

TANGAZA COLLEGE
(CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA)

**AFFIRMATIVE THOUGHT AND ACTION AS A KEY TO
YOUTH MINISTRY**

BY: Rutasitara, Projectus.

SUPERVISOR: Prof. Wanjohi, Raphael.

**This essay is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious studies.**

NAIROBI – KENYA

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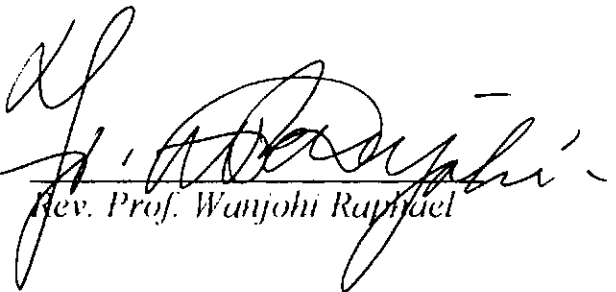
STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, research and reflection. This long essay has never been submitted to any other College or University by anybody else for academic credit. All information from other sources has been dully acknowledged.

Student's Signature:


Rutusitara Projectus

Moderator's Signature:


Rev. Prof. Wanjohi Raphael

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Lastly, my heartfelt thanks let them go all who assisted me in one way or another, I say thank you, may God bless you all.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all my my beloved one's in my heart especially my parents and all persons of good will especially the young ones.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

To begin with, I think these words are proper to serve as an orienting spirit of our work. 'In looking at the general scene of young people and the faith I am obliged to think that we now have a new situation. It is not just a question of young people going through a phase as they always did; new approaches have to be found.' These are the words of a keen observer in the youth ministry who declined to have his name mentioned. I may as well say that, they echo my sentiments and concern in regard to their needs of love and understanding. In my ministry I have always been honoured to have an opportunity to be with the youth. It is this kind of contact which enabled me to develop an interest in them, to get to know them and share in their interests, happiness, worries and concerns.

The young people are active and have got a lot of energy in them ready to unleash it for the common good of the society and the Church. But they need guidance, proper care to steer them away safely through this transitional, turmoil period of adolescence. Indeed, it is true that the society's values do not render the same support towards unlocking fully their potentialities; and promoting their positive growth as people of balanced personality and informed conscience.

We all know the problem of modernity with its impact of materialism and secularism on youth. We are as well aware of the new mentality present among these young people. This situation poses a challenge. We need to equip ourselves with new approaches, in order to face and dialogue with the youth in

their situation. Youth are in search for their identity and proper place in the Church and State. It is possible to touch their hearts and guide them to fulfill their desires and dreams for creativity, recognition, justice, freedom and truth. It is possible to achieve this if we can employ consciously affirmative thought and action as a style in youth ministry care.

Division of this Work

This work is intended to have five chapters. The first chapter will deal with problems of the youth in our situation. Chapter two will deal with affirmative thought and action as a method and style relationship in response to this youth situation. Chapter three will highlight on research methodology whereas chapter four will dwell on interpretation and analysis of data. Chapter five will culminate with critique, recommendation and general conclusion. In this chapter one I am going to highlight on the problems facing the youth

CHAPTER ONE

1.0.0. THE PLIGHT OF THE YOUTH

1.0. Background to the Problem.

1.1 Introduction

First and foremost, before starting our discussion on this topic it is worthwhile to start by clarifying our basic terms. Then, before starting to treat problems facing the youth, I am going to point out the working hypothesis, objective of the Study, rationale of the study and the scope of the study.

1.2 0 Clarification of our terms.

1.2 1 *Affirmative thought and action*

This refers to enabling conditions set in place first and foremost by positive thinking and attitude we have towards the youth. These enabling conditions are such as understanding, love, collaboration and empowerment just to mention a few.

1.2.2 *What we mean by 'youth'*

In our case this concept 'youth' is referring to young people who are neither children nor adults. That is to say, they are like a bridge of which spans the gulf between childhood and adulthood. This stage of transition is what is referred to as adolescence or teenage stage of development. In this vein of understanding then, the word youth refers to all unmarried young people, young men and women, boys and girls whose age group ranges from thirteen

to twenty two. Hence then, the period of youth here refers to a wider band of young people, from those just entering adolescence to those in their early 20's

1.2.3 *Youth Ministry Youth Minister*

Youth ministry as a youth work refers to 'socio-cultural youth work as a section socio life whose workers have dedicated themselves to the goal of bringing about a kind of change or transformation of attitudes and collective as well as inter-individual relationships by means of direct action on those individuals, their attitudes, inter individual and social relationships'.¹ In the light of this definition of youth ministry we are able to describe who is a youth minister from what he/she is not

The youth minister is not primarily a problem solver. Nevertheless, in the course of caring he/she may help young people deal with particular problems. In relation to innumerable situations the youth minister by his/her offer of support and encouragement is able to work with young people to help them achieve the things they want to achieve. In this regard then, the youth minister can assume the role of enabler to much of the youth's own dreams and hopes. An enabler is the one who helps another accomplish something which is the latter's goal. Hence, the youth minister is the source person who comes to give acceptance and sustenance. As an accepting person must have quality of setting out to find young people, to go to them thereby showing acceptance through a willingness to come near. By so doing he/she may be able to provide psychological, moral and emotional support for those young people. A youth

¹ Christine Cook, "Programme and relationship in Youth Ministry," in Relational Youth Work: Perspectives on Relationships in Youth Ministry, ed. Pete Ward (Oxford: Lynx Communications), 1995, 92.

minister who renders sustenance is the one who is able to recognize and respond appropriately to youth's need.

The youth minister is not primarily an evangelist yet as a result of his/her care young people may very well start to respond to the love of Christ. It is the youth minister's role to help young people through relationship to achieve their constant search for a sense of self-worth and identity

Thus, a youth minister is nothing else but a person called to be in a caring relationship with youth

1.2.4 Working hypothesis

If youth are going to be affirmed in their efforts, inclinations and corrected in such a way that, their self-esteem is not destroyed by the situation (parents, youth ministers, teachers, state and church), then, they have great potential for becoming responsible, happy and well integrated in their secular and religious life. The more the situation they are facing and relationships they are involved become pathetic, the more need and significance of this positive thought and action as a process of affirmation

1.2.5 Objective of the Study

(1) To uncover the youth's plight with a view aim of seeking an appropriate approach conducive to youth ministry. The study aims at making the reader aware of this problem and deeply enter in it so as to see its true nature as being compounded by multi-causal factors. As such, youth's plight has not yet attracted our attention as much as other "hot cake" issues such as that of women empowerment.

After informing ourselves about the challenging situation in which youth are, the reader will be assisted to know that a more human approach in mentality and attitude to all stakeholders in youth ministry namely parents, teachers and youth ministers could render an effective contribution to the solution seeking process.

(2) To find out whether youth are affirmed (field work) contrary to that the relevance of this method in regard to relationship in style will be underscored.

(3) To spur a reader into an action. Indeed, the reader is expected not to remain at the level of knowledge alone (affirmative thought) but to make use of it and spring into action and act (affirmative action). So, we are in a position to say that, an eventual conclusion to this study is to press for an integrated approach, namely, affirmative thought and action towards – solution seeking process in regard to youth's plight.

1.2.6 Rationale of the Study of Affirmative Thought and Action as a key to youth ministry.

The reasons and motivation for this kind of study is the practical evidence of this youth situation crisis. The crisis exemplified by the various problems youth are facing.

1.2.7 Scope and Limitations of this work.

This study, Affirmation thought and action as a key to youth Ministry: A pastoral challenge in Church's mission towards responding to the needs of the youth, looks at the needs and quest of the adolescent youth aged between 13-22.

