

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY

PERCEPTION OF YOUTH MINISTRY
IN A LOCAL CONGREGATION
A STUDY OF KAREN COMMUNITY
CHURCH-NAIROBI, KENYA

BY

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A Study of Karen Community Church - Nairobi, Kenya

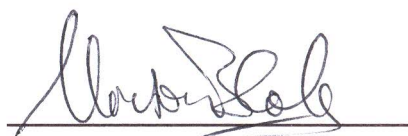
BY

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A Thesis submitted to the graduate school in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Christian Education

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July 10, 1999

Student's Declaration

PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH MINISTRY IN A LOCAL CONGREGATION

A Study of Karen Community Church - Nairobi, Kenya

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other
College or University for academic credit.

(Signed) 

Sandress Elias Mung'ondi Msiska

June, 1999

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate perceptions of youth ministry in a congregation that operates one. Karen Community Church was chosen because it was expected to have fresh and strong ideas of starting and running a youth ministry, for it had started its own youth ministry three years prior to the study. The study focussed on four areas of the youth ministry namely: Rationale, goals, contents, and style. Information was gathered through questionnaires and observations.

The results revealed that the congregation at the time of study did not have one perception of youth ministry. Different sections of the congregation held different opinions of youth ministry. The youths' perception of youth ministry showed some inclination towards putting emphasis on social interactions and relationship building. The church leaders on the other hand, seemed to portray an inclination towards evangelism and discipleship as their main interest in youth ministry. The parents' position was close to that of the church leaders. Consequently the researcher proposed that further research be done to find out the effects of divergent views in a single congregation on the ministries of the church.

Dedicated to:

My three children -

Samuel, Uchindami and Talumba,
who are yet to become teenagers;
my dear wife, Tomaida, who shares my
deep concern for the youths; and
the young people of Karen Community
Church and beyond

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study would not have been done without the strength, wisdom and encouragement I received from the Lord God Almighty who surrounded me with His abounding grace throughout my whole time of study here at NEGST.

I am also deeply indebted to my dear wife, Tomaida for her moral support and also for doing most of the typing and proof reading works. She deprived herself of sleep for several nights to ensure that the work was finished on time.

I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my supervisors, Dr. Victor Cole and Dr. Suraja Raman whose constructive criticisms and advice shaped this work into its present form.

I thank Pastor Fred Nyabera, the leadership, youths and their parents of Karen Community Church for their cooperation in providing the data.

I would also like to acknowledge the help and support I received from students of NEGST. A few need mentioning. Charles and Margaret Muhia Ng'ang'a, Peter Mutisya, John Isoka, Pius Wawire and Chad Erlenborn.

I would not have been able to study at NEGST without the financial support from International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) and Faith Mission Church through NEGST Scholarship Committee.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

The development of specialized ministry for the youths by local congregations and para-church organizations is a relatively recent phenomenon which started mostly in North America and Europe in 1930s and grew rapidly after the end of the second world war (Lamport 1992, 85; McKinney 1990, 73). Now there are specialized youth ministers, directors or workers in numerous churches and organizations offering specialized services to youths. The idea of providing specialized programmes for the youths has become so pervasive that sometimes congregations just do it even without giving much thought to it.

Karen Community church (KCC) was founded in April, 1996 and soon after its establishment the congregation started a youth ministry which is now popularly known as the teens' ministry. It seems there was not much discussion on the nature and scope of teens' ministry the church should have before the launching of the ministry. Perhaps the assumption was that everyone knows what a youth

ministry is. This may be true, but does everyone have the same perception of youth ministry? This study was, therefore, aimed at investigating the views of the members of KCC on what they perceive to be the essence of youth ministry. They were not necessarily expected to describe the youth ministry as it is run in KCC at the moment, but simply give their views on what they consider to be essence and nature of any worthwhile youth ministry.

The term perception can be quite broad and may include a lot of things. For the purpose of this study, four aspects of the concept 'perception' were considered. These were the rationale, goals, content and style of youth ministry. The research was probing into these areas in order to determine what KCC members understand to be the essence of youth ministry.

To put it differently, what do KCC members perceive to be the rationale, goals, content and style of youth or teens ministry?

1.2 Purpose of Study

Many people know or recognize what a youth ministry is when they see it, but to describe it is quite another matter (Lamport 1996, 61). Yet, having a clear understanding of what constitutes youth ministry is vital to having a successful and effective ministry among the youths.

Dettoni has rightly observed that most, if not all, youth workers are programme-oriented people (Dettoni 1993, 17) and that as such, they hardly stop to ask why, in the first place, should there be a youth ministry? Neither are they bothered with definitions or descriptions of what they are trying to do. Their concern and priority are on having a programme that works and produces maximum results. The problem with this kind of approach, however, is that there is a real danger of having programmes that are an end in themselves. Programmes are supposed to be a means to an end and not an end in themselves.

Descriptions provide not only a starting point, but also the scope of what one intends to do (Lamport 1996, 61). They enhance a clear understanding of the task at hand, which is necessary in setting up right priorities and principles that will guide the operations of the ministry.

The purpose of this study was, therefore, to find out from the members of a particular church their perceptions of youth ministry, since their church had been running such a ministry for the past three years. Do all members of this particular church have one clear perception of youth ministry, and are they able to articulate it?

The study was also trying to establish if there are any differences in perceptions among the different segments of the church membership, that is, the leadership of the church, parents and then the youths themselves. These three categories

of people were singled out because the researcher believed that they were the people who naturally would or should have direct interest in and bearing on what is happening in the youth ministry of this particular church.

1.3 Research Questions

From the stated research problem, the following research questions were raised:

- (I). What perceptions, if any, do the members of the KCC have about the rationale of youth ministry?
- (II). What perceptions, if any, do KCC members have about the goals of youth ministry?
- (III). What perceptions, if any, do KCC members have about the content of youth ministry?
- (IV). What perceptions, if any, do the KCC members have about the style of youth ministry?
- (V). Are there any significant differences in perceptions among the various categories of KCC membership?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Paul Borthwick argues that the sheer volume of young people in our world calls upon the church to take youth ministry as a global challenge (Borthwick 1996,

110). According to his estimation, by the year 2000 over half of the world population will be under the age of 25. Many of these people will be in the Two Thirds World (Africa, Asia and Latin America), where some of the countries have more than 50 percent of their population under the age of 15. These objective facts should in themselves make youth ministry a priority for the church.

Related to the magnitude of young people in society and church, is the fact that these young people have their own distinct sub-culture which must be taken into account when presenting the gospel to them. The youth sub-culture usually manifests itself in music, dress, hair style preferences, among other things. The study of youth ministry is therefore significant in the sense that it enables churches to minister to the youths at their own level, thereby enabling young people to be both Christians and youths at the same time.

The study of youth ministry is also significant because there is overwhelming evidence to the fact that the majority of the people who become Christians do so when they are young. Ian Clyne, quoting Chepkwony and Hyde, says that “teenage years are very formative and often crucial for spiritual awakening ..., the prime age for conversion” (Clyne 1997, 4). Borthwick says that in North America it is estimated that 85 percent of the people who become Christians do so between the ages of four and fourteen (Borthwick 1996, 13). It is not only in North America where the majority of people get converted in their early stages of life. On one occasion when the researcher had an opportunity of speaking to the KCC

congregation, he asked how many of them had received Jesus Christ as Lord and savior when they were in primary or secondary schools. More than half of the congregation had their hands up. This showed that even in Africa, there are churches whose majority members were saved while young.

The significance of youth ministry is on the whole widely acknowledged by a cross-section of the Christian community world-wide. This is shown by the fact that most of the existing Christian bodies do have at least a youth desk or department. The proliferation of youth programmes and youth ministries in churches is another testimony to this fact. Also, the great number of volumes of literature on youth work shows that there is considerable interest among Christians in youth ministry. Unfortunately most of the available literature in libraries, including NEGST library, on this subject have been written in the West and largely for the West. There are very few books written from the African perspective.

The dynamics of youth ministry makes it necessary that there be a constant review of and discussion on the nature and status of the ministry. What worked five or ten years ago with teenagers may no longer work with today's teenagers (De Vries 1994, 22). The researcher hoped that by exploring the perceptions of youth ministry of one local congregation, whose leaders and members had fresh memories of starting a youth ministry, he would contribute to the debate on the definition and nature of this vital ministry to the youths.

