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**INTEGRAL YOUTH FORMATION: A NECESSITY
FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA**

Supervisor

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a
Master in Pastoral Ministry**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters Degree in Pastoral Ministry. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed:

Name of Student:

Date:

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed:

Name of Supervisor:

Date:.....

DEDICATION

To

All the young people who strive for a better African continent.

EPIGRAPH

There are no bad boys and girls.

There is only bad environment, bad training, bad example and bad thinking.

(Fr Edward Flanagan, Founder of Boys Town, USA)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With a heart full of gratitude to God for his graces in my life, I wish to express my thanks to the congregation of the Daughters of St Paul for giving me the opportunity to further my studies. I thank my Sisters in the community for their moral and spiritual support during my time of studies. It has helped me to pursue my studies with dedication and determination.

Special thanks to Rev. Dr. Patrick Thawale for his scholarly guidance while writing this thesis. My sincere thanks also go to Sr Mary Augustine Nemer *fsp* who read through every text of this thesis and gave her suggestions. I also extend my thanks to Mr Michael Smith who was my supervisor during the practicum experience, for his advice and assistance in carrying out my experience and gaining more knowledge about youth ministry.

Most sincere thanks to my benefactors who made it possible for me to accomplish this program of studies. And to all those who contributed through their presence and prayers to making this thesis what it contains now, I pray that the good Lord will continue to bless you in all that do. To all with whom I have shared knowledge and experiences as a student, I say thank you all.

May God bless us all and accompany us in carrying out our specific mission in the Church and for the young people of our time.

ABBREVIATION

(a) Miscellaneous Abbreviations

CYOA – Catholic Youth Organization in Africa.

WAYN – The West African Youth Network.

YALDA – Youth Alliance for Leadership Development Africa.

CYON – Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria.

YCS - Young Christian Students.

YCW – Young Christian Workers

(b) Biblical Abbreviations

1Sam – 1Samuel

Amos – Amos

Dan- Daniel

Deut – Deuteronomy

Ex – Exodus

Jer – Jeremiah

Jn – John

Lk – Luke

Rm – Romans

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The world and all that exists within it experience their own challenges. These challenges are part and parcel of growth. The world population as stated by CNN Tech stands at seven billion and 1.2 billion of the population are youths. The challenges facing the youth of today do not have much difference from one part of the world to another.¹

My thesis is based on the problems facing the youth in Africa and the consequences on the Catholic Church in Africa. If the Church does not wake up to her responsibility of providing an integral formation for the youths then the future will not be promising. The youths of the 21st Century are faced with problems such as: unemployment, lack of self awareness and self actualization, uncertainty and emotional anxieties, alcohol and drug abuse, pre-marital sexual acts, sexually transmitted diseases, exploitation from the adults, secularism, youth violence, lack of formal and informal education etc.² The Church has been an agent of the spiritual formation of the people of God for centuries and the youth have benefited from this formation, but the whole idea of spiritual formation will be less effective if human, intellectual and pastoral elements of formation are not properly integrated in the lives of the youth, especially in Africa. As the Church encourages an ongoing formation for priests likewise I believe it is necessary for the youth to be given a formation that is general and integral. This involves a process of

¹ CNN TECH “*World Population projected to reach 7 billion in 2011*”; 12/08/09.

² Questionnaires.

constant growth, deepening each of the aspects of formation i.e. human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.³

The Church does not only show love to those who are afflicted by human miseries but also seeks the growth of every human person. She nurtures and brings about development in the lives of her faithful.⁴ I believe that an integral formation of the youth will not only spur transformation in the youth themselves but also in the society and in the Church. This transformation will lead them to become better citizens, men and women of integrity, people who live their vocation to the fullest, good leaders in the society and good Christians. The integrated formation of the social, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral aspects in the life of the youth will be of benefit to the Church in Africa.

The conception “youth” means different things to different people in accordance to their experience with the youth. Some consider them rebels, others revolutionary, others consider them the conscience of the society, others see them as cheats, e.tc. Most times they are forgotten by the adults because they are considered still far from realising themselves. Pope Benedict sees them as those who yearn for happiness: “In every period of history, including our own, many young people experience a deep desire for personal relationships marked by truth and solidarity. Many of them yearn to build authentic friendships, to know true love, to start a family that will remain united, to achieve personal fulfilment and real security, all of which are the guarantee of a serene and happy future.”⁵

The challenges faced by the youth of today are challenges that either break them or make them. This moment in their life is a time of questioning, of searching, of falling in

³ Cf. *Pastoris Dabo Vobis*, 71

⁴ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 8

⁵ *World Youth Day Spain*, 2011

and out of love, of being rebellious, of fighting for justice. If all these challenges are addressed and properly taken care of, then the future is bright.

The first part of this thesis has the information about my insertion experiences in Mother Bertilla Training School and among the members of the vocation group belonging to the congregation of the Daughters of St Paul. It also covers the socio-cultural analysis and pastoral concerns of these two places with the pastoral agents present there. My objective in doing this study, the problem that motivated my preference of this study, the significance of this thesis and scope within which I carried out my practicum experience are clearly in the first chapter.

In the second chapter I presented a logical flow of realities concerning the theme of the thesis. With the aid of different available materials I have presented the theological and pastoral principles of the integral formation of young people in the scripture and the Church teachings.

The third chapter presents the theological reflection supporting the theme of this thesis. Since the theme of the thesis is about the integral formation of the young people, the theological reflection is based on the sound teachings of the Church and its connection to the Christian calling to holiness. This calling includes the prophetic role of the young people in the Church and the Church's role in their lives as God's children. It also elaborates the benefit of the integral formation of the youth to the growing Church of Africa.

The final chapter of the thesis is about the recommendations and pastoral plan for action, with the summary of my findings, pastoral conclusions, pastoral recommendations and pastoral plan for required action in view of the problems or deficiencies observed.

The integral formation of the young people in the Church is a necessity that not only prepares the youth for the future but also it fulfils the mission of the Church to nurture every member of Christ's body, which is every member of the Church.

The recognition of the importance of today's young people along with their vitality is a benefit of the Church in Africa. Pope John Paul II, calls our attention to this fact by saying:

“It must be recognised that today's young people, with the vigor and vitality of their age, are also bearers of ideals which are coming to the fore of history: the thirst for freedom; the recognition of the inestimable value of the person; the need for authenticity and sincerity; a new conception and style of reciprocity in the rapport between men and women; a convinced and earnest seeking after a more just, sympathetic and united world, openness and dialogue with all; and the commitment to peace.”⁶

The Church needs to recognize the positive impact the young people have on her. She is to make use of their active and joyful spirit in energizing the Church in Africa.

⁶ Cf. *Pastoris Dabo Vobis*, 9.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the background description. This will include gathered information on my insertion experience, socio-cultural analysis and pastoral concerns of the practicum site, current agents of pastoral action, the problem statement, the objective of my study, its significance and the scope of my study.

I had my practicum experience (Youth Ministry) under the supervision of Mrs Jane Wangari Kiarie, Of Mother Bertilla Vocational Training Centre and the Daughters of St Paul vocational group, under the supervision of Sr Anasthasia Nduku Muindi, both in Nairobi. During the time of my practicum, I was involved in many activities. The various areas of the ministry I was involved in were:

- Youth animation in Schools, Religious formation houses and parishes
- Presentation of different human formation topics to young people;
- Posting of Website materials for young women about vocation, career and human formation topics.⁷
- Corresponding with young girls through letters

⁷ www.paulinesAfrican.org and www.vocationsAfrican.blogspot.com

- One on one sharing with young people
- Preparing a newsletter (titled: 'Follow Me') for young women on spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral formation.

1.1 Some Organisations and Areas designated for the pastoral experience

1.1.1 Mother Bertilla Vocational Training School

Mother Bertilla's Vocational Training School is a school to help young girls who do not have the opportunity to go for higher studies to have basic training in practical areas of: tailoring, catering, secretarial studies, and computer studies. These girls are coming from different parts of Kenya. Some of these girls are orphans, physically challenged, from poor homes; some do not have the appropriate grades to continue their education at secondary school level; some were not supported by family members etc. The main aim of the school is to give them the opportunity to become useful to themselves and to the society. It is a school that gives hope even to those who cannot afford good education. The school is administered by the Religious Congregation of the Little Sisters of St Joseph. The school subsidizes the school fees for those who cannot afford it through benefactors. The administration consists of the Sisters of St Joseph and some lay teachers who help the girls in the different departments. The school participate in national exams. This gives the students the opportunity to be recognised as qualified, cooks, tailors, computer literate, within the confines of the country.

1.1.2 Daughters of St Paul Vocational Group

The aim of the group of youth in the Daughters of St Paul Vocational group is to discern the will of God in their lives. The program for the group is organised in the convent of the Daughters of St Paul so that the young people can be inserted into the

lifestyle of the congregation. With this insertion they come to discern better if they are called to the life of the Daughters of St Paul or not.

The program is funded by the congregation and so candidates are being taken care of during their stay in the convent. The young girls are those who have finished their secondary school, in college or in the University. Some of them are also working for a living. The program goes for at least two and half months every year. The young people are of a mixed group from Kenya, Zambia, Uganda and Tanzania. They are helped to live together despite their different cultural backgrounds. If they decide to become members of the Daughters of St Paul then they have to get used to living in community with people of different cultures. This program initiates them into having an international spirit.

The girls are given classes on human formation so as to understand themselves better in line with the decision they are to make for life. They have time for group dynamics which will help them insert easily into the group with others. The classes on the life and history of the congregation are to help them understand the congregation and its charism. During the program they are inserted into the apostolate of the Daughters of St Paul. This is to help them discover if they really feel called to such an apostolate or not. The program gives them the opportunity to exercise their talents in the field of communication, through printing, singing, reading, writing etc.

The sister in charge of the program is a qualified formator and psychologist who apart from the normal classes also journeys with the young person personally. This is to help the person come to a deeper knowledge of herself. With the help of other Sisters who give classes the girls are helped to know themselves, others, the congregation and to make a concrete choice for their life.

1.1.3 Catholic Youth Organisation in Africa

The Catholic Youth Organisation is an organisation for young Catholics. It was started in Chicago in 1930 by Bishop Bernard Sheil of Chicago.⁸ Later on the ideas of this organisation were adopted in many dioceses around the world. In Africa, this organisation comes under different names. Notwithstanding they still have the same purpose of guiding the young Catholics to live a Christian life. From a very young age they are helped to develop trust with their peers, and live a positive happy life.

There are quite a good number of youth groups or youth organisations in the Church; Young Christian Students (YCS), International Movement of Catholic Students, International Young Christian Students, Association of Catholic Tertiary Students, Young Christian Workers (YCW), Scouts and The Legion of Mary. Various reasons can create avenues for organising a youth group. For example in Zaire, after the suppression of all movements and their replacement by a single youth movement, the Youth of Popular Revolution Movement came into being.⁹ Some youth groups are also connected with religious congregations or the parish patron saint. E.g Senior and junior youth of Don Bosco, Consolata Youth group, St Paul youth group etc. These groups that are associated with congregations or parishes take up the spirituality of the congregation of those working with them.

In Nigeria the Catholic Youth Organisation of Nigeria (CYON) came into existence due to the urgent need of youths to plan and execute Christian functions in their parishes. The organisation affirms the place of youth in the Church's life. It promotes youth involvement in the work of evangelisation. It outlines, promotes, directs and evolve

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Youth_organisation, 19/08/2011.

⁹ Cf. R. TESSIER, ed., Spear head: *Young People in African Towns*, 22.

network of support for youth initiatives. These initiatives are carried out as a group or as individuals for the development of the Church and the society. In Catholic Youth of Nigeria, the priority is always given to human development, youth empowerment and catechesis.¹⁰

1.1.4 The West African Youth Network (WAYN)

This network is a regional youth empowerment organisation established by four young people from West Africa in March 2001. Their mission is to enhance youth participation in issues relating to governance, human rights and peace building in West Africa. It also enhances the participation of young people in issues such as conflict resolution, governance, accountability, youth development and human rights. The objectives of WAYN are to mobilize youths across the sub-region at the national and regional levels to participate in all spheres of national and regional development. The activities seek the holistic involvement of young people as key actors in democratic processes and social transformation in West Africa.¹¹

1.1.5 Youth Alliance for Leadership Development Africa (YALDA)

It began as “The Future African Leaders Alliance” (FALA) and the name later changed to YALDA. It has the intention of connecting African youths outside and within the continent who are interested in the progress of African leadership. It is a non-profit international organisation that directs youth to information and resources provided by individuals and other organisations. It helps young people to develop their careers and also assist them in developing projects. The organisation aims at making significant and positive social impact across the continent. YALDA is a platform that allows young

¹⁰ <http://cyonanniversary.blogspot.com/> 12/05/10.

¹¹ <http://www.waynyouth.org>

people to communicate their needs and innovative ideas to each other, directly to professionals and leaders worldwide. At a time when the future of the continent depends on increased collaboration, and especially with the least empowered among them - the youth -YALDA serves to amplify, consolidate, support, train, and present solutions created by young Africans.¹²

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Looking at our society today what keeps staring at my face is the fact that the youths of today still need a wholesome formation that will help them to face the different challenges they encounter in life, whether spiritual, intellectual, human or physical.

My preference of the topic **Integral Youth Formation: A Necessity to the Church in Africa**, was motivated by my experience with youths during my apostolate as a vocation promoter in my religious institute and at Mother Bertilla Vocational Training School where I worked with young girls with a focus in the secular careers.

The members of the two groups I worked extensively with varied in their goals as human beings but I realised that the problems they were facing were applicable to all of them as young people and the future of the world. With my experience the young, I realised that a wholesome formation in all areas of the human person was lacking. Their integral formation will not only be of benefit to them personally but to the society and especially to the Church. Since the Church strives for the development of the person, the idea of an integral formation will not be out of place.

The problems facing the youths of today include: unemployment, lack of self awareness and self actualization, uncertainty and emotional anxieties, alcohol and drug

¹² <http://yaldAfrican.org/> 2008

abuse, pre-marital sexual acts, sexually transmitted diseases, exploitation from the adults, secularism, youth violence, lack of formal education etc. These are problems that can be solved by the Church in Africa for its own benefit and the future of the Church in this continent. The youth are the living force of this continent and the one to carry on the activities of the Church of Christ within the African Church.

The youths are in need of role model that will show them the path to life. It is not enough to condemn them for what the older generation thinks it is a wrong approach to life. The youth need people to mentor them and until everyone, including the Church makes this a priority then the youth should not be blamed.

Mary Edwards in her book “Total Youth Ministry” writes about the yearning of the youth for a rapport between them and the older generation. “Youths want adults to communicate with them on a heart level as well as on an intellectual level. This enables them to reflect upon their own personal experiences and feelings and gives them the courage to share their reflections in an accepting atmosphere. They want adults to practice what they preach because they so desperately seek inspiration and example from Christian adults.”¹³

The Church has extensively worked for the spiritual formation of her faithful and pastorally attends to the arising needs of her faithful. But in my opinion the Church in Africa still has a lot to do in forming her youth for social, intellectual and physical realities. Many youth go away from the Church because they are not equipped socially for the challenging and secularized society in which they live. They are not equipped in such a way that they are to merge all areas of their lives in line with the message of the gospel and its teachings in personal life. What we find among youths of today is a departmental

¹³ Cf. M. EDWARDS, *Total Youth Ministry*, 31.

life that helps them to be a good youth on Sunday during Mass, a smart-selfish student and staff during the weekdays, a point of reference for all crimes throughout the month and a confused mind in time of crisis. It is important to observe the youth of today especially when it comes to religion and secular life. They move from one sect or mushrooming Church to another.¹⁴ The question is that what do they seek? Why are they following the trendy Churches? Even with all these different Christian youth programs on TV and Radio, in the streets, in the Churches, it is obvious that these young people are searching for what meaningful to them. The changing society has a great influence on the young people today. The instability of the society also makes them unstable even in their choices. They moved with the flow of the society and are more into what is now and how they can fit it. The tendency to have changing principles and values is determined by the society not the young people.