Our topic under consideration enjoys considerable number of written and researches carried out by various authors in the areas of psycho-social religious youth development to maturity. In this study given an enormous and complex nature of the problems facing the youth certainly, we cannot claim to have blue print solutions for all these problems. Yet, it is possible to put conditions (of psycho-social-spiritual in character) for growth in place in our ministry of Christian relational care as a basis for tackling any of these problems. Again, it is good to remember that, whatever we speak about the youth we have in mind those of Kenya, particularly of urban areas. This is because those are the ones pertaining to our immediate context. Moreover, this approach and style to youth ministry cannot claim the status of being neither new nor the only one, but rather, it is contributing and enriching approaches and styles, which may happen to be in operation. This work for sure cannot tackle adequately the issue under discussions. Nevertheless, our main aim is to point out a proper approach and style from the human development point of view, to be adapted in the youth ministry. And this approach and style is laudable especially if we bear in mind that, the success of ministering to youth is very much dependent on understanding their context and period in which they belong to.

Categorizing youth problems.

The problems facing the youth will be put into two categories.

- (1) The problems traced within the youth themselves.
- (2) The problems that arise from the society.

THE PROBLEMS TRACED FROM THE YOUTH THEMSELVES.

1.3 *Identity Crisis*

This crisis is grounded in adolescence, which is a transition period between childhood and adulthood. This is the time of dramatic biological, emotional and intellectual changes, which take place in the youth². This transition marked by change to adulthood is marked by turmoil. The parents having teenagers have testified to this psycho-social crisis of the youth in confusion for search of identity.³ It is reported that the onset of teenage could turn formerly confident parents into confused, hand wringing wrecks. One of the parents says, "I feel like I don't know Lisa any more" She insists, "I don't understand her and has become so secretive. We used to share everything together but now ."⁴ Another parent says, "We are more than two adults in the house". Youth react to this crisis (second birth) often by forming 'youth culture', with a special set of anti-adult values and institutions.

One parent describes this situation as follows.

"...to add to all the consternation it is not only the girls in the house who are wearing earrings. And the music - it drives them mad. Only songs of Zion will grace our ears in this house."⁵ This 'problem' shows that youth are struggling to establish codes, groups, values and goals which provide a basis for identity, a standard of behaviour and a status"⁶

² Wynne Wenter, *Psychology: Themes and Variations* (California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1989), 409

³ Ibid. 111

⁴ *Daily Nation*, Feb. 24-March 2, 2001.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ed. Evelyn Shapiro, *PsychoSources: A Psychology Resource Catalog* (London: Bantam Books, 1973), 3

1.3.1 Others problems associated with identity crisis

These are the kind of the problems for the youth who deviate dangerously such as

3.1.1 *Drug abuse*

It is on record that drug users are increasing. Young people smoke tobacco, take cannabis, sativa and drink alcohol. Others sniff glue (street youth) and chew 'miraa'. It is in Universities such as Egerton and Kenyatta, and in secondary schools and Urban centres where youth openly take drugs.⁷ In one study 44.1% of those aged 15-19 and 20 to 24 respectively smoked marijuana.⁸ We may point out here that, the way in which the youth respond violently to issues that could have been settled legally shows that they are under certain influence of drugs. At times, it is out of group influence. The Kenyan Daily Nation of 13th April 1994 revealed that, between 25% and 35% of high school and university students in Kenya abused narcotic drugs and that 6% of the drug abusers were students aged below eighteen years.⁹ Youth embark on drug use due to various motivations. Some do so in a bid to fight off depression, in that it temporarily makes the youth unaware of his frustrations as he blots out his problems.

Also it is alleged that the use of pills are on the increase. They are used either to give them more energy or put them to sleep, or both. Ander called this the

Bartholomias Dungdung, *Youth counseling* A long Essay submitted to the Department of Pastoral Studies, Feb. 1998, Nairobi, 3

⁸ Ibid 5.

⁹ Today in Parliament, In the 'Daily Nation', Nairobi 13th April, 1994, 8.

age of anxiety but it also might be called the age of the anti-depressant pill.¹⁰ The smoking of marijuana has been increasing so rapidly among teenagers that it is now a major hazard to public health and law environment. Thomas A. Facelle says that, it has become "the way to give social acceptance."¹¹ It is alleged elsewhere that, no longer is any stigma attached to it. When we talk to youngsters about drug addiction their attitude is, "it does not apply to me because I just smoke marijuana."¹² In my interview, two young men in college who declined to have their names mentioned answered this question why drugs in this way "Life comes alive." Another one remarked " I can feel the intensity of a colour or a bar of music " Comments another, "you just float along, man, enjoying the simple things."

The use of marijuana is vicious. Youth start on it and then invariably turn to hard drugs such as heroine and cocaine. In our own environment marijuana is easily and cheaply available. So it is an ideal start point towards other killer drugs.

Apart from drug abuse there are other problems such as those of vocational nature, others are psychological such as those rooted in fear and anxiety, problems of guilt and depression.

1.3.2. *Secularism*

This is the problem being encountered by the youth in our modern changing situation. Secularism is described by Shorter as "a situation in which religious faith, for one reason or another, is felt to be superfluous. It is a state

¹⁰ Lucy Freedman, *The cry for Love understanding and overcoming human depression* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company), 1969, 22

¹¹ *Ibid.* 24.

¹² *Ibid.*

in which religion loses its hold both at the level of social institutions and at the level of human consciousness...secularism is a world view which in theory and/or practice, denies the eminence of God. Organized religion ceases to dominate or persuade society. In the same vein we are told that secularism has permeated all levels of society in Africa, spreading from city dwellers and infecting their kinsmen and women in rural areas. Secularism is a characteristic of Euro-American technological culture that fosters an overriding desire for the material products of technology, and comfort that they are deemed to provide.¹³ Secularism has entrenched itself and spread its bad spirit through the use of electronic media. Consequently, 'the film has now become mostly a wicked weapon aimed at debasing and corrupting' the youth that are part of urban population.¹⁴ For instance, it is pointed out that the films shown in the halls are mainly:

*'Video nastiness' with strong emphasis on violent and pornography... There is no age restriction to bar children from watching such shows. Children, some as young as ten years old or even less, are thus exposed to all the violence and eroticism contained in these videos.'*¹⁵

Secularism is thought to be a 'contributory' influence of imported Western sexy fashions and music. In fact sex and violence are the catchwords that are relentlessly flung into our living rooms for entertainment. Consequently, this has resulted to, among other things, 'deviant behavior by youth that imitate actions of character. For instance, it is certain that television teaches a drug

¹³ Aylward Shorter, *Evangelization and Culture*, (New York, Geoffrey Chapman), 1994, 79.

¹⁴ Shorter and Edwim Onyancha, *Secularism in Africa: A Case Study*, Nairobi City: (Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa), 1997, 80.

¹⁵ *Ibid*

culture, because it presents as role models for the youth film stars and pop stars who are notorious drug addicts. Also, mass media has encouraged unrestricted sexual activity, culture of violence and moral lapse among the youth. This moral lapse in many occasions manifests itself in terms of indifferentism and "privatism". Indifferentism is marked by loss of interest to participate in religious activities well as the term "privatism" has been designated "to represent this pattern of attitudes and values which incline to seek a rich, full life for oneself within one's immediate family and community, to think in concrete terms and practical terms about material benefits that one expects to attain and enjoy and to exhibit a pronounced unconcern with social problems and wider world."¹⁶

1.3.3 Youth problems linked to education

Youth in our modern system of education termed as "Western" model of education lays heavy stress on developing in the young an over-riding will to succeed on his \ her own. It fosters in the young a desire for individual achievement. And this ambitious desire has resulted into "ruthless, individualistic go getter..."¹⁷ In fact, this crisis has been aggravated by our education system which is examination oriented. On the examination day as Aloys Otieno says, "Young learners are expected to retrieve from their 'mental bank' the concepts the teachers had deposited there"¹⁸ This way the youth are not prepared for living. Actually, as one educator observed, "schooling has ignominiously replaced education and the results are questionable. Schooling has become a disguised form of non-education. Obviously, the African child

¹⁶ Charles E. Mowry, *The Church and the New Generation*, Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1969

¹⁷ Butch Hebert, "Youth Work in Africa", AFER 119 (1977) 27.