The choice of Karen Community Church was significant because the youth ministry there was only three years old at the time of this study and all the founders were still there. These were the people one would expect to have fresh and strong opinions about the youth ministry which they had just started. This made KCC a significantly profitable target of study.

1.5 Hypothesis

There will be differences in perceptions of youth ministry among the various categories of the KCC membership.

1.6 Assumptions Made

1. KCC members had some ideas about what a youth ministry should look like.
2. Their ideas were partly informed by their own understanding of biblical teaching and their exposure to what other youth groups in Nairobi and beyond are doing.
3. The older members (parents and leaders) would prefer a youth ministry loaded with serious activities such as teaching, bible studies and prayer, while the youth would be leaning towards having more good time and fun and only a few times of prayer and bible

study.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations

This research was restricted to one local congregation within the city of Nairobi, which came into existence only three years back. Right from the beginning the church felt it necessary to start youth ministry. This may be a reflection of the importance the church members attached to youth ministry. Since most of the leadership and membership of KCC who initiated the youth ministry three years back were still there, the researcher expected this church to have fresh and strong notions of starting and running a youth ministry. An investigation into the perceptions of youth ministry in this church would therefore enable the researcher to get the views of founders or pioneers of a youth ministry. Having established the ministry only three years prior to the time of research they ought to have fresh memories of what they had in mind when they were starting the youth ministry. Their views would probably be stronger than those of the people who have found a system already in place by the time they joined the church. The researcher was aware of the benefits that would have been realized if the research had covered both churches that were pioneering the youth ministry and those that had a long history of running a youth ministry. This limitation, which was duly acknowledged, was a result of the realities of operating with limited resources and within the busy academic schedule.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

- “Youth Ministry” refers to programmes done for or by the youths.
- “Youths” refers to people of ages 13 to 19 years.
- “Membership of KCC” refers to all people who have been attending church services at KCC on regular basis since January 1998.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains a review of substantive literature relevant to the topic being studied. The essence of this chapter is to incorporate into this study what other men and women of ideas and experts on youth ministry have said on this subject. Appropriate methodological literature was also reviewed.

2.1.0 Substantive Literature

2.1.1 Definition of Youth Ministry

Youth ministry is a common practice in many churches. In fact it is so common that people rarely stop to ask what exactly youth ministry is. The youth workers themselves, more often than not, just do it without making the effort of describing it (Dettoni 1993, 17). In reality, however, everyone involved in youth work does have some kind of definition of youth ministry. That is why he or she is able to recognize it when he or she sees it. The problem is how to articulate that definition in clear terms that others can understand and appreciate.

Mark Lamport, writing in Spring 1996, states that up to that time he had not come across a formal definition of youth ministry (Lamport 1996, 61). He then went on to propose the following definition:

...the purposive, determined, and persistent quest by both natural and supernatural means to expose, transmit, or otherwise share with adolescents God's message of goodness, which is central to the Christian faith.

Although Mark Lamport said that he had not, by 1996, seen a formal definition of youth ministry, some forms of definitions did exist by that time. Wesley Black writing in 1991 quotes a more embracing definition made by Bob Taylors who describes youth ministry as "... enabling and mobilizing the gifts of many people to touch, with the truths of the gospel, the lives of youths in every realm of their being" (Black 1991, 29). According to Black, youth ministry is "the sum total of all a church does with, for and to the youths". Even that which the church does to parents of youths that may have direct effect upon the youths is also regarded by Black as part of youth ministry.

Both Lamport and Black allude to the fact that the gospel plays a central role in youth ministry. Simply put then, youth ministry is the deliberate efforts either by the church or individual Christians to bring the gospel to the adolescents in a way that they can understand.

2.1.2 Rationale of Youth Ministry

John Dettoni argues that it is a necessity for youth workers and indeed the church to constantly reflect upon what they do, asking themselves, “why do we do these things?” (Dettoni 1993, 18). This, according to Dettoni, should lead them to articulate their rationale “in a coherent, consistent and unified manner so that some sense can be made of their reasoning.” He goes on to say that a youth ministry that has a clear articulation of its rationale enables the youth workers to make better and more informed choices.

2.1.2.1 Rationale Based on Scripture

The existence of youth ministry within the church is heavily supported by scripture. Everyone is sinful and utterly lost without the saving grace of God. The youths without the gospel are lost. Youth ministry is there so that it may bring the gospel to the youths at their own level (Gangel 1978, 27). That is why the researcher shares the views of those who believe that the word of God is and should be foundational to any viable youth ministry.

Andy Hickford gives another biblical justification for youth ministry. He points out that it is a biblical requirement that each generation of God’s people “should make it a priority to pass on their faith to the next” (Hickford 1996, 46). He quotes from the books of Exodus and Psalms:

And when your children say to you, 'what do you mean by this service?' You shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt when he slew the Egyptians but spared our houses' (Exodus 12:26, 27) RSV.

The things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders he has wrought (Psalms 18:3,4) RSV.

Apart from the mandatory requirement by God that the older generation of His people pass on their faith to the younger generation, Hickford also sees some inferences in the Bible (1 John 2:1-14) that support the idea of churches treating "teenagers as a distinct group, different from both children and adults, and that they require a different style and approach to those of other age groups (Hickford 1996, 42). Here again the researcher is in full agreement with Hickford's interpretation of the scripture.

2.1.2.2 Rationale Based on Ministry's Importance

The importance of youth ministry does not just lie in the fact that it is an effective means of reaching out to the youths for the sake of their own individual souls. Lamport sees it as "an effective tool of incorporating adolescents into the body of Christ, the local church" (Lamport 1996, 66), thereby ensuring the continuity of the church. Eli Buconyori considers the potentiality of youths as an important factor for having youth ministry in the church. "Youths who are saved are part of Christ's church and they are potential theologians, Christian educators,

missionaries, evangelists, pastors and bishops. Ministering to them at this time means preparation of God's workers" (Buconyori 1993, 91). The researcher believes that this utilitarian view, important as it is, must be regarded as secondary to the first one which has been outlined above.

While Benson thinks that the essence of youth ministry lies in the fact that it provides adults with an opportunity to use their contacts with adolescents "to draw them into a maturing relationship with God" (Benson 1987, 15), Black goes further by suggesting that youth ministry is a critical part of the mission of the church. He says that this is especially true because "youths have a unique position of being the people of God today and the promise of God tomorrow" (Black 1991, 13). Dettoni would agree with him when he says that "a church without a youth ministry is a church without a future" (Dettoni 1993, 22).

Lamport is even more bold in claiming that "youth ministry is the most profound ministry of the Christian church today" (Lamport 1996, 65). He substantiates his claim by presenting the findings of a research conducted by Roehlkepartain in 1989 which established the fact that in the West most families considered an effective youth ministry as an important factor in selecting a home church. Although Lamport makes such bold claims for youth ministry, he is also careful about its appropriate role. He says that "the legitimate role of youth ministry is not to usurp the responsibility incumbent upon parents ... but to "provide aid to parents in the spiritual nurture of their teenagers" (Lamport 1996, 66). Lamport's

statement confirms the researcher's belief that the church cannot effectively disciple the youths by simply offering specialized services to them. In addition to running youth programmes, the church needs to equip parents to teach their own children so that what is taught in youth ministry is complemented by parents at home during family devotions and through other avenues.

2.1.3 Basic Contents of Youth Ministry

Fulbright singles out four elements as basic for any youth ministry or programme of Christian Education. They are "worship, instruction, expression and fellowship" (Fulbright 1988, 23). Dettoni would agree with Fulbright in the sense that he too identifies four basic elements as prerequisites for any worthwhile youth ministry. According to Dettoni, any credible youth ministry should at least be teaching the word of God, getting or enabling the adolescents to worship God, providing fellowship to the young people, and then enabling the youths to serve others (Dettoni 1993, 29). Any youth ministry that does not have these elements is seen by Dettoni as a mere counterfeit. The researcher is in full agreement with this position.

Downs on his part looks into the abstract aspects of youth ministry. His concern is an understanding of the nature of faith that is being passed onto the youths. He sees faith as a complex activity made up of three elements: The intellectual element, which is the knowledge aspect of faith; the emotional element, which is

the conviction about the validity of the knowledge and the embracing of it. Last is the volitional element of faith, which involves the choice by will in response to the embraced knowledge. According to Downs, youth ministry must concern itself with these three elements of faith for “any faith that is authentic must have these elements within it” (Downs 1987, 50). Authentic faith may indeed contain these elements. The researcher however, doubts the necessity of youth workers’ understanding of these details in order to have a viable youth ministry.