The Church will be saving itself if the youth who are its future do away with segmented lifestyle and imbibe the gospel values in all areas of their life.

1.3 Significance of Theological Reflection

Youth all over the world have the challenges of their age just like every human person on this earth. The realities facing the youth in Africa are not something to close one's eyes to and pretend that they are not there. These realities are not points of condemnation for the youth but an invitation to the Church to wake up to its pastoral responsibility among this unique group of people referred to as the youth.

Based on my practicum experiences, this work will therefore help us to be aware of what our youth in Africa are facing, how we have contributed as a Church to it and how

¹⁴ KASUKU, M., "*Who will save our youth*", New People 135 (2011) 28-30.

the Church can build on them as the instrument of growth for the Catholic Church in Africa. It is impossible for the Church in Africa to grow when its living force is still in moral, intellectual, social and spiritual dilemma.

Thus the two groups I inserted myself in during the practicum are typical examples of youths who have to seek answers to the many questions they have on their minds. These questions are out of their experience of a society and Church that still needs to understand their realities and give appropriate and edifying answers to their questions.

There is need to reawaken in the Church the necessity of contributing to the integral formation of the youth for the sake of growth in the Church and the world around.

1.4 The Objective of Theological Reflection

The objective of this theological reflection is to help us be aware of the challenges facing the youth in Africa, the effects on the Church and the ways in which integral formation of every youth in the Church can bring about growth in the Church in Africa. This work is addressed to shepherds of the African Church, pastoral ministers and all people of good will who see the youth as a living force of the Church of God. It is also for those who want a growing Church that transforms the youth into good citizens, good men and women for all types of vocations, good Christians, good politicians etc.

With the information gotten from my practicum experience, information from internet sources, articles, journals, books, diocesan materials on the youth, questionnaires, Scriptures and Church documents, there will be a good number of sources for my theological reflection on the Integral formation of the youth in Africa. All references are acknowledged.

The study will help in creating awareness about youth problems and the necessity of forming the youth within the African Church; it will provide information on the youth

challenges, organisations that are helping in this formation and the reason for the Church to see it as a priority in its pastoral concern. The study will surface the fact that young people need integral formation to be able to face life's challenges positively.

Integral formation should be the goal of all people and the youth in Africa are in dire need of this formation. The mission of the Church will not be complete if a part of her body is lacking in the necessary tool for growth.

Therefore this work will also recognise the responsibility of the Church in Africa towards her youth.

Finally this work will be a guideline for those who are interested in contributing to the future of the Church through the contemporary youth.

1.5 The Scope of Theological Reflection

This reflection embraces the realities of the youth in Africa, basing my practical analysis on the two groups of youths that I worked with during my practicum experience during the long holiday. This thesis is also influenced by my experience with other different youths I worked with from different parts of Africa as a vocation promoter and the questionnaires answered by youths from various parts of Africa.

The use of the words “youth” and “young people” are synonymous in this thesis. Also the use of the word “Church” means the Catholic Church except stated otherwise.

1.6 Conclusion

There are many organisations in the continent of Africa who are trying to help youths develop financially and socially, but it is obvious that the youths are not growing wholesomely because they are more inclined to the orientation of the secular society. There is a need for a formation that is integral and balanced, if the youth are to become the

custodians of the Church in future. This thesis is all about the Church in Africa realising she has a responsibility in the lives of the many youths who look up to her as teacher and guide.

The youth form an integral part of the society and therefore it is obvious that they are determinants of the future of our continent, Africa and the Church in Africa.¹⁵

¹⁵ Cf. J. N. K. MUGAMBI, ed., *The Church in African Christianity*, 71-84.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The young people have a pastoral responsibility in the Church. They are part of the body of Christ, the Church and therefore have to channel their potential as youth in the work of evangelisation.¹⁶ To take up such responsibility, they have to be prepared adequately.

This chapter gives the definition of youth, what characterises this period in their life, the scriptural sayings about them, the agents of their formation and the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry in their lives.

The intention of the Church of having young people who are integrally formed i.e socially, psychologically, intellectually, spiritually, physically can only materialise when the pastoral ministry for youth is equipped with prepared ministers. The progress of young people in faith must go along with a progress in all areas of life.

¹⁶Cf. A. SHORTER, *The African Synod*, 44.

2.1 Definition of a Youth

The dictionary for pastoral care and counselling refers to the youth as young adults. They are those who are past adolescent stage and are on the way to becoming fully mature. They are human beings in the early period of adulthood.¹⁷

To define who a youth is, may literally be complex because the definition varies according to where you are coming from. While some countries consider only teenagers as youth, others start after the teenage years and continue until fifty years old. Several people define youth in terms of feeling young. Therefore this definition can lead us to conclude that even at sixty, a person can be considered a youth as far as one feels young. It is not easy to fix any ages in defining youth in Africa.¹⁸ Some describe it as a time in one's life between childhood and adulthood.

The United Nation's definition of youth is people from 15-24years of age.¹⁹ The age in which a person is considered a "youth", and thus eligible for special treatment under the law and throughout society varies around the world. The age range that will be considered in this thesis is between 18 and 30years.

In Africa "youth as a generational category is neither flexible nor stable but it is continuously produced and reproduced."²⁰ This lack of concise definition presupposes that the term youth is understood in relation to societies and cultures. Every culture and society determines who is and who is not a youth. In many cultures youth is associated with all the mischiefs, crimes, unaccepted behaviours and violence in the society. The term youth really varies according to the social-cultural reality of the people. The definition also varies from country to country and is dependent on specified socio-cultural, institutional,

¹⁷Cf. S. D. PARKS, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counselling*, 1344.

¹⁸ Cf. S. NYOMI, *Ecumenical Youth Ministry in Africa*, 16.

¹⁹ UN Report, 1996.

²⁰Cf. MUENI WA MUIU, *Africa in 2108: Strategic Plan*, 158

economic and political factors. This implies that the term youth is socially and culturally constructed. This gives rise to a number of conceptions of the term youth which include political, cultural/traditional, aesthetic, artistic, biological, and legal.

A *cultural/traditional youth* is one who is defined in accordance to traditional practices that mark the transition from one stage of life to another through the process of rite of passage. These traditional practices involve initiation practices such as removal of certain organs of the body, teeth or put certain marks on the body. One of the most common initiation practices common among African communities is circumcision that is carried out among tribes like: the Maasai, Gikuyu, Abaluhya, and Kalenjins of Kenya.

In this regard, human development is seen to involve three stages in life that is; childhood, puberty and adulthood. These stages not only mark changes in the human body but they also mark stages at which new responsibilities are acquired such as marriage, ownership of particular properties and status in the society. With the influence of modernity, there are exceptions to the rule. Some youths despite having gone through the initiation sometimes do not fulfil their cultural responsibilities. Hence, even in their 40s they are still being referred to as youth. While some of them, it is a matter of choice, to others it is a result of the need to pursue certain goals in life such as education and career.²¹

Politically there is the young generation of politicians who consider themselves advocates of a new form of government. Some politicians who are even above forty years of age consider themselves not only in favour of a young people's government but also make themselves speakers for the young generation. A good example is the Kenyan parliament member called Sonko. Once he had put earrings and attended the parliament

²¹Cf. MUENI WA MUIU, *Africa in 2108: Strategic Plan*, 159

meeting but was sent out. His argument was that he is representing the youth. This makes a definition of who a youth is to be more complex. The question is “Is it the dressing that makes someone a youth? Is it the physical make up? Or is it the age?”

2.2 Characteristics of a Youth

Erickson’s theory of psycho-social development describes the youth’s stage as a time to focus on developing close relationships with others. “Difficulties during this stage result in feelings of loneliness and a fear of relationships with others, while successful resolution of the crises of the stage results in the possibility of forming relationships that are intimate on a physical, intellectual and emotional level”²² This period is characterised by tremendous biological, emotional, psychological, physical and social mutations in the life of a young person. As the hormones gush through the endocrine system, the youth change, not only in appearance but also in the manner they interact with their social environment. They become anxious about their relationship with each other, especially the opposite sex, as they grapple with new social realities.²³

Apart from the biological and psycho-social characteristics of the development tasks of young people, we also can consider them the active doers of the generation. Each generation has been labeled by its characteristics; we have the uncommitted generation, the conformist generation and what we have now are the doers generation. Majority of the young people of today who are setting the pace are the doers. And they are scattered all over the world. They are present where the action is, participating in everything that gives meaning to their lives. They are in the activist group to make a better nation, they are in the most dynamic institutions to create an impact in the world. They have to be noticed

²² Cf. R. FELDMAN, *Understanding Psychology*, 454.

²³ www.ajol.info/index.php/index/search/google

and felt. There are drop-outs among them and there are many who are educated. They comprehend the media in ways far more perceptive than the older generation. They are inclined to act out their opinion. They live for the now, realising that tomorrow can only begin with what it inherits from today.²⁴

Nowadays youths have many questions and they expect the older generation to be able to answer them all. “Youth is a time when genuine and irrepressible questions arise about the meaning of life and the direction our own lives should take.”²⁵ Gone are the days when young people were reluctant to ask questions. There are a lot of messages available to the young minds of today’s world and they are vulnerable to these messages. When they need clarification they ask “why this or that,” if they do not get convincing answers they ask, “Why not this or that” and If they do not have a “why to live”, then every decision and action is based on “why not?” Why not kill another person for their jacket or basketball sneakers: Why not experiment with drugs and alcohol, since addiction is something that happens to old people?, Why not steal from a rich parent when he has too much to spend? Why not destroy the properties of the school since the administration is not listening to us? The list of “why not?” is always countless as long as there is something to justify one’s action.²⁶

The young people also have the characteristic of searching for a place in the society. This is a common phenomenon among youths of this generation. They search for what gives their lives meaning. Some seek security, some adventure, some danger, some

²⁴ Cf. C. E. MOWRY, *The Church and the New Generation*, 25.

²⁵ Africa’s Commitment ‘*Africae Munus*’ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 61

²⁶ Cf. C. R. MCARTY, *A Closer Look at Violence*.

revolution, some reform, some quiet, some multimedia impact, some the expanded mind, some the status of prominence, some a mystical faith, some power, some wisdom e.t.c.²⁷

Youthfulness is characterised by trust. Many young people feel threatened by the world around them. The reality of a society that does not trust or appreciate them is a serious obstacle to their understanding of trust. This hinders them from truly being their positive self and they rebel against such environment. “When children cannot trust the world around them, then they cannot form the stable bonds that make families, friendships, or societies even possible. For many children the challenge is not living, it is surviving.”²⁸

2.4 Concept of Youth Formation

Formation is defined as “the process by which something develops or takes a particular shape.”²⁹ Youth formation is the moulding of the young person into a particular identity in spite of the many contradictions and potentialities marking our society and cultures today. In trying to explain the human life as whole, specialists start from different aspects of the human person. “Some may try to account for life’s diversity on the basis of sexuality alone; others refer to the will to power or the physiology of the organism; still others focus on quantum theory or on the process of learning.”³⁰ As human persons our lives cannot be defined in segments. Daily we experience a lot of imaginations, feelings, thoughts, dispositions and actions. These aspects of our lives do not live in isolation from each other and so formation brings all these parts into a complete whole. “Formation aims at bringing the whole of our human form and its field to consonant unfolding i.e the living

²⁷ Cf. C. E. MOWRY, *The Church and the New Generation*, 28.

²⁸ Cf. C. R. MCARTY, *A Closer Look at Violence*.

²⁹ www.Encarta 2006

³⁰ Cf. V. A. KAAM, *Formation of the Human Heart*, 2.

harmony of all aspects of our formation field and the harmony between this field itself and the formation mystery”³¹. Formation takes the totality of the human person into account.

2.5 Types of Formation

A fully developed person is one who grows gradually through an unfolding dimension of life’s experiences. The harmonious formation of a youth is the integration of the physiological, sociological and intellectual and spiritual aspects of the youth.

2.5.1 Physiological Formation

The physiological aspect of the youth deals with the physical states of well being determined by the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of some fundamental physiological needs of the organism such as, hunger, thirst, sleep, survival and good health.³² Youths benefit from sports in many ways because it helps them in their moral development, identity formation and competence.³³ Recreation also contributes to the personality formation of the young person in relation to other young people.

2.5.2 Sociological Formation

The sociological aspect is linked with the need of developing social relationships, of “being with”. The youth as a social animal, feels the need of deepening friendship, of giving and accepting help, and of feeling that he or she is a member of a community of persons. Sociological formation embraces the understanding of other people, of events and things that surround our life. It is a living experience between us and other people. It has

³¹ Cf. V. A. KAAM, *Formation of the Human Heart*, 1.

³² Cf. C. A. MANENTI, *Psychology and Formation*, 20

³³ Cf. D. BOGOPA, *Ports Development: Obstacles and Solutions in South Africa*, 86.

an influence in all that surrounds us.³⁴ The sociological formation of young people shapes their character as who they are becoming.

2.5.3 Intellectual and Spiritual

Through intellectual formation or learning, the faculty of the young people is developed.³⁵ The intellectual and spiritual aspect includes the psyche activities which can be connected to the need of knowing the truth, and the related human capacity of grasping the nature of things, abstracting it from sensual data. From a person who has observed there can be a deduced conclusion which explains concepts they have come to experience. The power to comprehend what one has observed is what makes up the mind of the young person's 'spirit'. With this power young people can formulate concepts, know abstract things, judge and transcend the 'here and now' in order to affirm and pursue spiritual value.³⁶

Reaching far beyond the classroom and the fulfillment of academic requirements, intellectual formation seeks to cultivate learning as a lifelong pursuit. Its goal is to empower the person with the spiritual, philosophical, theological, and practical knowledge needed for academic degrees and effective ministry. Skills in communication, research, and time management are critical for growth in the intellectual life.

2.6 Formation in the Scriptures

Formation in the scriptures has been seen in the light of God's creation. (Gen 1:1-31). God created from nothing and formed human beings in his own image and likeness

³⁴ Cf. V. A. KAAM, *Formation of the Human Heart*, 5.

³⁵ Cf. W. WANYOIKE, *Understanding youth and family issues*, 13.

³⁶ Cf. C. A. MANENTI, *Psychology and Formation*, 22.

(Gen 1:27). Words like *creation, molding, and making* are all synonymous to the word “forming” in the scriptures.

God is revered as he who forms the human person; (Job 10:8-12, Jer 1:5, Psalm 139:13-16). God continuously forms his people in the path of knowledge and seeks for all to know what is right and just. Hosea 4:6. The acquisition of knowledge makes the person competent and equipped for good work; 2Tim 3:17. The scriptures becomes the material for gaining knowledge.

Formation in the Old Testament was based on instructions given from childhood to adulthood. The instruction of the youth was done as a passage from one generation to the next. In ancient Israel formation of the youth was done largely informally and related to the family unit. The formation was general towards keeping the way of the Lord so that God may fulfil his promise (Gen 18:9)³⁷

Young people who were selected for a particular task were secluded and given instructions relating to the task to be taken. In the book of Daniel at the request of the king, young men were selected and kept in formation within the king's court.

