



Towards a New Pastoral Care Model for Youth Retention in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana: A Case Study of the Brong-Ahafo Presbytery

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ABSTRACT

Church dropout among the youth has become a major hindrance to church growth in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG). Contemporary scholars have attributed this phenomenon to the lack of a modern pastoral care model for the youths in the mainline churches. The present study proposes a new pastoral care model for youth retention in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The pastoral care model that would help retain the youth embraces theological sensitivity to not only the spiritual but also the physical needs of the youth (satisfaction) for their holistic growth without compromising the biblical truth. This study employed a quantitative and qualitative analytic approach with primary and secondary data sources. In the study, the researchers sampled eighty (80) youth from four pastoral districts and the Youth Coordinator of the Brong-Ahafo Presbytery of the PCG. The findings showed that the pastoral care needs of the youth in the PCG include emotional, spiritual, physical, intellectual, social and personal needs. These needs can be met through regular visitation, welfare support, youth discipleship, friendly leadership, spiritual gift nurturing and management, disciplining with love and care, teaching doctrine, a friendly worship atmosphere and positive youth development programmes. The study also showed that some church leaders largely ignore the pastoral care needs of youth. Furthermore, it was established from the survey that the decline of youth in the PCG is due to lack of pastoral care which is important in faith formation and spiritual development in the youths. The study, when engaged, could help the church revise its current approach to youth ministry that would meet the holistic needs of youth while meeting ministry and mission goals.

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INTRODUCTION

Generally, the term youth is described as a transition period between dependence in childhood and independence in adulthood. Church dropout among the youth has become a major hindrance to church growth in the historic Historic Mission Churches (HMCs) in Africa.¹ Scholars attribute this ‘youth-

¹ Bredekamp I. M. and M. Schoeman, “Reason for Migration of Church Members from One Church to Another,” *Acta Theologica* 22, no. 1 (2015): 143.

drift syndrome' to a lack of formidable pastoral care in various youth ministries, making the youths unable to meet their existential needs.² Amfo Akonnor categorized the youth needs as social, intellectual, psychological, spiritual and emotional needs respectively.³ The inability of the youth to meet these needs in the church warrants their exit to find solutions to their predicaments.

Over the past decades, a significant number of scholars have expressed growing interest in the conceptual understanding and practice of pastoral care in general and pastoral gerontology in particular.⁴ However, exclusive pastoral care for the youth has been largely ignored in the mainline churches, especially in Africa. Contemporary scholars have attributed the lack of a modern pastoral care model for the youth in the mainline churches to the cause of church dropout. In the modern world where young worshippers have diversified problems, the church must exercise dynamic pastoral care to help them meet their needs in the church. Pastoral care is one of the prominent branches of practical theology.

Clebsch and Jaekel define pastoral care as the helping act done by a representative Christian person, directed towards healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling a troubled person whose trouble arises in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns.⁵ The position above is relevant to the pastoral care of the youth in Africa, too, because it pertains to mediating the youthful predicament of sin addiction and suffering from evil in the ultimate reality who is God. Furthermore, it is finding a reason for the youth to live amid sin addiction and suffering in the knowledge of God who is Love, Gracious and Comforting, namely the God who is Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

Pastoral care is an integral facet of the pastoral ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, of which the Brong Ahafo Presbytery is a part. Though pastoral care of the aged (pastoral gerontology) has been widely studied, studies on the pastoral care of the youth need to be intensified in Africa because they are the largest part of the African people today.⁶ Youths migrate from the HMCs (mainline churches) into the Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic churches worldwide.⁷ Meanwhile, in 2005, Asamoah-Gyadu pointed out that "Ghana Historic Mission Churches are declining numerically, and Pentecostals and Charismatics are enjoying new leases of life in the face of challenges from the context that has become religiously pluralistic."⁸ Today, in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and in other HMCs, a lot of measures have been put in place and some churches seem to be recording quantitative and qualitative growth of youth membership.⁹ Nonetheless, taking cognizance of the attrition rate associated with the youth in secondary and tertiary levels of education, Asamoah-Gyadu's assertion must be taken seriously. In some urban parts of Ghana, increasing the membership of youth in general is a herculean task in the HMCs. Moreover, it is a fact that youth dropout is remains a challenge in these HMCs. This implies that mainline churches are drastically losing their youth to the PCCs. There is something wrong. Bredekamp and Schoeman observed that interdenominational youth migration is due to a lack of pastoral care for the youth.¹⁰ In the postmodern world, where the youth face dynamic challenges, they find meanings and solutions to their problems. Against the complexity of denominational youth migration, this survey proposes a pastoral care approach that strategically satisfies the Christian youth for effective growth and development in HMCs in Africa.

