

Pastoral Guidance for the Spiritual Development of the Adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre

by

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Abstract

Keywords: pastoral guidance, spiritual development, adolescents, Little Falls Christian Centre

Healthy spiritual development of adolescents is lacking in our society. Research shows that the topic of spiritual development for adolescents has been neglected for some time. It is clear from Scripture that spiritual development needs to take place in the life of a believer and that it is in fact an ongoing process. Even though spirituality has not been classified as something scientific during the modern era, spirituality has made its way back in scientific circles. The scientific disciplines of sociology and psychology have indicated that adolescents have a need for spiritual development and that spiritual issues are important to them. However, adolescents of the twenty-first century also face some unique challenges that have an impact on their spiritual development.

Both the quantitative and qualitative methods of research were used and it was clear from both these studies that there were certain areas with regard to spiritual development that needed attention. The results in particular showed that the majority of those adolescents who took part in the research did not spend enough time on spiritual practices and most of them have taken part in some form of risky behaviour. The overall influences from family, friends and youth leaders were positive and in general it seemed that the majority of adolescents who took part in the research had a good relationship with parents and youth leaders.

Adolescents need help in their spiritual development and according to Scripture parents and youth/church leaders have the responsibility to assist them. Guidance was given to adolescents and to major role players in their lives to assist them in the process of spiritual development.

Opsomming

Sleuteltermes: pastorale begeleiding, spirituele ontwikkeling (geestelike groei), adolessente, Little Falls Christian Centre

Die gesonde geestelike ontwikkeling van adolessente ontbreek in ons samelewing. Navorsing bewys dat die onderwerp van geestelike ontwikkeling van adolessente vir 'n geruime tyd afgeskeep was. Dit is duidelik uit die Woord van God dat geestelike ontwikkeling moet plaasvind in die lewe van elke gelowige en dat dit 'n konstante proses is. Al was geestelikheid nie geklassifiseer as iets wetenskaplik gedurende die moderne era nie, maak dit wel weer opslae in wetenskaplike sirkels. Die wetenskappe van sosiologie en psigiologie bewys dat adolessente 'n behoefte aan geestelike ontwikkeling het en dat geestelike dinge van baie belang vir hulle is. Die adolessente van die een en twintigste eeu staan ook unieke uitdagings in die gesig wat 'n impak het op hul geestelike groei.

Beide die kwantitatiewe en die kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodes is gebruik in hierdie studie en dit was duidelik vanuit beide die studies dat daar sekere areas in verband met geestelike groei is wat aandag nodig het. Die uitkoms dui spesifiek daarop dat die meeste van die adolessente wat deelgeneem het aan die navorsing, nie genoeg tyd spandeer op geestelike praktyke nie en dat die meeste al deel gehad het aan een of ander vorm van riskante gedrag. Die algemene invloed van familie, vriende en jeugleiers was positief en oor die algemeen blyk dit dat die meerderheid van die adolessente wie deelgeneem het aan die navorsing 'n goeie verhouding het met hul ouers en jeugleiers.

Adolessente benodig hulp in verband met geestelike groei en volgens die Woord van God het ouers en kerkleiers, in hierdie geval jeugleiers, 'n verantwoordelikheid om adolessente by te staan. Riglyne is aan adolessente en aan die hoofrolspelers in hul lewens gegee om hul te help in die proses van geestelike ontwikkeling.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Background

For the first part of the 20th century attention had been given to the topic of spiritual development for adolescents; however, for much of the latter part of the 20th century it has been neglected and only started gaining an impetus in recent years once again (King & Roeser, 2011:1). The reason for the surfacing of the topic of spiritual development is probably because of a growing suspicion or realization that in reality and need had not been dealt with in previous years (Willard, 2006:1).

In Hebrews 5:11-14 the spiritual developmental process of a person is emphasized- from infancy and spiritual milk to maturity and solid food. As a believer, if you don't go forward, you go backwards; if you don't grow, you shrink (Vosloo & van Rensburg, 1999:1685). In chapter 5 verse 14 mention is made of the fact that once we are children of God, we should continue to practise our faith muscles (Vosloo & van Rensburg, 1999:1686). In the same way God desires adolescents to grow to maturity in Him.

When it comes to science and spiritual development, there is scientific evidence that says that "spiritual development is a dimension of human life and experience as significant as cognitive development, emotional development, or social development" (Roehlkepartain *et al.*, 2006:9). In fact the following is said in *The Handbook of Spiritual Development for Children and Adolescence*: "It is the spiritual dimension that is most involved in a person's effort to integrate the many aspects of development" (Roehlkepartain *et al.*, 2006:9).

However, the current situation of spiritual development is that in the United States the church and Christian communities are failing badly in the area of engaging with and educating the youth (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:21). "There is also concern in the South African community regarding the effectiveness of religious education in helping children and youth actualize their faith in their daily lives" (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:21). The following

is said about the South American society: “Families feel incapable of handing on values, schools form professionals, and the church institutionalizes and sacramentalizes rather than evangelizing and giving meaning to life” (Levebre & Ross, 2007:90).

According to Cotton *et al.* (quoted by Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:2), research shows that religious and spiritual issues are very important to adolescents. Spiritual development leads to understanding more about the Creator and themselves, understanding their purpose. The positive outcomes of religious practice for the youth are witnessed by a growing body of research and include overall well-being, altruism, service, resilience, coping and positive forming of identity (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:21).

In order to be more effective, there needs to be the realization that times have changed and so has the adolescent. Keupp says that “Post-modern identity differs from its modern twentieth-century precursor in marked ways- in temporal, social, and personal respects (quoted by Lefebvre & Ross, 2007:80). A lot of pressure is placed on adolescents, body image, forming their own identity, pressure from school, pressure from social institutions, pressure from friends and family, dating, health etc. (Anon., 2011:1).

Adolescents today face different issues than their parents did when they were their age. Some of the issues are the same, but because of the increase in technology, young people today also face things like: cyber-bullying, “sexting” and social media scandals etc. (Bolyn, 2011:1). Adolescents of the twenty-first century are in need of support (Lefebvre & Ross, 2007:81). According to the Word of God, parents (family) have the main responsibility in raising a child (Proverbs 13:24, Ephesians 6:4). However, the church/ministers were given the responsibility of looking after the flock, teaching them, instructing them etc. and this includes adolescents (1 Peter 5:2, Acts 20:28).

When it comes to parents and the family structure, parents often see the time of adolescence as a terrible time in the lives of their children. David Tripp says that “ We often talk about our teenagers as if they were nothing more than collections of raging, rebel hormones encased in

developing skin” (Tripp, 2001:14). Parents often can’t wait for their children to pass through this phase. This is exactly where parents make the mistake. “It is time for us to reject the wholesale cynicism of our culture regarding adolescence. Rather than years of undirected and unproductive struggle, these are years of unprecedented opportunity” (Tripp, 2001:19). This is exactly it - it is the opportunity to help our children develop well spiritually.

When it comes to the church, with pastors and youth workers, the problem we face in South Africa is that the church at large is not relevant when it comes to the needs of the young people in our nation. Janse van Rensburg says that a paradigm shift needs to take place from modernism to post-modernism, “where the relationship of subject/object between a teacher and the person he or she is teaching does not exist anymore (2000:36). According to an empirical study done on five adolescents from three different Dutch Reformed churches in Bloemfontein, it was clear that the congregation where adolescents had a positive experience in terms of spiritual growth, was a congregation where adolescents could communicate their questions in a group setting, a place where an exchange of meaning could take place (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:32).

It is also true that very often churches or youth programmes try to entertain and too often capitulate to the values of youth culture” (Ratcliff, 2002:3). Trimmer (1994:45) states: “Young people need to be called to make a commitment to Christ, to be challenged to do something about their faith, as well as to be nurtured in their faith”. Malan Nel says: “In youth ministry children and adolescents are often invited to make a decision for Christ as if such a decision comprises the totality of being a Christian”. Discipleship is about following Christ in a more considered manner (Nel, 2009:99).

Little Falls Christian Centre is situated in Little Falls, a suburb in Roodepoort, Johannesburg, South Africa under the leadership of Pastor Harold Weitsz (Weitsz, 2011:1). Little Falls Christian Centre is a non-denominational church, Pentecostal in nature and falls under the auspices of Five Fold Ministries International.

Little Falls Christian Centre “is committed to being a church that teaches, preaches, and lives out the fullness of the Word of God without any form of compromise” (Weitsz, 2011:1). Prayer is one of the highest priorities within the church of Little Falls Christian Centre. These principles are passed on to the next generation of young people (Weitsz, 2011:1). Their mission is “to reach out to young people through quality friendships, cell groups and relevant ministry, so that they may be inspired to live passionate lives filled with faith, hope and love as true disciples of Jesus Christ” (Weitsz, 2011:1). In terms of culture groups and language, even though a large percentage of the congregation of Little Falls Christian Centre is white and Afrikaans- speaking, it is a multicultural church and services are held in English to accommodate everyone.

Adolescents everywhere have challenges in common, no matter in which country they live or what racial group they belong to. However, different racial groups also face different challenges or are more affected by certain things. These challenges indeed have an impact on the spiritual development of individuals. In the South African context, research, according to Statistics S.A. indicates that white, families had been most affected by divorce in 2001 to 2007. However, from 2008 to 2010 it changed, and the black population was most affected with the white population not too far behind (Lehohla, 2010:4). From the above information, it is clear that black and white adolescents are most affected by parents getting divorced in South Africa. According to Theron and Dunn, divorce puts adolescents at risk for maladaptive outcomes (2011:231).

When it comes to HIV/AIDS, it is said that it is more common among black South Africans, as it affects 13.6% in comparison with the rest of the population, that includes whites, coloureds and Indians, which is only 2.3% (Shisana *et al.*, 2009:79). So many young people today are infected with HIV/AIDS or grow up losing parents to it. Certain areas in the country also face different issues, like substance abuse that is a major concern country- wide and internationally, but in Mitchells Plain for example, a majority coloured community in the Western Cape, the prevalence of substance abuse among high school students is high for all substances relative to national as well as international figures (Mash, 2011:83).

1.2 Problem statement

The Bible is clear on the fact that spiritual development needs to be part of the life of every believer as seen in scriptural verses like Hebrews 5:11-14 and Ephesians 4:14-15 and this includes adolescents. The question asked in this research paper is: What type of pastoral guidance is necessary to assist the adolescents (age 16-18) of Little Falls Christian Centre in their spiritual development?

In order to find new perspectives in addressing the problem the following aspects will be looked at:

- What Scriptural perspectives are to be found on spiritual development for adolescents?
- What can be learned from the science of social work and sociology with regards to spiritual development for adolescents?
- What is the outcome of an empirical study done on the spiritual lives and needs of the adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre with regards to spiritual development?
- What type of pastoral guidance can be given to adolescents and major role-players in their lives to assist them in their spiritual development?

1.3 Aim and objectives

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of this dissertation is to provide pastoral guidance that is relevant in the 21st Century to assist the adolescents (age 16-18) of Little Falls Christian Centre in their spiritual development, pastoral guidance that will effectively contribute to their becoming men and women of God in the day and age we live in.

1.3.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- to study what Scripture says on spiritual development of adolescents;
- to study what the fields of sociology and social work say on spiritual development for adolescents;
- to determine through an empirical study the spiritual development of the adolescents (age 16-18) of Little Falls Christian Centre and the adolescents from other churches in the area;
- to determine what kind of pastoral guidance can be given to adolescents and major role-players in their lives for their spiritual development.

1.3.3 Central theoretical argument

Pastoral guidance that is relevant in the 21st Century, to adolescents and to those who play major roles in their lives, can contribute to a healthy spiritual development of the adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre.

1.4 Methodology

This study will be done making use of the model of Osmer (2008). The model of Osmer consists of four parts, namely: descriptive, interpretive, normative and pragmatic tasks. Each part of the model asks the following questions in a study: descriptive (what is going on?), interpretive (why is it going on?), normative (what ought to be going on?), and the pragmatic task (how might we respond?).

Osmer sees theological research and interpretation as part of the **normative task**. Not only is scriptural theory explained during the normative task, but one also looks at what needs to take place theologically (Osmer, 2008:131). In this phase, we look at what Scripture says on spiritual development by looking at the life of Samuel as an example (1 Sam 2 & 3). From the New Testament, exegesis will be done on Heb 5:11-14, with the focus on chapter 5:13-14. Eph 4:14-15 also has the same topic in mind. These Scripture verses emphasize the developmental process of a believer. I will use the method described in de Klerk and van Rensburg (2005).

When it comes to the **interpretive task**, Osmer points to research done on a certain topic from a scientific point of view (2008:83). In the interpretive task, spiritual development is looked at from a psychological/sociological point of view. The following things will be looked at in relation to spiritual development: What does spiritual development mean to an individual, in this case an adolescent? What are the challenges that adolescents face in the twenty-first century, etc? This will be done through a literature study.

In the **descriptive empirical task** Osmer explains two research methods namely quantitative and qualitative research. He also talks about the “mixed method” which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research (Osmer, 2008:50). An empirical study was done on a group of adolescents from Little Falls Christian Centre, to find out what they have to say on issues regarding spiritual development, specifically, what their present spiritual state is, what their needs are and what impact their home and church/pastors have on their spiritual development.

Qualitative research was done by interviewing five individuals. This qualitative research is, however, limited to the specific group of adolescents from Little Falls Christian Centre. A quantitative study was also done on the adolescents of other churches in the area regarding spiritual development. In the **pragmatic task**, means are given on how to address the problem. According to Osmer, in this phase of research there are practical models and “rules of art” given (2008:176). In this phase, guidance is given to adolescents and major-role players in their lives, by gaining insight and guidance from different authors on the topic of adolescents.

The method that I used in this part of the research is an application of Scriptural principles to the practical findings of the literature study and the empirical study. This theological-pastoral study will be done from within the reformed tradition, which means having the inspired Word of God as primary source for this study (de Klerk & van Rensburg, 2005).

1.5 Preliminary chapter breakdown

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Scriptural principles for spiritual development of adolescents

- 3 Insight from the disciplines of sociology and social work on spiritual development for adolescents
- 4 An empirical study on a group of adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre
- 5 Pastoral guidance on spiritual development to adolescents and major role-players in their lives.
- 6 Conclusion
- 7 Bibliography

1.6 Schematic Representation of the Correlation Between 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4

Problem Statement	Aim and Objectives	Methodology
<p>What Scriptural perspectives are to be found on spiritual development for adolescents?</p>	<p>To study what Scripture says on spiritual development of adolescents.</p>	<p>Osmer sees theological research and interpretation as part of the normative task. Not only is the scriptural theory explained during the normative task, but a look is also taken at what needs to take place theologically (Osmer 2008:131). In this phase, we look at what Scripture says on spiritual development, by looking at the life of Samuel as an example (1 Sam 2; 3) From the New Testament exegesis is done on Heb 5:11-14, with the focus on chapter 5:13-14. Eph 4:14-15 also has the same topic in mind. These Scripture verses emphasize the developmental process of a believer. I use the method described in de Klerk and van Rensburg (2005).</p>
<p>What can be learned from the disciplines of social work and sociology with regards to spiritual development of adolescents?</p>	<p>To study what the science of sociology and social work say on spiritual development for adolescents.</p>	<p>When it comes to the interpretive task, Osmer points to research done on a certain topic from a scientific point of view (2008:83). In the interpretive task, spiritual development is looked at, from a psychological/sociological point of view. The following things will be looked at in relation to spiritual development: What does spiritual development mean to an individual, in this case an adolescent?</p>

		What is the difference between someone who has a higher level of spirituality and one who hasn't? This is done through a literature study.
What is the outcome of an empirical study done on the spiritual lives and needs of the adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre with regards to spiritual development?	To determine through an empirical study the spiritual development of the adolescents (age 16-18) of Little Falls Christian Centre.	In the descriptive empirical task Osmer explains two research methods namely: quantitative and qualitative research. He also talks about the "mixed method" which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research (Osmer 2008:50). An empirical study was done on a group of adolescents from Little Falls Christian Centre, to find out what they have to say on spiritual development. Specifically, what their present spiritual state is and what impact their home and church/pastors have on their spiritual development. Qualitative research was done- by interviewing ten individuals. This qualitative research is, however, limited to the specific group of adolescents from Little Falls Christian Centre. A quantitative study was done on the adolescents of other multicultural churches in the area regarding spiritual development.
What type of pastoral guidance can be given to adolescents and to major role players in their lives to assist them in their spiritual development?	To determine what kind of pastoral guidance can be given to adolescents and major role players in their lives for their spiritual development.	In the pragmatic task , means are given on how to address the problem. According to Osmer, in this phase of research there are practical models and "rules of art" given (2008:176). In this phase, guidance is given to adolescents and major-role players in their lives, by gaining insight and guidance from different authors on the topic of Adolescents. The method that I will use in this part of the research is an application of Scriptural principles on the practical findings of the literature study and the empirical study. This theological-pastoral study was done from within the reformed tradition, which means having the inspired Word of God as primary source for this study (de Klerk & van Rensburg, 2005).

Chapter 2: Scriptural Perspective on Spiritual Development

2.1 Introduction

The question asked in this exegetical chapter is: “What does Scripture say on spiritual development”? Exegesis will be done on the specific text of Hebrews 5:11-14 and Ephesians 4:14-15 and the life of Samuel the prophet will also be examined in order to determine what Scripture says on spiritual development. The method described in de Klerk & Janse van Rensburg's book “*Making a Sermon*” will be used (2005).

A word study has been done of different Greek key words and information drawn from background on the books of Hebrews and Ephesians like information of the recipients and their culture. A brief background of both the letters to the Hebrews and Ephesians is given to provide a better understanding of the considered texts (Heb 5:11-14 and Ephesians 4:14-15) on spiritual development.

2.2 Scriptural evidence for spiritual development from Hebrews 5:11-14

2.2.1 Background on the text of Hebrews

When it comes to the author of the book of Hebrews, the terms “milk” and “solid food” along with “child” and “mature” were also used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 2:6 (Wilson, 1987:103). This might indicate a Pauline influence and many do say that Paul is the author; however it cannot be supported conclusively who the author is as it is not clear (Hagee, 2004:1472). It is also said that the contrast of milk and solid food that is used in this specific text is something that is common in Greek ethical philosophy according to Moffatt (quoted by Wilson, 1987:103).

The content of Hebrews indicates that the book was written before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. The only possible site that we have evidence of is found in greetings that had been sent from believers in Italy in Hebrews 13:24. However, it is not clear if the author was in Rome, or if he wrote to the believers in Rome.

Concerning the audience and the reason why this letter was written to them: The early Christians were mainly converted Jews and the purpose of the letter was to encourage them in their faith (Hagee, 2004:1472). The pressures and persecution on a daily basis made these believers drift away from their original commitment to Christ. They are encouraged to not give up what they have in Christ for the rituals etc. of Judaism (Hagee, 2004:1472).

2.2.2 Genre and structure of Hebrews 5:11-14

This passage has a literary genre, seeing that the book of Hebrews consists of letters written to the believers who were mainly Jewish. The central theme of the book is the superiority of Jesus Christ over the Old Covenant (Hagee, 2004:1472). The considered text exists out of 4 verses, and these verses form a pericope. When it comes to the central theme of this passage, it is about reaching maturity in Christ (Wiersbe, 2008:58).

A comparison is drawn between the terms “sluggish” and “trained” found in the specific text of Hebrews 5:11-14, along with “milk” and “solid food” and “infant” and “mature” as already mentioned. The text can be divided into the following sections: Exhortation for being Immature (Hebrews 5:11-12), The Immature vs. the Mature (Hebrews 5:13-14) and Application and conclusion of Hebrews 5:11-14).

2.2.3 Brief summary of the passage

In this specific part of the text in Hebrews (5:11-14) the spiritual condition of the readers is examined, and it appears that they are not where they are supposed to be. They are reprimanded for being immature, in fact it is said that they have to start with the basics steps of being a believer all over again. This exhortation is given in order for them to make progress in their walk with the Lord (Wiersbe, 2008:58).

2.2.4 Exhortation for being immature (Exegesis of Hebrews 5:11-12)

“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s Word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!”

The author’s train of thought concerning the High Priesthood of Jesus is interrupted here in verse 11. When looking at the first part of the verse: “We have much to say about this”, first of all “**We**” is said to be a literary plural and refers to the author (one person) (Utley, 2009:56). The term “**We have much to say**” when written in Greek, reads as follows: “much is the word to us” and it is translated as, “we have much to say” (Greenlee, 1998:175).

The NIV translation uses the words “about this”. Other translations (KJV/NASB etc.) use “concerning/of him/whom” etc. This pronoun can be either masculine or neuter, however neuter is said to fit better and I agree seeing that it refers to Jesus’ Melchizedekian priesthood (Utley, 2009:56).

The author says that there is much to say about the Melchizedekian priesthood of Jesus, but the author goes on to say that it is difficult to explain it to the readers because they are slow to learn. Other translations use the word “sluggish”. The King James Version uses the words “dull in hearing”. They are literally accused of being “dull or sluggish of hearing”. This is not because they cannot understand what had been taught to them, but it is the neglect of their duty that is condemned. In other words they haven’t made real progress in their walk with the Lord. “It is men’s slothfulness in hearing which is the sole cause of their not improving the means of grace, or not thriving under the dispensation of the word” (Owen, 1996:88).

Although the readers had been Christians for some time, they failed to mature. The words “by this time” do not exactly say for what period of time, but from the words used the period seems to have been long enough for them to grow spiritually. On the other hand, as Utley puts it: “Length of time is not directly related to maturity” (2009:57). However, in this context the author

is saying that they indeed have been Christians for a long time. If they kept on growing in the Lord from the time of their conversion, they should have been mature by now.

When it comes to the term “teachers” (διδασκαλος, **didaskalos**) it has the following meaning: “an instructor (generally or specifically): - doctor, master, teacher (Strong, 1996:1320). However, this term isn’t used to address only the leaders of the church, but this is meant for all believers (Keck, 1998:68).

The fact that the author says that they should be “teachers” by now indicates that he held them in high regard, he had an expectation of them being able to give to others what they had received. The teachers of the Word in those days were people whom others looked up to, they had to have a higher standard when it came to the things of God. However, the author is not saying that all the readers should walk in the particular office of a teacher, but that they ought to know as much about faith as those who are in the office of a teacher (Mitchell, 2007:117). The term “knowledge” used here, refers not only to intellectual knowledge, but to the application thereof.

In this text, the readers are exhorted because they turned their backs on the vigorous study and diligent application of spiritual teaching (Brown, 1999:104) For this very reason they are not able to be teachers. They in fact need someone to teach them the “elementary truths of God’s Word”, the basic principles, “all over again”. They have failed in other words a few grades and instead of having graduated and becoming teachers, they are still at the primary level of their Christianity (Long, 1997:71).