Then the king commanded his palace master Ashpenaz to bring some of the Israelites of the royal family and of the nobility, young men without physical defect and handsome, versed in every branch of wisdom, endowed with knowledge and insight, and competent to serve in the king's palace; they were to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans. The king assigned them a daily portion of the royal rations of food and wine. They were to be educated for three years, so that at the end of that time they could be stationed in the king's court. (Dan 1:3-5)

³⁷ Cf. D. BLAND, *The Formation of Character in the Book of Proverbs*, 221-237.

The formation of the young, finds its root in the scriptures. The scripture is the instrument for an integral formation of the youth, (2Tim 3:16). For it teaches, refutes, corrects and trains the youth in the path of righteousness. The desire of every parent is for the youth to become people they can be proud of. The psalmist prays for youth that have been brought up in the way of the Lord. Youths that one can be proud of (Ps 144:12). The Word of God is that which can help the youth walk in the right way (Ps 119:9). So there is a great need to imbibe in them the word of God. It is arguable that scripture has opened for men and women the way to God.³⁸ When the youth listens to the instructions of the elders he or she walks on the right path (Prv 23:26). The golden rule taught by the prophets helps the youth to thread on the right path among the people of God, (Mt 7:12). The well formed young person lives morally through listening to the word of God and allowing it transform him or her. The whole life, body and soul becomes a witness of true worship of God, (Rm 12:1-2). The youth who honours his or her parents is not only a pride to them but is also rewarded with long life on earth. The fulfilment of the parent's responsibility towards their children is a requirement in the scriptures, (Eph 6:1-4). The exhortation of the children by St Paul towards their parents has a unique promise of long life associated to it. This advice is to be carried out 'in the Lord' for the simple reason that it is the right thing to do. Fathers are admonished not to anger their children so that they may not become discouraged. And parents are to rear their children in Christian discipline and instruction.³⁹ In the wisdom books Quohaleth reassures the young person that life is worth living but one has to fulfil her duties, knowing that the results are in the hands of God, (Eccl 12:1).⁴⁰ The neglect of one's God is the beginning of doom.

³⁸ Cf. W. BARCLAY, *The Daily Study Bible*, 200.

³⁹ Cf. I. HAVENER, "Collegvile Bible Commentary", *New Testament* -8, 103.

⁴⁰ The African Bible.

Youthfulness is characterised by liveliness and creativity but all these must be done with cautiousness, (Eccl 11:9). Youth is compared to light and life, (Eccl 11:7-10). It is a time of celebration and the time to follow ones heart with prudence.⁴¹

In the New Testament we find the reality of formation beginning from the time of Jesus. Jesus formed his apostles by the teaching them. He taught them to pray (Mt 6:9-13), to seek the will of of God (Mt 6:33) He taught them to welcome all as children of God even those who do not welcome them as God's messenger (Lk 9:54). Jesus formed his apostles with his own life. He was a Rabbi par-excellence.

Jesus Christ, true God and true man, demonstrated human qualities during his life here on earth. He was energetic, strong, truthful, moderate; a man of good character, serene, well balanced morally, firm in his beliefs; understanding and yet uncompromising for the truth; He was kind.⁴²

Christ was the point of reference for Paul and that is why he exhorts the Christians to have the mind of Christ. For Paul even though Christ was fully divine he also had all the qualities of a well integrated human being. This makes him also fully human. To have the mind of Christ is to think, live, speak, and relate like Christ.

2.7 The Youth in Africa

The youth in Africa are the young people living in Africa. Those who go through their youthful stage within the confines of the African continent. Just like many other young people in the world they face many challenges as they develop in life. They are faced with all kinds of problems and as much as possible they try to survive and live

⁴¹ Cf. A. R. CERESKO, *Introduction to Old Testament Wisdom*, 150.

⁴² Cf. P. M. MALITI, *Forming Priests for the Modern World*, 15

through their experiences like generations before them had done. A few of the many crisis they go through are explained below.

2.7.1 Youth Secularism

“Many Schools in Africa no longer have the first lesson dedicated to catechism or religions programmes conducted by teachers of various faiths. Instead, it is used as a tuition lesson or a time to make up for missed lessons”.⁴³ Young people of today have been deprived of the value of religious education because of the secularised society. Gone are the days when lessons were started with opening prayers and the courses on religion were compulsory for all students. The society now is going through the crisis of a situation where religious faith has become shallow and religion has lost its hold on social institutes. The youth have been carried away by the fuss between religion and social consciousness, and religion is losing the upperhand even in the life of these young ones. Secularization has led young people into forgetting their traditional values and adopting all forms of social nuances in the name of being in vogue.

2.7.2 Alcohol and Drug Abuse:

Drugs and medicines have been in use for centuries. They are useful and life saving and can enhance the quality of life.⁴⁴ The abuse of these drugs can injure and destroy life. Youths unfortunately most times fall into the abuse of psychoactive drugs such as alcohol, nicotine, marijuana and cocaine. The influence of the peers and parents on their receptivity of these drugs matters e.g. a youth is more likely to go into alcohol if his peers or parents do the same.

⁴³ Cf. A. O. OJORE, *Problems of Youth in Africa*, 65.

⁴⁴ Cf. L. OETTINGER – D. THOMAS, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care*, 314.

Drug use among youths is stimulated by different things and one of them is the experience of stressful negative events of life. Most youths use drugs to reduce their emotional distress.⁴⁵ It is known that more than one in every three Zambian adolescents have drunk alcohol, and Uganda has been noted as having the highest alcohol per capital consumption in the world. It can be denoted that heavy episodic drinking is prevalent among young adults in several African countries.⁴⁶

Drug and alcohol abuse among young people is an important case for study. Many youths have found the road to destruction through the excessive intake of alcohol and drugs such as heroine, cocaine, tobacco, hallucinogens, cannabis etc. Drug abuse is an irresponsible use of drugs.

Some of the reasons for the excessive indulgence in alcohol and drugs are based on peer pressure, curiosity, ignorance, socio-economic factors such as unemployment, dysfunctional families, poverty, poor or no parenting at all; psychological factors such as stress, low self-esteem, and lack of confidence, anxiety, depression, mental ill health. Anti-social tendencies like; rebellism against authorities, availability of these drugs, misuse of leisure time and so on.

The effects of these drugs include damage to the mind and body; poor academic or job performance, indiscipline of all kinds, anti-social behaviour like stealing, fighting, and all sorts of crime, infections such as sexually transmitted infections, HIV & Aids, weakened immune system, violent tendencies, public nuisance like drunkardness, smoking in public, car accidents, mismanagement of resources, family instability e.t.c.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Cf. L. M. SDOROW, *Psychology*, 158.

⁴⁶ Cf. M. H. SWAHN, *Early Alcohol use and Problems Drinking Among*, 83.

⁴⁷ Cf. W. WANYOIKE, *Understanding youth and family issues*, 146-147.

2.7.3 Unemployment

Today's generation of youth is the most numerous in history and the world is more youthful today than ever before. Unemployed youth make up almost half of the world's total unemployed. In addition to those who are born in the cities, lack of opportunities and underemployment put millions of rural youth to seek a living in the cities.⁴⁸

Most promises by the government to provide jobs are not honoured. The consequence of these unfulfilled promises can lead the youths to keeping themselves busy in the industries of crime and armed conflict. "In Ethiopia, out of the current 74 million total population, the youth population accounts for half of it. It has been said that in Ethiopia, one of the most obvious failures of the development process over the past several decades has been the failure of modern opportunities for the youth"⁴⁹

Unemployment has disempowered many youths in Kenya unlike their counterparts in Western Europe and USA. To get jobs or even parttime jobs in restaurants, bars, shops etc has become very difficult. These job opportunities have been taken up by older persons desperate for survival in the city. This means that the youth have to bide their time until they terminate university studies i.e waiting for more than 10 years to be economically active.⁵⁰

When young people are actively engaged they get a sense of a personal identity. The absence of this sense of identity often leads to aberrant development.⁵¹ The reality of unemployment among many young Cameroonians creates a room for the youths to feel their youth is protracted and their accession to social adulthood delayed. This is specifically true for many young people in their 20s and 30s who remain jobless,

⁴⁸ World Bank 2008; FAB, 2006.

⁴⁹ Cf. S. GIZAW, *A Glimpse at Urban Youth Unemployment in Ethiopia*, 4.

⁵⁰ www.ajol.info/index.php/index/search/google

⁵¹ Cf. P. ANDREWS, *Young people searching for self*, 113.

unmarried and uncertain about their future, but are continuously reminded by leadership to “wait for their turn”.⁵²

Unemployment leads the young people into all kinds of social ills, and young people are particularly susceptible to its damaging effects; the lack of skills, low self-esteem, marginalization, impoverishment and the wasting of an enormous human resource.⁵³

2.7.4 Violence

Violence can be defined as the use of force against persons or objects, whether physical or verbally.⁵⁴ Physical violence mostly ends in bloodshed and destruction of properties while verbal violence involves the violation of character or dignity.

Due to different reasons young people have found themselves either as victims of violence or initiators of violence. Violence itself is typified by an act of aggression, brutality and unfriendliness. It could be cruel and sadistic. Violence is an antonym of peace and calmness.⁵⁵ The areas where youth violence are more pronounced include in the family, the society, tertiary institutions etc.

Institutions of higher learning are meant to be places of human resource development for productive research and accademic excellence but what we have now is the reality of cultism in the universities and places of higher learning. In Nigerian Universities the reality of cultism is alarming and cultism has led to youth carnage in all forms. The violent activities of the cultists include: cult wars (among rivalry cults), thugery at political events or activities, moto parks “overthrows”, rivalry for the same girl/woman referred to as macho-violence, gang rape, drug related violence, assaults on

⁵² Cf. J. FOKWANG, *Youth Subjectivities and Assosiationl life in Bamenda*, 158.

⁵³ The World Programme of Action for youth in the year 2000 and beyond.

⁵⁴ Cf. L. OETTINGER – D. THOMAS, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care*, 1303.

⁵⁵ Cf. A. E. ARIJESUYO, *Theoretical Perspective of Campus Approach*, 106.

life and properties, indiscriminate use of weapons, dangerous arms, and the result is disruption in the accademic calendar”⁵⁶ Many innocent students lose their lives in such violent acts. Violence has become part and parcel of the African society. Forty-one percent of South African youth are victims of crime and violence. The aquisition of arms by the young people even in schools has become alarming. Many shootings occur in schools, some are accidental and some are deliberate actions.⁵⁷

Youth violence and communitarian violence has become prominent. Youths have become instruments for political rivalries and wars. Many politicians take advantage of the joblessness of the youth and use them for post-election violence. The following youth groups were used for political gangs for hire during the 1997 and 2002 General elction in Kenya:⁵⁸

- Jeshi la king’ole in Ukambani;
- Angola/Musumbiji in Kakamega;
- Jeshi la Mzee in Nairobi;
- The Taliban in Nairobi/Kariobangi North Estate;
- Mungiki in Laikipia West, Nakuru and Nairobi;
- The Bagdad boys in Kisumu; Kay Bombo in Kwale district/Mombasa;
- Kamjeshi in Nairobi Dandora and Kayole.

A recent manipulation of youth for political violence is that of the post election violence in Kenya after the 2008 presidential elections. Youth were manipulated by politicians and adults who should be their mentors. The idle youth are used as thugs and militia groups by politicians and people in authority. They are recruited and paid heavily

⁵⁶ Cf. A. E. ARIJESUYO, *Theoretical Perspective of Campus Approach*, 107.

⁵⁷ Cf. R. C. M. POTTERTON, *Guns in Schools*, 216-217.

⁵⁸ Cf. W. WANYOIKE, *Understanding Youth and Family Issues*, 23.

for services, thereby transforming violence into a commodity priced and purchased in the democratic process. Young people have become kidnappers and hijackers. They are now associated with hostage taking of oil company personnel and parents of government functionaries as it is evident from the Niger Delta in Nigeria.⁵⁹

Youths engage in armed conflict and violence when they are subjected to social and economic marginalisation unstable government, poverty, insecurity and development challenges. They are sometimes coerced into joining groups that could be avoided if they were well catered for. In Somali there is the Al-shabab militant group which the majority of the members are youth. The word Alshabaab itself means youth. The group is a force to reckon with due to their global linkages, history of growth in armed conflict and their youthfulness. The violence, atrocities and inhuman acts carried out by Alshabaab is a violence even against the right of the youths themselves.⁶⁰ Youth are easily lured into groups that they will not have joined, if they were playing an active role in the society. In Nairobi, the Mungiki group began as a religious group rekindling old Gikuyu form of worship and rejecting the modern religions. The latter were associated with the economic disempowerment of the youth and the country. The new religion offered hope and redemption for the Gikuyu youth. The group metamorphosed into a terror gang along the sides of the Italian Mafia. The gang's existence and proliferation may be explained by the socio-economic malaise that has bedeviled Kenya for about four and a half decades.”⁶¹

2.7.5 Poverty

The reality of poverty has been in existence since the beginning of creation. It is a phenomenon that human beings have continuously battled with and it does not seem to be

⁵⁹ Cf. I. S. IBADA, *Alienation and Militancy in the Niger Delta*, 20-25.

⁶⁰ Cf. H. MUTHONI, *Youth conflict in the Horn of Africa*, 165-167.

⁶¹ Cf. R. W. EMERSON, *Youth, Creativity and Urban Life*, 284-296.

ending. Poverty refers to the lack of means to provide the basic material needs.⁶² Human beings require certain basic needs to live with dignity and pride. Nwagwu in his article on poverty eradication further defines the poor as those who lack the basics such as: adequate income and food security status, access to social services such as health and medical facilities, good drinking water, house patterns, good roads and transportation. Other indicators of poverty include quality of housing, life expectancy, infant mortality rates, literacy and preventable diseases”⁶³. Since young people make up a large part of the African population, they are seriously affected by the level of poverty around them. Nearly, all African states are listed among the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries), where the poverty line is staggering. In Africa, many families earn less than a dollar per day.⁶⁴ The reality of poverty in Africa especially among the youth has several consequences for them. These consequences include: prostitution, widespread of HIV/AIDS, migration to other parts of the world, violence, suicide, anti-social behaviours etc.

Many African youth in search of greener pastures due to poverty in their own countries perceive a ray of hope in Europe. They do not mind the odd jobs that are available in Europe e.g cleaning jobs, stacking supermarket shelves, and menial jobs in factories, which do not yield any meaningful avenues of livelihood in Africa. They would do anything to cross the sub-saharan deserts, either legally or illegally in order to get good jobs and better way of living. The International Organization for Migration puts the number of African immigrants in Europe at 4.6 million in contrast to 890,000 in USA. There is, thus, no agreement on the number of Africans resident in Europe. Of all African

⁶² Cf. R. N. RWIZA, *Formation of Christian Conscience in Modern Africa*, 36.

⁶³ Cf. J.U. NWAGWU, *Poverty Reduction in Rural Nigeria*, 124-130.

⁶⁴ Cf. M. ASIEGBU, *African Immigrants in spite of “fortress” Europe*, 1-24.

immigrants in Europe, two-thirds are North Africans, numbering higher than migrants from other regions in Africa. The sub-Saharanans, mainly from Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal make their colonial powers their primary destinations in Europe. Migrants go by sea, land, and air using even forged passports and fake visas.