Buconyori is more practical in his approach. He feels that youth ministry should seek to address various practical problems the adolescents face in everyday life. African youths, for instance, are faced with problems of poverty, unemployment, political instability, tribalism and cultural identity. According to Buconyori, youth ministry for African youths “must find satisfactory answers” to these questions (Buconyori 1993, 50). The author believes that Buconyori’s point should be viewed as complimentary to Dettoni’s statement rather than an opposing view.

2.1.4 Goals and Objectives of Youth Ministry

Hickford starts the discussion on goals and objectives of youth ministry by emphasizing the importance of having clearly stated aim and objectives before starting the work. He says that “if you aim at nothing you will certainly hit it” (Hickford 1996, 40). In his opinion, “to present people perfect in Christ Jesus, and this is possible only through the saving work of Christ on the cross (Romans 5:6-

12), should be our main goal and objective in youth ministry” (Hickford 1996, 44).

The goal of youth ministry is not to have meetings, Trutzschler emphasizes, neither is it a matter of having a lot of exciting activities - good as these may be (Trutzschler 1983, 39). The ultimate goal of any valid youth ministry is to have youths who put their faith in Christ, are being led by the Holy Spirit into His truth and holiness and are growing more Christlike as they practice Christian morality and ethics (Dettoni 1993, 23). Dettoni goes on to say that the objectives of youth ministry should therefore include reaching youths at their various developmental levels so that what is communicated to them is understood and received.

2.1.4.1 Nature of Goals and Objectives

Borthwick, in making a contribution to this discussion, looks at the scope of youth ministry. According to him youth ministry should be dedicated to the development of the whole person - based on the holistic growth of Jesus Christ as recorded in Luke 2:52. (Borthwick 1996, 16) “And Jesus increased in wisdom (intellectually), stature (physically), favor with God (spiritually) and favor with man (socially)”. Youth ministry should therefore aim at facilitating growth into all these four areas of the youths’ lives. Dettoni is also in full agreement with this point of view (Dettoni 1993, 23). The researcher, however, believes that much as the church would desire to see growth in all these four areas, he wonders if the church is equipped to facilitate growth in all of these areas. The church would do well to

limit itself to the areas in which it is capable of doing well. The researcher's view is that the church should make spiritual development of a person its priority, not because other areas of development are less important, but because they can easily be handled by other institutions such as hospitals and schools. The church alone can successfully handle the spiritual aspect of mankind.

Lamport thinks that emphasis should be on the spiritual aspect of life and not necessarily the whole person. As far as he is concerned, the ultimate end of a youth ministry should be "to cultivate a life transformation of youths by the power of the Holy Spirit that they might be conformed to the revealed will of God as expressed in scripture, and chiefly in the person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Lamport 1996, 63). Lamport does acknowledge the fact that the spiritual growth of the youth does not happen in isolation but within the setting of a community. He therefore says that "the goal of youth ministry is to enable youths to respond to Jesus in a community of love and acceptance, and growth as individuals as they minister to one another, to the total church and to society" (Lamport 1996, 63).

2.1.4.2 Relationship Between Youth Ministry and Church Goals

Downs sees the goal of youth ministry as two-fold - outreach and nurture. According to him, "effective youth ministry will always have an evangelistic passion, but it must also focus on building up teens in their faith" (Downs 1987, 49). This, in many ways, sounds like the goal of the whole church and not just

youth ministry. Esther Megill would say that, that is what is supposed to be. According to her, the objectives of Christian Education for youths should be similar to, if not the same as, those of the Christian Education for the whole church (Megill 1976, 126).

We end this discussion with a word of caution from Joseph Morenammele who, having carried out an evaluation study of the youth programme of Nairobi Baptist Church in 1996, recommends that “youth programme objectives should be made on the basis of verified youth felt needs.” He reminds us of the necessity of linking activities with stated goals and objectives to ensure relevance, and for every objective there must be a specific activity that is geared to meeting it (Morenammele 1996, 65).

2.1.5 Style of Youth Ministry

Borthwick identifies four principles that would make youth ministry effective and successful (Borthwick 1996, 19-20). First, youth ministry should be relationally driven rather than task-oriented. Secondly, it should be incarnational in the sense that leaders should identify themselves with the lifestyle and challenges of youths and be the role models for them. Third, it should be holistic in nature, and fourthly, youth ministry should be an agent of hope to the youths who have no hope for the future. Of course most of this boils down to what Lefever calls creative method of ministry. Creative method requires that the learner and not the

teacher be the central focus of the learning activity (Lefever 1978, 406). This has a lot to do with the youth leaders or pastors. Apart from being intelligent, they need to be warm and loving. It is not just meetings or activities that the adolescents want. They also want to know that their teacher or leader loves and cares for them, for who they are. The youth pastor should therefore make efforts to spend time with individual members of the youth group (Trutzschler 1983, 40). The researcher also believes that warm relationship among youths themselves is also important if the youth ministry is to succeed. This means that the youth ministry should be operated in such a way that it meets not only the spiritual but also the social needs of the young people.

2.1.5.1 Learning Styles of Youths

Lefever says that if any learning is to take place in any youth ministry, it is expedient that youth workers take into consideration the learning styles of members of their groups. Using terms coined by McCarthy, she outlines the four learning styles as follows: analytical learners, innovative learners, common sense learners and dynamic learner (Lefever 1985, 12). She believes that knowledge of learning styles is a tool God has given us to enable us to do better the important work he has assigned us among the youths. This is actually the whole purpose of having youth ministry as a separate entity. It is in recognition of the fact that youths learn differently and as such must be taught separately and in their own way.

2.1.5.2 Jesus' Teaching Style

Oestreicher suggests a biblical approach which he says was followed by Jesus Christ. Not that Jesus Christ had a youth ministry, but he thinks that the informal approach Jesus followed in teaching his followers can be adopted for a youth ministry (Oestreicher 1991, 22). Oestreicher observes that Jesus spent the first part of his public life making or establishing relationships and thereafter he selected twelve disciples out of those who had shown interest in his ministry. He then spent more time with the twelve than anyone else before entrusting them with the responsibility of continuing with the work he had begun. Oestreicher thinks that youth workers also ought to identify a few able youths, train them and then use them to minister to other youths. The researcher believes that very few people would disagree with this approach. In fact he himself has used this method in the students' ministry for seven years and knows from experience that this approach works very well with the youths.

2.1.5.3 Teaching Styles

While Lefever looks at the learning style, David Gosnell is concerned with the teaching styles, which is another side of the same coin. He argues that although lecturing may be the easiest method of teaching, it is the least effective method of instructing teenagers (Gosnell 1989, 22). He therefore advocates the use of group discussion, brainstorming sessions, role-playing, neighbor nudge, panel

discussion, debate and article or lyric writings.

David Carlson employs commercial language. He says that in youth work we use two primary styles of ministry, that is, 'selling' - the ability to persuade and 'telling' - the ability to make clear the truths of scriptures (Carlson 1987, 407). So, according to him, effective youth workers are either charismatic personalities that make 'selling' possible by persuading teenagers to believe in Christ or people who are gifted in 'telling', that is, relating biblical truths to the teens' lives. In other words, Carlson is advocating a kind of youth ministry that revolves around charismatic personalities (evangelists) and gifted teachers. He goes on to say that 'telling' and 'selling' may not necessarily work all the time for all teenagers. Some of them may want the youth worker to talk with them over the questions, issues, problems or needs which they have. This is where counseling comes in. Carlson regards counseling as a vital style of youth ministry. Here the researcher's view is that charismatic personalities would easily attract youths to themselves since teenagers naturally are hero worshipers. However the problem with such type of ministry is that the charismatic leader tends to have youths become dependent upon him or her so much that they fail to develop their own potentiality. An effective youth ministry is the one that frees people to develop their potentialities and gifts that the Lord has given them.

2.2.0. Methodological Literature Review

Methodological Literature Review serves the purpose of providing the researcher with the various research methods and shows the researcher what possible options are available to him or her as he or she goes about planning the research work.

Much of research in education and in other fields is largely limited to observation and classification (Engelhart 1972, 12). This is a descriptive research and as such the researcher has incorporated into this study, literature review relevant to a descriptive study. The purpose of a descriptive study is to provide an accurate description of the phenomenon (Sogaard 1996, 98).