METHODOLOGY

This survey is interdisciplinary within the scope of practical theology, specifically, the sub-disciplines of pastoral care and Youth Ministry. This study also employed quantitative and qualitative analytic approaches with primary and secondary sources. In the survey, the researcher sampled eighty (80)

² Bredekamp I. M. and Schoeman, "Reason for Migration of Church Members from One Church to Another," 124.

³ Amfo Kofi-Akono, *Lay Ministry Training: Basic Liturgy I* (Abetifi: RTC Publishers, 2006), 18.

⁴ Samuel Ayete-Nyampong, "Pastoral Care and Gerontological Needs in Africa," *Testamentum Imperium: An International Theological Journal. Focusing on Eternal Security of the Christian* 3 (2011), 4.

⁵ Clebsch A. William and Jaekle R. Charles, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective: An Essay with Exhibition* (Cambridge: Harper Torchbooks, 1994), 12.

⁶ Ayete-Nyampong, "Pastoral Care and Gerontological Needs in Africa," 11.

⁷ Bredekamp I. M. and Schoeman, "Reason for Migration of Church Members from One Church to Another," 134.

⁸ Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Current Development within Independent Indigenous Pentecostal Churches in Ghana," *African Charismatics* 2, no. 7 (2007): 165.

⁹ David N.A. Kpobi, *Triple Heritage: Fact and Figures about the Presbyterian Church of Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2000), 6.

¹⁰ Bredekamp I. M. and Schoeman, "Reason for Migration of Church Members from One Church to Another," 139.

respondents from the Tuobodom, Techiman, Techiman South and Kintampo pastoral districts in the Brong-Ahafo(BA) Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The respondents included eighty (80) youth between the ages of 12 and 30. In collecting the data, the researcher administered standard, pre-tested questionnaires to all respondents (youth) and gave them ample time to answer the various questions. The youth coordinator of the BA Presbytery was also interviewed using a structured interview format.

Factors that Influence Interdenominational Youth Migration in Africa

In an attempt to develop a framework that will help retain the youth in the HMCs, the researcher tried to identify the potential factors that can make the youth leave the Historic Mission Churches in Ghana. Several suggestive factors were listed for respondents to identify (from most probable to least probable) which factor (s) would likely cause them to migrate to another church. The following was the outcome.

Static Leadership

According to data from the field study, leadership style in the church forms a major cause of church dropout. The respondents rated this factor as the highest cause, scoring 89%. Paul Kang-Ewala Diboro and Raymond Charles Ehiem noted that some HMCs have leadership which could be described as ‘not in touch with the times.’¹¹ Such leaders do not possess the emotional intelligence to decipher the mood and demands of time. Some may even see the demands of the youth as ungodly or immoral. For instance, when the Church of Pentecost decided to relax its policy on youth dressing, some dogmatic pastors opposed the decision, to the point of affray, and vowed never to accept it, even though the policy revision does not infringe on sound theology. A dynamic and friendly church leadership always has plans to meet the needs of the contemporary youth without compromising the biblical truth.

Inadequate Pastoral Care

From the data, “inadequate pastoral care” received the second highest-rated factor (86.25%) as the factor that would most likely cause the youth to leave the church. Issues such as visits, counselling, caring for the bereaved, homeless, jobless and poor members, and educational sponsorship for the youth were noted by the respondents to have been ignored by the HMCs. Some respondents hinted that some Neo-Pentecostal churches have well-dedicated and resourced teams to ensure effective pastoral care for their members. For instance, the Empowerment Worship Center (EWC) has a vibrant greeters’ team that welcomes newcomers and visitors; a strong Ushering team; a functional visitation team that ensures regular visitation of newcomers both in person and on phone calls; and a protocol team that ensures adequate hospitality of new members by providing them with lunch immediately after service. Personal observations from International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), another charismatic church, revealed a formidable welfare scheme that seeks to care for the bereaved, and crisis management of its members, care for the needy, homeless and the jobless. More importantly, the youth workers of the church, such as instrumentalists, are well catered for by providing them with accommodation, allowance and other non-monetary motivations. In modern Pentecostal churches, some systems, such as welfare and scholarship committees, are in place. From time immemorial the HMCs have adopted welfare schemes such as visits after every morning devotion and spiritual support. At the mission schools, children are provided with all the needed care to grow and become resilient and responsible Christians.

The HMCs have implemented these things with the improvement of services in education, health, agriculture and vocational skills acquisition. These schemes were widespread to all congregations, including those in rural and urban areas. In almost all PCG congregations, there are welfare, scholarship and needy schemes. The effectiveness of the latter may be good in urban areas as opposed to congregations in rural areas. Nonetheless, put together, the HMCs every year renders huge

¹¹ Paul Kang-Ewala Diboro and Raymond Charles Ehiem, “The Migration of Christian Youth to Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ghana: Implications for Mission Work” 1, no. 5 (2020), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.38159/pecanep.2020101>.

support to members of the society although there are several concerning issues which must be addressed as shown by the survey.