Due to the poverty rate in many African countries, youths, especially females fall into the enslavement of prostitution. Poverty has contributed to the high increase among sex workers. And these have greatly influenced the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Oyefara, in his essay on poverty and sexual practices states the fact that, poverty made many of the sexworkers to join sex industry. The same factor hinders consistent use of condoms and practice of safe sex by female sex workers in the sex industry. Young adults are infected with HIV/AIDS, because a good number of them make up the Commercial Sex Workers group (CWSs).⁶⁵

Poverty is the gate way to many social maladies among young people. There is a popular saying that the idle mind is the devil's workshop. Young people will go to any length, to improve their status even if they have to disrupt the peace of the older generation. Many join armed robbery gangs to gain financial status. Some, out of frustration go into anti-human behaviour like rape, murder and even committing suicide. Young people feel helpless in the sight of poverty and would do anything to correct the mark left by poverty in their life.⁶⁶

2.7.6 Misunderstanding of the Word "Sexuality"

"Sexuality is the human way of being in the world as male or female persons, including varied experiences and understandings of sex roles, sexual-affectional

⁶⁵ Cf. J.L. OYEFARA, *Poverty, Sexual Practices*, 1260-1276.

⁶⁶ Cf. R. N. RWIZA, *Formation of Christian Conscience in Modern Africa*, 38.

orientations, perceptions of one's own embodiedness and that of others, and capacities for sensuousness, emotional depth and interpersonal intimacy”⁶⁷

Many people have a distorted idea of what sexuality is all about. There is the narrow understanding of sexuality as only a physical expression. “Though genital expression is essential to any understanding of sexuality, it is more of “a way of being” which incorporates attitudes toward self and others, knowledge of one's emotional life history and capacity to relate with others in ways that foster developmental growth”.⁶⁸

Friendship and intimacy play important roles in the lives of the young people. Friendship for youths gives the opportunity for self understanding, an avenue to sort out feelings, developing self-insights, and becoming more aware of personal behaviours and attitudes. The need for intimacy also drives the youth and this creates a pattern of life in them. Intimacy calls for self disclosure, sharing, sexual involvement, emotional closeness and confidentiality. There is a common misunderstanding of intimacy, that it necessarily has to deal with sexual relationship. Sexual expressions is often part of intimacy but is not necessarily so.

Young people's understanding of friendship and intimacy changes as they mature. At this developmental stage the young people are overwhelmed by their feelings and caught up in relationships where boundaries are often lost and the desire for physical expression of their feelings become overwhelming. They tend to fall into different sexual promiscuities. Most of the sexual activities carried out by the young people sometimes lead to unwanted pregnancies, infections, sexually transmitted diseases, (HIV & AIDS/ Syphilis, Chlamyda, rejection from peers after becoming pregnant; leading to anxiety and

⁶⁷ J. B. NELSON, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counselling*, 1154.

⁶⁸ Cf. C. M. SHELTON, *Pastoral Counselling with Adolescents and Young Adults*, 154.

depression, poor academic or job performance because of distractions, dropping out of school e.t.c.⁶⁹

2.8 Agents of Formation for the Youth in Africa

“Wider than any particular formative experience is what we may call the global experience of our formation in its totality. It forms a living dynamic whole, continually expanding, refining and reforming itself.”⁷⁰

There are several agents of formation in Africa but the focus of this thesis will deal with only three agents that are very important and have immense influence on the youth in Africa; the family, the media and the Church.

2.8.1 Family

The family is where the community of persons is formed.⁷¹ The family has the duty to instill values into the life of the young people. Instead of the family being a cradle for forming the young people, it has become a place of unrest and a lot of anxiety for them. There is the uprising of domestic violence and insecurity within the family circle. The African family was known for its foundational attributes on forming the minds of the young people. Nowadays this value of formation has been overtaken by the busy schedule of parents, the over emphasis of formal education rather than a balance between the two.

“Acceptance, love and esteem, material, emotional, educational and spiritual concern for every child that comes into the world, should always constitute a distinctive essential characteristic of all Christians, in particular of the Christian family.”⁷² The family is the first agent of formation because the parents have the utmost role of forming the

⁶⁹ Cf. W. WANYOIKE, *Understanding Youth and Family Issues*,

⁷⁰ Cf. V. A. KAAM, *Formation of the human heart*, 3.

⁷¹ *Familiaris Consortio*, no 12.

⁷² *Familiaris Consortio*, no 12.

character of children, spiritually, morally and psychologically. Even the extended family is not left out in influencing the lives of the youth. Elders are to counsel and give the youth some guidance in life. “The family is the nucleus for vocations to priesthood and religious life. For that reason it has been given the following definitions: the domestic Church; the primary seminary, the all of society, the basis for social communication”.⁷³ The family has a lot to contribute to the welfare of the young people.

The influence of the family on the young person is so strong that “if young adults come from homes that are primarily rigid, they will easily be initiated or be attracted to groups that are dictatorial in nature”.⁷⁴ The human formation of the youth is a priority for the family. The home is the first and most important school.⁷⁵ Among all the problems young people face, is that of ignorance about many issues that are very important for their human development. Many advocate for sex education in schools but how many teachers can talk about it freely and competently with the students. This topic is not just any course to be explained, it is an area of life that deals with the integral development of the young person.

Young people are the fruits of marriages. Marriage as an institution has as one of its purpose the the procreation and education of the children.⁷⁶ It is not only to be proud of having children but of educating and bringing them up with proper human formation.

The family in Africa has been challenged by the disease of secularism and economic pressure. The attention of the parents is more on the societal status of the youth rather than the integral formation of the youth. Some parents work very hard to send their children to the best schools, get them the best jobs but they never listen to them. They

⁷³ Cf. P. M. MALITI, *Forming Priests for the Modern World*, 2.

⁷⁴ United Catholic Conference, *Young Adults Ministry Resources*, 64.

⁷⁵ Cf. P. ONYANGO-AJUS, ed., *Families: First School for Christian Life*, 29.

⁷⁶ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 1055.

believe they know everything about the young people while they do not. More time is spent at work than with the young people. One of the things lacking in our families today is the act of listening to the young people. There is the wrong notion that they are rebellious and they know little. But this is not always true, because they are ready to learn when taught. But how many parents listen to them.

Listening to the young people gives them the feeling that they are not going to get a lecture on what they are talking about. It gives them the opportunity to ventilate their grievance without a sermon coming. It gives them the possibility of freeing their mind from the problems that are so confusing and so bewildering. Once listening has taken place they experience an uplifting of their burden. When young people find a parent that listens then they become more receptive to what they are being told.⁷⁷ When something is wrong with the family set-up the young people can easily find themselves in unaccepted behaviour because no one has time to think critically about them. Most parents are cut up with the rat race of the societal life that they hardly fulfil the essentials of their duties as parents.

2.8.2 Media

The African Synod recognises the influence of the media of social communications and advised on the appropriate use of the means. The world is experiencing rapid political and social change, of cultural confrontation and mass media plays a highly significant role by shaping the Africans of tomorrow. Most times people accept all information given to them from the media without the courage or ambition for self-growth and self liberation.

⁷⁷ Cf. M. CONNOLLY, “*Spirituality for Today*”, Issue 3.

They become helpless in front of imported technologies, easily repeat models and examples of the developed countries. This is worse than slavery.⁷⁸

With the high level of exposure of the young people today, the media has a greater access and time to shape young people's attitudes and actions than do parents, teachers, replacing them as educators, role models and the primary sources of information about the world and how one behaves in it.⁷⁹ The power of the media cannot be over emphasised in the lives of young people. The media affects young people's minds through stimulating contexts that provoke their emotions towards violence, sex, passion etc. It also promotes among young people the sense of modelling themselves according to well known characters. From the adverts that are posted or aired, to the films that are being shown on screens, the youths who in their search for entertainment are immersed into the media culture of their time. The media encourages a noisy life in comparison to a reflective life.

The youths are the most influenced by the media. The media influences them by offering information, entertainment, cultural and psycho-social gratification which may or may not be appropriate for the mental, physical and spiritual needs.⁸⁰

The content of the information given by the media are mostly conditioned by the goal of the media practitioners; the medium through which they transmit the message can also be manipulative without the young people realising it. E.g some musical movies shown on Tv, for instance contain erotic scenes and these may arouse sensually many youths at an age when they are not quite aware of what they are being exposed to. The media influences even interactive and emotional process of the young people. Emotions whether positive or negative are shown as people watch, listen to or read anything.

⁷⁸Cf. R. K. SESANA, *The African Synod: Mass Media*, 191.

⁷⁹Cf. R. E. K. MCHAMI, - B. SIMON., *Church ministry in African Christianity*, 70.

⁸⁰Cf. P. JAKWOT, "Effect of Media in Our Lives", 11.

“According to a study conducted by Cradle-Kenya, more than 40% of children in Kenya are addicted to the internet. The study further shows that most of the children accessing social sites have been subjected to either sexual suggestions or pornographic materials, making them automatic candidates for porn addiction in their youth and adulthood.”⁸¹ Many young people have become slaves of the internet and they consume whatever is being served to them. Many log on for entertainment but as their minds are entertained with all sorts of information so is their mind being formed unconsciously.

The language of the media also influences the young people in their choice of vocabulary. The media constantly offers slogans that shape the fantasy of the youth e.g look young, act young, think and stay young. This also affects the adults because they want to remain youthful so they act like the young people.

The proper use of the media does a great service to young people. It contributes to their entertainment and instruction as well as to the spread and support of the kingdom of God. On the other hand the improper use of these means of social communication can lead the young people far from the plan of God for them.⁸²

2.8 3 Church

The Church recognises the influence of the society on the modern day youth. There are a lot of changing situations in the world today and these affect the young people in all areas of life; psychological, sociological, spiritual intellectual and physical. The influence of the societal demands requires proportional apostolic activity. Full of zeal for life and ready to assume responsibility the Church believes it is her duty to imbue in them the spirit of Christ. The zeal of the young people is to be enkindled with the spirit of Christ. They

⁸¹ Cf. H. MISIKO, “*Internet Hooking More Number than Alcohol and Drugs*”, 2-3.

⁸² Cf. Decree on Media of Social Communication, *Inter mirifica* no 2.

are inspired by Christ's obedience and love for the Church. Young people should become the first to carry on the apostolate directly to other young persons, concentrating their apostolic efforts within their own circle, according to the needs of the social environment in which they live.⁸³

Pope Benedict XVI in his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation "*Africane Munus*" invites the Church in Africa to wake up to its responsibility of forming the young generation. "Dear brothers and sisters in Catholic universities and academic institutions, it falls to you, on the one hand, to shape the minds and hearts of the younger generation in the light of the Gospel and, on the other, to help African societies better to understand the challenges confronting them today by providing Africa, through your research and analyses, with the light she needs."⁸⁴ The Church acknowledges the youth as its present and future and values their presence as a gift from God.

"Young people make up the majority of Africa's population. This youthfulness is a gift and a treasure from God for which the whole Church is grateful to the Lord of life. Young people should be loved, esteemed and respected. "Whatever their possible ambiguities, [they] have a profound longing for those genuine values which find their fullness in Christ. Is not Christ the secret of true freedom and profound joy of heart? Is not Christ the supreme friend and the teacher of all genuine friendship? If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross."⁸⁵

The Church through catechesis, homilies and youth programmes has tried to teach the young people. The formation given by the Church is more of the theoretical teachings

⁸³ Cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no 12.

⁸⁴ *Second African Synod Lineamenta*, no 135.

⁸⁵ Africa's Commitment, '*Africae Munus*', no 60.

of the Church than the practical living of these teachings. The Church in recent times has been preoccupied with other ministries in the Church. She needs to improve in her pastoral ministry for young people. There is an urgent need for a new way of teaching the young people about sacraments, about the liturgy, the writings of the pope etc. The doctrinal formation of young people needs to be reworked on. The young people deserve to be taught all aspects of their faith. Nowadays we cannot boast of young many young people who still remember their catechesis from childhood. Many Catholic students are no longer able to remember the Ten Commandments or list the seven sacraments; the difference between mortal sin and venial sin is news to them; some do not even know what an encyclical or that the Church has its own laws. The concept of grace is so strange that it has become just some name that a person can choose to bear. Personal prayer and liturgical singing are not attractive to the young people. What they know about the history of the Church is restricted to the scandals within the Church that has been propagated by the media.⁸⁶

2.9 Pastoral Ministry and Youth Integral Formation in Africa:

Pastoral ministry in the Church in relation to young people has been in existence for some time. The ministry to the young people has so far been on the confines of the priest and the religious. The Church in Africa is growing in various ministries even though some are prioritized over others for pastoral reasons. At parish, diocesan, national and intercontinental levels, the Church in Africa has tried to organise youth programs that cater for young people at all levels, whether as students, unemployed, employed and in religious formation. The formation of the youth so far has mostly been left in the hands of a few who either has it as their congregational charism (e.g the Salesians), diocesan youth

⁸⁶ Cf. M. DRAKKARD, *Is the Church losing or has lost a whole generation?* 5.

coordinator, the parish priest and the youth themselves. Programs are initiated by the youth groups such as Young Christian Students (YCS), International Movement of Catholic Students, International Young Christian Students, Association of Catholic Tertiary Students, Young Christian Workers (YCW), Scouts and The Legion of Mary. These groups make their own journey according to the inspiration and creativity of their leaders. Some dioceses have constructed centres for youth so that they can have their programs there, e.g Muji Wa Furaha in Nairobi. So far there have been few workshops for Chaplains in the continents but this a recent development that has to be well grounded among chaplains of the different schools in Africa.

The Church in Africa still needs to take up the challenge of the Second African Synod which invites the Church to prepare those that will be involved in the Church's pastoral programs; also those who are formed in the Church's Institutions (Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes, etc.). Consequently, courses and teaching seminars on peace and justice need to be introduced into formation programs for pastoral workers and consecrated persons, as well as those in Church educational institutions. This means providing them with useful tools in analysing the socio-political realities of the places where they will be working.⁸⁷

The youth chaplain or youth counsellor is required to be integrally formed as a human person. It is high time the Church realised that the youth are not a group of people who are naive but people who have some ideas but want to know what is true. Many of the youth groups in the Churches are co-ordinated by youths themselves. The parish priest or chaplain only comes in once in a while to see how things are going. Sometimes religious brothers in formation are the ones taking care of the young people in the parish or

⁸⁷ *Second African Synod Lineamenta*, no 60

chaplaincy. Though many chaplains believe the young people should be able to coordinate themselves and only seek his assistance when needed, it is important to devote considerable time and effort to the ministry of the youth.

The African Church is growing rapidly and so the Church is facing a good number of challenges. The number of priestly vocations is still not able to cover for the needs of the Church, so some ministries are unintentionally prioritized above others.

The ministry of the young is as important as any other ministry in the Church. Through this ministry the future of the Church is determined, even in the sense of priestly and religious vocations.

“Pastoral ministry entails accepting people where they are and being able at the same time to gently challenge them to future growth so that their behaviour might more reflect Gospel values”⁸⁸ It is being there for all situations whether to speak with a young person who lost her boyfriend or a young person who just got employed. Pastoral ministry embraces the compassion of Christ towards the youth and at the same puts a challenge as it deals with the youth.

Pastoral ministry fosters an insight into oneself by the youth. It fosters value awareness and forms the conscience.⁸⁹ Pastoral ministry has been more on forming the young people in the spiritual aspects. The African Church has been dwelling more on the youth coming to Church than actually living what the Church teaches.

By fostering insight in the life of the youth, pastoral ministry creates the foundation for an openness to the self-communicating presence of God in the life of the youth. The self-communication of God helps the youth to become aware of himself or

⁸⁸ Cf. C.M. SHELTON, *Pastoral Counselling with Adolescents and Young Adults*, 15.

⁸⁹ Cf. C.M. SHELTON, *Pastoral Counselling with Adolescents and Young Adults*, 20-21.

herself. The questions of “Who am I?”, “Who do I want to become?” “Who do I love?” “Who loves me?” “What influences my feeling, my thought?” etc.