2.2.1 Collection of Data

All research, whether descriptive or otherwise, begins with the recognition of a problem (Engelhart 1972, 12). The problem may be unexplained or inadequately explained phenomenon. According to Engelhart, after recognition of the problem, the next stage is the definition of the research objectives followed by the formulation of the actual research plan. The researcher has to decide how he or she is going to collect the data - whether it is by observation, using questionnaires or personal interviews. Tyrus Hillway observes that personal interviews require skills in winning confidence of the respondents and the ability "to record

accurately and at the time of the response the answers given by the respondents” (Hillway 1964, 201).

Where it is not possible to collect information from every element of the population, sampling method is used. “In a sample we choose a subset from a large group to represent the whole group” (Sogaard 1996, 110). This means that the subset should be carefully chosen to be truly representative of the whole population. According to Sogaard, the advantages of sampling, among other things, include saving time and money. In this study, however, there was no sampling because the population was small and manageable.

2.2.2 Formulation of Questionnaires

After the subject has been identified, the researcher may choose to get information from it by using a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a “formalized way of collecting data from respondents” (Sogaard 1996, 128). Hillway identifies two types of questionnaires - open and closed form of questionnaires. Open form questionnaires are the ones in which questions are asked in such a way that the respondent answers in his or her own words. “Closed form, on the other hand, suggests the possible answers to each question” (Hillway 1964, 203). The researcher feels that one advantage of the closed form is that it makes life a bit easy for the respondent and that is why he has opted for this type of instrument in this study.

Borg and Gall advise that “each item on your questionnaire must be developed to measure a specific aspect of your objectives or hypothesis” (Borg and Gall 1989, 427). They also emphasize on the importance of framing question in a language that respondents will easily understand. Sogaard would be in full agreement with them in urging for careful thought in constructing questionnaires. “We need to consider the main components of a questionnaire, the questions themselves, the format for response, how to phrase questions and work on the layout of the form itself” (Sogaard 1996, 130).

The questionnaire should go through several stages of formation before it is administered to the respondent. According to Engelhart, “The first draft of a questionnaire should be submitted to competent person for criticism”. Thereafter it should go for a preliminary trial by persons typical of the proposed respondents (Engelhart 1972, 101). The process of forming the questionnaires for this study will be adequately discussed in chapter three. It may be sufficient at this stage, just to mention that the whole instrument-building process went through four main stages. The researcher also tried to heed Engelhart’s advice, which says that an attractive-looking questionnaire is more likely to receive better attention than the one that is not appealing.

2.2.3 Data Processing

If the data is to be tabulated by hand then a tabulation form should be designed in advance (Engelhart 1972, 104). The most helpful tabulation, according to Sogaard, is the frequency count. It is helpful in providing a general picture without the underlying dynamics (Sogaard 1996, 190). So if the researcher wants to bring out the different responses from the different sections of the population, "it is usually helpful to cross-tabulate" the main sub-groups of the population (Ibid, 190). In this study, the researcher identified three main sub-groups and appropriate tables were designed into which the results were cross-tabulated.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This is a descriptive study that took the form of a survey aimed at investigating perceptions of youth ministry currently held by members of Karen Community Church. To get a fair overview of the views of the church, three categories of people, who have or should have direct interest in and influence on youth ministry in KCC, were targeted. These are the Initiative Committee, who provide the overall leadership of the church; the parents, who have their teenagers in the youth ministry at KCC and the youths themselves together with their leaders. It was from these three categories of KCC members that perceptions of youth ministry were sought.

The three categories identified above formed the entire population for this study. There were ten members of the Initiative Committee, about twenty parents and thirty youths at the time the research was conducted. There were therefore about sixty people altogether from whom the researcher expected to obtain information.

3.2 Permission for Study at KCC

The researcher first of all had some informal discussion with the pastor of KCC. The aim of the discussion was to seek the pastor's approval for carrying out a study in his church. The purpose of the study and the method of collecting information from the members were explained to the pastor. Thereafter the researcher asked the pastor for his support in ensuring the cooperation of the members in answering and returning the questionnaires. The pastor was understanding and expressed his willingness to assist in any way possible. The researcher also obtained a formal letter of introduction from the NEGST Vice Principal for Academic Affairs to back his request for permission and cooperation in carrying out the research in KCC.

3.3 Collection of Data through Questionnaires

Information for the study was gathered by administering two questionnaires and by personal observation of the youth programmes. The questionnaires were personally handed out to the respondents by the researcher himself at the end of a church service. The informants were asked to take some five to ten minutes to respond to the questionnaires since they were a closed type and as such it should not take them a lot of time. He also made an allowance for those who could not do it there and then. He asked them to take the questionnaires home and answer the questions at their own free time and return the questionnaires to the

researcher the following Sunday. The researcher was fully aware of the fact that some respondents might not return the questionnaires, but in a situation like that, one could only hope for the best response. The majority of the youths filled in the questionnaire and returned it at the same time, but all the parents and church leaders took the questionnaire home. It took three more Sundays to get 80% of the questionnaires back.

3.4 Collection of Data through Observation

The researcher believed that some aspects of the church's perception of a ministry could be observed in the way they run that particular ministry. The researcher therefore made observations of the contents and style of youth ministry at KCC by attending at least four sessions of the youth meetings. During the observation, the researcher was looking at the kinds of programmes they have, the topics covered in their teachings and the method of teaching employed. He was also observing the reaction of the teenagers in each of the programmes and the kind of relationship existing between the youths and their leaders. The information obtained was recorded in the observation table which had been prepared in advance. (See table 6 on page 41)

3.5 Preparation of the Questionnaires

This study had four substantive research questions and the fifth question was simply trying to establish whether or not there are any differences in perceptions among the various categories of the KCC membership. The questionnaires were therefore designed to obtain information along the lines of the four substantive research questions. There was at least one question item on the questionnaires addressing each research question. There were two types of questionnaires. One was for the youths and the other one was for parents and church leaders.

In preparing the questionnaires the goal was to design instruments that were user friendly by asking questions in simple and straightforward language. The formulation of questionnaires went through a four-stage process. The first stage in forming the questionnaires was to have some informal discussions with some KCC members. The aim of the discussion was to obtain a rough idea of their views on youth ministry. The information obtained was used by the researcher in forming questions for the questionnaires, most of which were in closed form. In determining the range of options for the individual questions, the researcher was guided by the information gathered from these members and his own research assumptions, which had been informed by the literature review.

After the questions had been formulated, the researcher took them together with his written research objectives to some of the students of Nairobi Evangelical

Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) who, by virtue of having taken Educational Research Methods course, had some idea of what a good questionnaire should look like. He discussed the draft questionnaires with them in the light of the research objectives. The researcher then made relevant changes to his draft in accordance with the comments of his colleagues. After that he took the second draft questionnaires and the copy of the research objectives to his supervisor for further comments or criticism. The researcher again modified the questions in accordance with the lecturer's comments. To secure some kind of consistency of responses, some questions were restated in slightly different ways. That, in a way, got the respondents to answer some questions more than once.

3.6 Pilot-Testing

When the researcher was satisfied with the kind of questionnaires he had at the end of consultation with the other Research students and his supervisor, he then did pilot-test the instrument before taking it to the actual intended target group. Through the help of another NEGST student he made contact with the leadership of Africa Inland Church of Ngong Road and asked for permission to have a pilot test of his questionnaires there. Permission was granted. This church was chosen because it is one of the churches in Nairobi that operates a youth ministry. Two church leaders, five parents, and five youths, twelve in all, were asked to answer the questionnaires at the end of the church service. The aim of pilot-testing is to

ensure that the questions on the questionnaire were not vague or too general. After analyzing the responses of the pilot test, the researcher noted that the items on the questionnaires had yielded the expected responses. He was therefore convinced that the respondents had understood the questions and that the questions were not vague. There was therefore, no need to make further changes to the questionnaires. The questionnaires were then administered among KCC members who were the real intended target of this study.

3.7 Data Processing

Being a descriptive research, the data collected ~~were~~^{was} analyzed by using percentages and ~~were~~^{was} tabulated. The results have been presented in tables and bars chart. For better understanding of the youths' responses, data from the youths were further sub-divided into junior (13 - 15) and senior (16 - 19) teenagers. It was planned this way because the researcher suspected that there might be differences of opinion between the junior and senior teenagers.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1.0 Results of the study

This chapter explains in detail how the data for the research were analyzed and interpreted. The analysis was carried out in accordance with the methodology described in the previous chapter. A discussion built around the results of the analysis is also included in this chapter.