Unmet Existential Needs

The next factor that received a lot of attention was the existential needs. According to the data, 82.5% believe that they are more likely to live in the church if their existential needs are not met in the church. Arzola Jr, in *Towards the Prophetic Youth Ministry*, classified youth needs, as emotional, spiritual, physical, intellectual, social and personal needs respectively.¹² Taylor portrayed these needs as Survival, Security, Belonging, Esteem and Fulfillment needs.¹³ No matter how different the classification may be, they reflect the fact that the youths are craving to make their lives meaningful and fulfilling. The respondents share a similar view with his observation that a major share of the factors responsible for attracting youth to Pentecostalism seems to come as a result of a yearning for a relationship, liberation, experience, passion, wonder, creativity, and spontaneity which are not common in the Historic Mission Churches.¹⁴ As a result, they dislike their traditional-repressive church conditions and become more adventurous in exploring new spiritual opportunities in PCCs.

Boring Church Liturgy and Worship Style

Another factor that received much attention was the worship style, which scored 68.75%. The typical mission church has a liturgically structured worship style that allows little variation. Worship in the Historic Mission Churches usually thrives on solemnity unlike the spontaneous Pentecostal worship style, which seems to attract the youth. Asamoah-Gyadu suggests that there may be dullness and lack of vitality in some Historic Mission Churches fueling the massive youth drifts from the mainstream churches.¹⁵ The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (PCCs) in Ghana have developed a style of worship that attracts the youth. What this means is that the contemporary genre and tempo of Ghanaian music are gradually bringing about some level of changes in the worship styles of these PCCs. The dynamic worship experience in PCCs portrays the type that the contemporary youth can easily identify with. In this way, the Ghanaian youth find Pentecostal and Charismatic forms of worship accommodative and adaptive to them. These motivational and innovative worship styles, coupled with their social activities, are crafted and framed in various forms. A new trend of Pentecostal/Charismatic worship initiatives which targets the youth in Ghana is 'Christian worship concerts.' Daniel Aboagye Aryeh called this approach 'musical evangelism'.¹⁶ These worship concerts are strategically and stylistically organized with highly recognized Christian musicians. These innovations are not commonly found in the Historic Mission Churches. Activities approved by the church leadership to invigorate the youth and sustain their interest in the liturgy of the Historic Mission Churches will go a long way to retaining them.

Modern Media Technology

Modern Media Technology in church scored 54% as a factor for youth migration. Branya agrees with Asamoah-Gyadu on the fact that the use of modern musical instruments and social media has become a lifestyle and a major platform through which PCCs sell and project their faith, ideas and practices into the public sphere.¹⁷ Significantly, the advent of information and communication technology did not only benefit the secular world, but also the church and, for that matter, mission and evangelism in Ghana. Recently, the era of COVID-19 has tested the Ghanaian church's perspectives and capacities

¹² Fernando Arzola Jr., *Towards a Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theories and Praxis in Urban Context* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 54.

¹³ Harold Taylor, *Tend My Sheep* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1983), 39-40.

¹⁴ Victor Counted, "Youth in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches and Factors Accounting for Their Attraction to Pentecostalism," in *Pentecostal and Charismatic Research (NPCRC) Conference-Abuja*, 2012, 23.

¹⁵ Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Signs of the Spirit: Worship as Experience in African Pentecostalism," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 8, no. 2 (2005): 10-22.

¹⁶ Daniel Aboagye Aryeh, *Assessing the Role of Prophecy in Mission in Charismatic Christianity in Ghana: An Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:24-25*. (Accra: Missiological Society of Ghana, 2018).

¹⁷ Francis Benyah, "Pentecostalism, Media, Lived Religion and Participatory Democracy in Ghana," *PentecoStudies* 18, no. 2 (2019): 156. <https://doi.org/10.1558/pent.38945>.

to use the media for spiritual services. In the wake of COVID-19, radio, television and Facebook have become the virtual church room and pulpit through which many church services are transmitted to congregants of these neo-Pentecostal churches. However, since COVID-19, the HMCs have joined the bandwagon although the PCCs were able to make a lot of gains because they were ahead. Hopefully, the HMCs may recover as they intensify their media ministry. The slow acceptance of the Media ministry had made the Mega PCCs more influential and popular in attracting the youth than HMCs like the Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

Doctrinal Controversies

One big challenge of Christianity is the doctrinal controversy. In this study, this factor forms the least cause of church dropout among the youth, scoring 51% according to the field data. One doctrinal controversy that generated a lot of theological debate is the concept of baptism; thus, how should baptism be done and the question of infant baptism. Some of the influential Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have won the youth in doctrinal arguments. This is because most of the HMCs do not spend time teaching their members why they do what they do. Some of the youth being ignorant of the biblical basis of such doctrines turn to ignore their HMCs and absorb whatever teachings they hear outside the church.