¹⁸ Mowry, 34

stands in need, not of more expertise, but of more education”¹⁹ Moreover, seemingly in Kenya the type of education, which is proposed to the youth, is that of contraception, free sex and abortion²⁰ Nevertheless, the Church is firmly opposed to this kind of education of which is disassociated from moral principles

Another problem allied to education is fundamentalism Fundamentalism has become a real danger to the youth Today, self-styled evangelists have entered in our institutions of learning leaving the youth more confused with conjectured teachings imparted in their heads Consequently, “parents and church are loosing control over the religions and moral formation of the young in school and colleges.”²¹

1.3.4 *Adolescents and Contraceptives.*

In Kenya sexual activity among unmarried adolescents is high but the use of contraceptives is low. Nevertheless, soon or later, many youth are exposed to use of contraceptives subsequently, this may lead to an increase of incidents of abortions²² This is due to pressure resulting from media advertisements and importation of contraceptives in the country. For instance, it is reported that:

“...We shipped the following contraceptives to Kenya in Fiscal Year 1991: 18,678,000 condoms made in Alabama” (Ronald Roskins, the then Director of

¹⁹ Gerard A. Bennars, Ethics, Education and Development. An Introductory Text For Students in African Colleges and Universities, Nairobi: E.A.E. P., 1993, 78.

²⁰ Raphael Wanjohi, Sex Problems Among the Youth: Solution and Therapy, (Nairobi: CUEA Publications, 1999), 20.

²¹ Aloys Otieno Ojore, Problems of the Youth in Africa: Implication for Religious Vocation, (Nairobi, Fotoform Ltd . 2000), 38.

²² *Ibid* 19.

USAID).²³ As a result in our country, we witness schools becoming markets and insecure places for drugs

1.3.5 *STD and HIV/AIDS*

Sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, which are prevalent among young people in Kenya, are associated with the role of media, flooding of pornographic materials in the country. Youth are mostly misinformed about the health matters. That is why Dr. Wanjohi says, "the current method of brainwashing the youth to opt for artificial family planning (AFP) is unethical and immoral because it does not present both AFP and NFP (Natural Family Planning) to enable the young person make an informed choice"²⁴ In 1996 National Aids and STDS Control Program (NANCP) reported more than 65,000 cases. And it was estimated that there were more than 2000,000 cases in actuality in Kenya 1.2 million people with HIV in Kenya 13-14% of Kenya's urban population with HIV NACP estimated for the year 2,000 10% of Kenya's population will have HIV and half of these victims to be young people²⁵

1.3.6 *Poverty*

We may describe poverty as a state of being in want or lacking something that is needed, desired or generally recognized as having a value. Also, poverty implies oppression and dependency in all spheres of life, socially,

²³ Dr. G.S.N. Wanene, *HIV/AIDS The Outside Story*, Kikuyu: Kenya Revised Ed. June 2000, 9

²⁴ Wanjohi, *Sex Problems Among the Youth*, 7

²⁵ Ed. Dr. Paul W. Robinson, *Choosing Hope Epidemic Curriculum Modules for Theological and Pastoral Training Institutions. The Christian Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic* (Nairobi: Map International, 1996), 2. Figures/ Statistics taken from: Plenary at the 9th International on AIDS and STD in Africa, Kampala, 1995

economically and politically. Poverty is rampant in the country and so it poses a formidable challenge that we cannot run away from. Some of the reasons can be put forward to explain why poverty is rampant in the first place. This poverty is due to exploitation. It is exploitation especially through economic policies that render powerlessness possible and this brings about:

- (1) Collapse of agricultural sector e.g. cash crops farming becomes quite unrewarding.
- (2) Unfavourable bank policies which impose high minimum balances, out of reach for the common citizen to invest in the bank industry
- (3) Imposed policies on privatization, which are not beneficial to the public.

Consequently, this has led to the deterioration of our current social-economic situation. These social-economic conditions have seriously and negatively affected growth and development of the entire social fabric of the society with no exception of young generation of which their lives are disrupted at early age. Worse still, this alarming state has been compounded by lack of proper planning and corruption. These conditions have especially hit the ordinary person as an individual by increasing unemployment, decline in quality and availability of education and deteriorating medical facilities and services. To this effect the pope some years back rightly observed that, the situation of many African countries including Kenya is so serious as to leave no room for attitudes of indifference and complacency.²⁶ Apparently, the political leadership has been unable to deal appropriately with sharpening social

²⁶ Michael Renner, Fighting for Survival, environmental Decline, Social Conflict, and the new age of Insecurity, (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1992), 90.

problems. Hence, this has resulted to what we consider to be a major fatal ramification to youth. That is, they do not see themselves as having a future as good as or better than their parents. They see themselves in a state of despondency. They see a hopeless future for themselves.

1.3.7 Conclusion.

In this chapter we have surveyed a background to the problem. We have looked into the problems facing the youth. Generally speaking, the picture painted is of the young generation facing alienation. This alienation is brought by a variety of things. But among others it is associated with the poor quality of their relationship with their parents and other authority figures, with peer groups with their own self-concept, the influences of the media coupled with negative influences from the Church as Louis pointed out.²⁷ We hope and we are convinced that an awareness of the youth's situation is a way forward to looking into ways of delivering them out of this mess. Let us now go to chapter two and undertake the task of reviewing selected literature proper to our topic.

²⁷ John Louis, The Youth in Search for Home in the Church A long essay submitted to the Department of Pastoral Studies, Nairobi, Feb., 2001, 19

CHAPTER TWO

1.4.0.0. AFFIRMING THE YOUTH

“We can not solve youth’s problems or manipulate their growth. We can only provide conditions for growth—the warmth of caring spirits, inquiring minds, and awareness of God’s message.”²⁸

-Merton

1 4 0 *An Introductory note*

This chapter is about the need to provide conditions (opportunities) for growth to our youth. This is due to my conviction that much impetus for movement and change lies within the youth themselves. It is in youth we find a lot of potential power and energy. Hence, the challenge of a Youth Ministry care is to take the task of building relationships with young people. Given the fact that they are the one’s who are in the process of developing abilities and capabilities in many areas and need opportunities to do so. These opportunities for growth are provided in the context of relationships.

Relationship is a key word to us. It is in relationship, firstly with God but also with each other, that we find ourselves to be who we are. Likewise, many young people are searching for a sense of identity and personhood. And it can

²⁸ Merton P. Strommen, *Five Cries of the Youth*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 39

only be secured in relationship. In this case, relationship refers to the forum within which the youth minister can exercise care by working with young people on issues, problems, projects, joys and opportunities as they arise. Hence, it is in context of relationship conditions for growth shall be our main subject.

In this chapter, we are going to inquire into some available information from authors, researchers, and opinions from the young generation coming out of experience; in as far as such information is relevant and useful to our topic.

In literature review, we shall identify six conditions for growth which affirmative thought and action is all about. Our thesis here is that, these conditions are valuable tools in face of challenges created by the problems and needs of youth in our society. I say that because as human beings simply we cannot afford the moral luxury of indifference, given such immense problems facing youth. We need an affirmative thought and action in youth ministry as a spiritual, moral and psychological basis in order to bring about meaningful changes in this young generation. These conditions to be treated among others are empowerment, understanding, collaboration, and trust.

1.4.1 *Empowerment.*

Is defined as “the motivation, freedom and capacity to act purposefully, with the mobilization of the energies, resources, strengths or powers of each person through a mutual, relational process”.²⁹ Personal empowerment in a ministry is by establishment of mutually empathetic and

²⁹ Ed. Barbara Jo Brothers. Equal Partnering a Feminine Perspective. Binghamton: Harrington Park Press, 1991, 27.

mutually empowering relationship either in a home or Church. This results to vertical participation that entails occasions when the youth develop particular relations with the parents, youth minister. Hence, power emerges out of interaction model in the form of 'power with' or 'power together'. Such kind of relations are mutually beneficial and so makes it possible to mobilize youth in active participation for their own good and good of the community.³⁰ Consequence of being empowered brings about sense of control over one's life in personality, cognition and motivation. It expresses itself at the level of feelings, ideas about self-worth, at the level of being able to make a difference in the world around us. Stephen R. Covey makes a point on how to establish a mutually empathetic and empowering relationship. He says, a leader in our case a youth minister ought to be influenced by the youth first. This is because if the youth feels that their youth minister genuinely cares about them and that he understands their unique problems and feelings, then they will become amazingly open.

