buys**

Student working on project: **Fazel Ebrhiam Freeks**

NWU Ethics application number:

Title of the project: **A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas. A case study of its impact in the Christiana district of South Africa**

Please answer each question by ticking the appropriate box⁶:

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable ⁷ or unable to give informed consent? (e.g. children, people with learning or other mental or physical disabilities, people who are incarcerated, unemployed or otherwise compromised in responding to your questions) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Are you planning on making use of NWU students or direct and secondary/contracted staff members in this research? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (e.g. students at school, members of self-help groups, residents of a nursing home, the Minister of Education, a tribal chief or village elder) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (e.g. covert observation of people) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Will the study involve discussion of or questions about a sensitive topic? (e.g. sexual activity, drug use, crime, harassment, violence) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind or any physical, psychological or socio-economic intervention? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

⁶ Adapted from Economic and Social Research Council (2005). Research Ethics Framework (REF). www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk

⁷ **Vulnerable groups** raise special issues of informed consent and potential risk. "Vulnerable" participants are not clearly described, but have been noted to include "...children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, economically or educationally disadvantaged persons" (Common Federal Policy, 1991). Weijer and Emanuel (2000) consider participants to be vulnerable if they are not in a position to provide informed consent, due to their position (such as being in prison), or not possessing adequate intellectual faculty (such as children or the mentally ill). "Children" here are defined as participants younger than 18 years of age.

8. Could the study induce physical, psychological or social stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks⁸ encountered in normal life?
9. Will the study require the identification of individuals for follow-up evaluation?
10. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) or inducements of any other kind be offered to participants?
11. I have read the NWU's Manual for Postgraduate Studies and am familiar with the Guidelines for Research Ethics contained therein.
12. Could the image of the NWU, the relevant academic department, your employer, or any other institution however affected by/involved in the project be negatively affected by this research or put in a bad light?

If you answered **no** to all questions, submit the completed and signed form with your title registration. Students should retain a copy of the form and submit it with their dissertation/thesis.

If you answered **yes** to any of the questions, you will need to describe more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your proposal. **This does not mean that you cannot do the research, only that your proposal will need to be approved by the Research Ethics Committee.** You will need to submit your plans for addressing the ethical issues raised by your proposal using the Ethics Approval Application Form. This may be obtained from: <http://www.nwu.ac.za/library/documents/manualpostgrad.pdf> Alternatively, you may attach a fuller description of the specific issue to this declaration, for discussion by the panel at the Proposal Meeting.

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow NWU's Guidelines for Ethical Research as set out in the Manual for Postgraduate studies and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study. **This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring the confidentiality in the storage and use of data.** Any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research should be notified to the Study Leader and may require a new application for ethics approval.

Candidate

Name and Surname:

Fazel Ebrhiam Freeks

Signature:

Supervisor

⁸ **Risk:** These possible risks are described as an "...invasion of privacy, loss of confidentiality, psychological trauma, indirect physical harm, embarrassment, stigma, and group stereotyping" (Oakes, 2002: 449), and also risks posed to "...a subject's personal standing, privacy, personal values and beliefs, their links to family and the wider community, and their position within occupational settings, as well as the adverse effects of revealing information that relates to illegal, sexual or deviant behaviour" (Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), 2005: 21). Minimal risk may be defined as where "...the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, in and of themselves, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life" (Code of Federal Regulations, 2005).

Name and Surname:

Prof P.J. Buys

Signature:

Chair: Research Proposal Committee:

Name and Surname:

Signature:

Date:

ANNEXURE K: PHD ANNEXURE

Appendix 1



Suppliers of top quality Potato Seed
Verskaffers van kwaliteit Aartappelmoere

Privaatsak 507
CHRISTIANA 2680
Tel : (053) 441 2241/2/3
Faks : (053) 441 3401
E-Pos: wvamk@mweb.co.za

Private Bag 507
CHRISTIANA 2680
Tel : (053) 441 2241/2/3
Fax : (053) 441 3401
E-Mail: wvamk@mweb.co.za

WES-VRYSTAAT AARTAPPEL MOERKWEKERS (EDMS) BPK WESTERN FREE STATE SEED-POTATO GROWERS (PTY) LTD

Reg. Nr. 95 05922/07

Verwysing
Reference

Datum
Date

20 Nov 2013

Vir wie dit mag aangaan

Hiermee die bevestiging van die verskeie plase en aantal leeders wat vanaf 2011 betrokke is by LIFEPLAN Opleiding:

Die plase is geleë in die Vrystaat- en Noord Wes Provinsies, maar die werkers is afkomstig van 3 provinsies: Noord Kaap, Noord Wes en Vrystaat.

Agrivan Farming:	68
Aqua Boerdery:	82
Belle Rive Trust:	31
Burlington Farms:	28
Calby Farmking:	57
Dennegeur:	12
JJ Boerdery:	33
Leeuwheuvel Bdy:	44
Rascal Seed:	89
WVAMK:	42

In totaal dus 486 mense.