Pastoral Care Needs and Strategies for Youth Retention

The focal role of the pastoral ministry is to exercise physical and spiritual care for the members of the church. In an attempt to determine the pastoral care needs of the youth in the HMCs, the respondents were asked several questions to respond by how the church leaders attend to them and meet their pastoral care needs to their satisfaction.

Visitation

The respondents were asked whether the leadership of the church visited them, and how often. Retrievable data from the field study show that 61 (80.3%) of the youth agreed that visitation is a pastoral care strategy that can ensure their retention. From these data, 25 (32.9%) respondents out of 76 were visited by their church leaders at home whereas 51 (67.1%) of them were not visited at all. Of the 25 who were visited at their homes, 8 of them were visited regularly while 17 were visited occasionally. The researcher further probed whether the respondents were reached out through phone calls. The data shows that 22 of them were visited through phone calls whilst 54 were never called on the phone for a visit. Of the 22 who were called, 4 of them had regular visitation through phone calls while 18 of them were called occasionally. Taking a keen cognizance of the data, it was observed that the majority (13) of those who were called for a visit were group executives. From this perspective, it is clear that the leadership of the church in the study area is not taking pains to visit the members of the church. According to Pobee, visitation is commonplace, and the sense of community is strong in Africa. He further added that this sense of community, results in the interconnectedness and strengths of relationships.¹⁸ Ayetey-Nyampong is of the view that, in the African context, the goal of these visitations is always to maintain relationships by promoting the well-being of the visited whilst the visitor is also enriched by the positive outcome of the visit.¹⁹ The Akan word for visiting means to go to ‘anoint’, an indication that within the Ghanaian community, visiting implies bringing to another person blessings in the form of nourishment, healing, spiritual strength, a sense of belongingness and sometimes guidance and correction in the person’s life-journey. For this reason, visitation is a prime pastoral care duty that cannot be overemphasized in African Christianity. Especially in the case of new converts and newcomers in the church, regular visitation becomes indispensable to integrate them into the body of Christ (the church). Therefore, the inability of the leadership to visit the youth is an indication that the youth are not fairly catered for in the church.

¹⁸ J. S. Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 39-40.

¹⁹ Ayete-Nyampong, “Pastoral Care and Gerontological Needs in Africa,” 12.

Counselling on Family Life Issues

The data shows that 71 of the respondents agreed that discussing issues of marital and relationship matters with the youth is important in their retention. The respondents were further asked whether their church leaders invited them to discuss matters concerning their relationships and marital issues. From this statement, 12 (15.8%) of them affirmed that church leaders invite them to discuss relationships and marital issues. The rest (64) have never had such an opportunity. Strikingly, all the respondents who had this session of discussions were all married. From this angle, it is prudent to warrant that these respondents had this opportunity to discuss their relationships and marital issues with the leadership either through premarital counselling or the opportunity they had facilitated their marriage decision. Gary R. Collins posited that youth in their mid to late adolescence stage are usually confronted with emotional and sexual challenges through their process of mate selection.²⁰ They need people who would listen to them and share their problems with them. It is of prime importance for the church to give them that attention through voluntary counselling services. To be more intentional about this the leadership, especially the clergy, can invite the youth pastorally to probe into some of these issues to identify hidden challenges affecting the youth. This will allow them to share their challenges and possibly find a lasting solution.

Friendly Leadership

Again, 69 respondents agreed that friendly leadership is also important to accommodate youth in the church. However, 46 of them observed that some of the church leaders (including agents) are not friendly and approachable. The friendliness of the leadership paves the way for any 'troubled person' to seek help when needed. This 'parent-child' relationship helps identify the challenges confronting the youth, especially in terms of opposite-sex relationships and addresses the seemingly unaddressed issue of teenage pregnancy in the country. Generally, the youth feel quite reluctant to attend voluntary counselling and guidance on marital issues, especially when they are not ready to marry any moment soon. Meanwhile, most of them, if not all, are involved in relationships with the opposite sex, some of which are potentially harmful and unproductive relationships. It is therefore the responsibility of the leadership to probe into the youth and assist them on matters of marital and relationship issues.

Career Guidance and Skills Development

The respondents were asked whether church leaders invited them to discuss issues concerning their careers. Of the retrievable data, 16 respondents affirmed that their church leaders invited them over to discuss issues of career development while 60 of them were never invited for such a discussion. On finances, only 7 out of 80 of them have been called to discuss their financial status and challenges. The impression created here is that the economic and social life of the youth is largely ignored. Meanwhile, the vision of the church is to pursue a holistic ministry. This means that the church is not only interested in the spiritual life of its members but also in social life. According to Clebsch and Jaekle, pastoral care is exercised for the person at a crossroads of making a particular decision.²¹ If the church is unable to meet the social needs of the youth, they will look elsewhere for solutions and hence will migrate to other churches where they think they will have that care.