They are Christians who are in need of help when they could have been those offering help to others. The apostle Paul says a similar thing to the Corinthian church. “It is not merely that they do not benefit personally, but even more serious, other people are denied the help which they might have received from them had they been strong and resourceful believers” (Brown, 1999:104). Different translations use different words for “the elementary truths of God’s Word”.

The King James Version, for example, reads: “the first principles of the oracles of God”, while other translations read: “the rudiments of the beginning” or “the first lessons” etc.

The Greek word for principles is **στοιχείον (stoicheion)**. It is the neuter of a presumed derivative of the base of **stoicheo**; something orderly in arrangement, that is, (by implication) a serial (basal, fundamental, initial) constituent (literally), proposition (figuratively): - element, principle, rudiment (Strong, 1996:4747). The word first/beginning/elementary (**ἀρχή, arche**) indicates that the principles/rudiments are the very beginning of the divine knowledge, the very principles/rudiments of the beginning (Greenlee, 1998:179). When looking at the Greek meaning of **arche** it is clear that the word beginning is a repetition of **stoicheion** (rudiments/principles).

When it comes to “of the oracles of God” or “of God’s Word, the following is pertinent: The Greek word for oracles/word is **λογιον (logion)**. It is the neuter of **logios**; an utterance (of God): - oracle (Strong 1996:3051). Oracles, according to Wilson, are words that have the literal meaning of “a saying” (1987:103). The oracles of God are a common designation for the Jewish Scriptures. These words are found in Numbers 24:16. Psalm 107:11, Acts 7:38 and in Romans 3:2 (Keck, 1998:68). The Hebrew word **אמר (‘emer)** is used in Numbers and in Psalms but it has the same meaning as the Greek word (**logion**) used in the New Testament (Strong, 1996:561). In Romans 3:2 it refers to the promises of God to the Jewish people and in Acts 7:38 it refers to revelations that Moses received (Wilson, 1987:102). In Numbers 24:16 it talks about the prophetic word given to Balaam and in Psalm 107:11 it talks about the will or commandments of God, given through Moses and the prophets. In this specific part of the text in Hebrews the “oracles of God” refers to the words of Scripture in general, however, one should remember that it primarily points to the Old Testament (Wilson, 1987:103). “Given the author’s Christian reading of those texts, very likely specific content about God and Christ was included”(Keck, 1998:68). Hebrews 1:1-4 for example might be found among such oracles according to Keck (1998:68).

On the other hand, when looking at chapter 6:1, it is clear that “the oracles of God” refers to Christ when it said: “Therefore let us leave the **elementary teachings about Christ** and go on to maturity...” The author goes on to say that they are in need of milk and not solid food. They are babies who are in need of help, babies who can only drink milk because they are not ready to digest solid food. “These are both God given and both are appropriate at certain times. However, milk is inappropriate for the mature (1 Corinthians 3:2; 1 Peter 2:2)” (Utley, 2009:57).

2.2.5 Summary of Hebrews 5:11-12

The intention of the Jewish Christians to whom this letter was originally addressed surely wasn't to become infants again, but this was indeed the stage they had reached. They reached a stage of uselessness. They allowed themselves to become like this and in the same way Christians today allow themselves to become passive Christians. Brown says: “Many people casually drift into a low standard of Christian life because they minimize the importance of Christian instruction and disciplined Bible study” (1999:105). Before they know it they have lost their passion/desire for God.

2.2.6 The immature vs. the mature (Exegesis of Hebrews 5:13-14)

“Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

A contrast is drawn between verse 13 and 14, while the author says what the readers look like in verse 13, where they are told what they ought to look like in verse 14. An infant (**νήπιος, nepios**) and milk (**γάλα, gala**) is contrasted with the mature (**τελειος, teleios**) and solid (**στερεος, stereos**) food (**τροπη, trophe**).

Verse 13 starts with the words: “Anyone who lives on milk...”.The term “lives on or useth” (**μετεχω, metecho**) is an active participle and has the following meaning: “From **meta** and **echo**; to share or participate; by implication belong to, eat (or drink): - be partaker, pertain, take

part, use (Strong, 1996:3348). It goes on to say that anyone who partakes of or lives on milk is still an infant. Again different translations use different words, but the Greek word for infant is **νήπιος (nepios)** and has the following meaning: “From an obsolete particle **νή (ne)**; implying negation and **epos**; not speaking, that is, an infant (minor); figuratively a simple minded person, an immature Christian: - babe, child (+ -ish)” (Strong, 1996:3516).

The word “infant” can have both positive and negative meanings. Scripture also refers to infants in a positive way. Being an infant is used to describe someone with good character, for example someone who is harmless, inoffensive, humble and meek, someone who has a sincere desire for the milk of the Word, someone who has pure motives, is free from hypocrisy and deceit (Gill, 2005:1). Jesus Himself encourages us to be like children. In Matthew 18:3-4: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven”.

On the other hand, in this context as mentioned, *infant* is used in a negative way, a way of exhortation. In this context it “denotes levity and inconstancy, ignorance and non-proficiency, want of digestion of strong meat, and incapacity to take care of themselves, as standing in need of tutors and governors (Gill, 2005:1). An infant, in this text, is someone who “is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness”.

Commentators differ on what is meant by the “teaching of righteousness”. The Greek word given for teach is **λογος (logos)** and it has the meaning of a word, an utterance or something said (Strong, 1996:3056). On the other hand, **δικαιοσυνη (dikaiosune)** is the Greek word for righteousness. The meaning of this word is: “From **dikaio**; equity (of character or act); specifically (Christian) justification: - righteousness” (Strong, 1996:1343). The entire phrase is translated: “right discussion’, ‘what is right’ and ‘the matter of right and wrong” (Greenlee, 1998:181).

“Commentators differ as to whether righteousness here refers to conduct or imputed worth” (Stedman, 1992:67). I agree with Hughes who says that it refers to imputed worth. The Christian faith is all about what Christ has done for us, He is our righteousness according to 1 Corinthians 1:30 and 2 Corinthians 5:21. It is completely opposed to self-righteousness or works of righteousness. We cannot earn our way to Heaven. In fact in Isaiah 64:6 it says: “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and **all our righteous acts are like filthy rags**; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away”. God has chosen us, and we are accepted by Him, in Christ. The only thing he asks is faith in Him. “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Romans 10:9-10).

Those who are infants do not understand this wonderful teaching of righteousness, because truly understanding it leads to change in the hearts of men and women. Stedman says: “The dullness which does not understand the divine program that leads to right conduct manifests its ignorance by being unable to “distinguish good from evil” (1992:67). In the King James Version it says that they (infants) are “unskillful in the Word of righteousness”. God wants all His people to be skilful in the word of righteousness. “To be skilful is to have a spiritual sense, taste, or relish, of the goodness, sweetness, useful excellency of the truths of the Gospel, endearing our hearts to God, and causing us to adhere unto Him with delight and constancy” (Owen, 1996:89).

In verse 14, the writer explains what his readers ought to look like or be like. They are to be mature people who eat solid food. **Τελειος (teleios)** is the Greek word for “mature” or they “that are full of age” as the King James puts it. The Strong’s Concordance gives the following meaning of the word **τελειος (teleios)**: “From **telos**; complete (in various applications of labour, growth, mental and moral character, and so on.); neuter (as noun, with **he**) completeness: - of full age, man, perfect (1996:5046). Utley says: “fully equipped for an assigned task” (2009:57).

The term mature refers to those believers who are disciplined and experienced (Greenlee, 1998:182). These are people whose understanding is enlarged and their minds are settled firmly in the knowledge of Christ Jesus and “the mysteries of the Gospel” (Owen, 1996:90). Mature people are “spiritual men”, men and women who walk by the Spirit. Solid (**stereos**) food (**trophe**) can be described as the deeper things of God which is for the mature because they are able to “digest” the deeper spiritual things.

Following this key to becoming mature, what does someone need to do to become a mature believer? The verse goes on to say: “who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil”. When looking at the Greek text the King James Version has a better translation of this part of the text. It says: “those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”. This is obviously what the readers lacked when looking at what is said.

There are certain words in this section that attract attention in relation to becoming mature. The words, “senses exercised” and “constant use”. First of all, what is meant by having your senses exercised or trained? **Αἰσθητηριον (aistheterion)** is the Greek word for senses and has the following meaning: From a derivative of **aisthanomai**; properly an organ of perception, that is, (figuratively) judgment: - senses (Strong, 1996:145).

To exercise your senses means getting your understanding and your mind ready, fit and able to receive the deeper things of God (Owen, 1996:90). However, one can only be fit, ready and able through constant study of the Word, prayer and meditation, hearing of the word and responding to the truth you’ve obtained (Owen, 1996:90). Very important here is to keep in mind the words “constant use” (NIV) or “by reason of use” (KJV). The Greek word for “use” is **εξῆς (hexis)** which means habit or practice (Strong 1996:1838). The NASB version reads as follow: “because of practice have their senses trained”. “This is a perfect passive participle, which speaks of repeated action that has become consolidated into a settled state of being” (Utlely, 2009:57). Practice is indeed a habitual action because practice makes perfect.

When it comes to the Word of the Gospel, God gave us His word as food, provided for the souls of men. In Matthew 4:4 it says: “Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” On the other hand, even though the Word has been given as food for our souls, it will not benefit us unless we eat and digest it. Our souls can only be healthy if we eat and digest and in turn a healthy state of soul has an appetite for the deeper mysterious of the Gospel. It is a healthy appetite that leads to having the ability to receive and digest solid food.

The Greek word for trained/exercised is γυμναζω (**gumnazo**) (Strong, 1996:1128). This is athletic imagery, something that is common in the New Testament. Other examples from the New Testament are found in 1 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:11 and 2 Peter 2:14. The direct English translation would be Gymnasium, a place where training takes place through different exercises. What is interesting is that in relation to athletic imagery, Scripture verses like 1 Corinthians 9:24 and Hebrews 12:1 etc. uses terms like a race and/or to run/running. Τρεχω (trecho) is the Greek for run, while different Greek words are given for the word race (Strong 1996:5143). In the end exercised/trained, run/running and race all has the imagery of progress in mind.

The last part of the verse talks about discerning between good and evil. In fact it says they need to exercise their senses in order to discern between good and evil. There is alliteration in verse 14 in the Greek words given for good (**kalos**) and evil (**kakos**). The terms ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in the Old Testament do not produce such an easy alliteration according to the Septuagintal renderings. Old Testament references are Genesis 2:17; 3:5,22 (Gordon, 2008:90). The meaning of **καλος (kalos)** according to the Strong’s Concordance is: “Of uncertain affinity; properly beautiful, but chiefly (figuratively) good (literally or morally), that is, valuable or virtuous (for appearance or use, and thus distinguished from **agathos**, which is properly intrinsic): better, fair, good (-ly), honest, meet, well, worthy”(1996:2570). **Κακος (kakos)** and its meaning is the following: “Apparently a primary word; worthless (intrinsically such; whereas **poneros**

properly refers to effects), that is, (subjectively) depraved, or (objectively) injurious: - bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked” (Strong, 1996:2556).

The text says that they need to have their senses trained to **distinguish** between **kalos and kakos**. This is where the big difference comes in between the mature and infants. Διακρισις (**diakrisis**) is the Greek term and can be translated to have the meaning of “differentiation, discrimination, distinguishing, ability to judge, discern, the ability to decide, to recognize (Greenlee, 1998:183). The mature have the ability to **distinguish** or **discern** while the infants don’t, because unlike them the mature have had their senses trained. When looking at infants in the natural world, their parents need to teach them, *no you are not allowed to do that and yes you are allowed to do that, this is good and this is evil, this is right and this is wrong.*

The mature are able to judge and receive what is good for the nourishment, the benefit of their souls and to reject what is evil (Owen, 1996:90). The full of age, as the King James Version puts it, are qualified to discern between what is morally good and evil, between the worse and better state of the church, and between the law and the Gospel of Christ, so between the doctrines of Christ, and the doctrines of men (Gill, 2005:1), the doctrines of men being from the enemy (Satan) seeing that they oppose the doctrine of Christ Jesus. Choosing that which is good leads to life, while choosing that which is evil leads to death (Mitchell, 2007:118).

2.2.7 Summary of Hebrews 5:13-14

God calls all believers to maturity. Mature men and women of God know that their walk with the Lord needs never be stagnant, it is an ongoing process of training their senses through spending time with Him, making progress, something all believers need to work on every day of their lives to in the end reach perfection when Christ comes to take us home.

Those who understand the righteousness of God understands the importance of spending time with Him in His Word and very importantly acting on what they have come to know in their walk with the Lord. Understanding the righteousness of God, leads us as believers to discern between good and evil, knowing what is from God and knowing what is not. In the end believers

should reach maturity because they shouldn't be able to hold back what they have come to know about Christ. People often say they want more of God, but how can anyone have more if they can't even get the basics right.

2.3 Scriptural evidence for spiritual development from Ephesians 4:14-15

2.3.1 Background on the book of Ephesians

It is accepted that Paul is indeed the author of the book of Ephesians, as he claims to be in the letter; however, there are many who doubt his authorship. Their reasons for doubting are that there are differences in language and grammar. It differs from the other letters like Romans, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1Thessalonians and Philemon. There is, however, more evidence that he is the author, than that he isn't (Cohick, 2010:5).

Concerning the date, it is not exactly clear when Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians. It is clear from the text that he was in prison (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). We know of three places where he could have been in prison: Ephesus, Cesarea and Rome. It is said that it was probably not in the prison of Ephesus, because why would he write to them, while he was in Ephesus. He was in prison in Cesarea in 57-60 AD and in Rome more or less 61-63 AD. Even though it is not clear, it is accepted that Paul was in Rome in prison when he wrote Ephesians (Vosloo & van Rensburg, 1999:1564).

It is also not clear whether he wrote it specifically to the church in Ephesus. The reference to Ephesus in 1:1 isn't found in the early manuscripts. This letter is said to be more a letter that was sent to the whole of Asia Minor to encourage and strengthen the believers. Ephesus was probably the first to receive the letter from the messenger (Vosloo & van Rensburg, 1999:1565).

2.3.2 Genre and structure

This passage also has a literary genre, seeing that the book consists of letters written to believers in Asia Minor. When it comes to the central theme of the book, different commentaries give different main themes, however the unity of and within the church is among the favourite

themes (Hagee, 2004:1409). The unity of and within the church is surely not the only theme of the book, but the book of Ephesians does portray a high and holy view of the church as the body of Christ (Hagee, 2004:1410). The central theme of the specific passage is **growing to maturity in Christ** (Ephesians 4:14-15). The considered text exists out of 2 verses. A comparison is drawn as in Hebrews 5:11-14, between infants and the mature. The text can be divided into the following sections: Infants and the danger of deception (4:14) and spiritual growth to maturity (4:15).

2.3.3 Brief summary of the passage

This specific text of Ephesians is about growing in Christ in order to reach maturity. The author first explains that they are like infants who can easily be influenced by the wrong things, but he encourages them to speak the truth of the Gospel in love in order to stand strong and grow as the body of Christ.

2.3.4 Infants and the danger of deception: Exegesis of Ephesians 4:14

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”

In verse 13, the author, Paul talks about becoming mature. Maturity is something that is meant for the entire body of Christ, seeing that verse 12 talks about the building up of the Body of Christ. In verse 13 it says: “until **we** all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become **mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”. The use of the plural form ‘children’ is said to be individualistic, that which leads to division. It is in contrast with the togetherness of those who are mature (Best, 1998:404).

Each member is expected to grow individually, but the focus here is on growing together and helping each other, up/building each other up, functioning as a body. In other words true maturity is found in unity. The tone of verse 14 is negative while the tone of verse 15 is positive

seeing that it talks about that which leads to maturity. In verse 14, the author highlights the unity of the faith to be aimed at by talking about the fact that they are currently weak (infants) and that there were dangers that the church faced at that specific time in History (Schnackenburg, 1991:186).

By using the word “we” the author includes himself (O’Brien, 1999:308). The same Greek words are used here in Ephesians chapter 4, as in Hebrews 5:13-14, **teleios** (mature) and **nepios** (infants). As used in Hebrews 5:13, the term *infants* is used in a negative way. “They are unstable, lacking in direction, vacillating, and open to manipulation” (O’Brien, 1999:308). Using the term *infants* doesn’t mean that they don’t know Christ, they are reborn believers, yet they still need to grow up as believers. In relation to the next part of the verse, they are like small boats that are “tossed back and forth by the waves” going from one side to the other through every wind of false teaching (O’Brien, 1999:308).

The fact that the believers in this text are not steadfast in their doctrine is metaphorically compared to a boat that is blown hither and thither by the wind on the ocean. “The metaphor was a natural one for the peoples of antiquity because of their fear of voyaging and of the omnipotence of the wind and waves” (Schnackenburg, 1991:186). The danger of traveling by ship on the ocean was often used in the Old Testament to indicate life apart from God. Paul himself was shipwrecked three or more times (2 Corinthians 11:25) and in Acts it talks about another shipwreck on his way as a prisoner to the City of Rome. Here, however, it is only used metaphorically in relation to the inner life of the Ephesian believers (Best, 1998:404).

The rest of the verse says “and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming”. The false teachings that cause so much trouble are encouraged by the cunning of men. The King James Version says cunning craftiness, while the NIV says the cunning and craftiness of men. The Greek term given for “cunning craftiness” is **πανουργια (panourgia)** (Strong, 1996:3834). “Cunning literally refers to dice-playing and comes to be used metaphorically of trickery that results from craftiness” (O’Brien, 1999:309), this being the third metaphor used in this text. Games that are played with a dice are not necessarily dishonest, but

in the ancient world it was associated with deception and trying to deceive someone. So it became “a synonym for trickery” (Best, 1998:405).

Paul had another seducer also in mind, Satan, the master deceiver, him being the one behind everything. Paul uses the same word when he refers to the serpent that deceived Eve in 2 Corinthians 11:3. It says: “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the **serpent’s cunning** ...”. His ultimate aim is to deceive (Schnackenburg, 1991:187). He works out schemes on an ongoing basis and other human beings are very often those whom he uses to deceive the believers, and especially those who are weak. These false teachers proclaiming false doctrines /teachings are said to have been Greek philosophers and Jewish legalists in those days (Utley, 2009:118).

2.3.5 Summary of Ephesians 4:14

Once the believers become mature individually and as a unit, they will have the ability to discern when deception is at their doorstep. Deceivers are still out there today, to try and deceive the people of God and there are so many “infants” who fall into the trap of deception because they lack discernment. Those who fail to grow close to God remain infants, and become a “play ball” for the people/deceivers/enemy (Floor, 1995:158). One moment they believe one thing and the next moment another, they are not rooted/grounded in the truth. However, the mature can judge between right and wrong.

2.3.6 Spiritual growth to maturity: Exegesis of Ephesians 4:15

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

When it comes to verse 15, a contrast is drawn between the false doctrine that was presented in a deceitful way in the previous verse, and growing in the truth that is presented in love (O’Brien, 1999:310). The Greek word given for truth is **ληθευο** (**aletheuo**). The meaning given to it according to the Strong’s Concordance is: “From **alethes**; to be true (in doctrine and

profession): speak (tell) the truth) (1996:226), the truth here referring to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This truth gives Christians the strength and steadfastness to stand their ground. Strength and steadfastness like the warrior's belt mentioned in Ephesians 6:14 (Schnackenburg, 1991:187). Believers are to speak the Gospel to one another to keep them from being deceived, standing firm against anything corrupt that wants to tempt them to turn from the truth (Best, 1998:407). This in the end leads to growth/maturity/unity in Christ.

The term love is added to the truth, "speaking the truth in love". The Greek word for love in this context is *αγαπη* (**agape**). The meaning of this word is: "From **agapao**; love, that is, affection or benevolence" (Strong, 1996:26). This is the way of the Gospel, love. This is the way in which the ministry of all should occur (O'Brien, 1999:312). People are to be convinced by the revelation of the truth and should be won by love. The words "in love" emphasize unity. Doing something in love brings people together. Speaking the truth in love takes a humble spirit straining after Christ (Cohick, 2010:113).

According to Abbot (quoted by Kitchen, 1994:81): "The exhortation included in the participle 'trusting it' is not simply 'speaking the truth', but 'being utterly genuine, sincere and honest'. In other words, doing the truth as well, as Jesus said in John 3:21: "But he that **doeth truth** cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (KJV) (Kitchen, 1994:81).

The verse continues to say what will happen if we speak the truth in love: "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ". The term "we" once again includes every member of the body and Paul, the author. When it comes to the term "grow", the Greek word for grow or "grow up" is, *αυξανω* (**auxano**) and has the meaning of, to enlarge or increase (Strong, 1996:837).

Seeing that the emphasis is put on unity in this text Kitchen says the following: "The way of unity is one of growth to perfection" (1994:81). The body can only grow perfect in love together.

It is interesting to see that growth is not a theme elsewhere in the New Testament, but peculiar to the book of Ephesians (Kitchen, 1994:80).

The author talks about growing up into all things. All things refer to faith, knowledge, unity and especially as seen in this context, in love (O'Brien, 1999:312). Colossians 2:19 also talks about growth; however, it differs from Ephesians 4:15 in the following way: "In Colossians, growth comes from God, through Christ, the head, whereas in Ephesians Christ is both the source of growth and its goal" (Kitchen, 1994:80). According to Markus Barth (quoted by Stott, 1999:171): "He provides sustenance to it (the body) through every contact according to the needs of each single part. He enables the body to make its own growth so that it builds itself up in love". He is also the reason we grow, to be just like Him, we become completely incorporated into Him.

2.3.7 Summary of Ephesians 4:15

Instead of being infants who are "tossed back and throw", we are given the means of growing into maturity in verse 15. Speaking the truth and acting out the truth of God in and through our lives, in and with love, is the answer. The truth in love helps the body grow, because the truth in love builds up, but each part also grows as they live the truth in love. Each part/limb/bone of the body, needs to develop fully to fit correctly in their individual place in order for the body to function together as a unit in maturity (in a harmonious and satisfactory manner) (Lloyd-Jones, 2004:199). This growth, however, is not something that we accomplish on our own, for it takes place for Christ, with the help of Christ, who is the Head of the body. It is in Him, in unity that we reach the fullness in Christ Jesus.

2.4 The life of Samuel as an example of spiritual growth.

In relation to the spiritual development of adolescents, the life of Samuel is a great example of spiritual growth, especially when it is placed in contrast with the lives of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas in 1 Samuel chapters two and three. According to Willis "there are altering notices of the progress of the boy Samuel and of the ruinous career of Eli's sons" (Gordon, 1993:24).

2.5 The difference between Samuel and Eli's sons

The following verses makes mention of the progress of Samuel, 2:11, 18-21, 26, 3:1-10, 19, 4:1a. On the other hand chapters 2:12-17, 22-25, 27-36; 3:11-18; 4:1b-22. talk about Hophni and Phinehas. In chapter 2:17-18 we read the following: "This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the Lord's offering with contempt. But Samuel was ministering before the Lord-a boy wearing a linen ephod". Not only did Hophni and Phinehas sin in this way, but they also slept around (Chapter 2:22b). Samuel served happily and innocently in the temple while Hophni and Phinehas abused their positions as priests in the temple. In chapter 2 verse 12 of the King James Version, Hophni and Phinehas are called "sons of Belial". "This phrase is idiomatic of one who is worthless and neglects Yahweh" (Firth, 2009:67).