Die uwe

M Nieuwoudt
Opleidingskoördineerder

Rig alle korrespondensie aan die Bestuurder

Address all correspondence to the Manager

Crime Research and Statistics -South African Police Service

Crime in Christiana (NW) for April to March 2003/2004 - 2012/2013

Crime Category	April 2003 to March 2004	April 2004 to March 2005	April 2005 to March 2006	April 2006 to March 2007	April 2007 to March 2008	April 2008 to March 2009	April 2009 to March 2010	April 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to March 2012	April 2012 to March 2013
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Murder	5	6	12	5	8	11	6	4	11	5
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Attempted murder	4	3	1	2	8	8	5	1	7	4
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	133	138	141	138	172	121	117	173	144	129
Common assault	174	145	141	103	135	159	96	133	108	112
Common robbery	23	26	21	21	32	31	23	25	24	23
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	6	5	8	13	9	15	11	18	13	13
CONTACT-RELATED CRIMES										
Arson	3	4	1	2	2	3	2	4	4	2
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PROPERTY-RELATED CRIMES										
Burglary at non-residential premises	36	56	11	19	36	38	39	47	44	36
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Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	14	14	17	12	12	11	9	13	3	11
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	26	23	32	22	27	28	16	26	17	21
Stock-theft	53	34	17	26	29	17	14	9	16	18
CRIMES HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON POLICE ACTION FOR DETECTION										
Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition	3	1	3	1	3	2	2	1	0	0
Drug-related crime	35	48	45	43	62	73	45	22	20	11
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	11	12	6	8	8	20	15	15	20	34
OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES										
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	237	204	180	160	174	195	159	175	157	135
Commercial crime	15	14	14	12	16	17	13	34	21	27
Shoplifting	15	8	11	15	10	6	5	7	5	5
SUBCATEGORIES OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY FORMING PART OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY ABOVE										
Carjacking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Truck hijacking	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Robbery at residential premises	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	5	6
Robbery at non-residential premises	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	8	2	2
OTHER CRIME CATEGORIES										
Culpable homicide	14	10	10	10	9	8	1	6	7	15
Public violence	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
Crimes in injuria	58	53	44	32	34	31	30	32	29	27
Neglect and ill-treatment of children	3	0	3	5	2	1	2	3	3	1
Kidnapping	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	5

Appendix 3

	<p><i>Wes-Vrystaat Aartappel Moerkwekers (Edms) Bpk</i></p> <p><i>Western Free State Seed-Potato Growers (Pty) Ltd</i></p>		
<p>Vaardigheidsopleiding/Skills Training</p>	<p>Development</p>	<p>&</p>	<p><i>Privaatsak 507 Christiana 2680</i> <i>Tel: 053 441 2241 Faks: 0866 366 714</i> <i>E-pos: marinda@wvmoere.com</i></p>

1Maart 2013

Beste Dr Fazel en Prof Annemarie

Dit is vir my 'n groot voorreg om hierdie kort Life Planverslag aan julle deur te gee. Ek is vir 7 jaar al betrokke by die ontwikkeling en opleiding van ons plaaswerkers in hierdie omgewing en heg graag die behoeftes, wat al 'n hele paar jaar gelede bepaal is, vir julle aan. Op daardie tydstip het ek gedink ek kan 'n ABET program deur iemand laat ontwikkel sodat ons hierdie vaardighede kombineer met die leer van lees en skryf, maar het moed opgegee aangesien kundiges se dienste nodig is en dit doodeenvoudig net te duur was. My verligting was dus GROOT toe ek Prof Annemarie en haar man die dag ontmoet.

Persoonlik put ek nog elke keer wat ek, Dr Fazel en Piet Ricketts hierdie program op 'n plaas aanbied, iets positiefs daaruit. Life Plan dwing jou om introspeksie te doen en dan is dit 'n persoonlike keuse of jy dit gaan toepas aldan nie. In LP2 is veral die HIV gedeelte van kardinale belang. Die manier waarop dit oorgedra word, die deelname en terugvoering tydens die kursus is vir diegene wat dit wel het, van soveel waarde. Hier hoor hulle die korrekte feite en kan hulle persoonlik hul vrese en vrae aan Fazel of Piet stel. Die deelname en terugvoering van die werkers tydens die opleiding is ook 'n groot satisfaksie vir beide my en Dr Fazel. Piet se vrolike deelname, voorbeelde en vertroue wat hy uitstraal, dra baie by tot die gemaklikheid en openlikheid van die mense. Vaalhartswater se hulp en aandeel in die sukses van hierdie projek gaan verseker nie ongesiens by my verby nie.

Ek het terugvoering van 5 plase gevra en ek aangeheg is van die persoonlike opinies.