Values are part of the elements inculcated in an integral formation but how many youths are motivated by what the Church teaches. Pastoral ministry and youth integral formation goes beyond having centres for youth in the dioceses or youth groups recognised by the dioceses. The integral formation of the young people needs a communitarian effort from all the members of the Church. Youths need mentors from the community of Christians, they need priests, religious and the laity that they can look up to.

Pastoral ministry among young people should help them to be involved in the Church’s life, of which is not the case in Africa. So far after the second African Synod, the invitation was for the Church to form lay people as agents of evangelisation. These lay people are involved now in various aspects of the Church’s life but more should be entrusted with the formation of the young people. Parental formation is an urgent necessity in Africa, since the foundations of faith are laid in the home, and parents must be closely involved in the preparation of their own children for the sacraments.⁹⁰

Pastoral ministry that fosters integral formation helps the young people discern amid sometimes dramatic experiences, the elements which really belong to faith and those which depend upon the culture or upon the growth process itself.⁹¹

Conclusion

The integral formation of young people is the foundation for development, not only in the society but also in the Church of Christ. With the different characteristics that have

⁹⁰ Cf. A. SHORTER, *The African Synod*, 44.

⁹¹ Cf. J. De Lorimier, *Identity and Faith in Young Adults*, 27.

been enumerated about this group of people, we can not but see them as renovators of our society instead of threats to the society. The reality of proper integral formation of young people is something that needs urgent attention. The agents of formation that have been specified in this chapter have a lot to contribute to the formation of the youth in Africa. It will be appropriate to make use of the energy that lies behind their youthfulness and help them use this energy for their own growth and the growth of the Church.

CHAPTER THREE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The Prophetic Role of the Youth in the Church

Introduction

The notion that the youth are only leaders of tomorrow does not give the full picture of who they really are. The young people are the prophets of today. They are the spokesmen and women of their time. Great prophets in the Old Testament like Moses, Elijah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Ezekiel and the rest of them were God's spokesmen to men and women of their time. John the Baptist also in preparing the way for the Messiah spoke to the people of his time and called them to repentance. Jesus the prophet par excellence was the Word of God. Jesus still speaks to all people of all generations. In our present generation we find many prophets who have spoken the mind of God to his people. We have Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II, Oscar Romero etc. Like young Daniel (Dan 13:44ff) who the Lord used to speak up for Susan, the young people of today are the mouthpiece of God in the society and in the Church today.

The Church of Christ is made up of the young and old, and every member has a role to play in the community of faith. The young people have been called by God to make his presence felt in the Church of Christ. They speak of the issues affecting them and the

other members of Christ's body. They critique what goes on in the Church and at the same time strengthen the hope of the Church of Christ.

The young people have been gifted with supernatural gifts needed for their mission in the Church. They bring joy, happiness, and a hope for the future within the body of Christ. In the Church the young people feel marginalised and deprived of their basic rights and opportunities as they try to participate in the mission of the body of Christ. The situation that the young people find themselves in the Church, has made it necessary to speak out and prick the conscience of those they regard as the older generation and the Church.

The concern of this chapter is to speak about the prophetic role of the youth in the Church and the how the Church needs to contribute to helping the young people to fulfil their mission in the Church.

3.1 Prophecy as the Revelation of God's Word to his People

The word 'prophecy' has come to mean 'the power of telling what will happen in the future'. The application of the word 'prophecy' can be dual in nature. The reality of prophesy is not only for future events but also in view of contemporary issues, "they tell forth the message of God to the people of their own day. It also involved predictions about the future based upon observation of the present and when this was so, prophets were not slow to say what they believed was about to happen",⁹².

The prophets of the Old Testament came from different backgrounds and walks of life. Jeremiah was a priest's son; Daniel was a nobleman; Amos was a simple herdsman;

⁹² Cf. H. MOWLEY, *Reading the Old Testament Prophets Today*, 3

Ezekiel was a priest and so on.⁹³ Prophets are the ones who prophecy about the future. Their ministry has the task to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception which is different from the uncritical conscience. The prophets daringly speak to the conscience of the people in order to provoke an alternative way of thinking or behaving. The word of God through the prophet on one hand critiques and dismantles the deformed conscience of the people; and on the other hand, his words energizes the individuals and communities. A good example can be cited from the words of Yahweh to Jeremiah *“Yahweh said to Jeremiah: “There! I am putting my words into your mouth. Look, today I am setting you over nations and over kingdoms to tear up and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant (Jer.1:10).”*⁹⁴ The prophets are God’s messengers and word bearers.

When we listen to a genuine prophet we listen to God himself. Genuine prophecies are verified after the prophesied event has taken place. Also genuine prophecy is faithful to the traditional doctrine of Israel and the Church, especially the covenant; (Jer 28:7-8, Deut. 13:1-5). Prophecies have to be in line with divine revelation for them to be considered genuine prophecies.⁹⁵ They require one’s test of faith because you cannot be absolutely sure of them until they come to pass. There were many known prophets in Israel and the genuine ones were characterised by:

- *Practicing what they preached.* Their words were in conformity to their actions.

The prophet spoke and acted according to what God said. Often the prophets looked too ordinary to be believed at first sight, because of the power of their

⁹³ *The prophets of Israel*, 676.

⁹⁴ Cf. L. MAGESA, *The Prophetic Role of the Church in Tanzania Today*, 15.

⁹⁵ Cf. E. W. F. VAN OOSTROM., *The Message of the Prophets* Vol 1, 7.

word. Some people found it difficult to believe Jesus' words simply because he was an ordinary carpenter's son.

- *Disturbing the conscience of the unrighteous.* Most prophets were considered trouble makers because their words and actions had a revolutionary effect. Their words and presence challenged their listeners. Since most people prefer peace and stability, the words of the prophets may seem to stir up some discomfort among people especially those who were comfortable with their unjust behaviour. Their prophetic ministry brought about a radical breakthrough in some social realities. The prophets spoke with audacity to those in authority when it come to issues of religion, oppression, corruption and exploitation. They did not tolerate any form of injustice in the society, they presented only the reality of things.

3.1.1 Roles of the Prophets

First Role: The prophet has the responsibility to criticise dominant cultures of their age. Usually the dominant culture is grossly uncritical, does not tolerate serious and fundamental criticism, and will do everything to stop or hinder it. Most established structures or even individuals do not want a genuine criticism. In criticizing the people, the prophet seeks for change in the community and among individuals. The prophet speaks to the heart of the people so that God may have his way among them. Prophets draw the people's attention to the pain and suffering of the oppressed and marginalised in the society. Due to their role of criticising, the prophets become lonely and isolated figures. They are most of the time lonely and unpopular people because they do not have personal advantage attached to their prophecy or have the intention to be rich. What they are after is the good of others and not their own good.

Since human beings prefer to remain comfortable in their established structures they hate criticism, and will do anything to eliminate who ever criticises them. That is the reason why many of the prophets in the Old Testament were either martyred or went into exile. Isaiah was martyred, Jeremiah went into exile, John the Baptist in the New Testament was beheaded, and Jesus the prophet par excellence was tortured and crucified. Modern prophets go through the same rejection and isolation from the society; heroes like Martin Luther King Jr, Oscar Romero, Nelson Mandela, Kensaro Wiwa and so on. Some were killed, some jailed, others on exile and many more ostracised in the society. This happened because they dared to criticise the unjust social structure.⁹⁶

Second Role: The second role of the prophets is to declare a message of hope: darkness in the end, would give way to God's glorious light.⁹⁷ The prophet is not only responsible with criticizing but also energizing and giving hope to the people. Jeremiah was sent to the nation, not only to tear up and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, but also to "build and to plant"⁹⁸. Isaiah's mission included: "*Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated; Indeed, she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.*" The prophet tries to revive in the people the hope that slavery is about to end and that soon they may return to their ancestral land.

It is part of the ministry of the prophet to motivate people to return to God. The message of the prophet should motivate the people to strive after the promise of newness that is at work in their history with God. This role of the prophet gives hope to the individual and the community. It brings forth fresh forms of faithfulness and vitality

⁹⁶ Cf. L. MAGESA, *The Prophetic Role of the Church in Tanzania Today*, 17.

⁹⁷ Cf. *The Prophets of Israel*, 676.

⁹⁸ Cf. L. MAGESA, *The Prophetic Role of the Church in Tanzania Today*, 17.

among the people. With the hope they bring to the society, they help people cope with mystery: by assuring them of the faithfulness of God as they put their trust in him. The hope the prophets bring to people is that they are still loved by God. Also this hope helps God's people to find fulfilment in God alone.

Third role: Apart from the prophet being a critique or a bringer of hope he is also an intercessor for God's people. Though not all the prophets in the bible were intercessors, we can still mention a few with such a role. Moses, Samuel and Amos are great figures that continuously intercede for the people of God. Moses went up to the Lord to atone for the sins of Israel after the episode of the Golden Calf. *"Ah this people has indeed committed a grave sin in making a god of gold for themselves! If you would only forgive their sin!..."* (Ex 32:30-32). Moses insisted on God changing his decision to destroy the people of Israel, because of their sins. The audacity Moses has to intercede for the people of God arises from his relationship with Yahweh. A prophet who is spiritually connected to God is inspired, motivated and loved by the Lord. Samuel tried to intercede on behalf of Saul even though God rejected Saul (1Sam 15:10-34). Amos was also a prophet who interceded for his people. The prophet tries to stop the wrath of God and prays for God's mercy on the people.⁹⁹

"Forgive, O Lord God!

How can Jacob stand!

He is so small!

Cease, O Lord God!

How can Jacob stand?

He is so small! (*Amos 7*).

⁹⁹ Cf. Y. GITAY, ed., *Prophecy and Prophets*, 70-71.

3.2 The Situation Today

An important characteristic of a prophet is the divine call he or she receives. This marks the beginning of their function as members of Christ's body. The youth within the Church have a divine call to deliver the message of God. God is the initiator of this divine call so they are not hallucinating but are in direct contact with God. Through baptism the youth take up their priestly, kingly and prophetic role of Christ within the Church. It is their duty to speak out as God has directed them. Purified by reconciliation, fruit of divine love and of sincere repentance, striving for justice and living in thanksgiving to God, the young people can be credible and effective prophets of joy in a world so frequently gloomy and sad.¹⁰⁰ As prophets the youth has a God given message to God's people. They are the spokesmen and spokeswomen of God to the contemporary society and Church. As spokesmen and spokeswomen of God they represent God to the people by saying what God had ordered. God enables them even in their fragility to carry out this supernatural mission. As spokesmen of God they are also accountable to God. A prophet is directly responsible to God, because his ministry is a divine call. The youth is given a message to be delivered and endowed with supernatural resources to accomplish his mission. As prophets of our time the youth is a prophet that speaks to the people of their time.¹⁰¹

Many youth find themselves lost in the Church because they do not seem to fit into the traditional structures within the Church. This is in the hand of those who feel they know what the Church is and what she should be doing. A youth once complained that the older generation sees everything around them as irreligious. And the youth are seen as going against tradition with their spirit of exploring everything about life. Many youth

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Y. GITAY, ed., *Prophecy and Prophets*, 60.

¹⁰¹ Cf. S. J. SCHULTZ., *The Prophet Speaks*, 23-31.

have left the Church because of one reason or another. Recent empirical studies have generated compelling evidence to demonstrate the relative absence of the youth from the Church. The young people call for a re-appropriation in the Church's message with cultural forms that can help the message of Christ become relevant to the times.

The Church passes her traditions from one generation to another, ritual ceremonies, and religious texts represent a tie to the past, a connection to a transcendent history. Thus the effort to respond in an innovative manner to changes in the Church's cultural context is understood to place at risk the plausibility that causes the Church to be viewed as legitimate by its adherents. Indeed, long term members tend to view the plausibility of their Church as being tied to its ability to preserve those elements that they believe constitute an ancient tradition. Usually the notion of faithfulness is what leads the Church to cling to an errant understanding of tradition. The faith communities formed within a given culture tend to reduce their understanding of the gospel to that which has resulted from the interface of gospel and culture in that context. This reduced understanding of the faith becomes problematic when sinful human desires to control begin to do its work.

The older generation most times are tempted to assert that their way of understanding the Christian faith is a final version of Christian truth and thereby they enshrine one cultural articulation of the gospel as the normative statement for all cultures. While intention may be noble and edifying this aspect of controlling may lead to the constraint of the Church's true calling among the faithful. When the Church is bound by human being's limited understanding of its tradition, then her missionary impulse is compromised and it loses sight of the extent to which its life and structure is culturally

determined. The Church loses her dynamism in this sense.¹⁰² The young people today are critiquing this rigid structure of the Church. This is due to the fact that the older generation has alienated them from being involved in the Church. The structure of the Church and her activities has been conserved in such a way that an opening to the signs of times is a risk to the older generation. The young people are crying for a contextualising of the Church and her teaching in the modern world.

Faith alone is not enough for the benefit of the young people. It has to be faith as understood by and expressed in terms of their particular subculture. When their culture is sidelined, they are prevented from responding to God directly in terms of their own subcultural structures. The older generation expect them to convert to a cultural form in which they (Older generation) are comfortable. This may force the young people to leave the Church. In good faith the older generation desires to see the younger generation to have the same spiritual experience that they found meaningful. But this desire most times is forced on the younger generation. They feel suffocated by this attitude and leave the Church. As some older members try to bring the young to experiencing what they experience spiritually others just assume that the difference between the two generations is merely a matter of maturity that will eventually be resolved and thus do not require significant changes.

There is a lot of intergenerational struggle between the older and the younger generation. The empowerment of the younger generation in impacting the shape of the tradition is being hindered. It is apparent that the young are disempowered and devalued within the congregation even when the community of faith seems to accommodate the young. Most young people are frequently welcomed to participate only in terms dictated

¹⁰² Cf. C. L. SEIBEL., - M. NEL., *Generation X*, 2.

by their elders, rather than on the basis of willingness on the part of the older generations to adapt or to negotiate differences across generational lines. The older generation are too comfortable with the traditions that they do not understand why cherished traditions need to be altered, or because they fear being disempowered in decision about changes within the Church.¹⁰³

The youth within the social circles are always at the fore front seeking for justice. They are always ready to fight for justice even at the expense of their lives. Olukotun in his article on national peace recognised the impact of the youth in addressing injustice in the nation. He gave an example of how prompt the young people were in clamouring for justice after the death of South African Communist party President, Chris Hani in 1993.¹⁰⁴ It is possible to mistake this youth clamouring as something that happens within the social set up, but the young within the Church are also crying for justice. There is lack of equity and more specifically, a lack of equitable distribution of the resources of power and human capital among the older and younger generations of which the Church is composed. Older members have the power and position that prevents the younger generation from assuming leadership or participating fully in decision making structures. This has led to withdrawal from the young people. The young yearn for justice within the structures of the Church. God desires for justice to be embodied within the concrete social reality of the Church.¹⁰⁵

The youth cry out for the dignity of each member of Christ's body. Clearly, they want the other members of the Church to affirm them especially in the way the Church members relate with them. In the community's personal contact with them, they want to feel assured that they are not written off, rejected or being sent out of the way. As prophets

¹⁰³ Cf. C. L. SEIBEL., - M. NEL., *Generation X*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. D. OLUKOTUN., *The Spirit of National Peace Accord*, 92.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. C. L. SEIBEL., - M. NEL., *Generation X*, 5.

the young people are crying for a renewal in the Church so that members may help reach out to the young people. Many young people have been wounded psychologically, spiritually, physically and socially and they yearn for a community of faith that will help them face the damages in their lives. Looking at the conception people have about the young people, one notices that the young cry out for understanding, respect and love. They want an environment where they can come to trust and learn to love and respect themselves because someone else loves and respects them.