1.4.2 *Understanding.*

The youth need adults to communicate to on a heart level as well as on 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. They ask that adults be honest and they desire that same degree of freedom

³⁰ Francis Wambua Mulwa, "Participation For Rural Transformation in Response to Rural Poverty," *Spearhead* No 151-152 (1994) 25-26)

when they discuss their ideas and opinions. In brief, the youth desire to be understood. A youth minister as well as parents ought to understand teenagers' hearts, strivings, victories and struggles as they apply the word of God to life.³¹

1.4.2.0 *Listening key to understanding.*

Everyone wants to be listened to, truly heard, responded to, and respected. Listening is the greatest compliment we can give, conveying to another person our interest in them and our concern for their well-being. For an effective youth minister, parent ought to consider this attribute as an absolute prerequisite because it is the primary mechanism for building relationship. Understanding involves paying attention to others; then, listening to what they believe, need, and want, and, finally communicating with them in such a way that they feel they have been heard, that they are in dialogue. After all, the characteristic of Christian holiness in polycultural societies is dialogue. This is true in so far as 'the charity of pluralistic societies expresses itself primarily in the desire to meet, with infinite respect and unconditional sympathy, the other'.³² The youth minister \parent is to uncover through intense listening not just the needs of the other person, but the gifts which they have to offer. Through his listening he helps youth to understand and appreciate those gifts. Thus, to this effect D. H. Kuhn and L. Sofield confirms that: by so doing *'he empowers them, giving them confidence and energy to use their gifts to deal with challenges in their own lives and those of others. Helping them to uncover their uniqueness he fosters self-esteem and a sense of personal power that can*

³¹ Donald Ratchiff and James A. Davies, Handbook of Youth Ministry Birmingham: Religions Education Press, 199, 275.

³² Pierre Babin, Adolescents in Search of a New Church New York: Herder and Herder, 1969, 72.

appreciate and celebrate ' Helping them to uncover their uniqueness' ³³ Indeed, youth desire to have their problems understood in order to be helped to help themselves. The same authors Sofield and Kuhn have these captivating words to put across 'The process of listening leads to understanding the aspirations, needs, and hurts others.' Besides this they continue writing 'only when people feel that they have been listened to and that the listener truly wants to understand their reality, can a mutually respectful relationship result' ³⁴

Ochieng' laments about the apparent lack of understanding of life's realities on the part of many engaging in youth ministering. He says,

'Let people get what they want Find out what they need Be more responsive to the individual needs of people I don't think the ministers realize the hardships that people have. I think they are blind to the fact of a lot of people's problems...they are too busy doing ministry' ³⁵

1.4.2.1 *Compassion: A mark of true Listening.*

Youth are in need of compassionate caretakers. Only when ministers and parents listen intently to youth indeed, everybody, will they be in a position to respond constructively as Jesus would ³⁶ Whenever youth do not feel listened to and taken seriously, then they come away with the sense of being devalued and neglected. Recently we engaged in dialogue with the youth ³⁷ about 'Jesus our model- listener and compassionate' Youth challenged ministers, parents to evaluate their willingness to listen and their corresponding

³³ L. Sofield and D.H. Kuhn, The Collaborative Leader Listening to the wisdom of God's people With a Foreword by D. Leakey (Notre Dame Ave Maria Press, 1995), 45,46.

³⁴ Ibid 51

³⁵ Ochieng' interviewed on June, 21st 2001 Youth member of St Mary's Parish - Rongai.

³⁶ Sofield, The Collaborative Leader, 51.

³⁷ The youth referred above are of St Mary's Parish at Rongai- Diocese of Ngong.

capacity to be compassionate. Paraphrasing their feelings they demanded that, we ought to be a compassionate church. They underscored the fact that Jesus was compassionate who listened to all people. They thought that if we talked and listened to them, we would be in a position to learn much.

1.4.2.2 *Listening effects credibility.*

Listening is highlighted as unequivocal need to be developed by all stakeholders in the youth ministry. The value of listening is pointed out as an indispensable virtue of which ought to be developed particularly by religious leaders. This is especially so because through their listening and their personal witness they are able to reach out others, leaders have to find ways to tap that potential and listen to these young men and women. It is underlined strongly in the same book that, “the Church is likely to lose its credibility if it won’t learn how to listen and instead keeps projecting an image of ‘excessive concern’ for the internal needs of the structure, organization and forgetting about people’s needs and concerns”.³⁸

The youth are yearning to have their needs met through liturgy of life. They do need to have their stories listened to. It is through such listening then one ought to allow liturgy to emerge from the needs and view points they describe; thus making the liturgy a true community celebration. Hence, this way the driving force would be on a youth’s needs.

To conclude here, we may say that listening as an enabling condition must be adapted by ministers if they want to be effective and energize the youth in their struggles of facing their own problems. But obviously they need to do more

³⁸ Sofield. 51

than listening passively. They ought to be involved with the people, truly hearing their needs and then responding to their hungers and yearning placed within them by Lord's Spirit.

Eliza, an experienced social worker in the youth animation ministry, highlights on how to create an environment for listening and dialogue. We can paraphrase her saying,

*"I think it is wise and proper for youth minister to gather younger people have lunch with them. Talk with them. Ask what is like out there. Get a real feel for what people are experiencing out there in their common places of life. Then, ask: What do you need to hear from us? What are we not telling you?"*³⁹

1.4.2.3 *Empathize as part and parcel of understanding.*

The youth ought to be loved and accepted unconditionally no matter the circumstances. In dealing with youth, the Christian adult's leadership must remember their own time of adolescence – what they thought was fair and unfair, what they worried about, what hurt or embarrassed them, and what they thought they could get away with. Remembering this helps them to be patient and empathize with them. However, we are cautioned not to be too understanding. Teenagers do not want instant understanding. This is because when they are troubled by conflicts they feel unique. Their emotions seem now, personal, private. To this effect youth feel to be insulted when told, *"I know exactly how you feel. At your age I too felt the same"*. Indeed, *"it distresses them to*

³⁹ Eliza, Social Worker, St John Evangelist Parish 28, Aug., 2001.

be so transparent, so naive and so simple when they feel complex, mysterious and inscrutable"⁴⁰

In our bid to understand the youth we have to differentiate between acceptance and approval. Youth rebel in a thousand ways. For instance, when a seventeen-year-old boy discards new shoes for old sandals, he may be in revolt. In fact, they proclaim in action what Bob Dylan said in these words:

*'Come, mothers and fathers all over this land ...and don't criticize what you don't understand. Your sons and daughters are beyond your command.'*⁴¹

This implies that our response must differentiate between tolerance and sanction, between acceptance and approval. A youth minister must tolerate much but sanction little. A physician does not reject a patient because he bleeds. Likewise, youth's behavior though unpleasant it is tolerated. This does not mean that it is neither encouraged nor welcomed. It is merely accepted. Similarly, a youth minister can tolerate unlikeable behavior without sanctioning it. Dr. Haim illustrates this fact by this example:

One father, irritated by his son's long hair said:

"I am sorry, Son. It's your hair, but it's my guts. I can stand it after breakfast, in your own room". This response was helpful. Father demonstrated respect for own feelings. The son was left free to continue with his unpleasant but harmless revolt. Had father sanctioned the hair do, he would have destroyed its value as a symbol of autonomy and rebellion. The young rebel might have substituted more obnoxious behavior.⁴²

⁴⁰ Dr. Haim G. Ginott, Between Parent and Teenager (New York: Avon Publishers, 1969), 41

⁴¹ Ginott Between Parent and Teenager, 31

⁴² *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, we are alerted that, it is important to remember that youth can only be understood in relation to their own time and place

Youth have their own culture which embody the way they desire, feel, think, believe and conduct their individual and collective existence. This youth's culture is characterized of distinctive quality, an ethos or perspective and a feeling tone that binds them together. It is culture which gives meaning and purpose to life.