Welfare Needs

To establish whether the church can meet the welfare needs of the youth, 53 of the respondents affirm that the church can meet their needs to some extent. Interviews with some respondents in the Tuobodom District indicated that the church could cater for such activities as funerals, marriage ceremonies, and hospitalization (depending on the severity of the condition). However, in situations where a church member is handicapped, needs startup capital, has school fees, needs money for rent, or needs a job, the church is not able to come to their aid. Meanwhile, these are the basic challenges facing the youth in our present day. It is however unfortunate that though the scholarship committee exists within the church, it is not able to assist poor and needy, yet brilliant students or assist young

²⁰ Collins R. Gary, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd ed. (Illinois: Zondervan Publishing House, 2007), 236.

²¹ William and Charles, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective: An Essay with Exhibition*, 31.

people to go into apprenticeship. This is an indication that the pastoral care needs are not entirely met by the youth. Generally, some youth show a total commitment to church activities. Some of them devote themselves, and sacrifice for the work of the church. However, the field study shows that only 16 out of 76 respondents agree that the church motivates youth who sacrifice for the church. Staff motivation is one of the most important retention strategies that most institutions adopt to enhance staff satisfaction. Motivations do not usually come as huge benefits, but in the form of appreciation to the person. Motivating such hardworking and committed people will make them realize that their contributions are significantly valued.

Discipline with Love and Care

In this regard, 17 out of 76 respondents are of the view that leadership disciplines members with love and care. On the contrary, 56 of them feel that disciplinary issues are handled in an inconsiderate and unfriendly manner. Though all (100%) of the respondents agreed that the importance of censorship in the church cannot be underestimated, it must be handled in such a way that the victim will not feel rejected by the church. The researcher believes that all censorship must precede counselling and proceed with regular visitation and prayer to ensure that the victim is restored to good standing. The essence of censorship in the PCG is to uphold sound moral values, instil discipline, ensure transformation, maintain Christian order, maintain the church's dignity, and glorify God. For this reason, censorship must be done with care and love for the victim so as not to lose such a person to the world.

In response to the research questions, the pastoral care needs of the youth include visitation, friendly leadership, friendly worship atmosphere, youth discipleship, general welfare, motivation, gift nurturing and spiritual empowerment. The pastoral care needs of the youth can be met by ensuring that the youth are regularly visited and listened to, the leadership of the church is friendly and dynamic to provide welcoming worship for the youth, motivate hardworking and committed youth in the church, provide their basic welfare needs, identify spiritual gifts in youth and nurture them, and empower the youth spiritually by bible studies and prayer. That is to say, the church must exercise pastoral care and have a theological and anthropological focus on the youth.

Positive Youth Development as a Pastoral Care Approach

In recent times, there has been a paradigm shift in adolescent research. Instead of viewing adolescents as a problem, the Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective highlights resources, opportunities, potentials, and strengths in the youth as a person. Daniel Shek and Wenyu Chai postulated that PYD qualities could be indicated by the 'five Cs' including Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring.²² In the ecclesia community, PYD is a focal point for faith formation and spiritual growth. In an attempt to establish the role of the church in helping them develop their social and spiritual life, a series of questions were asked for them to respond to accordingly. To begin with, youth were asked whether Discipleship & Gift nurturing would develop into mature Christians. Data from the study reported that 67 agreed with this statement, 2 were undecided, 5 did not agree, and 2 were lost data. This implies that youth desire discipleship to become mature Christians in the church. Mainline churches have good theoretical discipleship concepts but lack a practical approach to that effect.

According to Greg Ogden, disciplining is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other matured disciples to encourage, equip and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ.²³ In discussing Jesus' method of discipleship, Ogden discusses one of the major approaches utilized by Jesus as *intentionalization*. Jesus was consciously meticulous in training the disciples through teaching (Matt. 5:3-11), instructing (Acts 1:4-5), testing (Mk. 4:35-41), in-service training and empowerment (Lk. 9:1-6), and engaging (Matt. 28:18-20). It is about time the church took time to develop practical measures rather than theoretical concepts to disciple the youth. Through effective discipleship, the spiritual gifts and potentials of the individual youth may be identified and nurtured

²² Daniel T L Shek and Wenyu Chai, "The Impact of Positive Youth Development Attributes and Life Satisfaction on Academic Well-Being: A Longitudinal Mediation Study," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 9.