4.1.1 Distributed and returned questionnaires

Copies of the questionnaires were distributed and returned as shown in table 1 below. In planning, the researcher had aimed at distributing the questionnaires to thirty teenagers, but it turned out that within the three Sundays when he was administering the questionnaires he could not get more than twenty-five youths. Some youths had either gone to boarding schools or simply did not come to church in those three weeks. However, for the parents and church leaders the target number was reached.

Table 1 : Distributed and returned questionnaires

Category	Numbers given out	Numbers returned	% Return
Teenagers	25	20	80
Parents	20	16	80
Church Leaders	10	8	80
Totals	55	44	80

Although the researcher had expected a higher rate of return, after waiting for three weeks he settled for what he had received. He believed that an average return of 80% would give results that would be a realistic representation of the target group. As per plan, the results were processed in percentages and presented in tables and bar charts. The information obtained was used to answer the research questions and confirm the hypothesis.

4.1.2 KCC's Views on Rationale of Youth Ministry

R.Q. 1: What perceptions, if any, do the members of KCC have about the rationale of the youth ministry?

Four options were given to the KCC members from which they were asked to choose what they considered to be the most important rationale for having a youth

ministry in the church. The results of their answers are shown in table 2 below:

Table 2: Choices of rationale of youth ministry

Rationale	Teenagers (%)	Parents (%)	Church Leaders (%)
To Evangelize and disciple youths	18	52	65
To attract youths to church	24	27	0
To promote fellowship among youths	55	21	8
For growth of the church	3	0	27

Evangelism and discipleship rated highly among parents and church leaders. More than 50% of the responses of parents and church leaders chose evangelism and discipleship as the most important rationale of the youth ministry. Contrast that with 18% score by the youths for the same option. Promotion of fellowship scored highly among the youths with more than 50% of the responses. The parents and church leaders gave this option only 21 and 8 percents respectively. The idea of attracting youths to church found its strongest support among parents scoring 27% followed by youths with 24%.

4.1.3 Perceptions of Goals of Youth Ministry in KCC

R.Q. 2. What perceptions, if any, do KCC members have about the goals of youth ministry?

The respondents were asked to choose from among four options on what they considered to be the most important goal for youth ministry in the church. The options and the results reflecting their preferences are shown in table 3 below:

Table 3: Choices of goals of the youth ministry

Goals	Teenagers (%)	Parents (%)	Church Leaders (%)
To promote unity among youths	5	0	6
To develop gifts and talents of youths	32	6	0
To promote spiritual growth	63	94	94
To create a community of love	0	0	0

Parents and church leaders overwhelmingly (94%) chose promotion of spiritual growth as the most important goal of the youth ministry. The same option received 63% of support from the youths. Thirty-two percent of the youths chose development of gifts and talents as the most important goal. No one reported

creation of a community of love as the most important goal of youth ministry in the church.

4.1.4 Perceptions about the Contents of Youth Ministry

R.Q.3. What perceptions, if any, do KCC members have about the contents of youth ministry?

Basically five sets of activities were presented to the respondents from which they were to choose what they considered to be the most important contents of any viable youth ministry and the results were as indicated in table 4 below.

Table 4: Preferences of contents of the youth ministry

Contents	Teenagers (%)	Parents (%)	Church Leaders (%)
Interactive Bible study/teaching	60	81	88
Singing and Worship	25	6	12
Fun Days and Drama	0	5	0
Camps and Retreats	15	8	0

Church leaders reported the highest score (88%) in favour of interactive Bible study or teaching sessions as the most important component of the youth ministry. They were followed by parents with 81% and then the youths themselves with 60%. Singing and worship were second in preference among youths (25%) and church leaders (12 %). For parents camps and retreats were their second choice with 8%. Fifteen percent of the youths also chose camps and retreats as the most important element of youth ministry.

4.1.5 KCC's Perceptions of Style of Youth Ministry

R.Q.4. What perceptions, if any, do the KCC members have about the style of youth ministry?

The question of style was divided into two parts: the general style of the whole ministry and the style displayed by the teachers or leaders of any viable youth ministry. The results are shown in table 5(a) below.

Table 5a: Preferences of general style of the youth ministry

General Style of Ministry	Teenagers (%)	Parents (%)	Church leaders (%)
Preaching and lecturing	5	0	0
Counseling	5	0	0
Emphasis on relationship than tasks	60	50	63
Informal for the most part	15	30	37
Youths deciding for themselves	15	20	0

The preferred youth ministry style is the one that puts more emphasis on relationships than tasks. This particular option scored 60%, 50% and 63% among youths, parents and church leaders respectively. The second choice was that the ministry should be informal for the most part with 15%, 30% and 37% of responses among youths, parents and church leaders respectively. Twenty percent of the parents reported a desire to see a youth ministry in which the youths decide for themselves what they want. Fifteen percent of the youths also favoured that style of ministry.

Table 5b: Preferences of teachers' style.

Preferences of Teachers Style	Teenagers (%)	Parents (%)	Church Leaders (%)
Displaying skills in teaching	10	20	24
Having good relationship with youths	70	60	38
Living exemplary lifestyle	20	20	38

The majority of youths (70%) and parents (60%) prefer a youth leader who has good relationship with the youths. Only 38 % of the church leaders hold this perception. The second preferred teachers style is that of living exemplary life which scored 20 %, 20% and 38% among youths, parents and church leaders respectively. Displaying skills in teaching rated third with scores of 10%, 20 % and 24% among youths, parents and church leaders respectively.

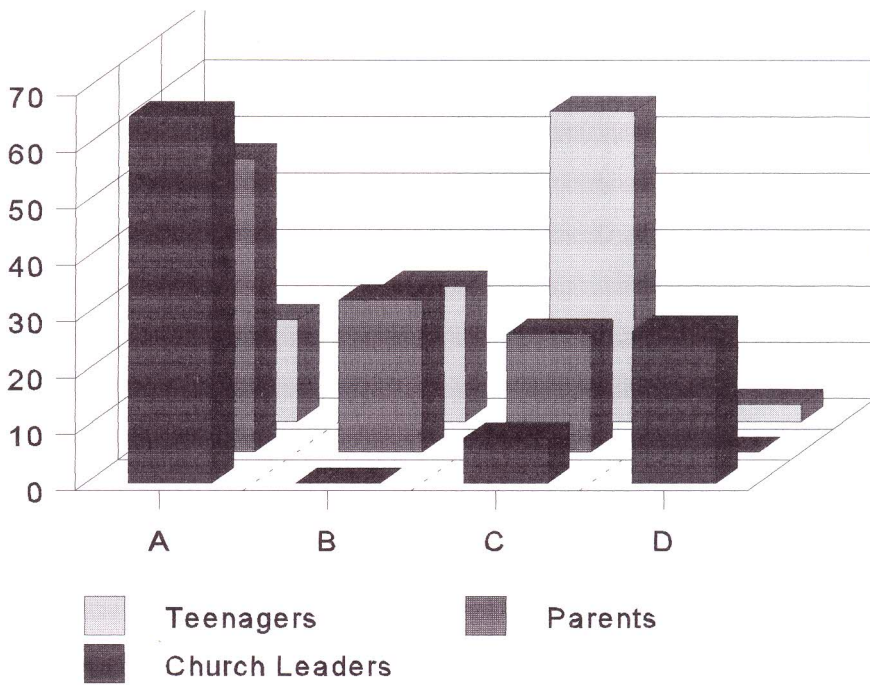
4.1.6 Differences in Perceptions

R.Q.5. Are there any differences in perception of youth ministry among the various categories of KCC membership?

Results from the study show that there are some differences in perceptions of youth ministry among the various categories of KCC membership. These

differences in perceptions are more apparent in some areas than others. For example, the youths' perception of preferred rationale is obviously different from that of the parents and church leaders. (See fig. 1). Church leaders' perception of the preferred teacher's style differs considerably with that of the parents and the youths (see fig 2). However, these apparent differences cannot be ascertained since the test of significance was not performed.