2.6 The role of parents

Very important here to see is the role that parents play and this includes mentors. The reason why many children don't walk in the ways of the Lord is because very often parents are too busy, they don't make time for their children or they simply see no need to discipline them. Vosloo and van Rensburg say that parents need not forget that a very important part of their calling is to educate/train/teach/discipline their children (1999:305).

It is interesting to note that Eli was blind. It is said that Eli **heard** about the wickedness of his sons (2:23) because he could not **see** them doing wrong. He became aware of their sin through the rumours he heard. "There is a subtle double meaning: Eli is physically blind, morally blind and sees no prophetic visions. Furthermore, this is symptomatic of Israel as a whole" (Gilmour, 2011:61). In the same way parents are often morally blind because they don't have a relationship with the Lord and for that reason their children do as they like. On the other hand, very often, parents don't want to see/acknowledge that their children are in error. Parents have the responsibility of leadership over their children, as Eli had the responsibility over Israel as a nation.

Eli spoke to his sons and told them that what they had done was wrong, but he took no action. He had the right to remove them from their priestly service, but he didn't. Later on it was probably too late for any success with them, they simply didn't give ear to his exhortation (2:22) (Evans, 2004:35). He failed to guide and discipline them; however, he had great success with Samuel, whom He mentored. On the other hand, parents are not always to blame for the behaviour of their children, each individual have to make their own decisions. Samuel was one of those who made the right decision. Samuel's nature was different, but both Hannah and Eli can take some credit, because there were indeed many things that they taught him (Evans, 2004:36). In the same way parents can have great success with the upbringing of their children if they discipline and mentor them in a Godly way.

2.7 Samuel as example

It is said of Samuel that he "ministered before the Lord" in chapter 2:11 and that "he grew up in the presence of the Lord" in chapter 2:21. Two keywords stand out with regards to spiritual development, "minister" and "grow". The Hebrew word for "**minister**" is **sharath** and has the following meaning according to the Strong's Concordance: A primitive root; to attend as a menial or worshipper figuratively to contribute to, to minister unto, to serve, to wait on (1995: 8334). **Halak** is the Hebrew word for "**grew**" in this context. The meaning of this word is to become/ be made large, in body, in mind, in estate or honour, to advance, to increase (Strong, 1995:1980). In Chapter 2:11, it is said that Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. Samuel learned from Eli and respected him. He learned how to minister, or serve before the Lord and he grew. Believers need to respect their parents and mentors and learn from them.

Just like Hophni and Phinehas he also didn't know the Lord in a personal way, before he heard the Lord speak to him in an audible voice. However, the difference between him and Eli's sons was that with the knowledge that he had he "continued to grow in stature and in favour with the Lord and with people" according to chapter 2:26 (Evens, 2004:38).

When the Lord spoke with Samuel in an audible voice, he didn't recognize that it was the Lord. He learned how to serve the Lord, but he didn't know the Lord's voice (Vosloo & van Rensburg, 1999:306). Eli, who realized that it was the Lord speaking to Samuel, told him how to reply to the Lord. When the Lord called Samuel again in chapter 3:10, he answered: "Speak Lord for your servant is listening". Samuel had the right attitude when the Lord spoke to him. As believers we must always be willing and ready to listen and serve when the Lord speaks (Vosloo & van Rensburg, 1999:306).

It was difficult for Samuel to tell Eli what the Lord spoke to him about seeing that God said that He would judge Eli and his family. However, he did what a good messenger would. We learn from chapter 3:19-21 that a close relationship was formed between God and Samuel. "The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and He let none of his words fall to the ground" (3:19) (Vosloo & van Rensburg, 1999:306). In chapter 3:20 we learn that Samuel was recognized as a prophet while God rejected Eli and his family. In chapter 4, Eli together with his sons ended up dying and Samuel ended up making a great impact in the history of Israel.

2.8 Application-Summary of Hebrews 5:11-14, Ephesians 4:14-15 and the boy Samuel (1Sam 2 and 3) as example

In conclusion, as mentioned in Hebrews 5:11-14 and in Ephesians 4:14-15, we are called to maturity in Christ. We are told to grow in Him. Both these texts apply without a doubt to all of us living in the twenty-first century, even though the letters had been addressed to specific recipients. The church today still suffers from immaturity and every now and again those who are mature need to remind themselves that they are not infants anymore, we need to act as mature men and women of God.

In relation to the topic of spiritual development of adolescents-adolescents might be young, but they are also expected to grow spiritually in order to reach maturity in Christ. The younger a person is, when starting to grow spiritually the better because it will keep him/her from so many wrong decisions in life. God longs to share the deeper things in his heart with even the young

people- I would say, especially with the young people, because they have the passion and the ability to run with something. Our young people are surrounded by so many temptations and wrong ideas of life and for this reason needs to strive to become mature in order to stand their ground.

Christ wants each and every believer to know who they are in Christ, to know that they share in the righteousness of God because of what He has done. Young people who understand this will study and proclaim the truth of the Gospel, train themselves in order to grow so that they will be able to discern between right and wrong so that they can stand strong against each and everything that sets itself up against the true knowledge of God. Also very important as mentioned here in Ephesians is that they should grow in unity, speaking the truth in love to one another, building each other up so that the body can grow to maturity. Yes, we should grow individually, but it is important to realize that it is not about us, it is about the Body of Christ and the unity thereof. If we grow together we will be so much more efficient.

From the book of 1 Samuel 2 and 3, there is so much that we can learn about the life of Samuel. Very important to notice, that God called him from a young age and he grew in the Lord (2:26). Samuel's attitude is something that many can learn from. Samuel had a servant attitude, he learned to serve the Lord and he did so in a humble way. Not only was he willing to listen to what the Lord was saying, but he had respect for the Lord and he obeyed His commands.

The fact that parents and mentors play a big role in lives of young people is another important point to notice. Parents and mentors need to take up their responsibility, because they play such a major role in the lives of their children. Let's reach out and make the difference in the lives of the adolescents around us so that they can become mature men and women of God who stand their ground, men and women who listen to and serve God wholeheartedly as Samuel did.

2.9 Goals of spiritual development

From the Exegesis done on Hebrews 5:11-14 and Ephesians 4:14-15, and from the example of Samuel's life (1 Sam 2 & 3), the following goals were formed to guide one in order to reach maturity in Christ:

- Keep on growing through the training of your senses, it is a continual process through constant study of the Word, prayer and meditation, the hearing of the Word and so forth.
- Discern between good and evil, in order to reject evil and stand your ground
- Respond to the truth that you have obtained (act on what you have learned and set an example).
- Grow in unity in Christ who is the head of the body, by speaking the truth in love and building each other up.
- Have a servant attitude, be humble and have respect for the Lord. Be obedient, always ready and willing to listen and serve.
- Mentors/parents should educate, train and discipline adolescents

Chapter 3: Spiritual growth from a sociological and psychological point of view

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter spiritual development was discussed from a Biblical point of view. Human beings are also psychological and social beings that can be affected psychologically and be influenced socially. For that very reason the following overall question is asked in this chapter with regards to spiritual development: What do the disciplines of sociology and psychology have to say on the topic of spiritual development of adolescence (age 16-18)?

A critical literature study is done in this chapter on spiritual development and the following areas are looked at: A need for spiritual development, the importance of spiritual development, spiritual identity development, faith development, moral development, risk-taking behaviour and spirituality and health.

The fields of sociology and psychology do overlap at times, but there is a clear difference between the two areas of study. The science of sociology examines groups of people, societies, communities and so forth, as well as the way in which they are affected or influenced by outside sources. Psychology, on the other hand, is concerned with the mental side of an individual. Psychology examines the workings of the human mind, why a person thinks and behaves in a certain way (Ellis, 2009:1).

3.2 Sociological view

From a sociological point of view, the postmodern world we live in has a very different outlook on life from the modern era. Postmodern thought and decision-making are based on feelings and will and not on reason, that which makes sense, the truth, intellect. Individual emotions play a far greater role. People today evaluate things, products, entertainment and even churches, faith and so on in terms of the way that they experience it. The twenty-first century has become an era of having a good experience (Mueller, 2006:65). The sad thing is that children and adolescents are sucked in by this way of thinking because this is the way they grow up. The

media and everything and everyone around them portray this as normal. If they are not helped, many individuals will not come to know the Lord Jesus, led alone develop well spiritually, because they do not know any better.

3.2.1 A need for spiritual development

According to Karstens, “spirituality is nowadays seen as a very real concept and needs to be included in scientific theories” (2006:37). Spirituality is said to have found its way back in areas like medicine, psychology and theology, even though there was not a lot of attention given to it in the modern era, seeing that it wasn’t seen as something scientific. There is still a need in relation to the application thereof (Karstens, 2006:38).

When it comes to the Western world at large, there are so many different religions and traditions represented in one country or continent, like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Europe and even in our country South Africa. One of the reasons is that a lot of migration has taken place in recent years. Secularism has been the way of modern society to distance itself from conflicts between religions and religious opinion (Tacey, 2004:12). In the U.S.A a distinction was made between church and state and many countries followed in those footsteps. Religion was placed on one side in order for governments to govern countries and to do business without the interference of religious opinion (Tacey, 2004:12).

Man decided to govern without God on the basis of man-made rules. However, governments were and are surely not in control of everything, looking at events like tsunamis and earthquakes and hurricanes and economic recession and they surely did not attend to the spiritual needs of its people because they did not consider it as necessary. A society without God cannot cope or function properly. Human beings are spiritual as well, and this means that they cannot live aside from the spiritual, the supernatural (that which is beyond them or their abilities). Human beings have a need and a spiritual longing for the transcendent. The fact that man needed to look after his spirit man became clear in the larger society of the twenty-first century.

I agree with Tacey when he says: “What we are seeing in so-called ‘secular societies or worldly societies is a return of the spiritual impulse...”. He continues to say: “The purely secular condition has proved inadequate to contain, nurture or transform the spiritual impulses in human lives...” (2004:12). However, the sad thing of today’s society is that the awareness of spirituality and the sacred does not include God or the focus is not on God as our Creator with whom we connect and communicate, but the focus is on self. Jupp and Flanagan say that God might be mentioned, but there is no commitment to Him as the ultimate authority. Today there is rather a commitment to the self as something that can be explored or experienced through spiritual practices (2007:111).

Everything revolves around self, and people adopt what is known as the holistic approach, a word that is widely used in society. This involves the overall well-being of the entire human being which includes the spirit man. Very often people sound like spirit-filled believers when they talk, but they are so far from it, because God is not part of the picture. The term God is also used by many, but to which God do they refer? Eastern practices like Yoga found in Hinduism and Buddhism are practiced by many. It is said that Yoga “aims to use meditation to attain spiritual insight and tranquillity” (Ness, 2012:1). This is the picture that society portrays to the adolescents of today, it’s about enriching the self.

Governments, the church and parents are not paying attention to the spiritual needs of young people in general. In the United States it is said that the church and Christian communities are failing badly in engaging with and educating the youth (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:21). “There is also concern in the South African community regarding the effectiveness of religious education in helping children and the youth actualize their faith in their daily lives” (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:21). The following is said about the South American society: “Families feel incapable of handing on values, schools form professionals, and the church institutionalizes and sacramentalizes rather than evangelizing and giving meaning to life” (Levebre & Ross, 2007:90).

Today we are sitting with a post-Joshua generation, a generation that lacks spiritual direction. To a large extent parents are to blame. Parents might have served God, but they didn't regard it important enough to bring up Godly or God fearing children, a generation which Linhart and Livermore refer to as a "Mess-Age", a generation in a mess because God isn't featuring in their lives (2011:99).

I believe that this generation is in a mess due to the fact that there are many who grow up in divorced homes. It is said according to Statistics S.A. that black and white families are mostly affected by divorce today. In 2001 to 2007 the divorce rate was the highest among whites, but in 2008 to 2010, the divorce rate for blacks was higher, but white people weren't far behind (Lehohla, 2010:4).

It is no wonder that this generation is also known as the fatherless generation, seeing that many grow up with only a mother in the house. It is said that according to research done recently that 40% of the 18 million children in South Africa are raised by single mothers (Prince, 2009:3). In some instances parents are together, but the father is just absent. His work or whatever keeps him so preoccupied that he doesn't feature in the lives of his children. It is said that young people who grow up without a father are more likely than others to experience social problems (Prince, 2010:1).

Many children in South Africa today also lose parents due to HIV. When it comes to which racial group or groups are mostly affected, it is said according to Statistics SA that among black South Africans, it affects 13.6% in comparison with the rest of the population, that includes whites, coloureds and Indians, which is only 2.3% (Shisana *et al.*, 2009:79). Many children lose both parents to Aids and end up homeless, and in trying to survive they end up getting involved in the wrong things.

3.2.2 Importance of spiritual development

From the above it is clear that individuals have a need for spiritual development. It is also said that individuals with higher levels of spirituality handle life and issues far better than those with

lower levels of spirituality (Cotton *et al.*, 2006:472). Our society as a whole indeed needs to undergo spiritual development, looking at the state that the South African and Global Society are in. Society however, poses many challenges with regards to spiritual development, and this has a great impact on individuals during adolescence.

A lot of pressure is placed on adolescents, their body image, forming their own identity, pressure from school, pressure from social institutions, pressure from friends and family, dating and health (Anon., 2011:1). Many of the challenges that adolescents face today are the same challenges their parents faced, but there are indeed a number of challenges that are far greater than previous generations (Bolyn, 2011:1). One of the big challenges is related to technology. Even though technology as well as the development thereof is positive in general with regards to making life easier, it does in fact complicate life for many individuals. Young people today also face: “cyber-bullying”, “sexting”, pornography and social media scandals (Bolyn, 2011:1).

With regards to bullying, as Michelle Bolyn put it, there have always been individuals who bullied others at school, but the problem of today is that when young people go home from school, the bullying doesn't stop. They are still made fun of and bullied on social media sites like Twitter, Facebook and MySpace, known as cyber-bullying (2011:1). Young people also undergo a lot of abuse, physically, emotionally and sexually at home or among family members. With regards to molestation, it is said that this epidemic is increasing worldwide. It is said that 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be molested before turning 18 (Anon., 2012:1).

“Sexting” is a practice that involves individuals sending nude pictures of themselves to others (Bolyn, 2011:1). These terms like “cyber-bullying” and “sexting” might not be commonly used in South Africa, but whatever it's called or even if its acknowledged or not, it surely forms part of the lives of many adolescents. Today more than ever, people also have free and easy access to pornography on computers and cell phones and many become addicted from a very young age.

Society and the social media have also become obsessed with the spirit world and the supernatural, and this is clear in movies, television programmes and even in cartoons and

animations. God is a supernatural being, but He doesn't feature. The occult has always been part of society and even though governments and people don't take it seriously enough, young people today are tempted to get involved in these things.

Films like *Harry Potter*, *Narnia* and *Twilight* are commonly referred to as fiction, but the irony is that people are glued to their chairs when watching it. People are so ignorant today of the reality of these things, and often young people experiment with the occult and before they know it they are involved in something very dangerous. Wika and Satanism seem like an option to some, especially those who feel "powerless/weak", because it involves having certain powers which are demonic (Mueller, 2006:101).

Another big problem youth is facing is drug abuse. Drug abuse in South Africa has reached levels unimagined together with a rise in drug-related crimes (SCRC, 2010:1). "The current and much extended menu of illegal substances that, as well as marijuana and LSD, now features such exotic items as cocaine, heroin, crack, crystal meth, ecstasy, cat, khat, tick, LSD, GHB etc. (SCRC, 2010:1)."

Big cities offer easy access to drugs. Due to urbanization, where people come to live in the cities where there are better job opportunities, more and more people are exposed to drugs. In South Africa, a lot of urbanization has taken place over the last number of years by just looking at the growth in size of our major cities.

A study done in the United States shows that wealthy suburban high school students use drugs more frequently and drink more than a group of students from the inner-city (Marano, 2008:1). The same might be true of children who grow up in wealthy suburbs in South Africa, white, black, coloured and Indian. However, the use of drugs, and this includes all other substance abuse, is specifically a huge problem in the poor, majority coloured, township area of the Cape Flats for example. The rate of substance abuse by high school students of the Cape Flats is extremely high nationally and internationally (Mash, 2011:83).

When it comes to disease, the HIV/AIDS virus is still one of the biggest challenges that sub-Saharan Africa faces. Not only as previously mentioned do young people lose one or both parents to it, but in 2009 worldwide 15-24 year olds accounted for an estimated 41 percent of all new infections amongst adults (WHO, 2011:1). Challenges like these affect the spiritual development of adolescents tremendously. These things lead to many problems and complications in the lives of individuals which in the end keep them from becoming who they were created to be.

3.2.3 Morality

The terms *morality* and *moral values* have taken a huge knock in our society. In the 20th century the youth in America were accused by some for being selfish, not having values and being too individualistic. On the other hand some people praised them for their “moral commitments” in standing up against poverty, racism and trying to bring an end to war. Nevertheless the nation was said to be in a dilemma with regards to morality (Adams & Berzonsky, 2003:247).

Looking at the world around us, living in the twenty-first century, things are not looking any better. Children and adolescents have so many rights that there are not many boundaries, if any in general, set by parents or society anymore. Adolescents who are respectful, kind, helpful, tolerant and gentle, who follow moral and Biblical principles of integrity and honesty etc. stick out like sore thumbs (Anon., 2011:1).

Society plays a major role in the moral reasoning and development of adolescents. The social media today is basically saying to young people that you can do as you like, everything goes as long as it makes you feel good. Television shows and movies today portray that there is nothing wrong with having sex before marriage, violent behaviour, breaking of rules and so on.

The South African government is in fact promoting sexual behaviour among young people by putting so much emphasis on using condoms. They should rather focus more on promoting abstinence until marriage and being faithful to one partner, like in the African country of Uganda

for example. The government of Uganda has promoted the **ABC** strategy from the early nineties: First **A**bstinence, second **B**eing Faithful to one partner, and thirdly using **C**ondoms (Uganda, 2007:1).

So-called role models, like the Rapp artist M&M, sing about killing people, being rebellious and so forth. Madonna promotes homosexuality in one of her music videos with the lyrics: “we are bored with the concepts of what’s right and what’s wrong”. In relation to homosexuality, the media is slowly but surely making people get used to the idea. A very prominent figure today who has many people talking is Lady Gaga. Not only does she defend homosexuality, and provoke young people sexually through her lyrics, but she also uses occult signs on CD covers and in her music videos which clearly indicate that she is involved in the occult.

Adolescents today are extremely challenged to discern and stand their ground and not allow themselves to be negatively influenced. They can, however, not do this on their own. The adolescents of the twenty first century are in need of support (Lefebvre & Ross, 2007:81).

3.2.4 Summary and conclusion of the sociological view

From a sociological point of view, the need and the importance of spiritual development for adolescents is something we cannot deny looking at the state that our youth is in. Seeing that the twenty-first century is about having a good experience, it poses a threat to adolescents being able to develop well spiritually. The truth is that it is not always easy to be a child of God, everything we go through isn’t always a pleasant experience. The society of the twenty-first century is aware of their spirit man/their spiritual side and that they need to look after it. However, being spiritual nowadays often excludes God and adolescents grow up thinking this is right.

Adolescents of the twenty-first century are also in a mess seeing that many grow up not having parents to lead by example and the church in general is also failing badly in helping young people develop well spiritually. When it comes to moral standards, there are hardly any portrayed by the media and so-called role models in our society. The bad influences that our

young people in South Africa and worldwide are experiencing are horrendous. The truth is that the social moral standards of the world we live in will probably continue worsening. Our young people are in need of support. The question is, what are we going to do about it?

3.3 Psychological view

“The meaning of spirituality from a psychological perspective has evolved through the years from the early notion that it is an acquired and secondary aspect of human endeavour (mostly embedded in religion) to a contemporary understanding that it is an inherent, distinct, and integral part of human experience” (Kim & Esquivel, 2011:1).

When looked at the concepts of Spirituality and Spiritual formation/development, the following is said to give a clear understanding of the difference between the two, even though they do go hand in hand. According to Ratcliff, “Spirituality emphasizes awe, wonder, and other experiences that are beyond mundane, everyday life, and that connect the individual to something transcendent and/or of ultimate importance” (2002:2). According to Karstens, “Spirituality can be seen as being located at the centre of what it means to be human and can further be described as a search for meaning, purpose and values in life together with a desire for transcendence, meaningful relationships with a supernatural being and other human beings” (2006:54).

According to May (as cited in Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010), “spiritual formation is a rather general term referring to all attempts, means, instruction and discipline intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth” (2010:21). Spiritual development, according to Benson, Roehlkepartain and Rude, can be defined as: “the process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred” (2003:205).

Adolescence is a time of several changes in the life of a young person, and this has a great impact on individuals psychologically. Spiritual development is often left out when it is in fact a crucial part of the development of adolescents. According to Roehlkepartain *et al.*, “It is the

spiritual dimension that is most involved in a person's effort to integrate the many aspects of development" (2006:9).

3.3.1 The Need and importance of spiritual development

From a psychological point of view, there is indeed a great need for spiritual development and it is very important when it comes to all aspects of psychological development. Not only is spiritual development a crucial part of development, but according to research done, it is said that spiritual issues are of great importance to adolescents (Cotton *et al.*, 2006:472).

Human beings indeed have an internal longing, for God, what Blaise Pascal referred to, in the seventeenth century, as a "God shaped vacuum" (McMinn, 1996:201). Karstens states: "Spirituality should be understood as an all-encompassing and penetrating aspect of the normal functioning of human beings" (2006:55). In other words, although many adolescents might not have a relationship with God, and some might even say they don't need Him, without Him an individual can never be complete.

As already mentioned in the section on sociology, individuals with higher levels of spirituality handle life and issues far better than those with lower levels of spirituality. Those adolescents with higher levels of spirituality show lower rates of risky behaviours with regards to health. The number of mental health problems is also less and they cope much better with physical illness (Cotton *et al.* 2006:472). "The positive outcomes of religious practice for the youth are also witnessed by a growing body of research and include overall well-being, service, resilience, coping and positive forming of identity" (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:21).

From a Christian point of view, spiritual development involves first of all the confessing of sin and turning from it, it also includes times where God feels far away and other times when God feels closer than a brother. It involves worship and experiencing the wonderful love of God. Spiritual activities/practices assist the process of spiritual formation/development. Things like meditation, fasting, prayer and attending church services (Ratcliff, 2002:3). These practices help

the individual to experience God and grow closer to Him, they are part of the relationship with Him.

In the following section different areas of adolescent development are discussed from a psychological point of view with the spiritual development of adolescents in mind. The different areas of adolescent development discussed are: spiritual identity development, faith development, moral development, risk-taking behaviour and spirituality and health.