²³ Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Few Disciples at a Time* (Illinois: IVP, 2007).

for use by the church. By Joel 2:28, there are a lot of spiritual gifts such as singing, ‘instrumentals’ (thus, playing a variety of musical instruments), prophetic, teaching, healing, pastoring (caring for others) etc. deposited in contemporary youth. However, they lack applicable knowledge to effectively utilize in the church. As a result, some of them begin to exercise their gift in ways that are not in line with the dogmatics of the church and hence are counteracted by the leadership. The researcher believes that this is one of the reasons why the mainline churches lose the youth to the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ghana. It appears like PCG grooms the youth to some extent and as their gifts begin to merge, it loses them to the PCC due to the lack of gift nurturing and gift management methods.

Mentorship and Coaching is another concept that the respondents were asked to state their opinion concerning PYD. Out of the 76 retrievable data, 58 agreed that mentorship and coaching enhance PYD in both the church and the society. This observation is in line with a report from a study by Richard Catalano et al. on adolescents’ developmental experiences. According to them, mentorship and coaching provide optimal preparation for the attainment of adult potential and well-being. They further added that mentorship and coaching are important in behavioural modification, reducing risky sexual activities, improving skill and career development, self-identity and positive self-esteem, self-determination, societal bonding, cognitive and emotional maturation and sound moral values.²⁴ Article 2 (4) of the PCG Constitution makes provision for such social development as the core values of the church as: “Godly leadership, discipline, sound moral principles, integrity, humility, skill development, hardworking, unity and democracy.”²⁵ This can be achieved on a holistic base through inclusiveness in programs and administration or one-on-one base coaching.

From the data, 66 (86.8%) of the respondents see guidance and counselling as important in PYD. Guidance & Counseling as an integral component of pastoral care is very important in PYD. Guidance is the process of helping an individual / to recognize and use his inner potential, to set goals, to work out his problem of development. It is a continuous process. Guidance must not be confused with direction. Guidance may be educational, personal, social, vocational, or health, depending on the needs of the individual concerned. Most, if not all, JY members need guidance to enable them to make educational and career choices. The data from the field study indicated that the majority of the youth were unemployed. Some of them will be able to unleash their potential to enter into several economic ventures which they have never thought about through vocational guidance. Counselling, on the other hand, is a learning-oriented process between a counsellor and a counselee, carried out in a one-to-one social or spiritual environment, in which the counsellor seeks to assist the counselee (client) to learn more about himself and accept himself, learn how to put such understanding into fruitful use to overcome a life-threatening challenge. Gary believes that counselling is a dynamic and purposeful relationship between a counsellor and a counselee with a focus on self-classification and self-determinism. Again, counselling is not advising.²⁶ The church needs to draw the youth closer to identify the challenges and help them overcome such challenges through guidance and counselling.

Some youth have already developed the skills but require financial support. Less than half of the respondents (37) believe that financial empowerment is important in PYD and that the church should resource its members financially to reach their potential. This finding contradicts with results from a study by Osei-Akoto and Stephen Afrane which reported that financial empowerment is directly linked to PYD.²⁷ From the researcher’s point of view, the church must develop a scheme to cater for the financial needs of its members, with the youth in particular. This scheme should be geared toward job and wealth creation by the youth. There should be a modality for youth support in the church.

Spiritual empowerment through Bible studies and prayers is another statement used to evaluate activities that enhance PYD in the PCG. From the retrievable data, 73 of 76 representing 96.1% of the respondents believe that Bible studies and prayers are the basis for spiritual empowerment for the youth. Foster and Shockley noted that contemporary African youth shifted their interest to develop

²⁴ Richard F Catalano et al., “Positive Youth Development Programs in Low-and Middle-Income Countries: A Conceptual Framework and Systematic Review of Efficacy,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 65, no. 1 (2019): 15–31.

²⁵ Presbyterian Church of Ghana Constitution, 3.

²⁶ Gary, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, 4.

²⁷ Isaac Osei-Akoto and Afrane Stephen, “Impact of Financial Empowerment on Youth Development: Finding from the Ghana Youth Save Experiment” (Accra, 2015), 79-81.

their spiritual life since the inception of African Liberation Theology and Pentecostalism during the early 1980s.²⁸ Since then, the youth have developed a special interest in developing their spiritual life through effectively understanding the bible through bible studies and prayers. The PCG, in its effort to improve youth spirituality, has incorporated a spontaneous prayer style into its liturgy. In October 2021, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the PCG stated that all agents are to make room for spontaneous prayer during Sunday Morning Service in addition to the liturgical prayers.²⁹ The church also has adequate bible study materials to facilitate effective bible study in the church.