The question here is what kind of culture we are talking about. This is the culture borne out of the world of electronic circuitry," the new technological environment, the environment of popular culture. It is this popular culture which is highly influenced by television, computer, E- mail, Internet and cell phones. Computer culture affects not only values and morals of our youth today but also their thinking and behavioral patterns. Advertisements, particularly in television programmes influence the values and goals of the youth. As a result of this John Louis observes that, "many youth delude themselves into thinking that happiness lies in a constant chase of "fit" clothes and "smart" cars, a "nice job" and a "cool" boy friend or a "cute" girl friend and, the most powerful fashionable music systems and "top-range" cell phones and pages. This is what underlies "pop culture" or popular culture which is all about fashion for the sake of fashion alone" ⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Louis, The Youth in Search for Home in the Church, 7

Hence, the Church's adult leadership has to help youth to create culture in such a way that each youth grows a rich and resolute inwardness and enables one to direct and creative creativity ⁴⁴

1.4.3 *Exploring Youth talents*

The primary qualification of adult leadership centers in what it inculcates and believes in being sensitive to youth and to their possibilities. The youth's potentialities are likely to flower if he can be helped to develop a realistic self-concept as a person who possesses a genuine sense of self-esteem and a feeling of adequacy in the world.

The youth minister is to help the youth discover his assets so as to capitalize on them, to be aware of his remediable limitations so that he may learn to live contentedly with them. Over and beyond this, such an approach implies a greater stress on assisting the youth to develop correct ideals, a true value system, an appropriate level of aspiration, a clear idea of those satisfactions that are worth striving for, and a proper set of motivations for attaining goals that are worthy of his time and energy ⁴⁵ Moreover, in order to achieve these ends integrated planning is a must. This kind of planning must involve all including the youth minister and the youth themselves. This is due to the fact that collaboration and integrated planning go hand in hand. Planning entails apart from specifying objectives, the testing of reasonable aims against harsh realities of life. With such a rationale then, guidance in a youth ministry demands competence, area of responsibility and interest on the part of youth minister.

⁴⁴ Paul Truvin, *The Care and Counselling of Youth in the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 46

⁴⁵ William C. Bier, S.J., Ed. *The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding* New York (Fordham University Press, 1963) 216

Collaboration here refers between those who are trying to help namely parents and youth ministers and those to be helped, the youth. Collaboration entails involvement. Young people do need assistance in learning ways to put their Christian ideals into meaningful action. They should not only be intellectually aware of contemporary social concerns and church's teaching about them, but they should also find ways to help meet these concerns through service activities in which they are personally involved. Young people can come up with some good service projects, but without adult direction they easily give up their ideas. Adolescents are very personal oriented, they need to be involved in activities that would directly be of service to people. Nevertheless, Mowry observes that, we have too long encouraged young people to think of the church as a place where they are 'educated' and entertained rather than as a place where they are involved in the mutual ministries of the priesthood of all believers. He decries this state of paternalism and so he demands its end.

*"All paternalism on the part of the church toward young people should now be seen for the inexcusable error that it is. Young people are not 'the future of the church'. That sentiments can be regarded as true only by those who think in purely institutional terms - they are the church now in their sector of the world's life and should accordingly be fully integrated into the life of the church."*⁴⁶

As it was observed by Mowry collaboration is all about "partnership with the new generation" Indeed, he stresses that "no new directions will be adequately

⁴⁶ Mowry, The Church and the New Generation, 67

defined without the help of a considerable number of new generation people at the planning table with voice and vote”⁴⁷ In a youth ministry we lay special emphasis on partnership as the way to engage in the ministry of koinonia. Koinonia here implies the youth minister being with and among youth. The result of which is the discovery of mission, his calling in their midst. For the youth minister being with them implies more than an education. It is the best means available to identify the critical issues they are facing. We must say that to know the problems a people face is the foundation of mission in the midst of that people. Indeed, by living among the youth Harris says, *“we will learn what causes them to cry out with pain, with despair, with frustration, with anger and hate. Also, by living among them we discover where they hurt. We come to know on what issues they long and their interests and developing ways how to participate in them. We discover where they are afraid, where they are courageous, where they are overwhelmed and where they need support from beyond their own resources.”*⁴⁸ Elsewhere, this is what is referred to as ‘Ministry of Presence’.

Partnership with youth is necessitated by the fact that they have the most accurate perceptions of current reality. However, partnership with the new generation is not possible if there is no affirmation. Affirmation entails being with the youth long enough to know them, their life experiences and their worldviews. This requires unbiased, objective, and sympathetic interpretation. The youth minister can provide this interpretative function if he is willing to become sufficiently involved in order to have an adequate understanding. The

⁴⁷ Ibid. 142.

⁴⁸ Maria Harris, Portrait of Youth Ministry (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 118. See also Mowry, The Church and the New Generation, 139.

youth minister ought to sustain a constant dialogue about what is taking place among the youth. This demands a constant struggle to arrange ways by which the new generation can receive a fair hearing on the matters, which concern them. Mowry says,

*If the Church is adequately informed and is ready to speak out on behalf of a fair hearing or just treatment for the members of this new generation, we will be closer to gaining their respect.*⁴⁹

Assisting the youth in their plight is a difficult as well as complex job. Hence the adults' leadership should find others in their neighborhood, schools and churches that also care about youth guidance and support one another, exchange strategies, share concerns and share one another's skills.

1.4.5 Trust.

In order to bring adolescents into more active participation let us say in a parish, a climate of trust must be developed. Youth should feel free to ask for help or support from adults at any given time. Most often it is said that youth are asked to serve in various positions and then are left to "fail" alone. The adults tend to criticize the youth's efforts rather than recognizing that they themselves are at fault for not providing help the young people need. A mutually empathetic and empowering relationship creates a climate of warmth in form of trust. This in turn encourages self-esteem. As Merton observes the consequence of this is profound. Indeed, Brother Roger being aware of the significance of trust had this to say

⁴⁹ Ibid. 148.

*"I would go to the uttermost ends of the earth, to the words' farthest end, to tell that trust the new generations that I trust the young' We who are older must listen... Listen, always listen, and so grasp the very best of the creative intuition alive in today's youth".*⁵⁰

First, it frees the youth in such a way that is able to verbalize his feelings and put into words the emotions churning from inside. It is the articulation of such feelings, which makes it possible to deal with them rationally. Hence, good sense and judgment can guide the youth.⁵¹

Second, a congenial affirming climate coupled with trust encourages youth to accept new information about them, to hear about God's promise to accept and acknowledge strength and weaknesses. Merton overstates the importance of times when youth and youth ministers can acknowledge their humanity through sharing honest and irrational fears. The result of this is great. It leads to a quite release and growth as masks are removed and one finds trust, acceptance and love. What is to be fought here at all cost in home, church and school is that attitude "you should not talk like that"⁵² This is particularly bad because it drives emotions underground to continue their eroding effect on the human spirit. Dr. Haim affirms this when he writes, "it is futile to address angry feelings with reasoning, explaining, denying, threatening or moralizing. Angry feelings do not vanish when banished. Strong emotions like turbulent rivers cannot be reasoned with, or talked out of existence. Their force must be recognized and respected to do otherwise is to court disaster."⁵³ That is to say,

⁵⁰ Ward, Relational Youth Work, 44

⁵¹ Strommen, Five Cries of the Youth, 40

⁵² Ibid., 39.

⁵³ Ibid., 40.

adults express their feelings and opinions in a way, which proves to be non-threatening, and youth express in a way, which proves to be non-defensive builds a climate of trust. Indeed, if the youth minister is able to demonstrate his/her trust and belief in the youth by letting them risk and discover that they have the courage, then it is this courage which enables the young people to change and move towards the good.

These enabling conditions such as trust makes a discernible difference in the lives of the youth. The previous youth Research Survey as portrayed in the Hand book of Youth Ministry shows that learned techniques and way of how to relate to youth led to a significant drop in terms of previous experienced problems such as: distress over personal faults and lack of self-confidence, academic problems and class room relationships.

1.4.6 Care.

Care is another essential quality needed as enabling framework in our bid to address ourselves to youth's plight. Care here refers to the youth minister as a supportive friend to the youth who are in need. The care offered by the youth minister finds its inspiration point of reference from this basic Christian understanding of care. Just as God's care manifests itself through the willingness of Jesus to be in relationship with people, likewise, youth minister has to radiate this same kind of care.⁵⁴ In the first instance, the willingness on the part of the youth minister to be with the young people "on consistent basis over a period of time", in and of itself is an expression of care. This is in a bid

⁵⁴ Strommen, Five Cries of the Youth, 40

of the youth minister to seek a common ground on which to discuss the crisis of their national and personal life today.