3.3.2 Spiritual identity development

Identity development as part of adolescence is something discussed by many, however, as part of spiritual development, adolescents need to know their spiritual identity.

From a Christian point of view, adolescents need to know who they are in Christ. Psychologically, spiritual identity and the development thereof are of the utmost importance. According to Poll and Smith, “major theories of identity development have neglected the salience of spiritual identity, even though the early work of William James placed this as a central component of personality” (2003:1). Hay and Nye also place “meaning making” at the centre of the many features that are identified as very important in relation to the spirituality of children (2006:76).

It is during the period of adolescence that individuals come to a place where they ask the question of meaning, whether their lives and life in general have any significance. “In childhood in particular, as a sense of identity is sought for, established and deepened, questions are raised which are essentially spiritual: Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose? To whom or what am I connected or responsible?” (Hay & Nye, 2006:77).

Influences of parents, mentors and the right friends are crucial during this stage, seeing that young people need to find their identity in Christ and not in what the world around them offers. Their spiritual identity or lack thereof will have an impact on how they see, reason about and experience everything.

3.3.3 Faith development

Faith is at the heart of spirituality and spiritual development from a Christian point of view. Without faith, which is about trusting God, one cannot please God and if one does not have faith, how can one possibly stand in relationship with Him? Relationship is all about trust. From a psychological point of view, faith is said to be very important for the human brain to function properly. The reason is, "so that it assumes that the world as it is perceived and interpreted represents a reasonable one-to-one correlation with what is actually "out there" (Roehlkepartain *et al.*, 2006:184).

Faith, according to Wicks *et al.*, like spirituality, can be referred to in a religious and a non-religious sense. However, according to Fowler (as cited in Wicks *et al.*, 1993), the most mature stages of faith will take on religious forms (1993:39).

A child, for example, can grow up in a Christian home, but during adolescence children also undergo what is known as cognitive development and all of a sudden they reason about and question things they never did. "During adolescence there is normally an expansion in the capacity and style of thought that broadens the young person's awareness, imagination, judgment, and insight". This can be positive and negative; it can both complicate the life of an individual and enrich it (Craig & Baucum, 2002:397).

These reasoning abilities may lead to certain questions concerning their beliefs from childhood, the existence of God, what is right and what is wrong (Roehlkepartain *et al.*, 2006:259). Even though cognitive development might have an impact on faith development during adolescence, the individual simply needs to learn that everything cannot be reasoned out with the mind, faith is something we can't always explain, but cannot do without. I fully agree with Roehlkepartain *et al.*, that faith is something that develops over the lifespan of a person and will have mutual interactions with the individual's sense of spirituality and religion (2006:184). The Holy Spirit is the one who imparts faith into the life of a person and helps them grow in faith as stated in scripture verses like John 6:44 and Hebrews 12:2.

Spiritual experiences are part of and lead to or contribute to faith development. "According to Rowan (cited by Roehlkepartain *et al.*, 2006) in order to attain a spiritual experience one must have discovered one's self through mindful awareness, therapy, personal growth, and/or meditation". On the other hand there are numerous people who have "spontaneous spiritual experiences" such as religious conversions, near-death experiences (Roehlkepartain *et al.*, 2006:184). Very often it is one or numerous of these events mentioned in the life of a person that brings perspective. These experiences very often lead to people having radical faith. Parents/mentors and pastors can be of great help in assisting young people on issues of faith.

3.3.4 Moral development

When it comes to moral development during the period of adolescence, individuals are confronted with certain aspects of morality, aspects that they haven't come across before. All of a sudden as they undergo physical, cognitive and hormonal development there are questions about sex and sexual behaviour for example. During this time, they are capable of having sex, but they have to decide what the meaning of sex is, and whether it is something they practise only after marriage (Craig & Baucum, 2002:401).

It is during this time that young people are most likely to be exposed to things like drugs and alcohol. Based on what they have been taught they have to work out things for themselves. This is why the right upbringing by parents is so crucial. According to Craig and Baucum most people do not get to the final stage of what is known as moral development. This final stage is said to be a stage "in which morality is seen as derived from personal ethical principles" (2002:401). Most people are said to stick by "conventional moral stereotypes". In other words, they live their lives so as not to come into trouble with the law and according to what society determines as acceptable or being a good person (2002:401).

It is said that "moral psychology has generally disregarded or distorted the significance of religion and spirituality in moral functioning" (Roehlkepartain *et al.*, 2006:224). However,

evidence shows that spirituality and religion indeed have great significance when it comes to moral functioning and development (2006:225).

From a Christian point of view, spiritual identity, as already discussed, is the key for adolescents to stand their ground against the challenges they face during adolescence. Someone who knows what their spiritual identity is, will not only discern better between right/good/beneficial and wrong/evil/harmful, but will also be encouraged to make the right decisions based on what the Bible says on issues of morality.

3.3.5 Risk-taking behaviour

When it comes to risky and high-risk behaviour among adolescents, there are things like drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual behaviour that lead to sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancies, cutting, eating disorders, firearm related injuries, aggression, violence (Sharp & Dellis, 2010:2). It is easy to judge when young people take part in risky behaviour; however, there are different reasons why adolescents might get involved in these behaviours. Craig and Baucum say: “They may get in trouble because they don’t understand the risks they’re taking. They may have too little information; the warnings they received from adults may be ineffective, or they may choose to ignore them” (2002:422).

Peer pressure can have a great impact on spiritual formation and is something that very often leads to risky or high-risk behaviour in adolescents. Adolescents need to know that they are accepted, and the need for acceptance amongst peers and the need to become popular can lead to them getting involved in risky behaviour (Anon., 2011:2).

In relation to sexual behaviour, according to Kinsman *et al.* and Dolcini (cited in Adams & Berzonsky, 2003) popular groups like “jocks” were reported to have more sexual activity going on than those who were less popular seeing that sexual intercourse is often seen as increasing the popularity status amongst others (2003:423).

The positive attitude of parents and friends towards substance use leads to substance use among young people (Adams & Berzonsky, 2003:459). Very often parents cannot understand why their children get addicted to alcohol, for example, but they themselves set the example of using too much alcohol themselves. Friends and family in particular have a great influence on the spiritual development of adolescents because they are the ones that are closely involved in their lives. However, it is said that during early adolescence-relative to mid-adolescence and even beyond-is a time in the life of a young person where parents have a greater influence than friends (Adams & Berzonsky, 2003:459). In the end I believe, as already discussed, that divorce and single parenthood is one of the main reasons why adolescents are in such a mess today.

3.3.6 Spirituality and health

Spirituality as mentioned previously has a great impact on the positive health outcomes of adolescents. When looked at adolescent coping mechanisms, individuals used religion/God as a coping mechanism during the time of a sibling's death or for general concerns in life (Cotton *et al.*, 2006:476).

When it comes to stress, anxiety and depression, so many young people suffer from these mentioned because of the amount of pressure that is placed on adolescents today. Depression is indeed one of the main causes for teen suicide. Most studies according to Westgate found that there is a negative relation between depression and spiritual well-being (1996:32). With regards to adolescents and physical illness, studies show that adolescents with serious chronic illnesses have greater spiritual concerns and they manage their illnesses by using spiritual coping strategies (Cotton *et al.*, 2006:477). In the end God is the one Who created us and it is only with His help that we cope, get healed physically and emotionally, and make sense of things that seem impossible to understand.

3.3.7 Summary and conclusion of the psychological view

Spiritual development is said to be at the centre of all human development. From a psychological point of view it is clear from the above that human-kind was made with a

need/longing for God. To develop well psychologically, they need to develop well spiritually. No person can function properly psychologically, without God's help and knowing Him as their ultimate purpose. Adolescents might be exposed to a large extent to drugs and alcohol and many are prone to get involved in these risky behaviours, whether it is through peer pressure or because of other reasons. However, those who know their spiritual identity in Christ will make the right decisions.

Spirituality is also said to have a positive impact on an adolescent's health, those with physical and emotional health issues. Parents do have an enormous influence on their teens and together with mentors/pastors/youth leaders have a major responsibility to assist young people during the period of adolescence. Young people need people to look up to and the time has come to set a proper example.

3.4 Six point conclusion

From the research done on spiritual development for adolescents (age 16-18) from a sociological and psychological point of view, the following conclusion was made in point form.

- There is a great need in our society today for spiritual development and it is very important to ensure the overall wellness of adolescents.
- Socially, adolescents have many challenges that have a negative impact/influence on their spiritual development.
- Adolescents should not be left alone to sort out challenges themselves, but they are in need of support and guidance.
- Spiritual development is at the centre of all development and knowing your spiritual identity specifically, has a positive impact on a person psychologically.
- Spiritual activities like prayer, going to church and reading your Bible assist in the process of spiritual formation/development.
- Parents/mentors or pastors/youth leaders play a huge role and can contribute a lot to the spiritual development of adolescents.

Chapter 4: Empirical research: adolescent spiritual development

4.1 Introduction

The healthy spiritual development of adolescents is something that is lacking in our society as a whole. The topic of spiritual development has recently surfaced again and it is said to be because of a growing suspicion that it has not been dealt with in reality and need in previous years (Willard, 2006:1).

Spirituality is said to be one of the core aspects of human beings, the motivating force behind all thoughts and actions. Spirituality indeed plays a much larger role in the lives of individuals than academics thought (Karstens, 2006:119). Spiritual development, however, is crucial especially during the developing years of adolescence. In fact it is at the heart of all development (Roehlkepartain *et al.*, 2006:9). Helping adolescents develop well spiritually will not only have a huge impact on their individual lives but on the spiritual well-being of our entire society. It is, however, very important to be aware of the challenges they face in the twenty first century as already mentioned in chapter three and what their needs are.

When it comes to the twenty first-century adolescent, Keupp says the following: "Postmodern identity differs from its modern twentieth-century precursor in marked ways- in temporal, social, and personal respects (quoted by Lefebvre & Ross, 2007:80). In this chapter of research, information is gained from an empirical study done on the spiritual lives and needs of adolescents with regards to spiritual development. This information gives us a peek into the lives of church going, South African adolescents (age 16-18) at this moment in time.

4.2 Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to point out the specific problem areas around adolescent spiritual development as well as the areas of positive response.

4.3 Theory and hypothesis

The reality is that around the world as well as in South Africa, the church and Christian communities aren't effective enough in helping adolescents develop well spiritually, as seen in chapter three. Many parents are also not doing their part in ensuring that their children grow spiritually. The twenty first century adolescent faces many challenges that have a great impact on spiritual growth.

When it comes to the hypothesis, there is a connection between the spiritual development of adolescents and four areas of research, namely: a) spiritual practices and the influence of the church, b) risk-taking behaviour, c) the influence from parents and friends, d) the relationship with parents and the youth pastor/leader or pastors/leaders. All four these areas of research play an important role to ensure that spiritual development takes place, but they remain problematic. A more positive response to all the questions in all four categories will ensure the spiritual wellbeing and most important the healthy spiritual growth of adolescents in our society

4.4 Research design and method

In this chapter dealing with the actual research both the quantitative and qualitative methods are used. Very often these two methods of research are used separately seeing that they are opposed to each other, but Osmer refers to what is known as the "mixed method" which is a combination of the two (Osmer, 2008:50). Nowadays, it is widely accepted that quantitative and qualitative methods of research should be used in some kind of combination (Haggis, 2008:1).

The twelve questions asked in the descriptive task fall under four categories mentioned in the theory and hypothesis, with regards to spiritual development. All four these categories play a role in the spiritual development of adolescents. Very important to notice is that this study is limited to church going adolescents. This empirical study points out areas that will help the church and parents to ensure the healthy spiritual development of our young people.

4.5 Participants and gathering data

A quantitative study was done on twenty young people from different cultures, age 16-18, and they were randomly selected. The selection was done by pastors or leaders of the different churches that participated. Twenty individuals from five different churches in the area around Little Falls Christian Centre in Roodepoort were given a questionnaire to complete. They were each given a questionnaire with twelve questions to answer. Each question had four options and they had to encircle the options which suited them best. The churches that participated in this study were from four different denominations, namely two AFM/AGS churches, one Methodist church, one DR/NG church and one Lutheran church.

A qualitative study was also done on five individuals from different cultures, age 16-18, from Little Falls Christian Centre in Roodepoort (West Rand), Gauteng. These five individuals were once again randomly selected and a separate personal interview was done with each one. They had to give answers to the same twelve questions that were used in the quantitative study regarding spiritual development.

4.6 Quantitative data analysis

Unlike qualitative research, this form of research has an objective approach. Information is drawn from surveys done on a number of individuals. Statistics are used to prove a certain hypothesis. Quantitative research is especially interested in predictions (Harwell, 2012:149). It is very interesting to note that a large percentage of the empirical research done by social scientists is designed to draw upon quantitative data (Bryman & Cramer, 1997:1).

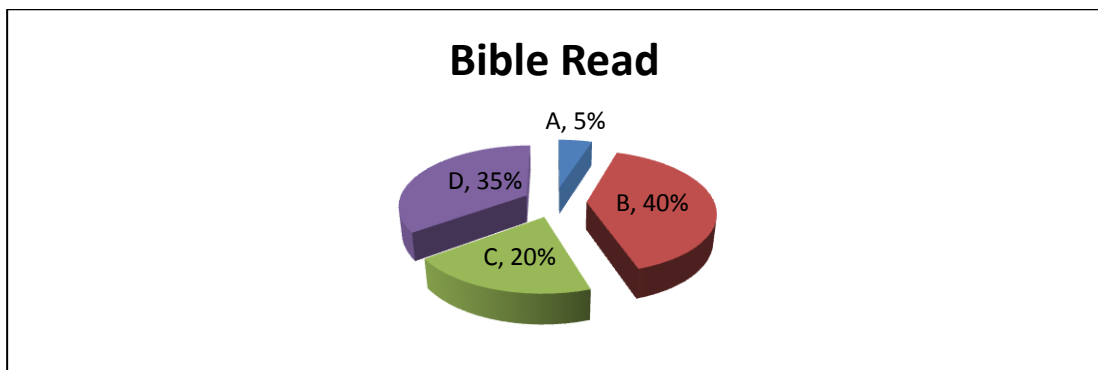
4.6.1 Questions and results

From the twenty adolescents who completed the quantitative questionnaire, the following information was gained from the twelve questions answered.

4.6.1.1 Spiritual practices and the influence of the church

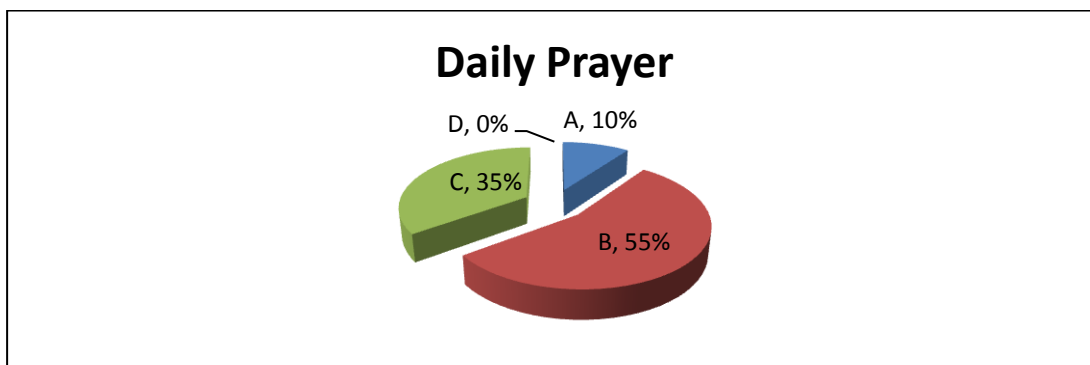
Data analysis of Question 1: How often do you read your Bible?

- a) Everyday: One of the twenty
- b) 3-5 times per week: Eight of the twenty
- c) 1-2 times per week: Four of the twenty
- d) Very seldom: Seven of the twenty



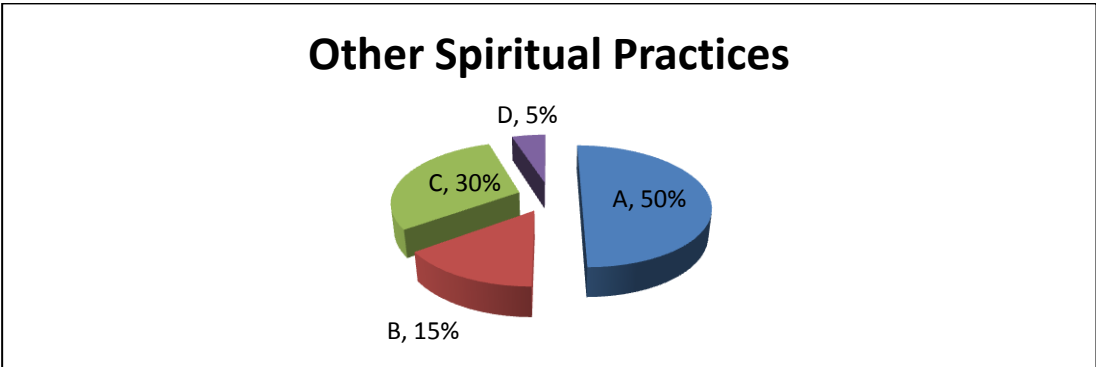
Data analysis of Question 2: How much time do you spend with God in prayer daily more or less?

- a) An hour or more: Two of the twenty
- b) 15-30 min: Eleven of the twenty
- c) Less than the above: Seven of the twenty
- d) Not at all: None



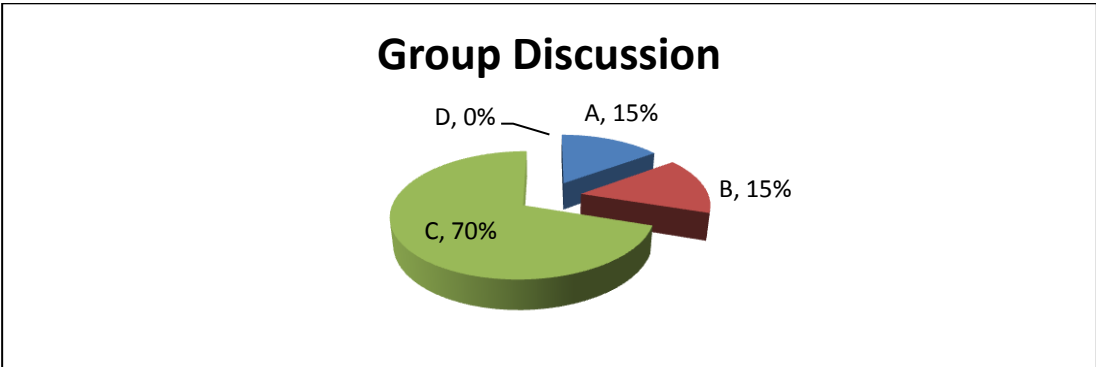
Data analysis of Question 3: Apart from Sundays, how much time do you spend per week on praise and worshipping, reading Christian books or listening to Christian messages on CD's or DVD and so on more or less?

- a) An hour or more: Ten of the twenty
- b) 15-30 min: Three of the twenty
- c) Less than the above: Six of the twenty
- d) Not at all: One of the twenty



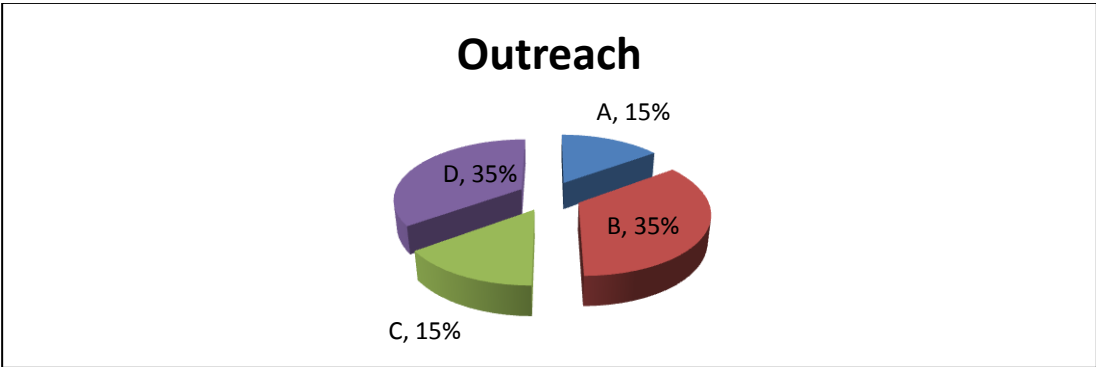
Data analysis of Question 4: Do you get the opportunity to discuss what is preached at church or youth group in a group setting?

- a) Yes, always: Three of the twenty
- b) Yes regularly: Three of the twenty
- c) Sometimes: Fourteen
- d) Never: None



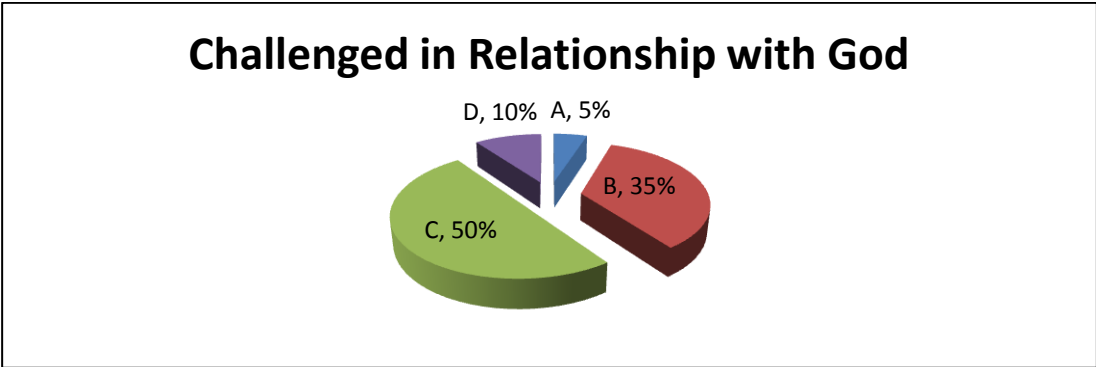
Data analysis of Question 5: Have you ever taken part in an outreach to the poor and needy and if so, how many times?

- a) Yes, I do so regularly: Three of the twenty
- b) Yes, more than once: Seven of the twenty
- c) Once: Three of the twenty
- d) Never: Seven of the twenty



Data analysis of Question 6: Do you ever feel challenged at your youth group in your relationship with God?