Leadership Skills Development is another concept assessed for PYD among the youth of PCG. From the data, 69 respondents believed that leadership skills development is an important component of PYD. Leadership skill development has a direct link with youth discipleship, and is an important element for human resource development. Strategies to transfer knowledge and prepare young people for future roles as citizens and leaders have been practised and valued in churches. Leadership development and civic engagement are concepts that intertwine in ways that enhance both. Learning collaborative leadership values and skills prepares youth right from their adolescence stage to engage in the community more sensitively and effectively. Studies have shown that adolescents with adequate leadership training and who became leaders during their adolescence stage subsequently become better future leaders than those who did not have that opportunity. In both ecumenical and social environments, effective leadership is key to organizational growth. It is, however, unfortunate that most of the youth in the PCG usually escape leadership responsibilities whenever they are called upon to serve or hold a particular position in the church. This could be due to a lack of adequate self-concept or skills among the youth. Such a phenomenon is an indication that either the church lacks lacking skill development concept, or the youth are not readily available to be disciplined. Whichever way it is, the youth ministry of the church can consciously design and adopt appropriate leadership skill training programs to facilitate PYD.

Leadership in the contemporary world demands the ability to work collaboratively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, address change in interconnected systems and make decisions amid ambiguity. It is not a practice that can be learned in the abstract, but instead through concrete experiences connected to meaningful decisions and consequences. It is an undeniable fact that the church, in diverse ways, organizes Leadership Training Seminars (LTSs) for the youth. Yet, this attempt seems unproductive enough. This becomes clearer especially when the church needs youth to occupy certain positions throughout the various courts of the church or within the youth ministry itself. It is about time the church moved from the theoretical approach of LTS to practical leadership coaching. Leadership is interpersonal and social, requiring engagement with others in the process of leadership through initiating, building, and maintaining relationships with a variety of people who might differ from oneself in age, gender, ethnicity, social class, religion, or even political agenda. The church must therefore groom the youth to fit into society, and take up leadership positions in the church, at the societal and political level. This can be achieved through experiential learning, where the youth can shift from the acquisition of knowledge through theoretical concepts to developing practical skills and capacities to do something useful with that new knowledge.

²⁸ Foster R. Charles and Shockley S. Grant, *Working with the Black Youth: Implication for Christian Ministry*, 2009, 59.

²⁹ Rt Rev. Prof. J.O.Y Mante, Moderato's Pastoral Visit to the B/A Presbytery, Tuobodom District, 4th October 2021.