The modern families have been influenced by the realities existing in the society. Instead of these families becoming a nest of joy and love they have become lion dens. Many African Christian youths are spiritually and emotionally deprived by their parents who are either selfish or not there to attend to the needs of their children. Sometimes due to their nature of work, they are simply unable to be home for as long as their children need them. It is a fact that many modern African parents hardly stay, live, play and work with their children in order to teach and inculcate in them values for life or even to watch them grow.¹⁰⁶

It is obvious that with the family situations of today, many of these young people have been failed by their families and communities. They have been rejected by the education system, live in drab, dreary housing estates with high unemployment and multiple social problems, are unable to get a job, are in regular conflict with the police (seen as the custodians of a society that has rejected them) and have a lifetime of experiences that tell them that they are no good, not worth much, not wanted. The attention of an unconventional priest or innovative project cannot adequately compensate for such overwhelming experiences. Yet that attention is important. For some of the very

¹⁰⁶ Cf. A. O. OJORE, *Problems of the Youth in Africa*, 25.

damaged young people who come to the Church, who will go on to jail or an early death from drugs or suicide, it is their hope that at the very least they can look back on some good experiences, some happy moments, that they can know that the Church cared.

The young people are crying for the Church to help in restoring their dignity as members of the body of Christ. The young people are challenging the Church in her mission towards them. To challenge the Church's structures may well result in their being marginalized, written off, ridiculed by those in authority who resent such challenges. The youth find themselves as outsiders but they want the Church to welcome them as Christ did to the outsiders of his time. Jesus reached out in a special way to the outsiders, the poor, the prostitutes, the tax-collectors, and affirmed their dignity by his own willingness to enter into a respectful relationship with them, in defiance of the attitude of society around him. He too challenged the attitudes and values of that society and its rulers which allowed them to justify their exclusion of certain groups in that society. And he too suffered the same fate as those whose dignity he defended. The Church has a mission to respond to the needs of these outsiders who are the youth. Not only should it reveal the compassion of Christ but it should challenge society to judge, value and respond in a very different way.

The youth remind the Church that they are not just young but have a prophetic role in the community of faith. Outsiders can be teachers in the Church. They teach the older generation a lot about themselves. They reveal the darker side of the Church, its failure to care, its readiness to judge, its greed, its unwillingness to change. They reveal so much about the Church, the values the Church proclaims, the prejudices she holds, the securities she clings to. Perhaps the comment that is echoed universally by those involved with

people on the margins identifies their prophetic role and their privileged place in God's heart.¹⁰⁷

3.2 Hope for the Church and the Society

It is right to say that the young people speak to the conscience of the Christian community. They also energize and give hope to the world around them.

Pope John Paul II saw beyond the general concepts that people have about the youth and recognised their true function in the Church as prophets:

I ask you young people, who naturally and instinctively make your "love of life" the horizon of your dreams and the rainbow of your hopes, to become "prophets of life". Be such by your words and deeds, rebelling against the civilization of selfishness that often considers the human person a means rather than an end, sacrificing its dignity and feelings in the name of mere profit. Do so by concretely helping those who need you and who perhaps, without your help, would be tempted to resign themselves to despair.¹⁰⁸

As much as the young people are considered prophets of doom because of their outspokenness, they still give hope to the society and the Church. Why is youth superabundantly alive, tense with expectation? Because it is meant to grow up and be fertile. It has been compared to a flower not merely because it is bright and fresh, but because it is on the way to a fully developed life and promises fertility. Childhood does not contain the brilliant originality which makes adolescence so attractive; on its slender and less robust stalk, buds are only germinal and flowers remote. Real youth presupposes a more immediate hope; not merely towards possibilities, the accent of original energies, but a move towards direct fertility and the most developed and active forms of life. Youth is life ascending with untapped energies to a life that is perfect and fruit-bearing.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Cf. P. MCVERRY, *The Outsider : The Way*, 1997.

¹⁰⁸ *World Youth Day* 1996.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Y. CONGAR, *The Youthful Heart*.

3.3 Giftedness of Young People

The young people are gifted with the spirit of adventure, of joy, by a kind of impetuosity, often even by easily aroused enthusiasm, a carefree confidence, an exuberance that seems to indicate inexhaustible strength. Youth has little interest in the possible; not that it is unacquainted with reality, but the power of the ideal and of sincerity of heart appears able to accomplish anything and removes the word 'impossible' from the dictionary. Since compromise is unknown to them, frankness is one of their notable traits; it is evident in their straightforward look, their open, welcoming faces. They enjoy the high privilege of being able to communicate their convictions and to render them acceptable.

Young people believe that truth has power and they can sacrifice anything and everything for truth's sake. It is unbelievable to see how they cherish friendship; they would give up a position in life rather than cast off a friend. They will go to any length to fight for what they believe is true. They believe in friendship and its values; they believe in love. It is due to this that they reject so much, a rejection that deserves a smile rather than a rebuke. It is sometimes irritating because they will accept no compromise and take no heed of the actual circumstances or of any accommodation that may be necessary. But even in its excess, youth's openheartedness is a testimony to the absolute nature of truth, to the compelling power of what is right, to what may be called the sacred character of innocence. These are priceless realities.

Youth also despises petty details, conventional attitudes that are safe and involve little expenditure of energy, but are useless for real creativity. They are an active generation and have no time for an unlucrative enterprise. The youth do not look at their parents as guides to life, but they see their parents as friends who sympathize with their

dreams and hopes. The young people decide who to commit themselves to and who to trust for anything. The spontaneous character of young people makes it difficult for them to accept conventional characters that the older generation feels comfortable with. A youthful soul disregards the security and comfort offered by routine; it is enamored by danger and by decisions that are really its own; it creates, with utter sincerity and spontaneity, its own way of life. This is not due to a mere spirit of independence and even less to a narcissistic attitude although youth can become a theme for literary exploitation.

For the ultimate truth about the young is their capacity for admiration, attachment and self-giving. It is this that alone makes sense of their other characteristics; their joyfulness and openheartedness, their contempt for mere conventionality. All this, without self-giving is no more capable of making the heart young than good deeds without charity can make a Christian. But whenever self-giving exists, the essence of youth is present. The ability to wonder and to be enthusiastic are qualities natural to youth. Every youth movement counts on this; they succeed because they demand great things; and the most successful are those which ask for everything. When Christ asked the young man to sell all that he had and follow him, he was offering him the worthiest opportunity of his youth. Unfortunately, however, he began to balance the impulses of his heart against his bank balance and went away sadly; he had lost what was best in him: his youthful heart. Youth is life ascending and abounding; it needs to spend and give itself; it hears the call of the absolute, of the total demand, with all its implications of enthusiasm and disinterestedness and chivalrous fidelity.

What ultimately makes a youthful heart is the power of believing in an ideal and of surrendering completely to it. Not to be merely an owner without ambition, only interested in enjoying an easy life, but eagerly looking ahead, fascinated by an ideal, mastered by it,

allowing it to dictate one's actions, subordinating money and comfort to its demands, this is to be young in heart. The youth have no room for monotony or indifference of any kind.¹¹⁰

3.4 The Role of Church in the Life of the Youth

The Church is God's family in the world. It is the new and greater subject on which past and present, subject and object come in contact. She is the contemporaneity with Jesus. The Church is endowed with a concreteness rooted in the binding Word of faith. She is a community of love, which functions as an organ of expression of human values: political, economic, social and cultural values. The Church has the salvific mission in the world to sow the seeds of Christ's love in the far reaching transformation of the human community and development in the society. The Church's mission focuses on integral development of the people of God.¹¹¹

The Church comprises of all categories of people, children, young people, young couples, women, and men. A Church having the integral development of young people must be able to cater for their physical, moral and spiritual needs. Any Church which does not have an attractive programme for children and youth is doomed to failure.¹¹² The youth like any modern man is in a process of fuller personal development and of a growing discovery and affirmation of his own rights. But the Church is entrusted with the task of opening up to the youth the mystery of God, who is the last end of every person, in doing so it opens up to the young person the meaning of his or her own existence, the

¹¹⁰ Cf. Y. CONGAR, *The Youthful Heart*.

¹¹¹ Cf. F. NWAIGBO., *The Church and Repositioning*, 114-115.

¹¹² Cf. J.N.K. MUGAMBI ed., *The Church and the Future in Africa*, 4-5.

innermost truth about himself or herself.¹¹³ The Church has the responsibility of helping the young people discover themselves in the midst of life's challenges.

The young people are the hope and joy of the Church and the community. The Church needs to urgently give appropriate attention to this group of people. It is the Church's responsibility to offer her youth an affirmation of life; a supporting fellowship and hopefully be in the vanguard of concrete action to do something about some of the problems facing the youth. It is not enough to give the promise of heaven but hope for the world in this life now, and the strength to meet up life challenges with confidence. The Church as the body of Christ can offer something which the young person may not be consciously looking for, but which will meet a basic need; a basic orientation to life, which will aid him or her in finding his or her identity.¹¹⁴

3.5 Formation and Evangelisation of the youth

The Church recognises the fact that there is a great need for the gospel to be imbued in the hearts of all people. Formation in the Church has been through catechesis. This mostly deals with the spiritual journey of the youth. It will be appropriate if the Church offers an integral formation that helps the young person face life in all its dimensions; spiritually, physically, morally, intellectually, socially and economically. The integral formation of young people requires methods that are consonant to the technical and psychological progress of the current society without losing the focus.¹¹⁵ The message of the scriptures is a material for human formation so it is important to pass on this message to every member of the Church. The method of preaching especially through homilies and in particular the witness of it is to be accompanied by a well prepared

¹¹³ Cf. *Gaudium Et Spes*, 41.

¹¹⁴ Cf. E. L. MEGILL, *Education in the African Church*, 127.

¹¹⁵ Cf. E. RASTELLO, - G. ROLANDI., *Bringing the Church to Youth*, 23.

catechesis. The word of God has the power to transform the young people into instruments of God's grace. Deeper evangelisation by preaching especially through a well prepared homily or sermon helps the young to associate with the word of God. They are ready to be influenced by matching their life story to God's story. Jimmy wrote in his book *Generating Hope* about this association of the Word of God with the youth's life:

Xers are alienated. The Christian story brings reconciliation.
 Xers feel betrayed. The Christian story restores broken trust.
 Xers feel insecure. The Christian story brings a sense of safety within a protective, healing community.
 Xers lack a defined identity. The Christian story gives them a new identity in Christ.
 Xers feel unwanted and unneeded. The Christian story offers them a place of belonging, a place for involvement, a place where their lives can be in service of a purpose that is larger than themselves.¹¹⁶

The witness of life has been an important tool used by the Church to speak to the heart of the young, but a lot still needs to be done in that area. The youth of today understand a holy, loving, just, forgiving life-giving God of grace when they see these characteristics being lived within the community of faith. For the X generation the Church becomes the plausibility structure of Christian world. The young people are concerned with the truth lived in the community of faith. Therefore evangelising the youth is practically living the Christian message. The witness of life within the community is the medium of forming young minds.¹¹⁷

The Church over the centuries has been offering systematic formation to the young people through catechesis. This was presented to them in the form of questions and answers. After receiving confirmation their spiritual nourishment was left to fate. Catechetical instruction is a means of evangelization that must not be neglected. The intelligence, especially that of children and young people, needs to learn through

¹¹⁶ Cf. J. LONG, *Generating Hope*, 190.

¹¹⁷ Cf. J. LONG, *Generating Hope*, 197.

systematic religious instruction, the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us and which the Church has sought to express in an ever richer fashion during the course of her long history. Moreover, without neglecting in any way the training of children, one sees that present conditions render ever more urgent catechetical instruction, under the form of the catechumenate, for innumerable young people and adults who, touched by grace, discover little by little the face of Christ and feel the need of giving themselves to him.¹¹⁸

Many young people do not have the opportunity to refresh their minds about the teachings of the Church. It is the responsibility of the Church to offer catechesis at all levels through the means that are well used by the youth. It is important for the young people to be taught even using the modern means of communication because their generation is characterised by new and advanced technology.¹¹⁹ The greatest problem attached to the use of catechesis in the Church is not that the young people are not willing to be taught. The problem is the training of committed members of the Church to form the young people with appropriate materials. Many times there are good hearted people who are willing to teach the young people but they have not been prepared for the ministry. Also the material for catechesis most of the times are very shallow depending on the creativity of the youth animator. The use of haphazard collection of bible stories and moralism does not create much impact in the lives of young people. There is need for appropriate material for catechism.¹²⁰

It is appropriate first of all to emphasize the following point: for the Church, the first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to

¹¹⁸ Cf. *Evangelization in the Modern World*, no 41-44.

¹¹⁹ Cf. E. RASTELLO., *Youth Challenge* 70.

¹²⁰ Cf. E. L. MEGILL, *Education in African Church*, 21.

God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal. Preaching, the verbal proclamation of a message, is indeed always indispensable. We are well aware that modern man is sated by talk; he is obviously often tired of listening and, what is worse, impervious to word.

The Church is responsible for the formation of the young people and so she has to form them through catechesis. There are many ways of catechizing young people today but the fastest means is through the means of social communication. "Our century is characterized by the mass media or means of social communication, and the first proclamation, catechesis or the further deepening of faith cannot do without these means...."¹²¹ The invitation of Benedict XVI to the Church in Africa in *Africae Munus* is that the Church needs to be increasingly present in the media so as to make them not only a tool for the spread of the Gospel but also for educating African peoples to reconciliation in truth, and the promotion of justice and peace.¹²² The use of media whether audio, printed material, movies, or internet can be of great use to the formation of the young people. Many of them are acquainted with these means and that is the best place to meet them. It is important that the Church makes herself part of the life of the youth through the means they are familiar with. This implies that the Church meets the youth where they can be found.

It will be right to conclude that evangelization does not consist only of the preaching and teaching of a doctrine. For evangelization must touch life: the natural life to which it gives a new meaning, thanks to the evangelical perspectives that it reveals; and the supernatural life, which is not the negation but the purification and elevation of the

¹²¹ Cf. *Evangelization in the Modern World*, no 45.

¹²² Cf. *Africae Munus*, 145.

natural life.¹²³ It is important that in evangelizing the youth the Church leads them to an experience of Christ in their daily lives.

The concept of inculturation should not be exempted from the formation of young people. This is due to their yearning of identifying themselves as African Christians. The young look up to the Church as mother and sure guide in life. She has to prove to the young people that she has the message that transforms life and incorporates each individual into a life with Christ. In comparing the Church with the consumerist reality of the world today, Elochukwu says:

The only way that the Church can prove that it is not just an import, along with other consumer goods, from the west and that it has a message and a way of life for every single human being is to share that it can accept, incorporate and learn from the authentic human values that belong to every culture. The glory of God is the adventure of discovering the many and diverse ways in which the living God has manifested himself to the peoples of the earth, in their efforts to live to the full.¹²⁴

The youth in Africa need the inculturation of the gospel to make them be and feel that they are true Africans and also true Christians.¹²⁵ There are so many African values that have been left out by the older generation who have little or no time to inculcate these African values in the lives of the young people. The Church will be carrying out her responsibility by making the word of God present within the context of African beliefs and customs. The young people want the practical relationship between the gospel and the beliefs they have seen Africans uphold. The word of God and its values has to be passed on within the African context to the African mind.

¹²³ Cf. *Evangelization in the Modern World*, no 45.

¹²⁴ Cf. E. E. UZUKWU, *Liturgy: Spearhead* no 74.

¹²⁵ Cf. E. RASTELLO., *Youth Challenge*, 29.