- a) Always: One of the twenty
- b) Most of the time: Seven of the twenty
- c) Sometimes: Ten of the twenty
- d) Never: Two of the twenty



4.6.1.2 Risk-taking behaviour

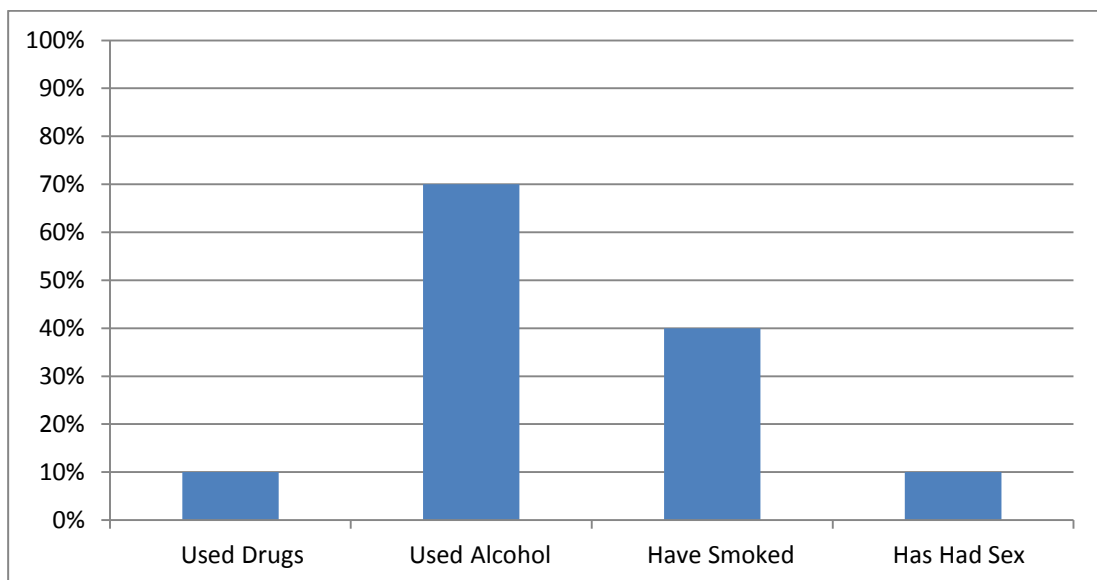
Data analysis of Question 7: Encircle which of the following you have done: Smoked, used alcohol or drugs?

- a) Used drugs: Two of the twenty
- b) Used alcohol: Fourteen of the twenty
- c) Smoked: Eight of the twenty
- d) None of the above: Six of the twenty

Data analysis of Question 8: Have you ever had any sexual relations with anyone?

- a) Yes, once: One of the twenty
- b) Twice: None
- c) More than twice: One of the twenty
- d) Never: Eighteen said never

Risk-Taking Behaviour

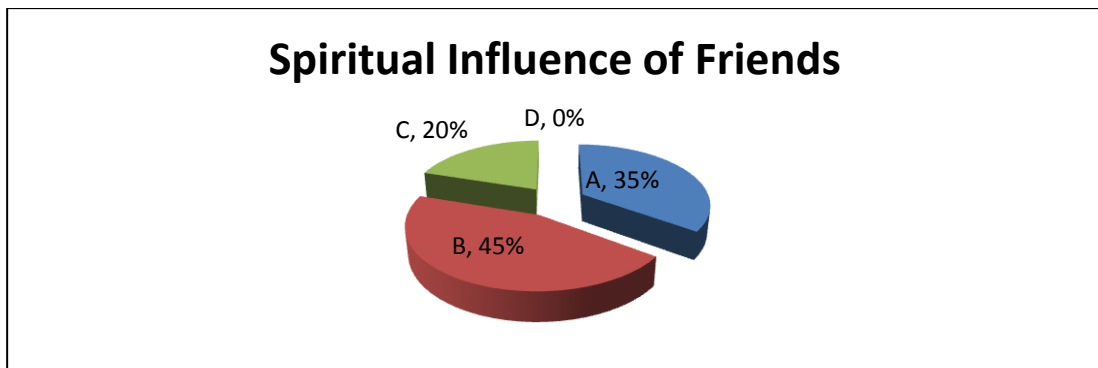


4.6.1.3 Influence of parents and friends

Data analysis of Question 9: Do your close friends know the Lord?

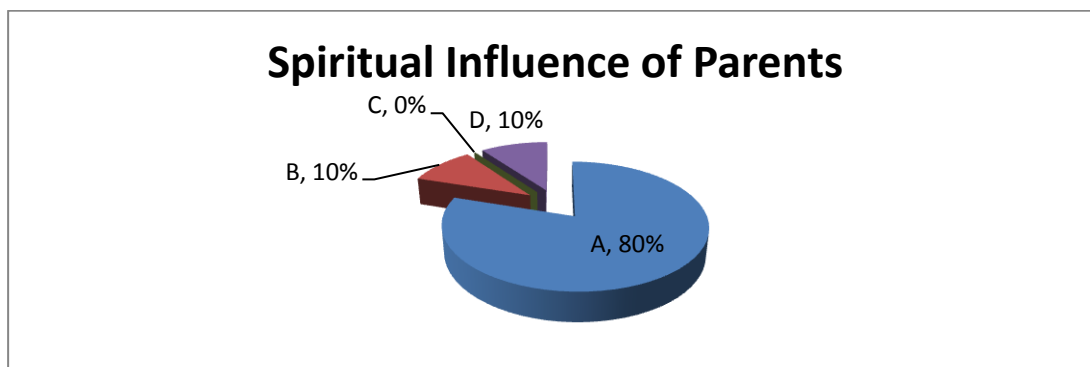
- a) All of them: Seven of the twenty

- b) Most of them: Nine of the twenty
- c) Some of them: Four of the twenty
- d) Not at all: None



Data analysis of Question 10: Do your parents know the Lord?

- a) Yes, both of them: Sixteen of the twenty
- b) Only my mother: Two of the twenty
- c) Only my father: None
- d) Not at all: Two of the twenty

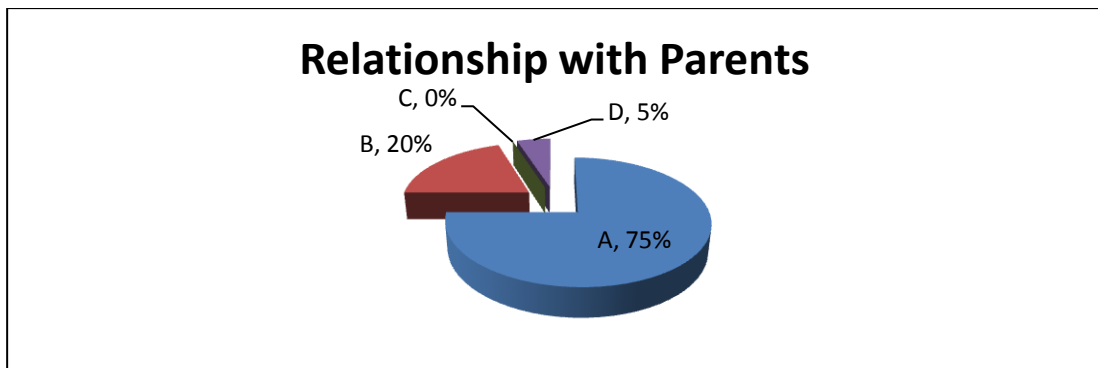


4.6.1.4 Relationship with parents and youth leader/pastor on leaders

Data analysis of Question 11: Do you have a good relationship with your parents?

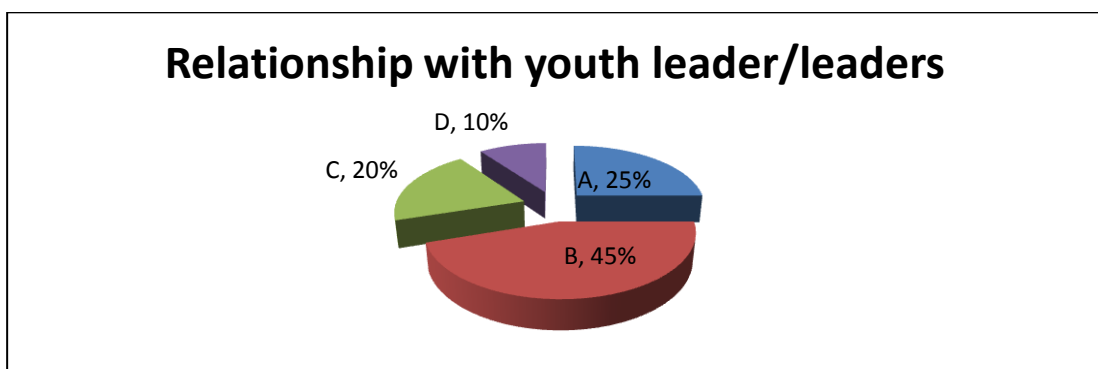
- a) Yes with both: Fifteen of the twenty

- b) Only my mother: Four of the twenty
- c) Only my father: None
- d) Not at all: One of the twenty



Data analysis of Question 12: Do you have a good relationship with your youth pastor/leader or pastors/leaders at church and do you talk with him/her or them freely about everything in your life?

- a) Yes, I talk with them about everything: Five of the twenty
- b) Yes, but I only talk about certain aspects of my life: Nine of the twenty
- c) Yes, but I have never spoken to them about my personal issues: Four
- d) Not at all: Two of the twenty



4.7 Conclusion and analysis of the quantitative research

The information drawn from the quantitative analysis indicates that there is a positive response to some questions, but it also indicates that there are certain areas among those that lead to spiritual growth, that needs a lot of attention.

The majority answer per question

Question 1	Bible Read: 3-5 times per week
Question 2	Daily Prayer: 15-30 minutes per day
Question 3	Other Spiritual Practices: An hour or more per week
Question 4	Group Discussion: Sometimes
Question 5	Outreach: Yes, more than once (35%) and Never (35%)
Question 6	Feel Challenged in Relationship with God: Sometimes
Question 7	Use of Substances: Used Alcohol
Question 8	Has had sex: Never
Question 9	Friends and relationship with God: Most of them
Question 10	Parents and relationship with God: Both of them
Question 11	Good relationship with parents: Yes, both of them
Question 12	Good relationship with youth leader/leaders: Yes, but I only talk about certain aspects of my life.

In the category on spiritual practices and the influence of the church, the following information was gained: 40% of young people said that they read their Bibles 3-5 times per week, but 20% read theirs only 1-2 times per week and 35% very seldom.

In total, 55% of the young people do not read their Bibles very often. To confirm this result, in the United States, there are fewer young people who read their Bibles on a regular basis in mainline denominations (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:139). It was also found in Australia that a

small percentage of young people in the church read their Bibles on a regular basis (Stanton, 2010:1).

When it comes to prayer, no one said that they don't pray at all every day, but 55% said that they pray 15-30 minutes per day and 35% said less than that, which makes time spent in prayer not much at all on a daily basis. Many young people do not spend much quiet reflective time in prayer with God, the reason being, that they do not have enough downtime, their lives are too busy and God is not on their list of high priority (Yaconelli, 2008:18-19).

50% of the young people said that they spent an hour or more per week on other spiritual practices like listening to gospel music, worshiping, watching and listening to sermons on DVD and CD etc. 30% said they spend less time than that and only 5% said not at all. Most of the young people spend a good amount of time on other spiritual practices. Of all these other practices, listening to Gospel music is probably the one thing they do most.

When it comes to group discussion 70% said that they sometimes get the opportunity to discuss what is preached at church or youth group in a group setting. It is clear from this study that young people don't get much opportunity to ask questions and share with others what they have learned. "Groups that share and discuss matters of faith provide security and support of like-minded youth" (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:213).

Only 15% of the individuals do an outreach every now and again which makes it part of their lifestyle. 35% said they had done an outreach more than once and 15% said they have done it once. Another 35% said they have never done an outreach. The majority have at least done an outreach once, but very few have spent much time doing so. A study done on Protestant young people by Roehlkepartain and Benson also found that not many of those interviewed have spent much time doing something to help other people in their town or city (Strommen & Hardel, 2010:153-154).

Being challenged in their relationship with God, only 5% said that they always feel challenged at their youth group. 50% said they sometimes feel challenged, 35% said most of the time and

10% said never. The conclusion is that most of the young people are not challenged in their relationship with God on a regular basis. "Entertainment has replaced the instruction of scriptural principles for daily living in many youth ministries" (Vukich & Vandegriff, 2002:55). "Discipleship involves following Christ in a more considered way" (Nel, 2009:99).

It seems that young people in general within the church don't spend much time on spiritual/faith practices on a weekly basis. When it comes to the influence of the church the following is said about the church in the United States: "Despite our substantial experience involving young people in practices of teaching and nurture, evidence suggests that we have not effectively used these practices to help young people mature in their faith" (Dean & Foster, 2010:117). This seems to also be true concerning the church in South Africa in general.

From the category on risky behaviour the following information was found: Most young people have used alcohol, 70%. 40% have smoked and 10% have done drugs and have had sex. Smoking and the use of alcohol had been done by the majority. Most young people have taken part in some form of risky behaviour at some time in their lives. Scott says: "The incidence and prevalence of risk-taking behaviour is a common aspect of the adolescent experience" (2012:1). This confirms the results on risk-taking behaviour. However, a number of studies found that higher levels of spirituality lead to lower levels of risk-taking behaviour for young people (Chamrathirong, 2010:1855).

The following results were found in the category on the influence of parents and friends: 80% of young people said that both their parents knew the Lord. However, it is not clear from this study whether their parents are Christians out of tradition, or whether they have a relationship with the Lord. This has an impact on the influence of adolescents. Almost half of the individuals (45%) said that most of their friends have a relationship with the Lord. Only 35% said all of them and 20% said some of them. The response to these questions regarding influence from others was seemingly positive in the quantitative study done.

As mentioned in chapter three, both parents and peers have a huge influence on adolescents. It was also said that parents indeed, have more influence than peers. The following is said in relation to the use of alcohol and drugs: “Teens’ behaviour is strongly associated with their parents’ behaviour and expectations...” (CADCA, 2009:1). The same can be said of teens whose parents have a relationship with God. Young people who grow up in a Christian home with Godly parents who set a Christ like example will more than likely also strive to do the same. It does, however, happen that adolescents who grow up in a Christian home also get involved with the wrong friends which can lead to them getting involved in the wrong things.

With regards to friends, the number one cause of young people getting into trouble is because of the wrong friends (Kane, 2012:1). However, this depends on the personal relationship that teens have with God. It is said that when people look for friends, in this instance adolescents, they make friends with those people who share the same interests and values (Kimmel, 2010:1). In other words, if young people personally have a relationship with the Lord they will more likely surround themselves with Christian friends. This was seen in the results on the selection of friends in this study. Most of the young people said: all their close friends and most of their close friends know the Lord.

Even though the overall response was positive, ten percent of the young people said their parents didn’t know the Lord. There were also twenty percent who said that only some of their close friends knew the Lord. This could be something to be concerned about. It does occur in this study that the right influence of parents in fact leads to them choosing the right peers. Even though the majority had taken part in some form of risky behaviour once, it seems like they stick to what they have been taught.

Relationships with parents and church leaders are the fourth category and the following information was gained: In this study, 75% said that they have a good relationship with both parents. It is not clear from this study whether parents are divorced, whether they have stepfathers and mothers, whether their relationships are good with their biological parents, step mothers and fathers, whether they think relationships can be better etc. There were, however,

20% of individuals who said that they only have a good relationship with their mothers and a remaining 5% said not at all.

When it comes to the relationship between young people and their youth pastor/leader or leaders, the largest group (45%) said that they have a good relationship, but they only talk about certain aspects of their lives. 25% said yes and that they talk with them about everything. 20% said that they have a good relationship, but that they have never spoken to them about their personal issues. Only 10% said that they did not have a good relationship with them. It does point out in this study that the majority do have a good relationship with leaders, but they are only willing to share certain aspects of their lives. This might be a huge problem, seeing that it might be exactly these areas that they don't want to share where they need help. To a certain degree this could point out a trust issue in relationships with youth leaders.

Not having adults as mentors and friends have left many adolescents today with many internal issues. These adults include parents, youth leaders, pastors etc. Young people are in fact eager to have adults as friends (Clark, 2011:34). In other words they want to have good relationship with adults. Clark says when a group of adolescents were questioned concerning a closer relationship with their parents, most said they wanted to have a closer relationship (2011:99). Even student/young leaders can make a huge impact. They in fact have an advantage over adults as adolescents can easily relate to them.

4.8 Qualitative data analysis

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research gathers information from unstructured interviews, open-ended questions, etc. This is information that is not placed in numerical form for example in statistics or tables (McLeod, 2008:1). This kind of research is said to be subjective in nature. In other words, the researcher is more closely involved with the participants and gives detail to what was experienced during interviews. The information gained from qualitative research takes a lot more time than quantitative research, but it is very rich and

cannot easily be generalized (Neill, 2007:1). The following information was gained from the qualitative study done on five adolescents (16-18) from Little Falls Christian Centre.

4.8.1 Background of participants

The first interview was done with a white, Afrikaans-speaking male, eighteen years old. He finished matric last year and lives in Witpoortjie, Roodepoort. The second interview was done with a white Afrikaans-speaking female, seventeen years old. She is a high-school student and lives in Little Falls, Roodepoort. The third interview was done with a white Afrikaans-speaking, working male, eighteen years old and he lives in Weltevreden Park, Roodepoort. The fourth interview was done with a white English-speaking female, age sixteen. She is a high school student and lives in Tarlton, Krugersdorp. The fifth interview was done with a black, English-speaking male, age sixteen. He is also a high school student and lives in Range View, Krugersdorp.

4.8.2 Questions and results

4.8.2.1 Spiritual practices and the Influence of the Church

Data analysis of question 1: How often do you read your Bible?

It is clear from the information gathered that most individuals read their Bibles regularly, some more than others which makes reading your Bible something important to most of the individuals who were interviewed. On the other hand two of the individuals seemed not to make it a priority.

Person A: I read my Bible every day, especially in the evening for about 10 minutes when I spend time with the Lord. I read as the Holy Spirit guides me, sometimes I read more than other evenings.

Person B: I read my Bible every day, more than once a day. I have my Bible and journal with me wherever I go, at school etc.

Person C: I don't read my Bible very often, but I want to read it more regularly.

Person D: I read my Bible often, not every day, but most days of the week. I read my Bible in the evening normally and I read as the Holy Spirit leads me.

Person E: I read my Bible not that often, twice a week more or less due to the fact that I am very busy. I prefer reading my Bible in the mornings.

Data analysis of question 2: How much time do you spend with God in prayer daily more or less?

It was interesting to note that prayer forms part of the daily lives of all five individuals. One of the five spends more than an hour where the others spend more or less 10-30 minutes a day. This is clearly not enough time spent. Prayer is something that should be encouraged more in the lives of individuals, seeing that this is what relationship with God is about, communication through prayer.

Person A: I pray 15-30 minutes at least every day. I pray in the mornings at work together with the staff, in the evening and at different times right through the day. On Wednesdays I fast and pray.

Person B: I pray more than an hour per day, right through the day at different times and I pray about everything.

Person C: I pray about 10 minutes per day more or less at different times.

Person D: I pray 15-30 minutes average a day, some days more, it depends, at different times during the day.

Person E: I pray 15-30 minutes more or less each day and when I go through difficult times I spend more time in prayer.

Data analysis of question 3: Apart from Sundays, how much time do you spend per week, praise and worshipping, reading Christian books or listening to Christian messages on CD or DVD etc. more or less?

Four of the five individuals spend an hour or more during the week on things that make them grow spiritually aside from spending time in the Word and prayer. Most of them enjoyed listening to Gospel music. An hour is in fact not much looking at the amount of time there is in a day and week. In order for any individual to mature in Christ they need spiritual input on a daily basis. There are so many wrong influences that adolescents need constant positive, Godly influence in the form of music, messages and books etc.

Person A: I am reading two Christian books at the moment. I spend time praising and worshipping for 10 minutes every morning together with people at work, and during lunch time. I spend time alone praising and worshipping in the evenings.

Person B: I spend time praising and worshipping, listening to Christian music more than an hour per week. Praise and worship is something that is very important to me.

Person C: I don't spend a lot of time, apart from Sundays.

Person D: I definitely spend an hour or more per week, listening to Christian music, watching TBN, etc. I also go to a Christian school and on Wednesday mornings we have assembly where I also get the opportunity to praise and worship.

Person E: I spend 15-30 minutes per week more or less, listening to Gospel music and watching TBN on Sundays with my family.

Data analysis of question 4: Do you get the opportunity to discuss what is preached at church or youth group in a group setting?

Four of the individuals said that they get the opportunity to discuss what is preached at their local cell groups that they attend once a week in the evening. The only reason one of them does

not attend cell group is because she lives out of town on a plot. She says that together with her friends at school they often discuss what was preached at church. Two of them also said they often discuss what is preached at church, at the youth service. Cell groups are a very good way of creating the opportunity for young people to discuss, understand and internalize the Word of God and what's being preached at church among people their age group. It was clear that all of them enjoyed discussing what was preached in a group setting.

Person A: Yes, on Tuesday evenings at cell group we discuss the messages preached on Sunday mornings and evenings.

Person B: Yes, we discuss what is preached at church at cell group every week.

Person C: Yes, most of the time if I go to cell group during the week.

Person D: Yes, sometimes at the youth service and I also discuss what is preached on Sundays with friends at school and with parents. I don't go to a cell group.

Person E: Yes, most of the time at the youth service and at the cell group.

Data analysis of question 5: Have you ever taken part in an outreach to the poor and needy and if, how many times?

Every adolescent interviewed had taken part in an outreach at least once. The majority had done so more than once. The response was very positive, they really enjoyed it and everyone said that they would like to be part of an outreach again. More opportunity should be given to adolescents to give back to their communities. It is indeed better to give than to receive, it is the father heart of God.

Person A: Yes, once and I really enjoyed it. I will definitely take part in an outreach again.

Person B: Yes, once, but I would like to do so more regularly because I really have a heart for the poor.

Person C: Yes, more than once and I really liked it. I will definitely do so again.

Person D: Yes, regularly, at school we have to do five hours of community service per term and I really enjoy doing it.

Person E: Yes, I have done it twice. At first I found it difficult, but after some time you start easing up and you start enjoying it. I would definitely do it again.

Data analysis of question 6: Do you ever feel challenged at your youth group in your relationship with God?

Three of them said that they always feel challenged in their relationship with God, and two said sometimes. In order for an individual to grow in Christ, they need to be challenged in their faith, their day-to-day living, making the right choices, becoming more like Christ, putting Christ first, getting to know Him more intimately etc. It was clear that most of them had a very special relationship with the Lord.

Person A: Always, during every youth service I experience a special touch from God and I am encouraged to grow in my relationship with Him.

Person B: I am always challenged and I am very passionate about the Lord.

Person C: Sometimes I feel challenged.

Person D: Yes, always. I am always challenged at the youth service and at school in my relationship with God.

Person E: Sometimes I feel challenged.

4.8.2.2 Risk-taking Behaviour

Data analysis of Question 7: Which of the following have you done: Smoked, used alcohol or drugs?