Care is also basically related to the trust and respect that the youth minister offers to young people. Indeed, there are prospects in many cases for this trust to be rejected or abused, nevertheless, the care offered by the youth worker needs to be forgiving and undaunted by the setbacks and problems which arise. In this sense the respect and trust offered in friendship by the youth minister is a mirror of the way that God sees young people. It is, thus a sign of grace. It is through grace that youth minister is able to bring about change in the lives of the youth. Such change however, grows out of a context of respect, understanding and trust⁵⁵

Friendship is important and with the new generation it is a key to a climate of trust and mutual respect. Youth have a desire for friendship, intimacy. The need for intimacy operates in the individual as an urge to acquire intimate friendships and relationships. Whenever one goes into young adult world, he must have his/her intentions clarified, one's vision clear. If he goes only to look and learn, then he had better not try to pretend he cares. That is to say, the extent of our caring goes far beyond all words. This is true since we ought to witness through our functioning. That is, if we have something to say about love, then it must be said through loving. If we speak about justice let our word be said through loving.

⁵⁵ Mowry, The Generation, 136

As young people seek to build mature and confident lives for themselves, the youth minister supports this process through care, which does not shrink from challenging young people's lifestyles and their patterns of behaviour.⁵⁶

In view of the needs of adolescents, the task of their life stage, it is very important we are in fact adults, and not adolescents in disguise. We need to have already gone through the 'unfinished business' of adolescence. If not we are in danger of being blind leaders and, as Jesus said, 'when one blind man leads another, both fall into a ditch (Matthew 15:14). This fact points out one thing that, those would be helpers ought to be committed to their own positive, dynamic relationships with their fellows and God. They also need to keep in healthy contact with their own humanly inescapable feelings of guilt, weakness, anger, anxiety and the like, as well as joy, tenderness, peace and reconciliation. It is such youth workers who are capable of embracing this challenge of taking care of the youth, which demands much of their integrity.⁵⁷

1.4 7 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at enabling conditions which ought to be put in place if at all we have to address ourselves meaningfully to the youth's plight. Now let us go to chapter three and highlight on how we have gone about carrying our research.

⁵⁶ Eugene H. Peterson, The Message (New York: Navpress, 1993), 99.

⁵⁷ Ibid 104

CHAPTER THREE

1.5.0.0. METHODOLOGY USED AND DATA COLLECTION

1.5.0 Introduction

Our previous chapter on reviewed literature so far, has been able to give us a direction in our project as far as primary source of information is concerned. Now let us proceed in this current chapter identifying our methodology and procedures being employed to gather both our primary and secondary data. This chapter will throw light on targeted groups and point out tools which have proved useful in our research.

1.5.1 Identified and Targeted Sources of Information.

This was prompted by the need of applicable data (in form of suggestions and views) in order to shed more light on our topic. Ideas in terms of suggestions and opinions were sought from stakeholders pertinent to youth ministry namely, the youth themselves, youth ministers and youth's parents. These targeted groups coupled with researched library information and actual youth's situation have contributed to our sources of information.

1.5.2 Data Sources

These entail primary data referred to as first hand information and secondary data, a library product which in the first place has enabled us to make our claim credible: Affirmative Thought and Action as a Key to Youth

Ministry. At this juncture it is worthwhile to describe briefly each of these sources here below

1.5.3 Library research

It entails all material in print. Our secondary data relevant to our subject is obtained from various forms of literature such as published books, submitted theses, periodicals and symposium talk

1.5.4 Sampling.

In regard to primary data associated with field research first we had to target groups as indicated in section 1.5.1 and then, individuals were selected within these groups. In our bid to obtain objective data we administered eighty questionnaire to all stakeholders in youth ministry which is parish based. Fifty questionnaire (62.6%) were distributed to youth, twenty five (31.2%) to teenagers' parents and five (6.2%) to youth ministers. These targeted individuals belonged to three various parishes, namely, St. John Evangelist-Karen, Holy Family- city centre both of -Arch Diocese of Nairobi, St. Mary's Parish at Rongai-Diocese of Ngong. And apart from using questionnaire, interviews and observation were utilized.

1.5.5 Analysis of the Investigated Data

Study results from our field research (primary data) are presented in this forthcoming chapter. This is after questions have been interpreted, analysed and the work hypothesis tested

1.5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has pointed out our methodology used to collect the primary data of our project. The subsequent chapter focuses its attention on

the analysed and interpreted data emerging from the administered questionnaire, interviews as well as from group discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR

1.6.0. INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTION

1.6.1 Introduction

Chapter three has dealt with methodology in the collection of data in the field. This chapter four presents the results of our field study among the youth. The items on which our attention will be focused are: participants in the field study, data analysis and finally conclusion.

1.6.2 Participants in Field Study

1.6.3 Questionnaire Respondents

The number of questionnaire copies supplied out is already identified in section 1.5.4.

Out of eighty questionnaire given out only seventy five (93.3%) of the total number came back furnishing us with some working data. Five copies (6.2%) did not come back were from youth group target. Otherwise, an overall exercise seemed to be a success due to the fact that the targeted group was of enlightened ones. For instance, most of the targeted youth groups happened to be in secondary schools, some have just graduated (Form four leavers) and a few of them are in the universities (Jomo Kenyata, Catholic University). And again, since the targeted youth groups were organised it was for us to supply questionnaire copies particularly bearing in mind that, the youth leaders facilitated monitoring their return. Moreover, before giving them out we made

sure that instructions were properly understood and an opportunity was granted to clarify any rising misunderstandings

1.6.4 Group discussion and participation

In the course of about six months (April, 2001-October, 2001) we managed to organise three sessions involving the youth on a variety of topics focusing on relationship i.e. relationship which entails all key players in youth ministry, namely, the youth themselves, parents and youth ministers. These topics were: Coping Mechanisms in view of the Relationship Problems Facing the Youth, Our Church and Participation in it and Expectations and Hopes of the New Generation in the Church. The first two topics were discussed by the youth of St. John Evangelist and the third one was at St. Mary's Parish. This tool enabled us to solicit ideas of particular interest in regard to our subject matter. In our research we orally interviewed the youth, parents as well as youth ministers from the two parishes named above. The cooperation was good. Below is an elaborated information in regard to our interview. The agents details include the type of interviewees whether is a youth, parent or youth minister together with their age, gender and the number interviewed.

Table 1: St. John Evangelist Parish

Pastoral Agents	<u>Age of Interviewees in Years</u>	Total Number a
Parents 5	34, 37, 40, 42, 57	5(=3male&2fe
Youth 17	14,15(x3),17(3),19(2), 20(3),21(2),22(3)	17(=8 male& 9

Total number of Interviewees-22.

Table 2 : St. Mary's Parish.

Pastoral agents	<u>Age of Interviewees in</u>	Total Number
	<u>Years</u>	
Parents 7	40, 45(2), 58(2), 62,64	7(2 male& 5
Youth10	15(x2), 17,18(3),20(2), 21(2)	5male&5fem
Youth Minister1	40	1male

Total number of interviewees =18.

From these tables it is noted that our target were persons falling within our already identified age category 13-22 And they were of both genders and as well as crucial stakeholders in youth ministry at parish level.

In our forthcoming section 1 8 4 we are going to point out respondents' attitudes, feelings and hopes grounded in their experiences of life.

1 6 5 Analysis of Our Survey Findings.

1.6 6 Affirmative Thought in the Practice of Youth Ministry

Question one was to test how much collaboration as an aspect of affirmative thought is manifested in action

Question1 (Directed to youth &youth minister)

Does the youth group in its program occasionally meet parents together with a youth minister to discuss their problems, which might be arising out of relationship? And have you participated in any way whatsoever in youth programs? **(Directed to parents)**

Response(s) 65 out of seventy five respondents to this questionnaire 86.7% of them said no, 12% of them said yes 1.4% gave no response

Table 3 Indicating Responses in number and Percentage

Response	Percentage	Number
No	86.7%	65
Yes	12%	9
No response	1.4%	1

This question one is the first in our survey findings which responds very well to our hypothesis as it is verified by our results shown above, notably, the more the situation they are facing and relationships they are involved become pathetic, the more need and significance of this positive thought and action as a process of affirmation Cf Section 1.9.2

Question three was to find out how much caring, understanding as an aspect of affirmative thought is manifested in action. The questionnaire is deliberately relating parents to youth. We believe that parents are indispensable and fundamental component in shaping the youth of which, their caring role not only assists them to make wise and informed decisions,⁵⁸ but also to face challenges created by such problems already pointed out

Question 3

Do you feel being cared, understood enough by parents since they know your joys and hurts?