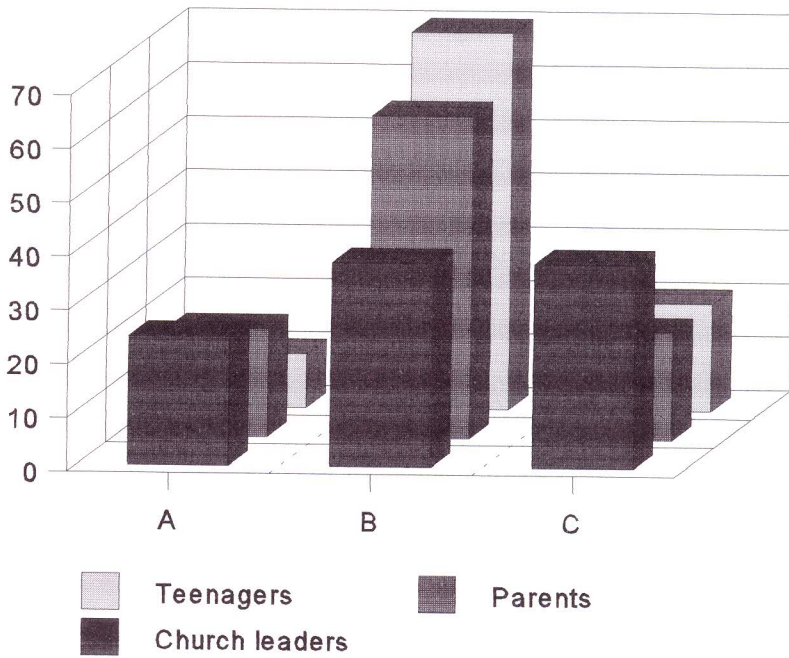
Figure 1. Preferences of rationale (in percentages) among different groups



KEY:

- A = Evangelism and discipleship
- B = Attraction of youths to church
- C = Promotion of fellowship among youths
- D = For growth of church

Figure 2. Preferences of Teachers style (in percentages)



KEY

- A = Displaying skills in teaching
- B = Having good relationship with youths
- C = Living exemplary lifestyle

4.1.7 Results from Personal Observation

Table 6. Observations of youth meetings

Contents	Style	Frequency	Time allocated
Bible study	High participation of teens in discussions	2	30 minutes each study
Fun Day	Led by teen. They were left alone to do whatever they wanted.	1	30 minutes
Teaching on a specific topic	A lot of interactions between teacher and teens	1	30 minutes

The researcher did make observations of the youth meetings as planned. There was a quarterly programme that was being followed. All the Bible studies of that quarter were coming from one book on discipleship. The youths had copies of this book and they were being encouraged to read and prepare in advance for the discussion. The teacher was simply directing discussion by reading out the questions from the book. Discussions were lively and participation was high. The separation of youths into junior and senior youths helped greatly in the sense that the younger boys and girls participated in the discussions more freely than when they were mixed with the older boys and girls.

The 'Fun Days' programmes, according to the leaders of youth ministry, were meant to help the youths to socialise and interact with one another. The particular 'Fun Day' programme that the researcher attended seemed unorganised. The leader for that day, who was one of the youths, asked for volunteers to come up with jokes or games. Soon there was much giggling and laughing in the place as individuals tried to perform comical tricks. Not everyone got involved. One boy was reading his novel, unconcerned with what was going on. Three other boys stood in the corner talking to one another and they seemed uninterested in what the rest were doing. The researcher noted that that kind of programme deserved some comments from church leaders.

The teaching session observed was on the subject of 'Relationships'. The teacher handled the subject by asking the teens a lot of questions on what they knew about relationships, advantages and disadvantages of relationships between people of opposite sexes. Soon there were more people willing to contribute than time could allow. In the end the teacher concluded his lesson by giving a summary of what he thought were important points for the youths to remember.

The researcher also noted that there were no regular teachers at the time of study. Different people were being asked to come and teach or lead discussion each Sunday. The implication of that was that the youths were not able to build any relationship with those teachers who came once in a while.

4.1.8 Differences between Junior and Senior Youths

So far we have been talking of the youth as one single group. The researcher, however, did divide the youths into two groups. Junior youths (13-15 years of age) and senior youths (16 years and above). He made this division because he was suspecting that there might be some differences of opinion between these two groups. The results, however, show that there was not much difference in terms of their opinions and that is why the results have not been recorded in two separate columns for youths.

There is, however, one exception which should be pointed out. On the style of teachers it was the junior youths who came out more strongly (87%) in support of the idea that the teacher should have a good relationship with them. The proportion of the senior youths who opted for this style was close to that of their parents. Only 58% of the senior youths supported this idea.

4.1.9 Results from Open-ended Questions

Responses from the open-ended questions also show some kind of pattern. The teenagers again mentioned, in a number of ways, the importance of having teachers who could relate meaningfully with them. Other responses stated that to improve the youth ministry the church needs to have teachers who are well trained and are lively in their teaching, among other things (see Table 7 below).

Table 7. *Suggestions from the youths on how youth ministry could be improved*

Suggestion	Number of responses
- Improve communication and understanding among members	1
- Have more exciting programmes instead of just talking	1
- Don't waste time at the beginning of programmes	1
- Have more drama, singing and concerts	2
- Have more fun and outdoor activities	2
- Teachers should be lively and friendly	1
- Have lively singing and hikes	1
- Have more discussions where both teachers and teens participate	2
- Teens should have more time together	2
- Organise retreats regularly	1
- Have discussions related to life and scripture	2
-Have trained teachers	1
-Teachers should relate well with teens	1
-Teens should open up and freely share their life experiences	4
-Involve teens more in decision making	1
-Teens should pray and work together more	1

The most glaring fact is the absence in their suggestions of any desire to be involved in the church activities which seems to be the concern of some parents as indicated in the summary of their suggestions in table 12 below. Two of the parents suggested that to improve the youth ministry the church needs to involve the teens in church programmes more regularly. The church leaders were silent on this matter. Instead there was an interesting suggestion from the church leaders. They suggested the involvement of the parents of youths in the youth ministry as a way of improving the ministry. No parent indicated willingness to be involved in youth ministry as a way of improving it. The idea that youths should participate more in decision making concerning their ministry has been mentioned both by parents and the youth themselves.

Table 8. Suggestions from parents and church leaders on how youth ministry could be improved

Suggestions	Parents	Leaders
- Involve parents	0	1
- Teachers should be young in order to relate meaningfully with the youth	1	1
- Teens should meet more than once in a week	1	1
- Allow them more participation in church	2	0
- Teens should participate in making decision concerning their programmes	2	0
- Teens programmes should be prepared well in advance	1	0
- Teens programmes should be evaluated regularly	1	0
- More camps, retreats and drama	1	0
- Teachers should develop personal relationships with teens	1	0
- More of activities which will help teens build relationship with one another and grow spiritually	0	1
- Have a strategic plan for the whole year	1	1

The youths perception of youth ministry is also reflected in their responses to the question about their preferred programmes. Five of them mentioned group discussion or Bible study as their favourite programme. The other programme that

was mentioned by three people was retreat. The most revealing part of these responses is their reason for their choices. Six of the responses said that they chose those particular programmes because they helped them in knowing and understanding one another (see Tables 9 and 10 below).

Table 9. Most interesting programmes or activities of youth ministry as indicated by the youths

Activity	Number of responses
- Retreat	3
- Christmas carols	1
- Fellowship	2
- Concerts	1
- Group Discussions or interactive Bible study	5
- Fun Days	1
- Drama	1
- Worship	1
- Singing	1

Table 10. Reasons for choices of programmes

Reason	Number of responses
-Knowing and understanding one another better	6
-It is exciting	1
-I just like it	1
-It helps us clarify our beliefs	1
-It gives us desire for worship	1
-It helps us discover and develop our talents	2
-Learning from God's word	1
-Learning from one another	3
-For growth	1

4.1.10 Confirmation of hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research was that there will be differences in perceptions of the youth ministry among various sections of the KCC membership. The results of the study, as presented above, have confirmed the hypothesis. However, this confirmation could not be verified because the test of significance was not done. All that can be said is that some considerable differences of opinion have emerged, especially in the areas of rationale and style of the youth ministry.

4.2.0 Discussions and Inferences

Since this study was concerned with probing into perceptions of youth ministry held by a local congregation which runs a youth ministry of its own, it is assumed that the ideas presented in this finding reflect not only what is, but also what ought to be the case of a good and effective youth ministry. Most of the items on the questionnaires required the respondents to describe the ideal ministry and not necessarily the KCC youth ministry. The respondents were, however, expected to do that in the light of their own youth ministry.