Four of the five had smoked cigarettes at some time in their lives and the one who didn't have smoked hubbly once. Four of them have used alcohol at some time. One of them got drunk a few times. When it comes to drugs, only one said that he used to do drugs before he came to know the Lord. Three of the five said that they stopped using alcohol, smoking and using drugs when they gave their lives to the Lord. When it comes to the other two, one of them don't smoke at all but she will drink a glass of wine with her family on occasion, but usually she doesn't use alcohol. One of the others stopped using alcohol, but he is smoking at the moment. It is interesting to see that all five of them have attempted some form of risky behaviour.

Person A: I have done everything, before I gave my life to the Lord.

Person B: I have tried smoking once, before I came to know the Lord, but I would never do it again.

Person C: I have smoked, and I have used alcohol.

Person D: I have tried alcohol, just tasted it, but never got drunk and I have smoked hubbly.

Person E: I have used alcohol and I have smoked, but I stopped.

Data analysis of question 8: Have you ever had any sexual relations with anyone?

When it comes to sex, only one said that he has had sex. At least this form of risky behaviour wasn't attempted by every one of them. It was clear that all of them knew that sex before marriage was not Biblical at all and that they would not have sex before marriage. Two of them made it clear that they would rather keep themselves pure for their marriage partner.

Person A: Yes I have, more than twice, before I gave my life to the Lord, but I would never do it again before marriage.

Person B: No, never.

Person C: No, never.

Person D: No. never.

Person E: Never, I would rather keep myself for the girl that the Lord has for me.

4.8.2.3 Influence of parents and friends

Data analysis of question 9: Do your close friends know the Lord?

Every one of them said that all their friends know the Lord. This is remarkable seeing that friends also have a great impact on the lives of adolescents as seen in chapter three.

Person A: I have seven close friends and all of them know the Lord.

Person B: Yes, all of them know the Lord.

Person C: Yes, all of them, amazing people of the Lord.

Person D: All of my close friends know the Lord, six of them. God also puts people on my path to help them and give advice.

Person E: Yes, all of them, they are there for support and advice.

Data analysis of question 10: Do your parents know the Lord?

Only two of them said that both their parents were Christians and the other three said that one of their parents was. Once again as seen in chapter three, parents have a great impact in the lives of their children. Children who grow up in homes with parents who have a relationship with the Lord indeed have an advantage.

Person A: Yes, both claim that they are believers.

Person B: My father, he is a Christian.

Person C: Yes, my mother, she is a good Christ follower.

Person D: Both my parents know the Lord as well as my family.

Person E: My mother is saved, not sure about my father.

4.8.2.4 Relationship with parents and youth pastor/leader or leaders

Data analysis of question 11: Do you have a good relationship with your parents?

Only two of the five young people have a good relationship with both parents. One of them mentioned that she has a better relationship with her mother. The other three grew up with only one parent. Person B never got along with stepmothers and her relationship with her father was not that good. Person C grew up without a father and he do not get along with his stepfather, but he does have a relatively good relationship with his mother. Person E also grew up without a father, but he has a good relationship with his mother. Healthy parent and child relationships are very important when it comes to spiritual development. Growing up with only one parent often creates problems in the lives of individuals as mentioned in chapter three of the research.

Person A: Yes, with both parents now, but previously we didn't have a good relationship, but they did care about me.

Person B: My mother died when I was young. The relationship with my father is okay, but it can be better. He is protective over me. I have had bad experiences with stepmothers. No one can replace my mother.

Person C: Yes, with my mother.

Person D: Yes with both, but a better relationship with my mother. I feel that I can open up my heart easy to her.

Person E: Only with my mother. My parents are divorced and I don't see my father often. He only gives money.

Data analysis of question 12: Do you have a good relationship with your pastor/leader or pastors/leaders at church and do you talk with him/her or them freely about everything in your life?

Only two individuals said that they have a good relationship with the leaders and that they felt comfortable to talk with them. Person A said that he hasn't shared everything with the leader/leaders, but that he was willing to. Person B has shared some issues with some of the leaders, and it sounded like she would share everything with them. Three of the five, however, said that because they did not know them in person and did not feel comfortable to approach them they would not share. It is very important that leaders do all they can to be approachable to all young people.

Person A: Yes, but I haven't spoken to them about everything, but I am open to do so. I feel comfortable to talk with them, I trust them.

Person B: Yes, I feel comfortable to talk with the leaders at church, especially with some of the girls/ladies/leaders that supported me when I was in a bad place in my life.

Person C: No, not one leader or pastor.

Person D: I don't really know them, I feel leaders should mingle more with the young people before the youth service starts.

Person E: No, not at all. They are good leaders, but I don't feel I can approach them.

4.9 Conclusion and analysis of the qualitative research

In conclusion, the overall response from the interviews done on the adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre was very good. When it comes to spiritual practices and the influence of the church, Bible reading and prayer are a priority for most of the young people interviewed. The pastors and congregation are particularly focused on prayer. The majority of them also spend a lot of time on other spiritual practices during the week like praise and worship, listening to

sermons and gospel music. They also get the opportunity at church to be involved in outreaches and they really enjoy it. However, looking at the two who did not give that good a response to spiritual practices indicates that there is a lot that can still be done to encourage them.

These young people are challenged at their youth group in their relationship with God, and it is clear that passion and the desire for more of Him are not lacking at all. "Young people need to be called to make a commitment to Christ, to be challenged to do something about their faith, as well as to be nurtured in their faith" (Trimmer, 1994:45). I did notice from the interviews that they would like to have more preaching/message at youth group particularly. Cell groups/home cells are also something that Little Falls Christian Centre is focused on and this has a great impact on them. This helps adolescents tremendously in their spiritual development and this is something that many congregations can learn from them.

In a study done by Hoffman and Janse van Rensburg, it was found that adolescents had a positive experience when it came to the exchange of meaning, when they could ask questions in other words in a class setting. They want to be actively involved in their spiritual formation, together with friends, parents, pastors (2010:32). Young people need to ask questions, give their opinions and hear the opinions of others and a cell group is another excellent way to give them that opportunity.

Little Falls Christian Centre has a very good spiritual impact/influence on their young people. In relation to spiritual practices, Hoffman and Janse van Rensburg found something interesting in their interviews with adolescents. There was a specific incident or incidents that brought about change in the spiritual lives of individuals. After this incident or incidents, their whole outlook changed. Things like religious education, church and other activities had more meaning (2010:24). Looking at the positive response from the qualitative study on spiritual practices, it was clear that a change has taken place in the lives of the majority of them at some point. The passion and excitement with which the majority of these young people talked about their faith was great. More people would respond better to spiritual practices if they can come to a place where they are completely changed by God.

When it comes to risk-taking behaviour, almost everyone had smoked and used alcohol, one did drugs and one has had sex. Even though this was before they gave their lives to the Lord for the majority, it does confirm that there are many young people in our nation who takes part in some form of risky behaviour. It was clear that risk-taking behaviour was something of the past for most individuals. One of them is still smoking.

The influence from friends and parents seems to be healthy, seeing that all their friends have a relationship with the Lord and at least one parent if not both are believers. In the interviews it was clear that some parents were believers, but they didn't really have a relationship with the Lord. Two individuals had given their lives to the Lord because of the influence of parents. One gave his life to the Lord through the influence of a family member and the remaining two gave their lives to the Lord because of the influence of a friend. This confirms the influence of parents and friends in particular.

The need is, however, great taking into consideration that three of the five individuals came from broken homes. This confirms that there are many young people who grow up in broken homes or who are raised by only one parent. Relationships with parents seem to be relatively good and some very good.

There are a number of leaders at the youth in particular and they are strong leaders. Two of the young people said that they have a good relationship with the leaders or some of them at least apart from their cell/home cell leaders. On the other hand the majority of those interviewed said that they didn't have a good relationship with the leaders at the youth and that they don't feel that they can approach them with any issues in their lives. They are very good leaders, they just feel that they would like to get to know them more in person.

Little Falls is a very large congregation with a large number of young people, which makes it challenging to know everyone in person, but it is very important that all young people should feel that they can approach leaders with personal issues. As mentioned in the quantitative

study, adolescents want and need to have relationships with adults which includes parents, pastors/youth leaders etc.

4.10 Differences between quantitative and qualitative studies

The answers given to the questions in the qualitative and quantitative studies are not exactly the same, there are differences. Some are very small differences, but there are also differences of a larger extent. There are also many answers that agree with each other.

A more positive response was gained in the qualitative research on Bible reading and prayer. The response to reaching out to the poor was also more positive in the qualitative study. The quantitative response to group discussion was the total opposite of the qualitative. All of them get the opportunity to discuss what was preached on a weekly basis always to most of the time. The qualitative response was also opposite to the quantitative response on being challenged in their relationship with God. In the qualitative response almost everyone felt challenged always and in the quantitative study most young people only felt challenged sometimes.

The response to whether both parents knew the Lord was a lot more positive in the quantitative research. The outcome of the research on relationship between children and parents also differs from the qualitative research. In the qualitative research the minority had a good relationship with both parents. There are probably many reasons for the difference between the response in the qualitative and quantitative study in both these questions. As mentioned, in the quantitative study it wasn't clear whether parents were Christians out of tradition, or whether they really had a relationship with the Lord. It was also not clear whether parents were divorced, whether they had a good relationship with a stepfather or mother and if they thought their relationships could be better. The in-depth interviews in the qualitative study revealed these things.

In the qualitative study the majority didn't have a good relationship with the leaders. In the quantitative study most young people said that they had a good relationship with their youth pastor or leaders, but they said they only shared certain aspects of their lives.

4.11 Conclusion and findings on the qualitative and quantitative research

More insight was gained from the qualitative study, but there was also very valuable information found in the quantitative research. In the end, both these methods of research complement each other and conclusions can be drawn. Looking at the information given in chapter three on adolescents all over the world and in South Africa, the response from the studies done on church going adolescents who have a relationship with the Lord are indeed much more positive. There is, however, a lot that the church and parents can give attention to or improve on.

The following was found from both these studies:

Most adolescents read their Bibles relatively often to not so often. More in- depth study of the Word can be encouraged.

- Every adolescent - prays every day, but the time spent on prayer is not much;
- A reasonable amount of time is spent per week on other spiritual practices like listening to Gospel music, sermons/messages on CD or DVD, watching Christian programmes, reading Christian books and so forth;
- Most young people have taken part in an outreach, but more opportunities should be given;
- Group discussion is not taking place in the lives of the majority of young people on a weekly basis;
- Smoking and the use of alcohol had been done by the majority of adolescents at some time in their lives. A small minority has used drugs;
- A small minority has had sex at some time, once or some more than once;
- The number of friends who know the Lord averages from all of them to most of them;
- In general, both parents are said to know the Lord;
- Some adolescents have a good relationship with both parents. A significant number only have a good relationship with their mothers; and

- A large number have a good relationship with their youth leader/leaders but they aren't open enough to talk about all personal issues.

Chapter 5: Pastoral guidance to adolescents and major role players in their lives, to assist them in their spiritual development

5.1 Introduction

Every individual in life is responsible for their own lives and spiritual development and this includes adolescents. However, it was clear from section/chapter one to four, that they need assistance. From Scripture it is clear that parents and the church have the responsibility to help adolescents mature in Christ. The main responsibility was given to parents. Proverbs 22:6 says: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it". To pastors/leaders/youth leaders the following is said in 1 Peter 5:2: "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers..." In section 3.2.1 it was said that the church isn't effective enough in relation to reaching young people. It was also said that in general parents do not do their part in raising Godly children.

Many children don't have a good relationship with their parents because of divorce and many parents are also too busy and don't make enough time for their children. On the other hand, many parents just simply don't have a relationship with the Lord (Section 3.2.1). The positive or negative influence of parents on the lives of their children was confirmed in chapter/section one to four. It is said in section 3.3.5 that parents in fact have more influence than peers even during adolescent years (Adams & Berzonsky, 2003:459). The church also has some, but needs to have a more effective influence on young people. In this chapter, in the pragmatic task, guidance is given to adolescents, parents and church leaders to assist adolescents in their spiritual development. There are three categories of research in this chapter, namely: Guidance to adolescents, guidance to parents, and guidance to church leaders. The conclusions drawn from chapter two on scriptural perspective will be discussed under these categories to give proper guidance.

5.2 Guidance to adolescents

- **Keeping on growing through the training of your senses, it is a continual process through constant study of the Word, prayer and meditation, the hearing of the Word etc. (Section 2.2.6)**

Spiritual practices or disciplines need to be part of the life of every believer, young and old. The only thing necessary to making it part of one's life is a longing after God as Richard Foster puts it (1999:2). According to section 3.3.1, God has created individuals with this longing in their hearts (McMinn, 1996:201). Many people try to satisfy this longing with substitutes. Young people should realize that this longing in their hearts is a longing for God and that it can only be satisfied by the Lord Jesus Himself. The moment this is realized, pursuing God and His presence should follow. It is said in James 4:8 that if man draws near to God, He will come close to them. God is pursued through spiritual disciplines.

Because individuals have given their lives to the Lord, and they are His children, it does not mean they are perfect, they will still make mistakes. Children of God are on this journey with Him and as this journey continues He is busy changing them to become more like Him. "God has given us the disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us" (Foster, 1999:7). In other words, through spiritual disciplines the Lord will show believers areas in their lives that needs change.

According to section 3.3.1 spiritual practices assist in the process of spiritual development (Ratcliff, 2002:3). The main purpose of spiritual disciplines is to connect man with God. Spiritual disciplines help believers to experience God in person and grow closer to Him, it is part of relationship with God as mentioned in section 3.3.1. In general as seen in section 4.11, adolescents don't spend enough time on spiritual practices. To become more like Christ, which is what one should strive towards, the training of self/senses through the **regular practice** of these disciplines needs to take place.

In section 4.8.2.1 in the qualitative research, it was found that most adolescents regularly read their Bibles (three out of five). In the quantitative study the majority read their Bibles not so often. Results from the United States and Australia point to the fact that adolescents don't read their Bibles regularly as seen in section 4.7 (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:139) (Stanton, 2010:1). The discipline of Bible study is something Christians do for two reasons, first of all one gets to know God and His Word and secondly, God also uses Scripture to talk to his children. It is in Scripture that He gives guidance for every situation that individuals face in life.

Believers need to know the Word of God in order to stand their ground whenever the enemy tells them something contrary to the truth of God. Time should be set aside each day to spend in the Word. So many people spend so much time per day on sports, watching movies and other hobbies, while God did not give believers movies or paintings or a symphony. He gave them a reasonably thick book that is filled with all the information that they will ever need, information that will lead to a productive and satisfying life (Miller, 2012:1). This doesn't mean that watching movies or spending time on hobbies is not allowed. Believers should just be careful not to neglect spending enough time in the Word. God reveals His Word to man, He makes it clear and often use people to give answers. Young people should seek the advice of parents, pastor or friends.

When it comes to prayer, according to both studies, the quantitative and qualitative, each individual does spend time with God in prayer each day but not enough time is spent in general (15-30 minutes) (section 4.7 and 4.8.2.1). In section 4.7 it is said that many young people don't spend enough reflective time in prayer because they are too busy and God is not top priority in their lives (Yaconelli, 2008:18-19).

Regular time spent with God in prayer is important, talking to Him throughout the day about everything. There also needs to be time set aside each day to just sit before the Lord in prayer where there are no distractions. Believers need to seek to encounter God in a fresh way each time they approach Him. Be careful to not fall into the trap of dry routine (Frizzell, 1999:43). Prayer can easily be very self-centred; instead believers need to also bring others in prayer

before the Lord. One should start with a few minutes each day, but don't stay with a few minutes, grow to spend an hour or more.

Studying the Word is necessary in order to have insight into the text being read, but meditation is just as important. The term *meditate* often has a negative connotation, because it makes one think of some Buddhist sitting with crossed legs somewhere. Meditating on the Word of God is a Biblical term and it simply means thinking on what's been read, pondering, allowing the Holy Spirit to bring revelation. "It is characterized more by reflecting than by studying, more by listening than by thinking, more by releasing than by grabbing" (Foster, 1999:37).

When it comes to spending time on other spiritual practices, from both the quantitative and qualitative studies, it was found that most individuals spend time on other spiritual practices like listening to Gospel music, watching and listening to sermons on CD and DVD. However, not enough time is spent as seen in section 4.7 and 4.8.2.1. Regular time should also be spent reading other Christian books, listening to sermons and so on to enhance spiritual growth.

When it comes to music, being a Christian doesn't mean that one cannot listen to any other music than Gospel. Believers just need to make sure of the background of the band, who they are and what they stand for and very importantly, they need to listen to the lyrics, to what they are actually singing based on what was mentioned in section 3.2.3. This section refers to music artists who promote immorality in their music. On the other hand listening to Gospel music, music that glorifies God and praise and worshipping along is definitely something that should form part of the live of every believer on a daily basis. It also contributes to spiritual growth.

In section 3.3.5, with regards to the influence of friends, it was said that peers have a great influence on adolescents. The responses from both the quantitative and qualitative studies were positive. As seen in section 4.7, 45% of individuals said most of their friends knew the Lord and 35% said all of them knew the Lord. In section 4.8.2.3, the qualitative study reveals that every person interviewed said all their friends knew the Lord. Teenagers, who have a heart for God, will seek the fellowship of the body of Christ. They spend time with friends who are like minded

and they desire to be, involved in a Christian community (Tripp, 2001:182). It is very important that teenagers spend time with people who encourage and help them in their walk with the Lord. Those who do not have Godly friends should ask the Lord to bring the right friends on their path.

The research points out that adolescents want to interact when it comes to Christian teaching, as seen in Section 4.9 (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:32). The qualitative research points out that all the individuals get the opportunity on a regular basis to discuss what was preached at church and youth group in group setting in section 4.8.2.1. The total opposite was found in the quantitative research, as 70% said they sometimes got the opportunity as seen in section 4.7 Section 4.9 also points out that young people need to be challenged in their faith and relationship with God (Trimmer, 1994:45).

Young people should join a Bible-based church, go to the Sunday services, attend their youth group and find a cell group to go to during the week if possible. Corporate worship, prayer, instruction and interaction are vital. Believers need to hear the preaching of the Word on a weekly basis and pray and worship together with the body of Christ. Fellowship among believers is also very important. Praise and worship is such an essential part of being a Christian. Gustafson says seeing that worship is the expression of the believer's love for God, He desires whole hearted worship. Whole hearted worship reflects whole hearted devotion (2006:187). God deserves nothing less.

- **Discern between good and evil, in order to reject evil and stand your ground (Section 2.2.6)**

As mentioned in sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of the research, there are so many negative influences on young people today and many get involved in some kind of risky behaviour. There is a lack of morals, sexual perversion, substance abuse, the occult etc. Young people also get involved in things like sexual behaviour that leads to sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancies, cutting, eating disorders, firearm related injuries, aggression and violence as mentioned in section 3.3.5 (Sharp & Dellis, 2010:2).

In the quantitative and qualitative research in section 4.6.1.2 and section 4.8.2.2, it was found in both studies that the majority of individuals have smoked and have used alcohol at some point in their lives. In the quantitative study most of them have taken part in some form of risky behaviour, while in the qualitative study all of them once participated in some form of risky behaviour. On the other hand in section 3.3.1 it is said that adolescents with higher levels of spirituality show lower rates of risky behaviour with regards to health (Cotton *et al.*, 2006:472).

It is more difficult for young people today to grow up as believers and keep their lives pure before God. The enemy is out there to try and get the people of God off track. The Word says in 1 Peter 5:8: “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”. Young people need to know what is going on in the world around them, be up to date with the latest in everything and be aware of the dangers. Believers should always be on their guard and not afraid to warn others.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Proverbs 4:23). The use of the word “heart” refers to the entire inner man. The first hearers saw the heart as the key of character- the origin of desires, feelings, ideas, thoughts, reason, imagination, conscience, goals, will and faith (Lucado, 1997:100). Young people should guard their hearts, and ask the Lord to always help them discern between good and evil, staying away from that which could harm their entire being. No decision should be made without the help of God. Most important of all, as mentioned, adolescents should know the Word in order to stand their ground.

- **Respond to the truth that you have obtained (Act on what you have learned and set an example) (section 2.2.4)**

In section 3.2.3 it is clear that our society lacks Godly role models. Teenagers often get addicted to something like alcohol seeing that parents set the example as seen in section 3.3.5. Many children today grow up without fathers (section 3.2.1). In the qualitative research in section 4.8.2.4, two of those interviewed grew up without a father. Young people in general

don't have people whom they can look up to. Teenagers should strive to set the example that Christ Jesus set for us. He is truly someone to look up to.

Jesus said that His disciples needed to bear fruit: "This is my father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8). Believers need to act on what they have learned in their walk with the Lord from the Word, and through experience and they should share that with others. The boy Samuel set an example; he did what he was taught. Believers should continue speaking the truth in love setting the example of Christ with His help of course.

- **Grow in unity in Christ who is the head of the body, by speaking the truth in love and building each other up (Section 2.3.6)**

Not only should believers grow spiritually as individuals, but as the body of Christ they should grow together in Him Who is the head, helping/building each other up as mentioned in chapter two of research. It's all about growing in unity and functioning as a unit. According to Roman 12:4-6a every believer has a different function and has been given different gifts in the Body of Christ. In verse 5 it is clear that the members belong to each other. They cannot function on their own. Different members have different gifts with which they build up the rest of the body.

In section 3.2.2 mention is made to what is known as "cyber-bullying". "Cyber-bullying" is where young people are bullied and made fun of on social media sites like Twitter, Facebook and MySpace (Bolyn, 2011:1). Young people can be very cruel to each other, not realizing that words cut very deep.

It is easy to point out negative things when looking at people, but when Jesus looks at his children, He does not see their flaws; He sees all their best qualities. He sees who they can become and He keeps on encouraging them. Instead of breaking people down and judging them, believers should continue building each other up in love even if someone made a mistake. Gossip is something that can cause a lot of hurt. I agree with John Zens when he says that gossip and slander are problems, because they seem innocent and often come to believers

subtly. Christians are called to walk in love, but when they spread negative things about someone they are doing the total opposite (2012:1).

Believers should be careful what they say. Some of the biggest mistakes people make in life are with their tongues. People are guilty of speaking too soon. They should either control their tongue or be controlled by it (Gifford, 2012:1).

- **Have a servant attitude, be humble and have respect for the Lord. Be obedient, always ready and willing to listen and serve (Section 2.7)**

As seen in section 3.2.1 society in general is very individualistic, it is all about self, edifying the self. It is said that the awareness of spirituality and the sacred does not include God or the focus is not on God as their Creator with whom they connect, but on self. Samuel is the example used in section 2.7 of a young man who served before the Lord, with obedience, humility and with respect.

As a child of God one needs to have the fear of the Lord. Fear in the sense of respect. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding” (Psalm 111:10). Wiersbe says: “While some of the fears people have might be distressing and even defiling, the fear of God is clean and maturing” (2008:81). The fear of the Lord is not something negative/harmful, but it leads to maturity in God.