3.6 Benefits of Youth Ministry in the Church

Both the Church and the youth benefit from a well organised youth ministry. When the Church devotes herself to those whom the Lord has entrusted to her for their formation in Christian virtues and their growth in holiness, she not only wins them to the cause of Christ but also makes them protagonists of a renewed African society.¹²⁶ The young people have a lot of potential that if tapped can be for the good of the growing Church in Africa. Youth ministry in the Church is an instrument for affirming, guiding and enabling the young generation in fulfilling their role as part of Christ's body.

The presence of a well established youth ministry in the Church indicates the interest of the Church in affirming the young people. Affirmation of the young people includes: getting to know them, making them participate as members of Christ's body; worship, study, fellowship, and social action.¹²⁷ It is important for the Church to get to know the youth and work with the youth. The young people want to be known, loved, and involved in what goes on around them. When the Church is adequately informed and is ready to speak on behalf of the new generation and treat them with respect, the Church also gains for herself the respect and trust of the young people.¹²⁸ *Africae Munus* confirms the fact that young people should be involved in the life of the Church, so that they do not fall prey to feelings of frustration and rejection in the face of their inability to shape their own future, especially in those situations where they are vulnerable due to lack of education, unemployment, political exploitation and various kinds of addiction.¹²⁹

The Church will be fulfilling her role as guide if she prepares ministers to guide the young people even as they lead their own youth groups. If the Church carefully selects an

¹²⁶ Cf. *Africae Munus*, no 109.

¹²⁷ Cf. E. L. MEGILL, *Education in the African Church*, 130.

¹²⁸ Cf. C. MOWRY, *The Church and the New Generation*, 143.

¹²⁹ Cf. *Africae Munus*, no 62.

adult who is mature, who symbolises that life is worth living, who cares enough about human experience that they join the new generation in working on some of their problems and projects, the Church would have begun a meaningful journey to forming the young people. The prepared guide is to help the young people bring out their leadership skills and ability to plan for themselves, useful and relevant activities.¹³⁰

The youth ministry that is people centred involves every member of the group. It considers each one individually with their aspirations, limitations and concerns. The new generation has important things it wants to accomplish. They may be limited in the resources necessary to fulfil their desire. The Church often has many resources that it uses wisely. When the resources belonging to the Church are given to the young people the creative characteristics of them are brought to the limelight.¹³¹

The Young people are the best evangelizers of their own peers. Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Africa* agrees with the idea of peer evangelisation:

The Church in Africa knows well that youth are not only the present but above all the future of humanity. It is thus necessary to help young people to overcome the obstacles thwarting their development: illiteracy, idleness, hunger, drugs. In order to meet these challenges, young people themselves should be called upon to become the evangelizers of their peers. No one can do this better than they.¹³²

The young people are in the best position to evangelise their peers. Just like the two disciples of Emmaus, they will be able to share their experience of the risen Lord with their peers. After going through life's challenges themselves they will desire nothing else but to give hope to their fellow youth. The sharing of their experience of Christ with fellow youth gives wings to the gospel.

¹³⁰ Cf. C. MOWRY, *The Church and the New Generation*, 146.

¹³¹ Cf. E.L. MEGILL, *Education in African Church*.

¹³² *Ecclesia in Africa*, no 93.

When the Church's youth ministry is aimed at Christ's experience then the young people become disciples of Christ and messengers of the good news to others. If the variety of activities in the youth group or youth centre, facilitate the process of true discipleship among the youth, then the experience invariably leads to service and evangelisation among their peers.¹³³ In evangelising their fellow youth, the Church benefits by having an increased number of her faithful. The Church is sure to grow in all aspects with many more members of the body of Christ.

Conclusion

The young people carry out their prophetic ministry in the Church as they remind the Church of her duty towards them. The Church will not be complete without the young spirited being part of it. Therefore the Church needs to wake up to the cry of the young within her confines. The youths are yearning for an integral formation that prepares them for the world outside. They encounter challenges not only in their spiritual life, but also in their social, moral, physical and economic areas of their lives. What else can the Church offer them but a formation that helps them to be well grounded in all dimensions of life.

The young people of today tend not to be interested in the modern hierarchical structures of the Church. They prefer a more formal and relational approach to organisational life. The Church's rigid structure needs to be made flexible to attend to the signs of time, without losing its authenticity. Since young people of today are influenced by changing society, the Church though existing in the same society should help the young people find themselves even in the river of change. The youth of today are experiencing a new creativity, a new era of connectivity and information. The young people yearn for the

¹³³ Cf. R. E. K. MCHAMI – B. SIMON., *Church Ministry In African Christianity*, 78.

sensitivity of the Church to the contextualization of the faith in their time. It is important for the Church to recognise that contexts are always changing, precisely to be able to discern a pattern of how to live in the world with youth.¹³⁴ Young people need a Church that speaks to their hearts and help them to be better persons not only in the Church but also in the society. They are the major stake holders in the development process of any institution. It will be appropriate for the Church to look for a common denominator and initiate a dialogue with the young people, having in mind their integral growth.

¹³⁴ Cf. C. J. P NIEMANDT., *Acts for Today's Missional Church*, 2.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PASTORAL PLAN FOR ACTION

Introduction

The fourth chapter gives a summary of my findings from my practicum experience; my apostolate among the young people as a religious; my personal readings and observations; discussions I have had with young people and ministers working with them; my own conclusion concerning the impact the Church still needs to make in the lives of the younger generation and my suggestions of a pastoral plan that can help to achieve an integral formation in the lives of the millions of young people belonging to the Church in Africa. The questionnaires confirm the fact that young people are challenged by social, economic, spiritual, moral, physical and intellectual realities today. These young people will not be asking too much from the Church if only the Church will wake up to her responsibility of nurturing an integral growth in them. As a mother, the Church will be fulfilling her role if all her faithful are transformed through her.

4.1 Summary of Findings

The period of my practicum was an eye opener to me, concerning the life of the young people. Being a nun, I had always taken it for granted that the Church caters adequately for the formation of this young generation. My own personal formation has

been the landmark for this, assumption which I discovered not to be true in all cases. The young people as I have realized lack appropriate formation in all areas of life. The Church stresses the spiritual aspect of formation, but for a person to attain complete human development then the Church has to make a further move in the lives of the faithful. The Church in forming her youth needs to come up with a formation that transforms the whole person. This formation of the youth will be integral if it redefines spirituality and the adoption of a more spiritual approach to social, economic, physical and intellectual problems, without abandoning the commitment to social justice.¹³⁵

Apart from my experience with the young people at Mother Bertilla Vocational Training School and the vocation group of the Daughters of St Paul, I thought it necessary to know more about the reality of young people from Kenya and other parts of Africa who belong to the Catholic community of faith. Through questionnaires both hand written and answered by email (See Appendix..), I have been able to gather more information on my topic. The feedbacks I got from the questionnaires were mind blowing because they showed the vast needs of the youth in the African Church. Depending on the reality of each country, these young people have either been pastorally attended to or have been neglected. Also within a particular country there can be varieties of realities depending on which part of the country the youth is coming from.

The majority of those who answered the questionnaires defined a youth as:

- ❖ Someone between the ages of 18 – 35; 18-45; 15-35; 10-35; 12-24; 16-25; 9-35; 15-45 and 15-28.
- ❖ Someone young, strong and energetic;
- ❖ Someone with a sense of responsibility and discipline;

¹³⁵ A. SHORTER J. N. NJIRU, *New Religious Movements in Africa*, 82.

- ❖ Someone ready to contribute his or her God given talents in the Church and in the society;
- ❖ Someone experiencing the reality of being young;
- ❖ Someone hardworking, but easily influenced by the world around him or her;
- ❖ Someone active and mostly inexperienced in certain aspects of life;
- ❖ Someone experiencing life and trying to find an identity of his or her character;

It is obvious that a definitive definition cannot be given to who a youth is and the age range that can be considered by all people. Notwithstanding the variety in definition, the majority considers the age range to be between 18-35years of age.

In discussing the realities facing the Catholic young men and women in Africa who are either living in urban or rural areas, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Unemployment and underemployment
- Illegal practices to get quick money
- Improper management of time and resources
- Poverty
- Illiteracy
- Lack of commitment and sense of responsibility
- Degradation in social morality
- Decreasing interest in religious matters
- Lack of basic needs such as water, electricity, quality education, communication infrastructures etc
- Lack of knowledge about rights and duties

- Dependency
- Alcohol and Drug abuse, sexual exploitation
- Misunderstanding from the adults
- Imposition of ideas by the adults on the young people
- Lack of consideration on the side of adults concerning family issues like, divorce, disagreements etc
- Rigidity of adults especially in matters of faith
- Secondary on the priority chart of the Church
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Leadership
- Choosing a career
- Insecurity
- Crisis
- Tribalism
- Pornography
- Corruption
- Peer pressure
- Studies and exam pressure
- Relationship issues
- Self awareness

The causes of this wide range of problems are narrowed down to the following:

- Desire to get quick money
- Negative competition among peers
- Little or no attention from parents and guardians

- Limited or no avenue for counseling
- Illiteracy
- Fixation on specific job opportunities
- Lack of holistic education
- The spirit of sacrifice and volunteerism not encouraged as before
- Negative influence of the media
- High inferiority complex
- Laziness
- Adventurous desire
- Incompetent political leaders and non-functional government policies
- Lack of interest in spiritual matters
- Family problems
- Poverty
- Tribalism
- Corruption
- Unemployment
- Ignorance of the society about the youth
- Lack of moral support
- Lack of mentors from the society
- Imposition of ideas by the older generation on the young ones
- Availability of drugs

The Church in her role of forming the young people is also questioned. How is the Church helping to solve the problems of the young under her care? Some conclusions drawn from the questionnaires are stated below:

- Organizing spiritual activities
- Organizing parish meetings, choir, liturgical dancers
- The Church is doing little or nothing in my parish
- Creates room for socializing
- Formation of groups and societies
- Talks, seminars, youth camps, excursions, religious programs, sports days
- Formation programs
- Very little is being done, the pastors stay out of politics, focus on spiritual objectives but neglect socio-economic problems.
- Training the youth on how to stop bribery and corruption
- Counseling
- Education
- Technical training
- Creating awareness about alcohol and drug abuse
- Providing sponsorship for education
- Supporting Catholic Schools
- Involving youth in management
- Helping the youth financially
- Funding youth projects
- Retreats
- Classes for youth after mass
- Planning youth festivals

Many youth are aware of the Church's presence among them, but some believe something more needs to be done. The impact of the Church in tackling the problems of

the young is left to diocesan initiatives, parish initiatives, the minister's initiatives and the youth themselves. Some areas do not have youth programs while others have and need to be improved. The youth believe they can be formed better and integrally by the Church if she wants. These are the suggestions they gave:

- ❖ Planning and carrying out more spiritual exercises
- ❖ Using the media of social communication to teach
- ❖ Having concrete methodologies for the youth ministry
- ❖ More talks on social issues
- ❖ Entrusting the ministry to ministers who have the youth at heart
- ❖ Intensifying a program that leads to spiritual, physical, moral, economic and mental development of the youth
- ❖ Teaching real life issues
- ❖ Empowering the youth with small scale business
- ❖ Speaking the language of the youth
- ❖ Equipping the youth on issues concerning relationships and sexuality
- ❖ Doctrinal formation
- ❖ Allow open forum where youths can discuss their own issues
- ❖ Openness to the views of the youth
- ❖ Motivating the youth through the witness of life by the adults

4.2 Pastoral Conclusion

The Church is aware of her role in forming the young generation integrally. "Integral human development, the development of every person and of the whole person,

especially of the poorest and most neglected in the community, is at the very heart of evangelization.”¹³⁶

What I can conclude from my findings is that the Church is fully aware of her role in forming the young people, but she is still far from fulfilling this responsibility. There are many problems facing the young people in Africa and when they come into the community of faith they come with all these problems, whether, social, spiritual, mental or physical. They come with their brokenness to be mended, their insecurity to be insured and their questions to be answered. They have questions about their own identity, about life and about the faith they profess. Many of these questions have not been answered adequately by the Church and so the young people seek solace somewhere else. There are many new religious movements who try to answer this question and they have become an abode of assurance for many catholic youths.

“New religious movements can raise the disoriented youth to a different social level, transforming their social relationships and affirming them as individuals. Although young people want to be trusted and to act on their own, they also crave for parental support. They need to be appreciated and loved. In the new religious movements they often find the affirmation denied by family and society”¹³⁷

The members of the new generation are active and has many things they want to achieve. These desires of the young people have been frustrated by many issues that have been pointed out above. The Church in her formation towards the young people is called to address these issues and empower the young people. The African Church needs to wake up to the signs of the time and meet the young people where they are and with what they use. Many youths are enslaved by the new means of social communication. It won't be

¹³⁶ *Ecclesia in Africa*, 68

¹³⁷ A. SHORTER., - J. n. NJIRU., *New Movements in Africa*, 75.

asking the extraordinary if the Church uses the same means to speak to the hearts of her future.

The ministry to the youth has been made secondary in the list of the Church's priorities. Therefore the young people are most times neglected and left to make things work by themselves. There has to be a different approach by the Church in evangelizing the young people of this generation. The pastoral work among young people must be approached with the fastest and most effective means.

“Today in fact the mass media constitute not only a world but also a culture and civilization. And it is also to this world that the Church is sent to bring the Good News of salvation. The heralds of the Gospel must therefore *enter this world* in order to *allow themselves to be permeated* by this new civilization and culture for the purpose of learning how to make good *use* of them. "The first Areopagus of the modern age is the world of communications, which is unifying humanity and turning it into what is known as a 'global village'. The means of social communication have become so important as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behavior as individuals, families and within society at large".¹³⁸

An effective evangelization that leads to transformation among the young people demands that appropriate use of the means of communication. The young people today are influenced by what is communicated through the media. Many new religious movements in the society today make the youth their target. Since the young people are naturally curious about the new phenomena they see, they are easily lured to other churches. Young people need to be formed with the new means of communication which they are already familiar with. Many young people are carried away by the lively music, the opportunity for leadership and the participatory spirit of these new movements. The Church is invited to be relevant to its time.

¹³⁸ *Ecclesia in Africa*, 71.

4.3 Recommendations

“...*I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly*” (Jn 10:10).

The message of the gospel brings life. Christ’s life won for all salvation and a qualitative life that dignifies the human person. The word of God should be the basis of any pastoral activity especially that of the youth. The message of Christ must be imbued in the lives of the young people so that they can experience Christ in all areas of their lives. The word of God leads to an experience that transforms the whole person. The formation of young people should be grounded on the word of God which gives life. The young people are to find the meaning to their lives through the word of God. Christ through the gospel addresses the realities of the human person, whether poverty or riches, anger or gentleness, joy or sorrow, rejection or acceptance, death or life. The young people through the word of God can identify with the life of Christ and be strengthened in the struggle for survival.

“Along these lines the Synod called for a particular pastoral commitment to emphasizing the centrality of the word of God in the Church’s life, and recommended a greater “biblical apostolate”, not alongside other forms of pastoral work, but as *a means of letting the Bible inspire all pastoral work*”. This does not mean adding a meeting here or there in parishes or dioceses, but rather of examining the ordinary activities of Christian communities, in parishes, associations and movements, to see if they are truly concerned with fostering a personal encounter with Christ, who gives himself to us in his word. Since “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ”, making the Bible the inspiration of every ordinary and extraordinary pastoral outreach will lead to a greater awareness of the person of Christ, who reveals the Father and is the fullness of divine revelation.” For this reason I encourage pastors and the faithful to recognize the importance of this emphasis on the Bible: it will also be the best way to deal with certain pastoral problems which were discussed at the Synod and have to do, for example, with the *proliferation of sects* which spread a distorted and manipulative reading of sacred Scripture. Where the faithful are not helped to know the Bible in accordance with the Church’s faith and based on her living Tradition, this pastoral vacuum becomes fertile ground for realities like the sects to take root. Provision must also be made for the suitable preparation of priests and lay persons who can instruct the People of God in the genuine approach to Scripture. Furthermore, as was brought out during the Synod sessions, it is good that pastoral activity also favor the growth of *small communities*, “formed by families or based in parishes or linked to the different ecclesial movements and new communities”, which can help to promote formation, prayer and knowledge of the Bible in accordance with the Church’s faith.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ *Verbum Domini*, 73.