Most of the questions were in a closed-ended form. The respondents were given a set of alternatives from which they were to choose only one which best described their opinion of youth ministry. All the alternatives given were relevant and so by choosing one alternative and leaving out others the respondents were not necessarily rejecting the others but were simply indicating their preferred or best opinion.

4.2.1 Different Perceptions of Rationale

Parents and church leaders had two question items designed to obtain information concerning the rationale of youth ministry. The youths had only one item on rationale. The results show that there is a stronger feeling among the older members of the church (parents and church leaders) that the youth ministry

exists or should exist for the purpose of evangelism and discipleship of the youths. This same item comes third in the youths preferences of the rationale. What scored the highest among the youths was promotion of fellowship. Ironically the same item came third in preference among the parents and church leaders. *This difference in preference of rationale is probably a reflection of the differences of felt needs between the youths and the older members of the church.* While the youths' greatest felt need is fellowship and friendships, the parents' and leaders' (most of whom are also parents) desire and concern is to see the youths saved. As Andrew Murry has rightly observed, "Among all earnest parents there is the desire that as their children grow up they may come forward to make personal confession of the faith in which they have been raised" (Murry 1975, 133).

4.2.2 Trends in Perceptions of Goals

In both sets of questionnaires there were two items requiring respondents to give their preferred goals of youth ministry. The results show that there is a similar trend in choices of preferred goals among all the three groups. Promotion of spiritual growth rated as the most preferred goal of youth ministry by all the three groups. The only difference worth noting is that while 94% of parents and leaders chose this alternative, only 63% of the youths chose this alternative. There is therefore some kind of consistency among parents and church leaders in their desire to see the youth ministry as a vehicle for spiritual birth (through evangelism) and spiritual growth (through discipleship). The parents' and leaders'

position agrees with that of Trutzschler who insists that the ultimate goal of youth ministry is to have youths put their faith in God (Trutzschler 1983, 39). The youths responses here are somehow inconsistent with their preferences in rationale. If they were consistent with their choice of rationale one would have expected them to choose creation of a community of love as their preferred goal.

4.2.3 Preferences of Youth Ministry Content

All the three groups agree in their choice of interactive Bible studies and teachings as the preferred component of youth ministry. Eighty percent of the parents and church leaders chose this alternative . Although the same alternative came first among the choices of the youths, only 60%of them registered it as their preferred ministry content. Again parents and church leaders demonstrated consistency in their strong belief in the importance of the word of God and discipleship. The responses from the youths indicate that they do enjoy Bible studies and teaching sessions, but other programmes such as singing, camps and retreats are also important to them. Fulbright would agree with this position since he is an advocate of youth programmes that contain worship, instruction, expression and fellowship (Fulbright 1988, 23).

4.2.4 Preferences of General Style of the Youth Ministry

This is one area where some considerable differences of opinion have emerged between parents and church leaders. Parents' choices of preferred style of the ministry are spread over three alternatives. They prefer a ministry that is relational in outlook (50%); informal for the most part (30%) and one that allows youths freedom to make decisions on how to run the ministry (20%). These findings agree with the observations of Borthwick who says that for youth ministry to be successful it has to be relationally driven rather than task oriented (Borthwick 1996, 19-20). Church leaders did not think that allowing youths to decide for themselves was a priority in the style of youth ministry. But as Lefever points out, there can be no real creative teaching without putting youths at the centre of the ministry (Lefever 1978, 406). This involves including them in decision making process. The researcher notes that these differences of opinion as revealed by this study have the potential of affecting the ministry in one way or the other. Another important point to note is that only 15% of the youths indicated that involvement in decision making was their preferred ministry style. Despite these differences all the three groups placed "relational in outlook" at the top of the list. For the youths this was quite consistent with their choice of the preferred rationale of the ministry.

4.2.5 Perceptions of Teachers' Style

The youths, especially the junior ones, came out very strongly in support of the idea of having a teacher who has good relationship with them. Sixty percent of the parents' responses also supported that idea while only 38% of the church leaders chose that alternative as the preferred teachers style. This choice of preferred teachers style shows that the youths are not only interested in having good and growing relationship among themselves, but that they also desire a thriving relationship with some mature persons, such as their teachers. These findings agree with those of Morenammele, who did an evaluation study of Nairobi Baptist Church (Morenammele 1996, 65). The advice of Lefever is quite relevant here. Young people want to know that their teacher loves them for who they are (Lefever 1978, 406). These results also reveal some differences of opinion between parents and church leaders. Church leaders have demonstrated more consistency in their perceptions by rating the training and skills of the teacher higher (25%) than other groups. They seem to prefer teachers who not only teach with their words but also by the way they live. Thus the alternative of living exemplary life scored highly (38%) among leaders. All this is consistent with the leaders' strong commitment to discipleship as the most important rationale of youth ministry.

4.2.6 Perceptions Derived from Open-ended Questions

Responses to the question on improvement of youth ministry were many and varied. The question was asking respondents to look at the youth ministry as it was at KCC at the time of the study and then make suggestions of what could be done to improve it.

Suggestions made by the youths were consistent with their desire to have a ministry focussed on relationship building and led by dynamic teachers. Five (25%) suggestions made were concerning the teachers. The message from the youths is clear. The church needs to do something to improve the state of teachers in the youth ministry. The proposal by Oestreicher that we adopt Jesus' style in ministry may be helpful here. Oestreicher observes that Jesus spent time with his disciples to build relationship with them as part of his training strategy (Oestreicher 1981, 22).

Two parents also suggested the need for improvement on the part of teachers. Four youths (20%) suggested that the youths should become more free with one another so that they could share more freely. This suggestion implies that, although youths desire good relationships with one another, somehow the development of such relationships has not been as easy as they expected it to be. These suggestions show that there are at least some youths who are not open to or free with the other youths within the fellowship. This suggestion lends weight

to the observation the researcher made on the 'Fun Day' programme where he saw some cliques or individuals keeping to themselves, uninterested in what others were doing.

In their naming of the most interesting programme, again five of them (25%) indicated that interactive Bible studies and discussion were their favourite programmes. This was consistent with their choice of preferred contents of the ministry. Many other activities such as singing, retreats or Christmas carols were also mentioned. A summary of reasons for their choices shows that six (30%) of them chose whatever programme they chose because they believed that that particular programme helped them in understanding one another. This reason echoes the youths need or desire of trying to get close to one another.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 Background to the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate from members of one congregation, Karen Community Church, what their perceptions of youth ministry were. The researcher was also interested in finding out if all the members held similar views of youth ministry. In order to get a clear picture of their perception, four aspects of youth ministry - rationale, goals, contents and styles were singled out. Four Research questions were drawn to probe into these aspects.

The significance of this study rests in the importance churches, para-church organizations and parents attach to youth ministry. In addition there is overwhelming evidence to reveal that the majority of people became Christians in their adolescence. The study which leads to an understanding of youth ministry is significant because it enables leaders from churches and organizations to minister effectively to the youths.

The aim of this study was to make a contribution to the global discussion on the definition and nature of this vital ministry. The choice of Karen Community Church was significant because the youth ministry in that church was only three years old at the time of study and most of the founding members who were expected to have fresh and strong opinions about youth ministry were still there. KCC therefore was a significant target of study of the youth ministry because it offered the opportunity of hearing from the pioneers of a youth ministry.

The data were gathered by means of two types of questionnaires, which were administered by the researcher himself. The researcher also made observations of the youth ministry by attending four sessions of the youth programmes at this church. Obtained data were processed according to the study plan and the research questions were answered accordingly.

5.1.2 Findings of the study

Question 1. What perceptions, if any, do members of KCC have about the rationale of youth ministry?

More than half of the parents and church leaders considered evangelism and discipleship as the most important reason for having youth ministry in the church. On the other hand, the majority of youths chose promotion of fellowship as the preferred rationale.

Question 2. What perceptions, if any, do KCC members have about the goals of youth ministry?

All the three categories of KCC membership were unanimous in their choice of promotion of spiritual growth as the preferred goal of youth ministry. The score for this opinion was, however, much higher among parents and church leaders than among youths.

Question 3. What perceptions, if any, do KCC members have about the content of youth ministry?

Interactive Bible studies and teaching sessions came out as the preferred component of youth ministry. The score was again much higher among parents and leaders than among the youths.

Question 4. What perceptions, if any, do the KCC members have about the style of youth ministry?

In short, the findings of this study show that KCC members' - parents, leaders and the youths - prefer a youth ministry that places more emphasis on relationships than tasks. An ideal youth teacher is the one who is able to build good relationship with the youths.