Algemene punte wat baie na vore gekom het:

- Respek vir myself, beter selfbeeld en selfvertroue.
- Besef van die dinge wat regtig saakmaak in die lewe en dat ander net soos jy ook probleme het.
- Baie het persoonlike hygiene en beter eetgewoontes uitgewys. Self die maak van groetetuine het posgevat.
- Minder alkoholgebruik en beter geldbestuur.
- Beter gesinsverhoudings
- Meer begrip en beheer van emosies en woede.
- Geloofsversterking
- Verantwoordelikebesef
- Beter kinderopvoeding: verantwoordelike en verhoudings in die gesin
- Beter gesondheidsbegrip - die besef dat die verantwoordelikheid van jou gesondheid in jou hande lê.

Ek sal altyd die belangrikheid van hierdie projek tussen die boere beklemtoon. Ons het reeds weer 2 nuwe plase wat volgende week met Life Plan 1 begin en ek sien baie daarna uit.

Prof Annemarie, Dr Fazel en almal wat hieraan gewerk het: 'n groot, groot dankie dus vir die ontwikkeling van hierdie projek.

Vriendelike groete

Marinda Nieuwoudt

Appendix 4

Aspekte waarby die leerder/werker gebaat het	Rascal Farming	Wes Vrystaat	Calby Farming	Aqua Farming	Dennegeur Farming
	Aantal mense: 71	Aantal mense: 40	Aantal mense: 42	Aantal mense: 28	Aantal mense: 10
Alcohol	11%	3%	43%	11%	
Behoeftes	4%		5%	21%	20%
Child spacing	3%				
God (Bible)	65%	3%	24%	61%	30%
Goeie aanbieding	3%	60%	10%	68%	
Het iets geleer	7%	13%	7%	11%	1%
Higiëne	17%	3%	33%	11%	30%
HIV & Aids	1%	3%	2%	7%	
Kan nie sonder alkohol	14%				
Kommunikasie	8%	5%		11%	10%
Konflik	3%				
Love				7%	
Purpose for living	13%		7%	7%	

Regte diëet	46%	3%	50%	25%	90%
Respek	31%	3%	14%	18%	20%
Safety	3%				40%
Selfbeeld	14%	23%	12%	21%	20%
STI's				7%	
Stres	3%		14%	4%	
Verhouding - huwelik	21%	3%	33%	32%	50%
Verhouding - kinders	17%		33%	25%	50%
Versorging van kinders	14%	3%	12%	14%	30%

ANNEXURE L: ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE



NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom,
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Tel: (018) 299-4900
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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

Tel: +27 18 299 4849

Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

2016-06-02

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by Research Ethics Committee of Theology (TREC) at the meeting held on 30/05/2016, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas. A case study of its impact in the Christiana district of SA.																															
Project Leader/Supervisor: PJ Buys																															
Student: FE Freeks																															
Ethics number:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Institution</td> <td colspan="6">Project Number</td> <td colspan="2">Year</td> <td colspan="2">Status</td> </tr> </table>			N	W	U	-	0	0	1	2	0	-	1	5	-	A	6	Institution			Project Number						Year		Status	
N	W	U	-	0	0	1	2	0	-	1	5	-	A	6																	
Institution			Project Number						Year		Status																				
<small>Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation</small>																															
Application Type: PHD																															
Commencement date: 2013-06-23		Expiry date: 2016-11-30																													
Risk:			Low																												

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the Informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the TREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the TREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

<p>General conditions:</p> <p>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via TREC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project. - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit. • The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the TREC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited. • The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC via TREC and new approval received before or on the expiry date. • In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and TREC retains the right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project; - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process. - withdraw or postpone approval if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected, - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the TREC or that information has been false or misrepresented, - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately, - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary. • TREC can be contacted for further assistance via Nadine.Havenga@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 1000.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or TREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Linda du Plessis

Digitally signed by Linda du Plessis
DN: cn=Linda du Plessis, o=NWU, ou=Vaal Triangle Campus, email=Linda.duplessis@nwu.ac.za, c=ZA
Date: 2016.06.03 09:26:30 +0200

Prof Linda du Plessis

Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

ANNEXURE M: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE AND KNOWLEDGE PRACTITIONER

WELLINGTON

7655

18 September 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I hereby confirm that the PhD thesis, *A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas. A case study of its impact in the Christiana District of South Africa* by Dr Fazel E Freeks (No 10589686) was edited and groomed to the best of my ability. This included recommendations to improve the language and logical structure, guide the line of argument as well as enhance the presentation.

The Rev Claude Vosloo

ID 59 0806 5146 085

Language and knowledge practitioner and consultant

Home of Creativity/Kreatiwiteitshuis

<http://homeofcreativity.co.za/info>

South African Translator's Institute reference no: 100 2432

Associate Member of PEG (Professional Editor's Group)

Home of Creativity ULTD 

Don't think outside the box, reinvent the box