⁵⁸ Robinson. *Choosing Life* Module Number 7. 1 Aloys O. Ojore in the Youth Symposium of 2011, March 2001 on Helping Younger people to identify their vocation and Service remarked '...the role of the family in parenting is irreplaceable'

Out of fifty informants who responded to this questionnaire 40% of them responded somewhat agree. Whereas None(0%) strongly agreed, 9% said we agree and 1% disagree

Table 4. Indicating Responses in number and percentage

Response	Percentage	Number	Out of
Somewhat agree	80%	40	50
Strongly agree	0%	0	50
Agree	18%	9	50
Disagree	2%	1	50

Also, the second question is another pointer in affirming our hypothesis. This shows to what extent affirmative thought to be exhibited in action is lacking. For instance, 80% majority of the respondents are not committed fully in acknowledging parental care and understanding rendered to them by parents. Worse still, none of them strongly agreed and acknowledged parental care. To us this is a sign of the pathetic situation already pointed out in the previous findings of Louis (lack of effective listening and understanding).⁵⁹

Question 4:

What do you think can be done to help the young persons help themselves?

(Directed to Youth)

Out of fifty youth informants who handed in their feedback to this questionnaire 35% of them can have their response categorised as empowerment in the context of relationship. And 10% demanded to be involved in decision making. 3% requested to be assisted to begin youth small

⁵⁹ Louis, The Youth in Search for Home in the Church, 43.

projects for self-employment whereas 2% identified the need of education on self-awareness so as to learn ways on how to deal with their problems and fears

Table 5: Indicating Responses in number and percentage

1. Response	Percentage	Number	Out of
Empowerment (Improve relationship)	70%	35	50
2. Be part of decision making organ (parish council)	20%	10	50
3. Small income generating projects.	6%	3	50
4. Education on self awareness	4%	2	

Again, our point of interest in this questionnaire is the young persons' cry for empowerment by the adult generation. This is equally true in the church just as it is in the state especially in politics.⁶⁰ An intensity of this cry is represented by the massive majority of our respondents 70%

⁶⁰ President Moi triggers talks of young turks and involvement in politics. Sunday Nation Nairobi: October 2, 2001.

Question 5

Please point out whom do you trust most and ready to listen and seek advice from in accordance to the order of your preference

1 Religious Leaders/ Youth Minister(s) 2. Peers(friends) 3. Teachers 4. Parents

Out of fifty youth informants who responded to this questionnaire 66% ticked trust most in favour of peers, 26% ticked trust most in favour of parents. Whereas 8% said to trust most Religious Leaders/ Youth Minister(s). And nobody ticked trust most in favour of teachers

Table 6: Indicating Responses in number and percentage

Response	Percentage	Number	Out of
Trust most	Peers 66%	33	50
Trust	Parents 26%	13	50
Trust little	R/Youth ministers 8%	4	50
Don't trust	teachers	0	50

What can we make out of this? This provides us with a hint on how to get close to young generation. Since it is the peers who command an overwhelming influence and trust to their fellow peers then, it is logical to look into ways of empowering peers in affirmative action. This point will be developed later when we shall be offering recommendations.

Secondly, any remarkable success in youth ministry demands working hand in hand by involvement of all agents in youth ministering. As one can see there above there is no single entity which monopolises all the percentage in regard to trust

In our previous chapter we have been examining our field results. We have noted that the data emerging out of it has to a great extent concurred with our hypothesis highlighted on chapter two dealing with literature review. We used a variety of main players in youth ministry as our informants, young and old with various experiences and perceptions. Our goal was to make our field research exercise objective and credible

Now we are going to tackle Chapter Five. We shall begin by presenting some criticisms over our work then brief preview of our work, observation and recommendations from our field survey. Also, Chapter five will include the general conclusion of our work

CHAPTER FIVE

2.0 SUMMARY, CRITICISMS, OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Introduction

In our previous chapter our main concern was to see whether our hypothesis is working. Now let us take a look at the summary of our work. This will be followed by self-evaluation and then recommendations.

2.2 Brief preview (summary) of our work.

In chapter one we started our project by defining our crucial terms such as affirmative thought and action, youth and youth ministry. We stressed strongly that the youth minister is an enabler, helper of the young people in relationship to attain their constant search for self-worth and identity. This means then, that the first task of youth ministry is not to solve problems. In addition to this, we pointed out our working hypothesis and objective of the study which unfolds four points to be observed for action. Furthermore, the rationale of the study together with the scope and limitations of the work were indicated. In this same chapter we pointed out a few problems facing the youth. Some of them belonged to the youth themselves such as identity crisis and other problems related to it. But we also discussed those problems which are of external nature. Such as secularism, use of drugs, contraceptives, HIV/ AIDS to mention a few.

Chapter two dealt with the kernel of our topic “affirmative thought and action as a key to youth ministry” in as far as its meaning is concerned. It is shown that, affirmative action in our context entails providing conditions for growth. That is enabling the youth to stand on their own and manage their life responsibly. These conditions pointed out are empowerment, understanding, listening, collaboration and care among others. Moreover, it was noted that these opportunities for growth takes place in the context of relationships.

Chapter three was about the methodology employed in data collection. Its aim was to lay the foundation so significant in enabling us to carry out meaningfully the task of interpreting and analysing the information collected from the field work.

Chapter four itself was about the interpretation and analysis of data collected. In this chapter we have tried to correlate a variety of opinions and ideas with the reality on the ground. That is with young people’s experiences in regard to their life. The intention being to acquire some lessons useful to be applied in youth ministry.

In this chapter five we have reflected on our entire work and we came up with some constructive criticisms and recommendations to be observed so as to make our project meaningful in the field of youth ministry.

2.3 Some Criticisms over our work.

We are well aware of the fact that our approach to this topic brings about unrealistic expectation, namely, solutions to the problems raised. We know this is natural more so to the modern mind which is solution oriented. Nevertheless, we must be aware of the fact that there is no blue print solutions

for such problems. But we can talk of provisional solutions to these problems facing the youth which have been given by a good number of authors. Our interest is not what is the solution of this problem but rather is how to go about offering the solution of this problem

Another problem is constituted in the very nature of our topic, namely, how to close the gap between affirmative thought (theory) and affirmative action (praxis) It is always a problem to translate our good, noble thoughts and ideals into a concrete reality. This gap is never fully closed. And this explains the reality of imperfections and difficulties experienced in our relationship we would like to rectify in our case in the context of youth ministry.

Another real perceived challenge is in regard to training of the youth ministers who are capable of the quality relationships. This is urgent since we are able to reach young people and help them to meet Jesus Christ not by the kind of programme we present rather it is by who we are. We say it is a challenge because even if we ought to put a lot of emphasis on the basic character traits of the person yet, it is much easier to learn certain programme techniques than to help her/ him to develop and work on her/his personal relationships. It is sometimes even easier to offer a large and intricate programme instead of opening oneself up to a young person.

Affirmative thought and action may oblige that, some of the people be empowered in a form of skills training. Nevertheless, the challenge is that not all people specifically identified to be youth ministers may be in a position to know their gifts. Even if it they were to be helped to do so, they may as well lack the courage to tap their potentialities. Others simply may not manage to

live up to standard. Indeed, this is part of difficulties involved in closing the gap between theory as an aspect of affirmation and praxis as part of living an ideal.

2.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made out of my research study and personal encounter with the youth as part of my missionary experience

2.4.1 Help the youth to make commitment to change of behaviour by a solemn pledge

- It is true that the youth want to be given something to do. The commitment to be given can be of this kind. “ Lord assist me by your grace to be pure and chaste by so doing I testify my heroic faithfulness to your love”.
- Such a promised commitment to be accompanied by liturgical ceremony, retreats encouraging them to join together as a single person in Christ. The aim is to take a common stand and say firmly “We are for change”.