Question 5. Are there any differences in perceptions of youth ministry by the various sections of the church?

The study has revealed that the youths' perception of youth ministry differs, in some respects, from that of their parents and leaders. The youths' concept of youth ministry leans towards putting emphasis on relationship building while their parents' and leaders' idea of youth ministry shows an inclination towards evangelism and discipleship of the youths. In some cases the parents' views also differed from those of the church leaders.

For instance, the proportion of parents who preferred a teacher who has good relationship with the youths was higher than that of the church leaders.

5.2.0 Conclusions of the Study

1. Different sections of Karen Community Church have different perceptions of youth ministry in terms of its rationale, goals, contents and styles.
2. The youths' preferred ministry rationale is promotion of fellowship among the members. The church leaders' and parents' preference is evangelism and discipleship of the youths.
3. All the three sections of the church agree in their choice of promotion of spiritual growth as the preferred goal of youth ministry. However, parents and leaders gave this option a higher score than the youths did.
4. Interactive Bible study and teaching sessions are the preferred components of youth ministry that were supported by all the three sections

of the church. However, the score by the youths was lower than that of parents and leaders.

5. In terms of the general style of the ministry, the church prefers a ministry that places more emphasis on relationship than on tasks. It should also be informal for the most part.
6. The youths and parents prefer a youth teacher who is able to have personal relationships with the youths. The church leaders' support for this view is not as strong. They rated it at the same level with "living exemplary life".
7. The church leaders were consistent in their choices of preferred aspects of youth ministry. The results seem to indicate that their perceptions of youth ministry are inclined towards discipleship of the youths. The youths display some kind of inconsistency in their perceptions. There is, however, an indication of an inclination towards building relationships and social interactions. The parents' views are close to those of the leaders.

5.3.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher puts forward the following recommendations for churches or organisations and individuals interested in youth ministry.

1. Since the youths' perception of the youth ministry may be different from

that of their parents and leaders, as has been shown by this study, it is important that church leaders should listen to the youths with the aim of knowing their felt needs and expectations. This is the only way a church can provide a youth ministry that is relevant to its young people.

2. Traditionally, instruction has been regarded as the best way of teaching faith. Therefore, schools have been established by churches with classrooms, teachers and formal curriculum to teach faith. However, recently some educationists have come up with an alternative approach - socialization approach which says that faith is learned more like culture and is best passed on through relationships and modeling (Downs 1994,156). Since the youths in KCC are calling for better relationships with one another and with their teachers, the church may consider using socialization approach instead of just relying on the traditional approach of teaching faith. This entails having youth teachers, on a more permanent basis in the church, who will teach the youths with words and at the same time live exemplary lives for the youths to emulate.
3. The suggestion by some parents and youths that youths should be involved in decision making concerning their ministry should be taken seriously. The church should tap the potentials of youths by allowing them to take an appropriate share in planning and running the youth ministry. Youths with leadership potentialities should be identified, encouraged, motivated and trained so that they effectively take part in the leading of the ministry.

4. The dynamics of youth ministries are such that what worked this year may not work for the next year due to the changing nature of young people. There is therefore a need for the churches to evaluate the programmes for their youth ministries regularly to ensure that they are meeting the real as well as the felt needs of the young people. They can do that by asking youths and parents to comment on the existing programmes at the end of each year.

5.4.0 Recommendation for Further Studies.

This study aimed at investigating perceptions of youth ministry among the various sections of one congregation. The results have revealed that differences of opinion can exist among Christians of the same congregation. The researcher suspects that these differences, if unchecked could affect the ministry the church is operating in one way or the other. For this reason the researcher recommends further studies on effects of divergent views within a congregation on ministries of the church.

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APPENDIX I

A Covering Letter to the Questionnaire.

Dear

This questionnaire is aimed at finding out your opinion on what you consider to be the essence of a legitimate teens ministry. The findings of this study will be a mirror of what members of KCC consider to be the rationale, goals, contents and style of any teens ministry worthy of its name. Such information will naturally be of great help to the people responsible for teens ministry in improving the quality of this vital ministry for the church. Your participation and cooperation is, therefore, of great value.

May I, therefore, request you to kindly complete this questionnaire to the best of your knowledge by ticking the alternative that best describes your views concerning teens ministry.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

SANDRESS MSISKA

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (FOR TEENAGERS)

Please try to answer all the questions.

Your age: 13 - 15 years old 16 - 19 years old.

1. The priority of our teens' ministry is: (tick one)
 - A. To evangelise and disciple the members
 - B. To provide interesting programmes and activities that will attract us to the Church
 - C. To promote fellowship among the members
 - D. Any other (Specify)-----

2. The activities that should always be included on the teens' quarterly programme are: (tick one)
 - A. Bible study and prayer
 - B. Singing and drama
 - C. Camps and retreats
 - D. Any other (Specify)-----

3. When drawing up a teens' programme, one of the activities that should be given the most amount of time is: (tick one)

- A. Teaching of God's word
- B. Worship
- C. Fun Days
- D. Any other (Specify)-----

4. In our teens' ministry we intend to : (tick one)

- A. Promote unity and oneness among members
- B. Develop gifts and talents of the members
- C. Promote spiritual growth of the members
- D. Any other (Specify)-----

5. A good and successful teens ministry should be able to: (tick one)

- A. Help us grow in our commitment to the Lord.
- B. Grow in numbers and have more members
- C. Create a community of love amongst members
- D. Any other (Specify)-----

6. The preferred method of teaching in our teens' fellowship is: (tick one)
- A. Interactive Bible studies and discussions
 - B. Preaching and lecturing
 - C. Counseling
 - D. Any other (Specify)-----

7. I believe that teens' ministry should: (tick one)
- A. Place more emphasis on relationships than tasks
 - B. Allow us to decide for ourselves what to do every Sunday.
 - C. Be informal for the most part.
 - D. Any other (specify)-----

8. We would like our teachers and leaders to be people who: (tick one).
- A. Are trained and gifted in teaching.
 - B. Have good relationship with us
 - C. Live an exemplary lifestyle
 - D. Any other (Specify)-----

9. The most interesting programme or activity in our teens' ministry is

Reason-----

10. To improve teens' ministry the following should be done:

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (FOR PARENTS, YOUTH LEADERS AND CHURCH LEADERS)

Please try to answer all the questions.

Your status : Parent. Youth leader. Church leader.

1. We started a teens' ministry in this church particularly because: (tick one)
 - A. We wanted to reach the youths with the gospel.
 - B. We believe God wants Churches to run teens' ministry.
 - C. We believe teens' ministries contribute to the growth of the Church.
 - D. Any other (Specify) -----

2. The priority of our teens' ministry is: (tick one)
 - A. To evangelise and disciple the teens
 - B. To provide interesting programmes and activities that will attract teenagers to the Church

- C. To promote fellowship among the teenagers
- D. Any other (Specify)-----

3. The activities that should always be included on the teens' quarterly programme are: (tick one)

- A. Bible study and prayer
- B. Singing and drama
- C. Camps and retreats
- D. Any other (Specify)-----

4. When drawing up a teens' programme, one of the activities that should be given the most amount of time is: (tick one)

- A. Teaching of God's word
- B. Worship
- C. Fun Days
- D. Any other (Specify)-----

5. In our teens' ministry we intend to : (tick one)

- A. Promote unity and oneness among members
- B. Develop gifts and talents of the teens
- C. Promote spiritual growth of the teens
- D. Any other (Specify)-----

6. A good and successful teens ministry should be able to: (tick one)
- A. Help the youths grow in their commitment to the Lord.
 - B. Grow and have more members
 - C. Create a community of love among the teens
 - D. Any other (Specify)-----
7. The best way of teaching the teens is by: (tick one)
- A. Conducting interactive Bible studies and discussions
 - B. Preaching and lecturing to them
 - C. Counseling them
 - D. Any other (Specify)-----
8. The teens' ministry should (tick one)
- A. Place more emphasis on relationships than tasks
 - B. Allow teens to decide for themselves what to do every Sunday.
 - C. Be informal for the most part.
 - D. Any other (specify)-----

9. The teachers and leaders of the teens should be people who: (tick one).

A. Are trained and gifted in teaching.

B. Have good relationship with the teens

C. Live an exemplary lifestyle

D. Any other (Specify)-----

10. To improve teens' ministry the following should be done:

VITA

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