The Post-Synodal exhortation *Verbum Domini* lays emphasis on the fact that the word of God should not be omitted from the formation of the young people.

“*And who willif they have not heard*”.(Rm 10:14) The young people are ready to be formed and transformed into mature human beings that make positive impact in the Church. But they need to be taught. They need to be shown how things work in the Church without being forced or manipulated. The Church has to prepare the young people because they are the hope of tomorrow. It should help the young assume leadership roles, tap their enormous energy and channel it to productive areas in its mission. It should guide them toward growth in stature, wisdom and in favor before God and human beings (cf Lk 2:52). They should be initiated into this process which will bring with it the gradual accumulation of all that is true, good and beautiful. This gives the young people the opportunity to contribute to the society and the Church in Africa.¹⁴⁰

It is necessary for the Church to implement a youth ministry that is holistic in its approach. In the area of the heart there is need for spiritual growth. This will be helped by bible sharing, retreats, spiritual disciplines and prayer services. The soul needs emotional growth that is aided by support groups, mentoring programs, talks on self discovery and awareness, group dynamism etc. The physical formation of young people requires sporting initiatives, talks on physical fitness and health issues. The mind which is very delicate needs the intellect to be tutored and enlightened with the right information and attitude. Socially the young need to be helped to reach out to others especially their peers through works of charity and life witness. Morally the young people need sessions on moral living, health, sexuality, relationships and life etiquette.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ E. RASTELLO., *Youth Challenge*, 70.

¹⁴¹ F. ARZOLA., *Towards a Prophetic Youth Ministry*, 53.

The young people need to be met where they are. They need to be evangelized using the language they understand best. It is important for every member of the faithful to build a relationship with young people. They have to be invited and given the opportunity to serve. It should not be taken for granted that they know they are part of the Church and should feel invited automatically. They have to be encouraged in their spiritual conversion and transformation in Christ. It is important that the older generation recognize that they are undergoing a developmental process and should be helped to re-evaluate every step they take. When the young people undergo their own experience of Christ, they experience his transformation and are eager to go out to the world. God has placed responsibility for the spiritual life of children on parents and while it is the business of the Church to evangelize the world (including the youth), it is also true that most young people are influenced more by their peer group than their parents or the Church. One of the best ways to win youth to the Lord is through the witness of Christian youth among themselves. When the young people are integrally formed they become ambassadors of the Gospel to each other.¹⁴²

The apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* confirms that whoever has been adequately formed by Christ is not only transformed but eager to spread the joyful message that he or she has received. “Finally, the person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others. Here lies the test of truth, the touchstone of evangelization: it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn.”¹⁴³

¹⁴² Cf. I. ZUCK., *Youth and the Church*, 174.

¹⁴³ *Evangelisation the Modern World*, 22.

4.4 Pastoral plan for Action

It is necessary to have a pastoral plan for youth ministry within the Church in Africa for an effective formation and participation of the young generation. I would like to propose the following actions for the improvement in the integral formation of young people within the African Church.

4.4.1 Action One

Team building

Due to the different realities facing young people, it is appropriate for each diocese to have a team that works for the ministry of the youth. This team, preferably a small group of people should have their objectives i.e the structure for quality and growth of the ministry; should have specified mission which has to do with areas concerning the youth and draw up a programme for the youth in the diocese. This is for the main reason of having a consistent and applicable formation programme throughout the dioceses. This generation has the potential to play an important role in helping local congregations to respond to the changes associated with the emergence of a post modern world. Therefore a team with competent people will help to bring out the best in a youth ministry.

The dioceses need a group of adults (including priests and religious) who have been trained in youth ministry. Preferably people with outstanding qualities to help in the formation of the youth along with a few youth group representatives and some parents are to makeup the team.

This team is to plan for all the young people in the diocese. It has to come up with a programme that is practical and can be carried out easily by the local community. The questions that should be behind the mind of the team members should include the following:

- ❖ What are the objectives of the ministry?
- ❖ What was on the ground in the ministry before now?
- ❖ What kind of approaches are available for an effective ministry?
- ❖ What approaches have been taken by other dioceses?
- ❖ How long should the program for the dioceses be?
- ❖ Who is to do what in the team?
- ❖ How does the work of the ministry reach every youth in the dioceses?
- ❖ How many people are needed in the team?

4.4.2 Action Two

Awareness on Youth Issues

It would be wise if the team members get to know the problems of the youth that they are called to serve. There is a great need to understand the beneficiaries of the youth ministry in the dioceses. It is up to the team to get to know the needs of the youth within the dioceses. The willingness to listen to young adults will motivate them to commitment in the Church. It will also empower and equip them to contribute actively to leadership and decision making process in the community of faith. This attitude will give the young people the opportunity to influence and shape their own life.¹⁴⁴ The team at the diocesan level is to organize a forum where they can meet the young people and let them (youth) share freely the problems they are facing. A forum for discussion can be set up with youth from across the dioceses.

¹⁴⁴ C. L. SEIBEL., - M. NEL., *Generation X*, 6.

A research through questionnaires or reports from parish youth groups is important for getting accurate information. In getting to know the young people, questions such as the following need to be asked:

- ❖ How many young people exist in the dioceses and in each parish? Their age, educational background, interest etc
- ❖ What youth programmes or activities are being initiated in the dioceses?
- ❖ What youth programmes are available in the parishes?
- ❖ What are the problems and needs of youth in the dioceses and in the individual parishes?
- ❖ What role is the Church holding in the formation of the young people within the dioceses and the individual parishes?
- ❖ What kind of formation is lacking or to be improved for the youth?
- ❖ Who are the mentors of the young people? Their parents, priests, religious, some young people?
- ❖ Are the young people comfortable with the adults in their parish?
- ❖ Do the young people feel they are part of the Church?
- ❖ How do they feel about the Church as a whole?
- ❖ What potentials do the young people of the dioceses and especially the parish, have to contribute to the growth of their community of faith?
- ❖ How can the whole community contribute to their formation?

4.4.3 Action Three

Planning

Drawing up a program that attends appropriately to these needs. Based on the findings of the team an appropriate and applicable program can be drawn for an effective

integral formation. The program should cater for the spiritual, intellectual, physical, moral and psychological formation of the young people. Programs such as: retreats, leadership training, forum for discussion, talks/seminars/workshops, catechesis, vocational training, self-empowerment programmes, educational opportunities, pilgrimages, excursions, camps, youth festivals, social work, involvement in the parish council committees etc. The team draws a general outline of programs and it is left to individual parish youth ministry to make it applicable in the parish. Here are some of the questions that can help in the planning of a comprehensive and applicable programme:

- ❖ What programmes can help solve the problems of young people in the dioceses?
- ❖ How can these programmes be best organized? Diocesan level or parish level?
- ❖ Who will be responsible for what?
- ❖ How long do these programmes take? A year, two years, three years or just six months?
- ❖ What are the appropriate times for each of the programmes, so as to get the young people?
- ❖ How can the priest, religious and other members of the Church be involved in carrying out the programmes along with the youth?
- ❖ Who sponsors the programme? The Church hierarchy, the parishioners or benefactors?

4.4.4 Action Four

Particularizing the program

Each parish knows the reality of their young people and so has to apply these programs where necessary. The parish ought to have its own team for the ministry so that they can make the diocesan program effective among the youth. The team must be aware of the categories of young people within the parish. The age range can help them divide the groups into senior and junior youth. If it is a chaplaincy for students, there can be groups according to faculties so that they have the same interest and availability. It is important for the team to be aware of the availability of the young people when carrying out its programs. For example if the young people who are studying are having exams it will be useless to plan for a retreat or an excursion at that time. Or if the schools are closed the chaplaincy will have no students around to benefit from the program. It is necessary to make sure that the programs are applicable and the recipients are available. The team within the parish (including some of the youth themselves) has to know, what program is to be carried out; when it is appropriate to carry out a program; how to carry out the program and for whom.

4.4.5 Action Five

Evaluation

This gives an understanding and direction to both the teams and the young people who carry out the programs. In evaluating the progress of the program the team gets to check on the effectiveness of the program, its impact on the young people and the areas for improvement or better approach. Evaluation brings personal and communitarian development. Questions that can help in evaluating the programs at different levels include:

❖ *Team at diocesan level*

Do we have enough information regarding the needs of the young people in the diocese? How has the program helped to them? How many young people are we reaching out to in the diocese? How can we reach out more with our programs?

❖ *Team at parish level*

How is the effect of the program on the young in the parish? Are we really meeting their needs? If **YES**, how can this reaching out be better? If **NO**, how can we make an impact in their life with the program? Is there a rapport between the older generation and the younger generation?

❖ *Young people themselves*

Has the program helped me to be a better person? How? Has it helped us to be recognized and awarded due respect in the Church? How has the program shaped me in the face of economic, social, mental, physical and spiritual challenges faced daily?

Way forward: How can we improve the impact of the youth ministry in the parish and in the diocese?

4.4.6 Action Six

Ongoing updating

It is important that the program should be relevant to the young people at any given time. Therefore it is necessary to always review and renew the programs for a better formation. Issues of great significance are to be attended to so that the young people may apply their formation in all areas of their life.

Conclusion

Pastoral work among young people gives them the opportunity to learn ways of putting their Christian ideals into meaningful action. It is not enough to be spiritually equipped. An intellectual awareness of contemporary issues is also important. Likewise the young people should find themselves capable of relating with others and the world around them without being overshadowed by everyday dealings. Youth ministry is to cater for the needs of the young people so that in all dimensions they can meet up with their peers around the globe.

Knowing the problems and needs of the youth today is not enough. Forming them to face the challenges of their time is the greatest tool for their development as human beings. Programs of formation should be applicable for them to be relevant and effective.

All shepherds of the flock of Christ have every duty to see that none of the flock goes astray.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

We have seen the background for my theological reflection on the topic “Integral formation of the youth: A necessity for the Church in Africa”. My experience with young people from different parts of Africa has brought to my awareness that the Church still has a lot to do in the area of integral formation.

The African society like any other society in the world is always changing in its social-economic realities. This does not only affect the civil society but also all those who are members of Christ’s body; the Church. The Church in Africa is affected by the socio-economic, socio-political problems of the Christians in Africa. The Church is called to a spiritual formation that is accompanied by social, economic and political formation which helps her Christians to live fully in the society.

Throughout this thesis I have emphasized the fact that the youth make up a major part in the Church in Africa. They are the hope of the Church for a continuous and consistent presence in Africa. The youth are the medicinal insurance of the Church. Looking at them the Church is sure to survive for many years to come. They affirm the development of the Church in a continent that the majority of its countries are referred to as developing countries. The young people give hope; they testify to a new dynamism of

life, they are inventive and creative; they employ all their physical strength in all areas of life.¹⁴⁵

As we reflect on the role of this great portion of the Church, it will also be fair enough to think of the role of the Church in the lives of her people. Many people are threatened by the presence of the young people, because they neither understand them (youth) nor wish to understand them. These young people present the message given from God to help the older generation fulfill their duties and work for the growth of the younger generation and the generations to come. The Church most times neglects the ministry to the young people; most families do not even consider them as part of the family and some of the young people hardly feel welcomed in their communities. There is an urgent need for the integral formation of young people by the Church. It will be unfortunate if people live in segments when they are supposed to live holistically. There cannot be two parallel lives in their existence: on one hand spiritual life with its values and demands and on the other hand secular life that involves the family, a person's job, his or her social relationships, one's responsibility in public life, and in culture. Every area of a young person's life as different as they may be enters into the plan of God, who desires that these very areas be places in time where the love of Christ is revealed and realized for the glory of God and the service to all people.¹⁴⁶

It is obvious that the formation of these young people has a great impact on the life of the Church. If we are hoping for a Church that will be active, self-reliant and missionary then the formation of the young people should not be left out. Young people give the Church a sense of pride. They serve as assets by extending and helping in the

¹⁴⁵ E. RASTELLO., *Youth Challenge*, 70

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful*, 59.

various activities of the Church. As the Church advances in age the young people provide her with care, support and hope that she needs. Some of the sentiments still hold true today. The future and destiny of the African continent is in the hands of our youth. Likewise the destiny of the African Church lies in the hands of the youth.¹⁴⁷

The young people are willing to be directed in the right path and every member of Christ's body needs to contribute to their growth as they are the future of the Church. The young people are the future of the Church in Africa, they are prophets of our time and they remain the destiny of the Church in Africa.

The ministry to the youth should not be placed secondary to any other ministry for through these rejected lots the Lord speaks.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. J. N. K. MUGAMBI – L. MAGESA., *The Church in African Christianity*, 72.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

(Sample)

Dear Friend,

Hello and greetings! I am Sr Josephine Idowu a student at Tangaza College in Kenya. I am doing a research on the topic titled: **The Integral Formation of the Youth: A Necessity to the Church in Africa**. You will be of great help to me, and also contribute to the mission of the Church by answering the following questions. Feel free to add your opinion to the whole concept.

Name.....

Parish.....

Country.....

- Who is a youth in your own understanding?

.....

.....

.....

.....

- What do you think are the problems of the youth in your country?

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- What do you think are the causes of these problems?

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- What is the Catholic Church in your country doing about youth problems?

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- How has the Church helped in the formation of the youth, spiritually, socially, intellectually and physically?

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- Personally how has the Church formed you for the future

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- How do you think the Church can form you better as a youth?

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- Any other comment about this whole topic?

.....

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.....

.....

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

Sr Josephine Idowu *fsp*

Jossie4jesus@yahoo.com

LIST OF INFORMANTS

NAME	PARISH	COUNTRY
AGNES PHILOS	TAZA PARISH	ETHIOPIA
BERYL OGOLAH	ST CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA	KENYA
CLEOPHAS ODUYO	CHRIST THE KING KIBERA	KENYA
DIANE	ST DOMINIC PARISH KINSHASA	DR CONGO
EUCLIDA MARIYATE	OUR LADY OF VICTORY MAPUTO	MOZAMBIQUE
JENIPHER OGWU	ST LEO'S CATHOLIC CHURCH	NIGERIA
JOHN MUYENGA	ST JOHN	DR CONGO
KIMATU	CHRIST THE KING	KENYA
KITUMA JULIANA	ST CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA	KENYA
MAONIQUE	STS PETER & PAUL (CATHEDRAL)	DR CONGO
BIME MIRABELL	ALL SAINTS PARISH BAMENDA	CAMEROON
MUSAU	KAREN PARISH	KENYA
MUTWIRI MANGI	ST FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH	KENYA
NDICHA HARIET	ST ANNE PARISH OBILI	CAMEROON
NG'ANGA PETER	ST FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH	KENYA
NICK YAW KLUABAH	ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI AWOSHIE	GHANA
PATRICK NZIOKA	CHRIST THE KING-KIBERA	KENYA
SUNGUTI IRENE	ST FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH	KENYA
TISUNGENI KANDULU	ST CHARLES KAGGWA	MALAWI
VERO AMAECHI	ST JUDE PARISH LAGOS	NIGERIA
WAMBUI KARIUKI	ST CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA	KENYA