From a servant attitude/heart before the Lord, young people need to also serve others. One of the spiritual practices discussed is reaching out to the poor and needy. As seen in section 4.7 a survey done by Strommen and Hardel showed that adolescents do not spend much time reaching out to their community (2010:153-154). This is confirmed in the results in section 4.7 in the quantitative and the qualitative studies. The qualitative response was more positive, but more time should be set aside to reach out (section 4.8.2.1). Children of God need to go out and make a difference in their community. Jesus said: “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

- **Mentors/parents should educate, train and discipline adolescents (Section 2.6).**

Teenagers often feel as if their parents/guardians are always on their case. Parents often want to know their every move, regular advice is given on certain issues in their lives and they point out dangers that adolescents often think are not things that will affect them. The reason parents/mentors act this way is not because they want to sound like they know it all, but it is because they care. They may often sound like they don't know what they are talking about, but they do know, they have a lot of wisdom, and young people should listen to their advice.

As seen in section 3.2.3, adolescents who are respectful, kind, helpful, tolerant and gentle, who follow moral and Biblical principles of integrity and honesty are very rare (Anon., 2011:1). In the qualitative study from the interviews done, it was clear that all the individuals had great respect for their parents and that they were obedient to them. In section 4.8.2.3, it was found that those interviewed had Godly influence from parents and in 4.8.2.4 it was clear that they at least had a good relationship with one of their parents. These young people interviewed are young people who live by Godly principles, striving to be like Christ. Even though they made mistakes in the past, there are certain incidents that occurred that brought about change in their spiritual lives (Section 4.9).

God expects of young people to honour their parents. Exodus 20:12 says: "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you". Young men/women should honour their parents in the same way that they strive to bring glory to God. Obedience to parents goes hand in hand with honouring them. Obedience includes things like listening, heeding and submitting to their authority (G.Q.M., 2012:1).

Pastors/youth pastors, family members/friends often also give advice to young people because they care. Young people need to also respect them. From the qualitative study young people said they did not have a good relationship with the leaders because they don't know them (section 4.8.2.4). The opposite was true in the quantitative research (Section 4.6.1.4). From the interviews done in qualitative study it was found that they have great respect for their leaders.

Very often they do not want adolescents to make the mistakes they did. God expects of parents and other role players to ensure that young people become the men or women that He destined them to be. It is their responsibility to look after adolescents, instructing and disciplining them when necessary.

5.3 Conclusion on guidance to adolescents

Young people are responsible for their own lives; they are responsible to build a relationship with the Lord. The following advice was given to adolescents on how to mature spiritually in Christ:

- First of all, believers should train their senses through constant study of the Word, prayer, meditation and worship. They should pursue God and be transformed through spiritual disciplines/practices. They should also spend time listening to Gospel music, sermons, reading books etc. and they should seek the fellowship of Christian friends. They should join a church and attend Sunday and youth services. During the week they should join a cell/ small group if possible.
- Adolescents should be up to date with what is going on around them in the world. They should always ask the Lord to help them discern between good and evil and to stay away from that which could harm them. Adolescents need to know the Word and stand their ground. They should share knowledge about what God has done in their lives and set an example.
- They should be careful what they say; they should rather build one another up in love.
- Adolescents need to have a servant heart before the Lord of obedience and they should fear Him. They should also reach out to those in need.
- Adolescents should submit to the authority of parents and heed to their instruction and discipline. They should listen to the advice from pastors and youth leaders.

5.4 Guidance to parents

- **Keeping on growing through the training of your senses, it is a continual process through constant study of the Word, prayer and meditation, the hearing of the Word (Section 2.2.6)**

As mentioned in section 3.2.1, today we are sitting with a post-Joshua generation because parents do not regard it as important enough to bring up Godly children. The general results from the empirical study show that at least one part from those who participated knows the Lord, but the majority said both their parents know the Lord (section 4.11). Parents should grow in the Lord through the training of their senses by spending time in the Word and prayer regularly etc. Based on that, parents should teach and encourage their children to spend regular time in the Word and in prayer etc. One cannot give what you haven't received from the Lord. In other words that what parents receive when they spend time with the Lord is what they have to give to their children.

Believers grow in passion and desire for the Lord and the things of God when they continually spent a lot of time with Him. As mentioned in section 2.2.6 believers need to feed their souls by the intake and digesting of the Word etc. However, regular intake is needed to grow strong in the Lord. It is the growth in the revelation of the things of God, and the growth in passion and desire for the Lord that children should see in their parents.

Spending time as a family together on a regular basis in the Word and prayer is a must for every family. Not having time because parents are working or something is no excuse as parents need never be too busy for their family. In section 3.2.1 it is mentioned that very often fathers are absent in the lives of their children because they are too busy at work etc. The following was found in a study done: "people who regularly have family devotions, prayer, and Bible reading tend to have higher faith maturity" (Neff & Ratcliff, 1995:210). Parents should also encourage their children in worship, to attend church and youth group services and to attend a home cell if their church has home cells. Families should talk about spiritual issues even when they are relaxing together or having dinner.

Even though it was found in the empirical study in general that adolescents don't spend effective time on spiritual practices as seen in section 4.11, it was said in section 3.3.1 that spiritual things are very important to them (Cotton *et al.*, 2006:472). Adolescents just need to be taught and encouraged. Parents need to teach their children that faith practices is not some rituals that they perform, but spending sufficient time with the Lord is because they love Him, and want to get to know Him and to become through growth who He has called them to be. It has to become something believers want to do and not need to do out of obligation.

- **Discern between good and evil, in order to reject evil and stand your ground (Section 2.2.6).**

From the Scripture passage in Hebrews discussed in section 2.2.6 of the research, it was deduced that those who train their senses will be able to discern between good and evil, the reason being that they are mature believers. Parents should mature in Christ in order to distinguish good from evil. Based on what they have come to know, they need to warn their children who might still be immature, against evil.

Parents need to realize that times have changed; adolescents do face the same challenges their parents did, but they also face challenges far greater as mentioned in section 3.2.2 (Bolyn, 2011:1). The empirical study shows that most individuals have taken part in some form of risky behaviour in both the quantitative and qualitative studies (Section 4.6.1.2 and 4.8.2.2). Parents need to be up to date with what is going on in the lives of their teenagers. They should inform their children to be on the lookout for certain dangers, what not to watch on the television, what music not to listen to, to be aware of and recognise occultic things around them, whether it is at school, among peers etc.

Parents should explain to them the dangers associated with using alcohol, smoking, using drugs, hanging out with the wrong friends. They should also keep on teaching morals and always go back to the primary source of authority, the Word of God. Adolescents often make impulsive choices which they regret afterwards. Adolescents need to learn from their parents to

trust truth above feelings. Mueller says: “Teach them how the authoritative Word speaks to every area of life, going to great lengths to speak God’s truth on matters to which they’re deferring to the authority of their feelings” (Mueller, 2009:78). The Word is full of examples of people who in their circumstances held on to the truth of God even though they felt tempted to do the opposite (Mueller, 2009:79).

- **Respond to the truth that you have obtained (act on what you have learned and set an example) (Section 2.2.4)**

As already mentioned and discussed in section 3.3.5 family and in particular in this case parents have a great amount of influence in the lives of their children. Most of the individuals interviewed have a Godly influence from parents which is positive with regards to the example being set 4.6.1.4 and 4.8.2.3. The role of parents is to consistently model and speak the truth into the lives of their children as they change and grow (Mueller, 2009:23). They should be careful to speak and model the truth. People often say, don’t do what I do, do what I say. Children indeed follow by example; they will in fact rather do as you do, than do what you say.

The actions of parents need to indicate that they are children of God. They need not neglect their duty as believer like those exhorted in section 2.2.4 Parents should give their children the opportunity to see the fruit of their faith in their lives (Mueller, 2009:88). God has called believers to bear fruit as mentioned in the guidance to adolescents. One bears fruit through sharing from their relationship with God with others. Many adolescents want to follow in the footsteps of their fathers and mothers.

- **Grow in unity in Christ who is the head of the body, by speaking the truth in love and building each other up (Section 2.3.6).**

During the adolescent years, parents and teenagers are often in disagreement about many things. However, adolescence is a time in which parents should strive to build and maintain very good relationships with their children, growing in unity in Christ. As already mentioned, the answers from the quantitative study show that most individuals have a very good relationship

with both parents (Section 4.6.1.4). The results from the qualitative study show that most individuals at least have a good relationship with one parent (4.8.2.4).

Things can easily be said that shouldn't have been said and then it is too late, the damage is already done. Chap Clark says that which matters most in the lives of adolescents is how their parents handle conflict (2011:99). Even when teenagers make the wrong choices, they shouldn't be rejected; parents should pray for them and always give them the insurance that they are loved no matter what. Parents need to love without condition, because this is what today's youth culture needs (Mueller, 2006:190).

During adolescence, identity development takes place, but ultimately spiritual identity needs to take place as mentioned in section 3.3.2. Adolescents need to find their spiritual identity in Christ, because this will have impact on how they see, reason and experience everything. Parents should assist adolescents in spiritual identity development, faith development (3.3.3), moral development (3.3.4) etc. Because of the physical changes that adolescents undergo, it is very challenging for them. Teenagers spend hours in front of the mirror, looking for body and facial flaws, thinking that they should look like the so-called perfect people our society portrays (Mueller, 2009:42).

Parents should be careful what they say, as even jokes can be misunderstood. Rather keep quiet if you know it would not build up your child. Parents should be there to build their teenagers up, make them feel loved and accepted at all times. During this time parents should teach their teenagers on the inner qualities of Godliness (Mueller, 2009:43). They should be taught and reminded that true beauty comes from inside. They don't need to look like someone else, they are who God says they are in Scripture. They are unique, beautiful/ handsome, highly favoured, adored and incredible loved by God.

- **Have a servant attitude, be humble and have respect for the Lord. Be obedient, always ready and willing to listen and serve (Section 2.7)**

Part of the normal process that adolescents go through includes the focus on self. It usually changes after the period of adolescence, but parents need to be on the lookout for selfish behaviour that could threaten to become part of their adult lives. Parents need to act by helping their teens from selfish to selfless (Burns, 2012:1).

The culture we live in has also become incredibly selfish as mentioned in section 3.2.1. “Over the past several decades, there has been a discernible shift from serving others to “looking out for number one” (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:153). Samuel is definitely one of the greatest examples of someone who served before the Lord in obedience as already mentioned and discussed in section 2.7. The empirical study done on the spiritual practice/discipline of reaching out, as already mentioned, showed that most individuals had taken part in an outreach at least once, but not enough time is spend reaching out (4.6.1.1 and 4.8.2.1). A significant number (35%) have never taken part in an outreach (in the quantitative study).

Parents need to teach their teens on the importance of giving and serving. Give them the opportunity on a regular occasion and reach out to people in need. Reaching out to the poor and needy is definitely also a humbling experience because serving is about being the least. This also teaches young people to have respect for even those who seem less important than they are. Parents can also work together with youth leaders and offer their help as volunteers during youth group outreaches or any other special events. They can even become involved as leaders on a regular basis if the church/leadership approves.

Teenagers often think that they know everything, that they don't need their parents. It is also said that “most teenagers do not live with the fear of God before their eyes” (Tripp, 2001:217). Parents need to teach their children to respect them as their parents and they should never give up giving advice. Teenagers end up finding out that their parents were right. They should be taught to have respect for others and most important, parents should teach them to fear God.

“To fear God means that my life is structured by a sense of awe, worship, and obedience that flows out of recognizing Him and His glory” (Tripp, 2001:217).

Parents should teach their children from Scripture who God is. They should help them develop the right picture of God. God is loving and merciful, but He is also almighty, righteous, holy, all-powerful, the ultimate authority, not someone that you play games with. They need to know and be reminded that He is the one that is in control of their lives. They do not belong to themselves. With regards to decision- making, parents should teach adolescents to know God in the decisions they make.

- **Mentors/parents should educate, train and discipline adolescents (Section 2.6)**

In section 2.6 it is said that parents should not forget that a very important part of their calling is to educate/train/teach and discipline their children (Vosloo & van Rensburg, 1999:305). With regards to education, training and discipline, it is important that parents know the Lord, because then they would do as the Lord expects of them. As already mentioned, the general result from the empirical study shows that most of the individuals said that both their parents know the Lord (section 4.11).

Part of training is also to be open for discussion, and parents should ask the Lord to help them answer the questions their children have. Giving teenagers the right outlook on all matters of life is crucial. Parents should not only warn them, but talk to them about things like sex. Many parents are afraid or too shy to talk with their children about sex. Parents should teach their children that sex is something beautiful that God has created to exist between a husband and wife and that God wants them to keep themselves pure for their marriage partner. Neff and Ratcliff say that it is ideally the family that should educate teens on sex (1995:75).

When it comes to discipline, the Bible is clear that children should be disciplined. As mentioned in section 3.2.3, there are not many boundaries set in general by parents and society in the day and age we live in. “Little or no discipline from an indulgent parent may influence the child

toward a perception of God as not interested in justice but only delivering rewards that are irrelevant to one's actions" (Neff & Ratcliff, 1995:70).

There are other ways of discipline aside from a physical hiding. The Bible is also clear on reproving (Neff & Ratcliff 1995:70). Adolescents should be corrected in some or other way when they are out of line. When it comes to boundaries, parents should not be unreasonable, but boundaries are a must. Contrary to what parents think, adolescents do want rules to live by (Gregston, 2010:1). Not only does it benefit adolescents because it helps them say no, but boundaries are in fact for the benefit of the entire family. Boundaries help everyone improve their choices and to know if they are heading in the wrong direction (Gregston, 2010:1).

5.5 Conclusion on parental guidance

Parents have the main responsibility to help their children mature spiritually as mentioned in the introduction. The following guidance is given to parents to assist adolescents in spiritual development:

- Parents should train their senses by spending sufficient time in the Word and in prayer. By doing this they will grow in passion and desire for the Lord and the things of God. They should teach and encourage their teenagers to do the same out of their love for God. Regular time spent in the Word and prayer together as a family is a must. Parents should encourage the attendance of church and youth group services and joining a cell group during the week. As a family they should talk about spiritual issues on all occasions.
- Adolescents face different challenges from what parents did when they were their age and for that reason, parents need to be aware of the dangers and warn their teenagers. Parents need to keep on teaching them morals, going back to the Word as primary source. They should teach their children to trust truth above feelings.
- They should set the example in word and deed, because teenagers follow by example. Parents should strive to build and maintain good relationships with their teenagers and be careful what they say to them. They should rather build them up and make sure that they

feel loved and accepted at all times. If they made a mistake they should not be rejected. Parents also need to teach their teenagers on the inner qualities of Godliness and help them find identity in Christ.

- Parents need to have a servant heart before the Lord and encourage their children to do the same. They should teach them to fear God and respect others. Opportunities of reaching out to those in need should be created.
- Parents need to instruct and discipline their children, and be open to discussion about anything. They should also ask the Lord to help them answer the questions their teenagers might have and give advice.

5.6 Guidance to church leaders

In this part of the research guidance is given to youth leaders in particular, seeing that they are the ones who usually work more closely with young people.

- **Keeping on growing through the training of your senses, it is a continual process through constant study of the Word, prayer and meditation, the hearing of the Word (Section 2.2.6)**

In the same way as parents, youth pastors/leaders should spend enough time daily in reading the Word and in prayer. Once again, they can only give what they have received. As their cups are filled they are able to overflow onto others. Living in the day and age we live in, working with young people living in a broken world, Walt Mueller says that people regularly asks him this question: “How do you continue to maintain your faith and spiritual sanity when you immerse yourself in so much garbage”? He gives them the following answer: “ I confess my reliance on the spiritual disciplines of scriptural study and prayer as the anchors the Holy Spirit uses to keep my mind and my heart from going to places they shouldn’t go (2006:179).

Parents are not the only ones responsible for the spiritual development of teenagers, youth leaders are also responsible. In section 3.2.1 it is said that there is a concern in the South

African community regarding the effectiveness of religious education in helping children and the youth actualize their faith in their daily lives (Hoffman & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:21). In comparison with the quantitative study, the qualitative study done on individuals from Little Falls Christian Centre had more positive results with regards to spiritual practices (Section 4.9).

As seen in the guidance given to adolescents and parents, the quantitative results show that the majority of those interviewed do not spend enough time in the Word (Section 4.6.1.1). Most of the individuals who participated in the qualitative study read their Bibles regularly, but yet again more time should be spent in the Word (See section 4.8.2.1). The results also point out that in both studies, in the quantitative and in the qualitative study, every one that participated prayed every day, but there is not enough time spent in prayer as mentioned in section 4.6.1.1 and in section 4.8.2.1. A reasonable amount of time is spent on other spiritual practices in both studies (see section 4.6.1.1 and 4.8.2.1).

Those who are involved in youth ministry, being it youth pastors or youth leaders/volunteers, have the primary task to keep the young people attentive to God. Spiritual practices are the tools by which the attentiveness to God is formed in young people (Dean *et al.*, 2001:159). Youth leaders should encourage these practices in the personal lives of young people. Faith is at the heart of these spiritual practices and in section 3.3.3 faith formation of adolescents is discussed. Youth leaders should assist adolescents when they have questions regarding faith, when all of a sudden they have doubts with regards to certain things they once simply believed as a child (see section 3.3.3)

Youth ministries should also involve the young people in corporate prayer by having worship and prayer evenings for example. Those church/youth leaders who are involving young people in corporate prayer and worship should keep on giving young people these opportunities on a regular basis. Youth leaders should also encourage more young people to join the rest of the congregation in prayer for example.

When it comes to preaching and messages; from the qualitative study done it emerged that some individuals mentioned that they wanted preaching/a message more on a regular basis (Section 4.9). They enjoy worship, praying for each other and testimonies and so forth, but they want more preaching/a message at the youth service in particular. Many of them do attend church services where they sit under the preaching of the Word every Sunday and of course they discuss what was preached on Sundays at home cell during the week. However, they still have a desire to hear a message at the youth service every Friday evening/most Friday evenings.

Youth leaders together with pastors should encourage young people to attend church services regularly. It is very important that young people form part of the local congregation and that they sit under the preaching and teaching of the shepherds/ leaders of the church. Youth ministries should also encourage the freedom of worship, even if it means dimming the lights in order for them to connect with God without them worrying what the person next to them is thinking. An atmosphere of worship should be created where individuals can freely worship and have an encounter with God.

Pastors should also keep in mind that when they are sharing a message or preaching, they should encourage participation. Adolescents should be encouraged to bring their Bibles with and read together. They should also be given opportunity after a message to ask questions. Hoffman and Janse van Rensburg did a study and found that adolescents had a positive response when it came to the exchange of meaning, when they could ask questions in a class setting. They want to be actively involved in their spiritual development as see in section 4.9 (2010:32).

The use of small groups is also a way of giving adolescents the opportunity to ask questions and to hear the opinions of others on the Word etc. as mentioned in section 4.9 in the qualitative research. Out of all the churches that participated in the empirical study, Little Falls is the only congregation that has youth cell/small groups (see section 4.8.2.1). In the quantitative research

the majority of individuals didn't get the opportunity to discuss what was preached on a regular basis in a group setting as seen in section 4.6.1.1. Vukich and Vandegriff say: "The small group method of teaching is a valuable method for instructing and teaching other" (2002:349). The congregation, pastors and youth leaders of Little Falls Christian Centre in particular should continue to encourage young people to join home cells because it has a tremendous impact on the lives of young people.

It was also clear from the qualitative study in section 4.8.2.1 that most of the adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre interviewed always felt challenged at their youth group. The quantitative results showed that the majority said that they only felt challenged sometimes in their relationship with God (see section 4.6.1.1). Young people need to be challenged in their faith, they need to be called to make a commitment to Christ (Trimmer, 1994:45) (Section 4:9). The leadership of Little Falls should continue challenging adolescents in their faith and relationship with God. They should keep on stirring the faith of individuals and keep them burning with a passion and desire for God.

- **Discern between good and evil, in order to reject evil and stand your ground (Section 2.2.6)**

From the information given in section 3.2.2 it is clear that an incredible amount of negative things are being portrayed by society through, music, films, music videos etc. Young people also face things like "cyber-bullying" and "sexting" and have easy access to things like pornography as seen in section 3.2.2 (Bolyn, 2011:1). Many young people also suffer from stress, anxiety and depression; however, it is said that there is a negative relation between depression and spiritual well-being as mentioned in section 3.3.6 (Westgate, 1996:32). Not only do parents need to be up to date with what is going on in the lives of teenagers, but youth pastors/youth leaders also need to be aware of the things that young people face and they should inform individuals. Hosea 4:6 says: "my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge".

As already mentioned, both the results in the quantitative and qualitative studies show that most of the adolescents have taken part in some form of risky behaviour at some time in their lives (Section 4.6.1.2 and in 4.8.2.2). It is said that one of the main reasons that young people get involved in risky behaviour is because they have too little information as mentioned in section 3.3.5. The influence of friends was also highlighted in section 3.3.5. From the empirical study done, most of the adolescents in the quantitative study said that most of their friends knew the Lord (see section 4.6.1.3).

In the qualitative study all of them said that all their friends knew the Lord (see section 4.8.2.3). In order to address certain issues that adolescents in particular face more effectively, discussions on relevant topics like sex, drugs, alcohol, the wrong friends, what music not to listen to etc. is a good idea. It is very important that youth leaders teach young people what God says on these topics in Scripture.

- **Respond to the truth that you have obtained (Act on what you have learned and set an example) (Section 2.2.4)**

The media world today is full of “so-called” role models who promote issues like immorality and rebellion, as mentioned and seen in section 3.2.3. Youth leaders/pastors need to also set the example in word and deed. It was not clear from the empirical study done whether youth leaders are setting an example. However, looking at the response in both studies shows that leaders do have a positive impact on young people, particularly in the qualitative response (Sections 4.6.1.1 and 4.8.2.1). Young people particularly have their eyes on their youth pastor/leaders. Very often youth leaders are the only examples of Godly men or woman an adolescent have.

This generation is not only referred to as the post Joshua generation who lacks spiritual direction, but they are also called fatherless (Section 3.2.1). Adolescents are in need of spiritual direction; in need of authority figures. Adolescents are often sceptic, seeing that people in the world aren't trustworthy, they often do contrary to what they say. Their eyes are on youth

leaders/pastors to see if they are fakes. This world needs Godly role models who will love and help young people in their search for identity and direction. People are searching for something/someone with “beef” (substance) (Stringer, 2009:45).

Being relevant is one thing, but youth leaders should also be careful of becoming too conformed to youth culture. Very often Churches or youth programmes try to entertain and too often capitulate to the values of youth culture” (Ratcliff, 2002:3) (Section 1.1). Youth leaders need to keep in mind that they are and need to be the example, the one to whom young people look up to. They have the responsibility to be the light in the world, to be the salt of the earth whether they are at church, relaxing with family and friends etc. Even adults, parents, family members should see a Christ-like example in them at all times. Youth leaders should never compromise, no matter in which situation they are in. “Our attitudes, thought and behaviours are to reflect the will and way of the One to whom we belong” (Mueller, 2006:149).