Activate the youth to come up with their own slogans spurring them to action committed behavioural change. Examples of such slogans which have so far proved useful are: “We are for Christ’s love”, “Say No to sin”, “Yes to Christ’s love”, “ We are the Church and for the Church”

2.4.2 Help the youth to start movements which are instrumental in engaging them in positive outlook and action.

- Such movements like “True love waits” have been observed that they are a must to give youth what to stand for.
- Help the youth to be firmly rooted in this endeavour by accompanying them with seminars, workshops, days of prayer(retreats)

- Make scripture a guiding soul in all these organised activities.

Assist them to cultivate a spirit of prayer e.g by helping them to pray together.

- Encourage the youth to engage in group discussions which are generated and conducted by the young people themselves. This is important since it can bring about young people's self-confidence and sense of responsibility to themselves and the community at large.

Promote clubs and youth leagues. And give them freedom to say what they want, allow them to enjoy themselves with variety of activities such as: short drama, allow them to have plenty of fun such as going to picnic, scriptural reflection.

- Help and encourage them to use their talents such as drama, poems reciting to direct the work of others. This is important since it can serve as a deterrent way to anti-social behaviour.

Know that young people have great interest in music. Such activities goes by such names like music extravaganza, music shows and concerts.

- Be understanding that they need such activities and encourage them to participate fully and in the entire process of planning and management of such activities. By engaging in such activities they have to take responsibility for fund raising and budgeting for the successes of their activities. In this way by use of their talents can assist themselves to tackle a problem of poverty cemented by dependency.
- Let youth use such shows and concerts to deliver messages as of anti-drug, need of behavioural change, HIV/AIDS awareness.

2.4.3 Use of stories.

Let the young people tell stories about their lives and let the adult generation, particularly the youth ministers tell theirs. This is important since in our traditional setting stories played a vital role. Moreover, our culture is a culture of story telling so to speak. Jesus too made use of stories to console and encourage people

2.4.4 Peer educators

- Equip church youth to become peer educators, role models. For example: take those who are exemplary in character, commitment to duty and expose them to training by means of seminars, workshops and retreats.

And empower them by giving them an opportunity to serve others.

2.4.5 Involvement

Encourage them to enact programmes of action such as visitation. E.g. Visitation to orphanage centres, slum areas.

Encourage them to get involved in a variety of community projects\church such as afforestation and city clean up exercises. This is important for it answers to some extent their cry to be involved, recognised and trusted with responsibilities. Again, this in a way helps to close the gap between their ideals and faith.

2.4.6 Use of visual aids

- Let them see people engage in a variety of good, noble activities for community development

General Conclusion

Affirmative thought and action is a manifestation of positive thinking to be adapted in terms of our outlook and attitude which influences our action in a meaningful and constructive way.

This kind of methodological approach is appropriate as a style in dealing and relating with youth. We say it is appropriate and so to speak necessary due to the fact that, it affirms them in their desires and aspirations. Moreover, it activates their creativity and makes it possible for them to realise their potentialities.

If one pays attention carefully to this methodological approach realises that its spirit and orientation is grounded in the very approach of our Lord Jesus' way of engaging in a ministry. For instance, we see Jesus in Matthew affirming the individuals in the crowd to persist and grow in virtues (Matt. 5:3-10), setting the golden rule (7:12) which is essentially positivistic in nature. In the Gospel of Luke we note Jesus' use of "enabling condition" to encourage faith which was being threatened by fear (4:40) indeed, examples are plenty from the Gospels to justify the relevance and suitability of our approach.

So far we have been trying to argue that, the root of many problems facing the youth is the lack of, or inadequate conscious use of this methodological, relational style in our particularly youth ministry.

It is clear then, given this pathetic situation facing the youth is the call of urgent nature on family and parents, on the religious leaders and particularly on youth leaders to make use of this affirmative thought and action.

This is a strategy and panacea, which we believe ought to be adapted in order to better the situation of the youth and improve their well being

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INTERVIEWS & DISCUSSION

(This List Excludes Names of Those Who Asked for Anonymity)

Ochieng' Oluoch, 36, Youth Minister (St Mary's Evangelist) June, 2001.

Eliza, Social Worker in Youth Ministry Animation (St John Evangelist) August, 2001.

Youth of St Mary's Parish at Rongai-Ngong Diocese & St John Evangelist interviewed on August,28 and Sept .4, 2001 respectively.

APPENDIX A

(The Questionnaire-for the youth).

A Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following statements:

(5=strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Somewhat agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree

1) I feel my parents are caring enough since they know my joys and hurts

(5 4 3 2 1)

2) I often feel misunderstood and not allowed to express my feelings.

(5 4 3 2 1)

3) In our group of youth ministry generally I am listened to

(5 4 3 2 1)

4) My parents push me too hard to get good grades and be successful

(5 4 3 2 1)

5) As a young person I feel being involved adequately in Church activities

(5 4 3 2 1)

6) My church provides a lot of activities, programmes and opportunities for learning about, and which help to cope with life and its associated problems.

(5 4 3 2 1)

7) I feel that it is good and proper for religion to control and guide my life

(5 4 3 2 1)

8) I feel that media (T.V., Internet, Magazines) on free life style and sex is good and should be introduced in education curriculum

(5 4 3 2 1)

9) I agree and I am satisfied with the way my family expresses affection and responds to emotions such as anger, sorrow or love.

(5 4 3 2 1)

10) I agree and I am satisfied that family allows me to mix freely with my age mate (peers)

(5 4 3 2 1)

B. DIRECTIONS From among the needs listed below, choose five which are most important to you personally, and number: them in the order of your preference from most important (1) to least important (5).

I feel the need to:

-----take part in more parish activities.

-----to be of help to those who are in need

-----understand how the Bible relates to my life today

-----learn how to pray

-----understand better the basic belief of Catholic Church

-----get to know the other young person in my parish

-----have discussions on marriage and family life

-----learn what the Catholic Church teaches on certain issues.

-----find better ways how to communicate with adults.

-----be more of social problems and what I can do about them

-----learn about myself as a person

-----have more prayer and retreat experiences

-----learn more about other religions

-----have discussions on sex and dating.

-----understand the importance of sacraments in my life

-----experience Jesus Christ as real and present in my daily life.

-----learn ways how to deal with my own problems and fears.

-----understand some of the traditions and laws of the
Catholic Church.

-----open up to God and let him be the centre of my life

C. 11) Please point out whom do you trust most and ready to listen to and seek advice from in accordance to the order of your preference.

(1 -trust most, 2 trust, 3=trust little, 4 don't trust)

Religious leaders/ youth minister(s) () Peers (friends) () Teachers ()

Parents ()

12) What do you think can be done to help the young persons help themselves?

13) Does the youth group in its program occasionally meet parents together with a youth minister to discuss their problems, which might be arising out of relationship?-----If so for the past six months how many times you have met?-----

14) In the light of your expectations and hopes do you see any bright future in favour of this present generation of youth?

15) What should be done to make you feel at home in the church by being involved?

Appendix B

Questionnaire for parents's youth

Sex-----

Age-----

Place-----

1) What youth programs or activities are what your teenager wants and needs?

Explain

2) Do you feel these activities are what your youth wants and needs? Explain

3) Have you participated in any way whatsoever in your parish youth programs?

4) In general, how do you think your youth feels about the parish and its relationship with the young people in it?

5) What types of youth programs or activities would you like to see being offered in your parish?

Appendix C

Questionnaire for youth minister

1) What are some things that seem to be exciting to today's youth?

2) What seem to be the needs or areas of concern of most of the youth in your parish?

3) What type of youth programs or activities are being offered in your parish?

4) Do you think these activities are meeting the needs of the teenagers?

Explain

5) How do you feel about your role as a parish youth minister?

6) What types of youth programs or activities would you like to see being offered in your parish?

7) I feel that one of the most important qualities a youth minister should possess is -----.

8) The general feeling of adults in our parish towards the youth is-----