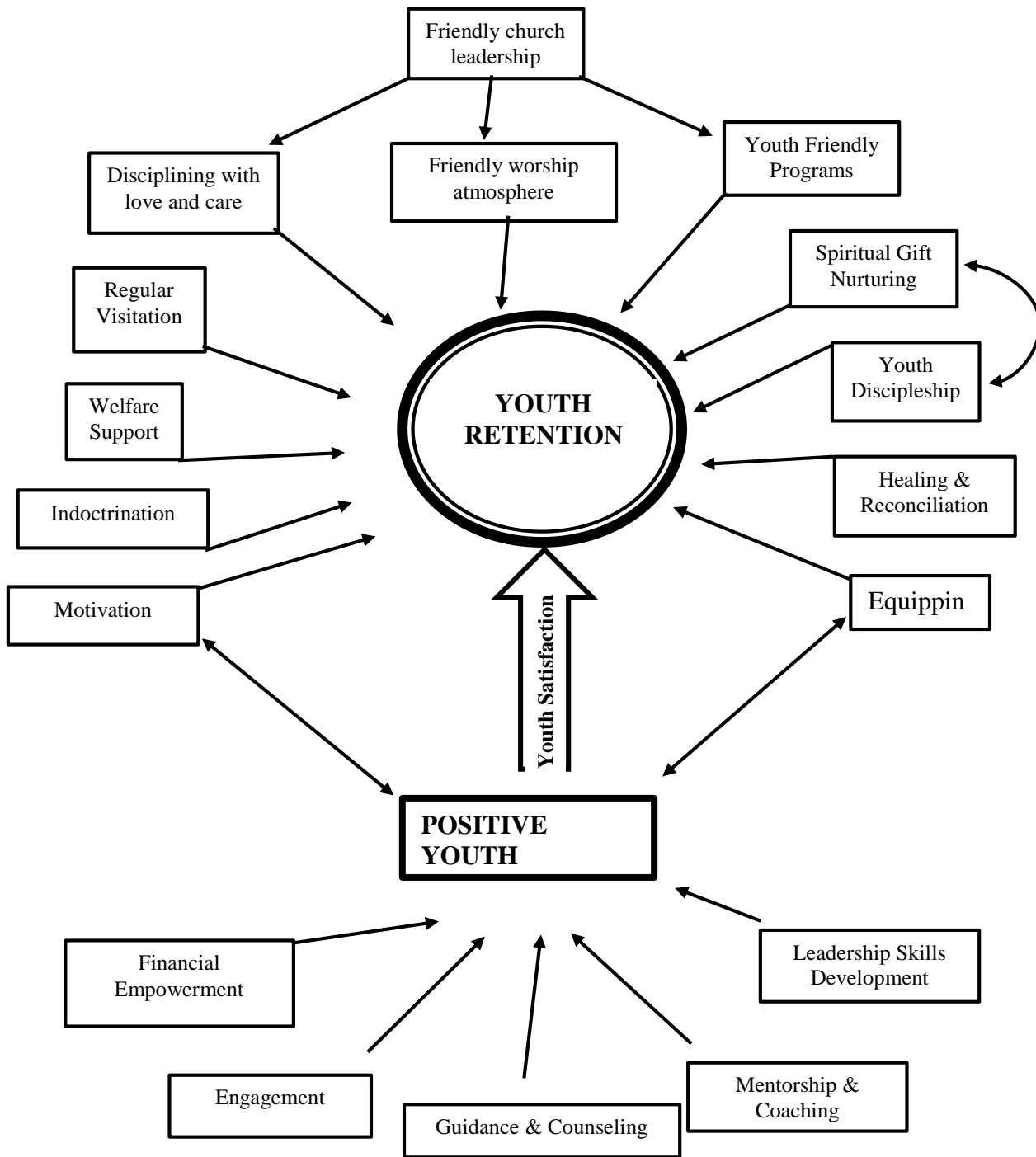


Figure 1: A Conceptual Pastoral Care Model for Youth Retention in the PCG.
 Source: Authors construct

Towards a New Youth Pastoral Care Model

Youth retention is a concept that requires a complex approach that varies from psychological and sociological to spiritual. Pastoral care is exercised in a friendly manner, a friendly environment, and by friendly leaders. Youth are attracted to leaders who are friendly and more welcoming to share their problems with them than hostile leaders. It is more likely that friendly dealers handle disciplinary issues with love and care without compromising the biblical truth. In the case of any moral deviation by any youth, friendly leaders censor victims by taking them through counselling and prayers to ensure restoration. Friendly leaders also develop programs that are youth-friendly to enhance their holistic growth. Such leadership ensures a friendly worship atmosphere for the youth to express their desire

for God through singing and dancing. Pastoral visit to new members creates a sense of belonging and social bonding that ultimately results in the retention of the youth in the church. Welfare intervention and support for the youth, whether in cash or kind, helps retain the youth in the church. To retain them, their existential needs such as physical needs, financial needs, and emotional needs must be met. This can be achieved through prompt crisis interventions.

Motivation of youth for their commitment towards church activities is key to youth retention. Church workers such as Junior Youth leaders, Children Service teachers, instrumentalists and other youth leaders can be motivated through words of motivation and encouragement, gifts presentations, or an end-of-year party. Such motivation also attracts others to involve themselves in church work. Indoctrinating the youth, especially from the JY level, to understand and appreciate the church's values and practices will equally make them accept and stay in the church. Youth with identifiable gifts should be selected and groomed in line with the church's doctrine. Such youth must also be available for Christian nurture. Effective gift nurturing and management are achievable through conscious discipleship and engagement. As the youth are being nurtured, they must also be given the platform to practice what they learn from their mentors. In pastoral care, healing and reconciliation are important concepts for a troubled person to be wholesome. In situations like a break-up, leadership must act promptly to restore such victims. This makes such victims feel that they belong to a family that cares for them, and therefore will be ready to stay in the church. Equipping the youth with the requisite skills results in Positive Youth Development (PYD), and also retains them in the church. Activities such as financial empowerment for entrepreneurship, civic engagement, guidance and counselling, mentorship and coaching, and leadership skills development enhance the PYD of the youth. PYD helps youth develop good moral values and ethics to fit into societies and make them better leaders. The model above is a practical-oriented model that will enhance PYD and youth retention in the PCG.

CONCLUSION

At the heart of this study was to examine the nature of pastoral care in a historical context and develop an appropriate Trinitarian pastoral model for the youth ministry in the context of postmodernism. Findings from the study show that the pastoral care needs of the youth in PCG are emotional, spiritual needs, physical needs, intellectual needs, social needs and personal needs. These needs can be met through regular visitation, welfare, rapt attention to crises, youth discipleship, friendly leadership, gift nurturing, disciplining with love and care, indoctrination, a friendly worship atmosphere and Positive Youth Development. It was also observed that the leadership largely ignores the pastoral care needs of the youth. The pastoral care model would help retain a youth in the model that incorporates both anthropological and theological concepts to enhance youth satisfaction and holistic growth without compromising biblical thought. Understanding pastoral care as part of God's ministry is important in effective pastoral practice. The key issues for a theology of youth pastoral care model include youth discipleship, spiritual gift nurturing, and indoctrination. Finally, understanding the psychobiology of youth and the dynamism of youth culture is indispensable in managing Christian youth ministry. The church must go beyond the theoretical concept of discipleship and move towards practical methods to ensure retention and holistic growth.

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