- **Grow in unity in Christ who is the head of the body, by speaking the truth in love and building each other up (Section 2.3.6)**

Youth leaders need to constantly encourage adolescents in their walk with God, building them up and giving them hope in a world that seems hopeless. When it comes to identity development, help them through. Every human being on earth wants to feel loved and accepted and adolescents in particular often feel that they are not good enough, that they need to look or be like someone else.

Youth leaders need to help them find their identity in Christ Jesus. It is said that the influence of parents, mentors (youth leaders/pastors) and friends is crucial as seen in section 3.3.2. Youth leaders should help them discover their spiritual gifts and what their function in the Body of Christ is. In order for any of this to take place, youth leaders need to build good relationships with young people. “As leaders and teachers, we must be the bridge builders-forging relationships with students that will pave the way to a deeper relationship with Christ” (Huffman, 2012:1).

It was found in the quantitative study that most individuals said that they had a good relationship with leaders (Section 4.6.1.4). In the qualitative study in section 4.8.2.4, most of the individuals said that they did not have a relationship with the main leadership of the youth and they did not feel that they could approach them with problems that they were facing. This isn't the case for all the young people as the results indicate and it doesn't mean that young people are not encouraged, helped to find their identity in Christ. This does take place with the help of main leadership and youth cell leaders. This is seen in the fact that in over all, Little Falls has a very positive impact on the young people (see section 4.9). In order to be even more effective leadership should maybe create more opportunities to get to know young people in person and work even closer with cell leaders.

- **Have a servant attitude, be humble and have respect for the Lord. Be obedient, always ready and willing to listen and serve (Section 2.7)**

Being a leader is all about servant-hood. The greatest leader of all, Jesus Christ came to earth to serve. Being a leader is not about elevating the self, it is about serving Christ Jesus, with a humble heart and respect. Listening to the leading of His voice and reaching out to those in need. Leaders always need to be reminded that they are called to serve, and what a privilege it is. The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas abused their positions in the temple, they did everything but serve (Section 2.5).

As already mentioned and seen in section 3.2.1 the society we live in is very self-centred, everything revolves around self. Like parents, youth leaders also need to teach young people to serve the Lord with a humble heart and with respect and to also serve and respect others, which often means putting others before yourself. As mentioned under the heading of parental guidance, teach young people from the Word who God is, that we need to have respect for Him, He is not someone you can just mess around with. God loves us dearly, but He is not someone to have a stinky attitude with. Proverbs 16:5 says: "The Lord detests all the proud of heart". James 4:10 says: "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up." He is known throughout Scripture as the Great I AM, He who existed before time and life itself.

Youth leaders have the responsibility together with parents to help young people develop an attitude of selflessness, respect and humility with the help of the Holy Spirit and live lives that are surrendered to Almighty God. The youth leaders of Little Falls have servant hearts as well as those adolescents interviewed in the empirical study. As youth leaders they should just continue portraying a servant hood attitude and teach and encourage the young people to do the same.

Reaching out to the poor and needy is another spiritual practice that is often neglected. “We must create opportunities for youth to stand in the receiving line of the soup kitchen, to share the sidewalks of the homeless, to feel the suffering of the AIDS victim, and to weep with the abandoned child” (Dean *et al.*, 2001:163). It is also something that most of the youth of Little Falls have done more than once as seen in the results from the qualitative study (Section 4.8.2.1). Most of them have been given the opportunity to reach out by an event organised by the church.

The quantitative study results were also not negative with regard to reaching out, but 35% as already mentioned in the guidance given to parents, have never done an outreach (see section 4.6.1.1). More events that give adolescents the opportunity to reach out should be organised on a regular basis and youth leaders should encourage young people to make a difference wherever they are or go, at school, university, local community etc.

- **Mentors/parents should educate, train and discipline adolescents (Section 2.6).**

As seen in section 3.2.1, this generation lacks spiritual direction. In general, from the empirical study done, as already mentioned in the category on guidance to parents, it shows that most of the individuals said both their parents know the Lord which means that there is a positive impact with regard to training and disciplining on those interviewed (Section 4.11). The same was found in the empirical study with regard to the impact that youth leaders have, seen in the response from those that participated in the study. This was particularly seen in the qualitative study response as mentioned (Sections 4.6.1.1 and 4.8.2.1).

Just like parents, youth leaders or pastors need to also teach teenagers about God and His Word. As mentors, youth pastors or leaders have the ideal platform to bring the Word of God to young people. When young people attend a youth service, they are “kind of forced” to sit and listen to what the youth leader/s have to say. Youth leaders should seize the opportunity with God’s leading and make a difference in the lives of young people by bringing them the truth in love.

Not only are they to be taught, but they are to be disciplined. As mentioned in section 4.8: “Discipleship involves following Christ in more considered way” (Nel, 2009:99). It’s not just about making a decision for Christ by responding to an altar call. It’s about a commitment, and youth leaders need to walk a road with young people through discipleship. Little Falls as a congregation, and this includes the youth ministry, always sees to it that whenever there are people or young people giving their lives to the Lord, there are people to walk a road with them. They are helped to join a home cell and it is here where discipleship takes place to a large extent.

Adolescence is a period in the life of a young person where they undergo a lot of change and this has a great impact on them psychologically (section 3.3.3). Youth leaders should help adolescents through the period of spiritual identity development (section 3.3.2), faith development (section 3.3.3), moral development (section 3.3.4) etc. Spiritual identity is said to be at the centre of personality and development as seen in section 3.3.2. Youth leaders should always be open for discussion as mentioned in the guidance given to parents.

Adolescents should also be corrected when they are out of line. It is said in section 3.2.3 in general that there are not many boundaries set by parents and society anymore, children and adolescents have too many rights. Correction should of course be done in love, but it cannot be ignored. Clark says that it is not only the responsibility of parents to set boundaries to adolescents. He says that it is the responsibility of every adult in society (2011:200).

2 Timothy 4:2 says: "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. Church leadership should keep on teaching young people morals etc. and never stop praying for them. The youth leaders of Little Falls should once again be encouraged to teach, equip and correct adolescents with the help of the Lord.

Another essential part of educating and training adolescents is to educate and train parents. Youth leaders can never replace the influence of a teenager's primary socializing structure, their parents. What they can do is to partner with parents by supporting and equipping them to pass on the faith as effectively possible to their children (De Vries, 2004:104). They can equip them by meeting with them on a regular basis in the form of parent meetings without the young people present. Seeing that both parents of the majority of those interviewed know the Lord (See section 4.11), there would not be a problem to meet with them on a regular basis. In relation to counselling, when parents send their child for counselling youth leaders should also make a separate appointment counselling them. Very often the parents are the biggest problem.

5.7 Conclusion on Church guidance

Church leaders also have a responsibility to help adolescents in their spiritual growth as mentioned in the introduction. The following guidance is given to help them assist adolescents:

- Youth leaders should spend sufficient time on the Word and in prayer and on other spiritual practices. They should encourage young people to make spiritual practices part of their personal lives. They should involve them in corporate prayer and worship encourage their participation during services like reading together from the Word and allowing questions and answers afterwards. They need to encourage young people to worship freely and to join a home cell. Youth leaders also have the major responsibility to continually challenge young people in their faith and relationship with God.

- They need to be up to date with the challenges that the young people are facing today and discuss relevant topics with them on a regular basis.
- They should set the example by portraying a Christ-like character at all times, because young people look up to youth leaders/pastors.
- Youth leaders should constantly encourage adolescents in their walk with the Lord, build them up and help them find their identity in Christ. Very important, they should build relationships with adolescents.
- Youth leaders should serve the Lord with a humble heart and with respect and also respect others. They should teach adolescents to do the same, living a surrendered life to Christ. Young people should be involved in an outreach to the poor regularly.
- Youth leaders should seize the opportunity by making a difference in the lives of young people. Young people need to be disciplined, corrected and they need set boundaries. Youth leaders should equip parents and counsel both teenagers and their parents.

5.8 Over-all conclusion

In conclusion, it is not easy to be an adolescent in the world we live in, but there is hope and parents and youth/church leaders should do all they can to effectively help adolescents grow spiritually. Paul Tripp says that adolescence is the age of opportunity, and it sure is (2001:19). Together, parents, church leaders, family members and teachers can make a difference in a generation that seems hopeless. The guidance given in this chapter of research is not the only advice, but I strongly believe that the points of guidance given are great tools that when used will ensure the expected results of spiritually mature adolescents.

Chapter 6: Conclusion of study: Findings and conclusion

6.1 Reason for the study and the overall research question

For the latter part of the 20th century, the topic of spiritual development for adolescents has been neglected and started gaining interest in recent years as seen in section 1.1 (King & Roezer, 2011:1). The overall question asked in this research paper is: What type of pastoral guidance is necessary to assist the adolescents (age 16-18) of Little Falls Christian Centre in their spiritual development? (Section 1.2)

6.2 Aim and objectives

The primary aim of this study was to give pastoral guidance to the adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre (Age 16-18) to assist them in spiritual development, and provide effective pastoral guidance that will help them become who God has called them to be (Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2). The objectives were the following:

- to study what Scripture says on spiritual development of adolescents
- to study what the disciplines of sociology and social work say on spiritual development for adolescents
- to do an empirical study on the adolescents (age 16-18) of Little Falls Christian Centre and on adolescents from other churches in the area.
- to give pastoral guidance to adolescents and major role players in their lives for their spiritual development.

6.3 Central theoretical argument and method

Pastoral guidance, that is relevant in the 21st Century, to adolescents and to those who play major roles in their lives, can contribute to a healthy spiritual development of the adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre (Section 1.4). This study was done making use of the model of

Osmer (2008). The model of Osmer consists of four parts namely: the descriptive, interpretive, normative and pragmatic task (Section 1.5).

6.4 Scriptural perspective on spiritual development

6.4.1 Chapter Two: Research question and method

The question asked in this chapter was: What Scriptural perspectives are to be found on spiritual development for adolescents? With regards to the method used: Osmer sees theological research and interpretation as part of the **normative task**. Not only is the scriptural theory explained during the normative task, but there is also looked at what needs to take place theologically (Osmer, 2008:131) (Section 1.7).

6.4.2 Findings from the Scriptural perspective on spiritual development

- Those who neglect their duty as Christians stay immature. As believers we need not be stagnant, but we should continue maturing. Readers are exhorted for turning their back on the continual study and application of spiritual teaching. Believers need to come to a place of becoming teachers, instead of them always being taught (mature). As a Christian one should not allow oneself to become passive in one's walk with the Lord (Section 2.2.4).
- Keep on growing through the training of your senses; it is a continual process through constant study of the Word, prayer and meditation, the hearing of the Word (section 2.2.6)
- Readers are accused of being infants who use milk, that they do not understand the teaching about righteousness, that which Christ has done. Mature believers eat "solid food". They are spiritual men and woman who walk by the Spirit and are able to "digest" the deeper spiritual things of God (section 2.2.6). Being called infants doesn't mean that they are not believers, they just need to mature and become steadfast in what they believe, their doctrine (section 2.3.4).
- Discern between good and evil, in order to reject evil and stand your ground (section 2.2.6).
- The mature are able to judge and receive what is to the benefit of their souls and reject evil because they continually train their sense. Mature believers truly understand the righteous of

God because they understand the importance of spending time with Him in His Word and acting on what they have come to know (section 2.2.6).

- Respond to the truth that you have obtained (Act on what you have learned and set an example) (Section 2.2.4)
- It is not about the period of time being a Christian, but growing in maturity is about putting into action what you have come to know. Doing what you know (section 2.2.4).
- Grow in unity in Christ who is the head of the body, by speaking the truth in love and building each other up (section 2.3.6).
- People need to be convinced about the truth found in Christ Jesus and they should be won in love. It's all about growing in unity and love brings people together. Christ enables the body to grow, He is both the source and goal of growth. Each part of the body needs to develop fully in order for the entire body to function as a unit in maturity. We reach the fullness in Christ Jesus, in Him in unity (Section 2.3.6).
- Samuel serves as an example of what the heart of an adolescent should look like. He served before the Lord in the temple. He learned from Eli the high priest and he “continued to grow in stature and favour with Lord and with people” (1 Sam 2:26). In the same way adolescents of the twenty first century need to have a servant attitude, be humble and have respect for the Lord and authority. Be obedient, always ready and willing to listen and serve (Section 2.7).
- Mentors/parents should educate, train and discipline adolescents (Section 2.6). Many children do not know the Lord because their parents have no time for them. Some on the other hand, doesn't see a need to discipline their children. Eli spoke, but he took no action. He failed to guide and discipline his children, but he had great success with Samuel whom he mentored (2.6). In the same way parents can have great success with the upbringing of their children if they discipline and mentor them in a Godly way (Section 2.6).

6.5 Spiritual growth from a sociological and psychological point of view

6.5.1 Research question and method

The question asked in chapter three was: What can be learned from the disciplines of social work and sociology with regards to spiritual development of adolescents? With regards to the method used: When it comes to the **interpretive task**, Osmer points to research done on a certain topic from a scientific point of view (2008:83) (Section 1.7).

6.5.2 Findings from spiritual growth from a sociological and psychological point of view:

- There is a great need in our society today for spiritual development and it is very important to ensure the overall wellness of adolescents (Section 3.2.1 and section 3.2.2).
- The western world has fallen into the trap of secularism and a society without God cannot function properly (Section 3.2.1).
- Society has become very self-centred and being aware of the spirit man, people try to enrich self through things like Yoga practices (Section 3.2.1).
- Parents are not doing their part in raising Godly children and the church in overall hasn't been effective in reaching adolescents. This generation lacks direction (Section 3.2.1).
- Socially, adolescents have many challenges that have a negative impact/influence on their spiritual development (Section 3.2.2).
- Adolescents face challenges like body image, formation of identity, pressure from school and social institutions, pressure from friends and family, dating, health. Many get involved in alcohol and drug abuse and become sexually active. There are also technology-related challenges like "sexting" and "cyber bullying". The media has a very negative impact, promoting sex, homosexuality, violence, witchcraft etc. Godly role models are needed (Section 3.2.2).
- Adolescents should not be left alone to sort out challenges themselves, but they are in need of support and guidance (section 3.2.3). Guidance from parents, the church and other

mentors in the areas of spiritual identity development, faith development, and moral development is needed (Section 3.3.2, section 3.3.3 and section 3.3.4).

- Spiritual issues is said to be of great importance to adolescents seeing that man has been made with a longing for God (Section 3.3.1).
- Spiritual development is at the centre of all development and knowing your spiritual identity specifically, has a positive impact on a person psychologically (Section 3.3.2).
- Those with higher levels of spirituality cope better in life and makes better choices (Section 3.3.1).
- Spiritual activities like prayer, going to church, reading your Bible etc. assist the process of spiritual formation/development (Section 3.3.1).
- Religious practice has a positive impact on young people and it is said to lead to overall well-being, service, resilience, coping and positive forming of identity (3.3.1).
- Parents/mentors or pastors/youth leaders play a huge role and can contribute a lot to the spiritual development of adolescents (Section 3.3.2, section 3.3.3 and section 3.3.4) They have a great influence on adolescents and for that very reason parents and church leaders should set the example (Section 3.3.5).

6.6 Empirical research

6.6.1 Research question and method

The question asked in this chapter is: What is the outcome of an empirical study done on the spiritual lives and needs of the adolescents of Little Falls Christian Centre with regards to spiritual development? With regards to the method: In the **descriptive empirical task** Osmer explains two research methods namely: quantitative and qualitative research. He also talks about the “mixed method” which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research (Osmer, 2008:50) (Section 1.7).

6.6.2 Findings from the empirical research

The majority of the individuals that participated were from the quantitative research. The results from the qualitative study (Little Falls Christian Centre) were more positive. The following results were different from the quantitative study:

- The responses to Bible reading and prayer were more positive. The response to reaching out to the poor was also more positive. The qualitative response to group discussion was the total opposite because they discussed what was preached on a weekly basis. Almost everyone in the qualitative study was being challenged at their youth group in their relationship with God (Section 4.8.2.1).
- The qualitative results pointed out that the minority had a good relationship with both parents. It was found that the majority grew up in a home where only one parent featured in their lives. Everyone at least had one parent who claimed to be a Christian (Sections 4.8.2.3 and 4.8.2.4).
- The majority said that they did not have a good relationship with all the leaders. They said that they wouldn't share their personal issues with them, the reason being that they did not know them (Section 4.8.2.4).

6.6.3 The overall findings from the empirical study (Section 4:11):

- Most adolescents read their Bibles relatively often to not so often. More in-depth study of the Word can be encouraged.
- Every adolescent interviewed prays every day, but for the majority the time spent in prayer is not much
- A reasonable amount of time is spent per week on other spiritual practices like listening to Gospel music, sermons/messages on CD or DVD, watching Christian programmes, reading Christian books and so forth.
- Most young people have taken part in an outreach, but more opportunity should be given.

- Group discussion is not taking place in the lives of the majority of young people on a weekly basis.
- Smoking and the use of alcohol had been done by the majority of adolescents at some time in their lives. A small minority has used drugs.
- A small minority has had sex at some time, once or some more than once.
- The number of friends who know the Lord averages from all of them to most of them.
- In general, both parents are said to know the Lord.
- Most adolescents have a good relationship with both parents. A significant number only have a good relationship with their mothers.
- A large number have a good relationship with their youth leader/leaders but they aren't open enough to talk about all their personal issues.

6.7 Pastoral guidance to adolescents and major role players in their lives

6.7.1 Research question and method

The following question is asked in chapter five of research: What type of pastoral guidance can be given to adolescents and to major role players in their lives to assist them in their spiritual development? With regards to the method: In the pragmatic task, means are given on how to address the problem. According to Osmer, in this phase of research there are practical models and "rules of art" given (2008:176) (Section 1.7).

6.7.2 Findings from the pastoral guidance given to adolescents and major role-players:

6.7.2.1 Guidance to adolescents (Section 5.2):

- First of all, believers should train their senses through constant study of the Word, prayer, meditation and worship. They should pursue God, from the longing that has been placed inside of them and be transformed through spiritual disciplines/practices. Young people should also spend time listening to Gospel music, sermons, reading books etc. and they

should seek the fellowship of Christian friends. Adolescents should join a church and attend Sunday and youth services. During the week they should join a cell/ small group if possible.

- Teenagers should be up to date with what is going on around them in the world. They should always ask the Lord to help them discern between good and evil and to stay away from that which could harm them. Adolescents need to know the Word and stand their ground. They should share about what God has done in their lives and set an example.
- They should be careful what they say; they should rather build one another up in love. Different members have different gifts with which they should build up the body.
- Young people need to have a servant heart before the Lord like Samuel, of obedience and they should fear Him. They should also reach out to those in need.
- Adolescents should submit to the authority of parents and heed to their instruction and discipline. They should listen to the advice from pastors and youth leaders. The reason they give advice is because they care and have the responsibility to do so.

6.7.2.2 Guidance to parents (Section 5.4):

- Parents should train their senses by spending sufficient time in reading the Word and in prayer. By doing this they will grow in passion and desire for the Lord and the things of God. They should teach and encourage their teenagers to do the same out of their love for God. Regular time spent in the Word and prayer together as a family is a must. Parents should encourage the attendance of church and youth group services and joining a cell group during the week. As a family they should talk about spiritual issues on all occasions.
- Adolescents face different challenges from what their parents did when they were their age and for that reason, parents need to be aware of the dangers and warn their teenagers. Parents need to keep on teaching them morals, going back to the Word as primary source. They should teach their children to trust truth above feelings.
- They should set the example in word and deed, because teenagers follow by example. Parents should strive to build and maintain good relationships with their teenagers and be careful what they say to them. They should rather build them up and make sure that they

feel loved and accepted at all times. If they made a mistake they should not be rejected. Parents also need to teach their teenagers on the inner qualities of Godliness and help them find identity in Christ.

- Parents need to have a servant heart before the Lord and encourage their children to do the same. They should teach them to fear God and respect others. Opportunities of reaching out to those in need should be created.
- Parents need to instruct and discipline their children, and be open to discussion about anything. They should ask the Lord to help them answer the questions their teenagers might have and give advice. Parents should also be more involved in the lives of their teenagers at church, by volunteering to help out during youth outreaches for example.

6.7.2.3 Guidance to church leaders (Section 5.6)

- Youth leaders should spend sufficient time in the Word and prayer and on other spiritual practices. They should encourage young people to make spiritual practices part of their personal lives. They should involve them in corporate prayer and worship and encourage their participation during services like reading together from the Word and allowing questions and answers afterwards. They need to encourage young people to worship freely and to join a home cell. Youth leaders also have the major responsibility to continually challenge young people in their faith and relationship with God.
- They need to be up to date with the challenges that the young people are facing today and discuss relevant topics with them on a regular basis like sex, wrong friends, substance abuse and so forth.
- They should set the example by portraying a Christ-like character at all times, because young people look up to youth leaders/pastors. Very often youth leaders are the only examples of Godly men and women.
- Youth leaders should constantly encourage adolescents in their walk with the Lord, build them up and help them find their identity in Christ. Very important, they should build relationships with adolescents.

- Youth leaders should serve the Lord with a humble heart and with respect and also respect others. They should teach adolescents to do the same, living a surrendered life to Christ. Young people should be involved in an outreach to the poor regularly.
- Youth leaders should seize the opportunity by making a difference in the lives of young people. Adolescents need to be disciplined, corrected and they need set boundaries. Youth leaders should equip parents and counsel both teenagers and their parents.

6.8 Final conclusion

In conclusion, it was said that the topic of spiritual development had not been dealt with in reality and need in the past (section 1.1). From this study information was gained from the Word of God, science, an empirical study done and practical guidance was given to adolescents and major role players in their lives to assist them in their spiritual development.

From the Word of God it is clear that adolescents need to grow to maturity in Christ Jesus. Spiritual development is an ongoing process and it involves the regular practice of spiritual disciplines, the right influence from friends, family and youth leaders and standing their ground as believers against the attacks of the enemy. Scientific evidence made it clear that adolescents have a need for spiritual development and that spiritual issues are of great importance to them. It also pointed out the significant challenges that the twenty-first century adolescent has to face. The results from the empirical study done showed that there are specific areas which contribute to the healthy spiritual development of adolescents that needs attention.

From the advice given to parents and youth leaders in particular it was clear that they had the main responsibility to assist adolescents in their spiritual development and that they had to set an example by looking after their spiritual health. What parents and youth leaders did not receive from the Lord they can't give to others. Advice was given in chapter five to help them be

more effective in their approach to young people. Advice was also given to adolescents personally seeing that they have the responsibility to look after their own spiritual condition and relationship with God. This study is believed to contribute to the equipping of young people and major role players in their lives to ensure that adolescents reach maturity in Christ.

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