

**Assessment of the needs of the Young Adults Group in  
the Lutheran Church, Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg: A  
growth group solution**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation aims to explore the needs of the Young Adults Group in the Lutheran Church, Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg. Focus groups were conducted with young adults to establish their needs. During the three months of data collection, group dynamics were also observed, and at the focus groups, specific focus group dynamics were detected. The focus group interactions were recorded and transcribed. Using thematic analysis, the transcribed data was encoded using existing codes based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and analysed. Twelve themes of needs emerged from the data. These were: i) physiological needs; ii) safety needs; iii) the need for acceptance and love and the absence of judgement; iv) the need to be understood – by others and the church; v) the need to be valued and appreciated; vi) the need to have fun; vii) the need for nature; viii) the need to delay life's pace and prioritise; ix) the need to grow spiritually – as individuals and as church; x) the need for a spiritual outlet and expression of one's spirituality; xi) the need to be used by God for a specific purpose; xii) the need for assurance from God. Using these needs, a framework for a programme was developed. All the guidelines and exercises suggested in the programme aim to promote growth - spiritual, emotional, and personal - and focus on fulfilling the individual's potential within the group.

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My parents, who, without complaining, allowed me the financial freedom to study for another year, even though it was only to complete the rondavel next to my roofless house.

## **Dedication**

This research dissertation is dedicated to the love of my life, William Frost. Without his belief in my abilities and intelligence, I would have failed miserably at this task. Without his love and care I would fail miserably at life.

To God, for without Him, I would not be alive. This dissertation was not completed in my own strength, but only with the help of God. He is the one who has blessed me with the gifts I needed to complete this dissertation.

**Declaration**

I, Karen Monika Brunke hereby declare that this dissertation, unless specified otherwise in the text, is my original work. This work has not been submitted for any other purpose at any other university or institution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Monika Brunke

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

As supervisor, I agree to the submission of this dissertation for examination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Edwina Ward

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This research dissertation has been edited by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Editor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

It is apparent in most mainline churches that people, especially the youth, are leaving these churches. According to Mugambi (1994: 160 – 161), pastoral care is focused mainly on youth and not on young adults and students. Due to this lack of emphasis on students, congregations are struggling to keep students as members (Mugambi 1994: 160 – 161). In the researcher's previous research, it was found that mainline churches are not meeting the needs of young adults, and this is one of the reasons for many young adults moving to charismatic churches (Brunke 2005: 3). As a logical next step, the researcher has to ask the question: what, then, are the needs of the young adults that do still attend mainline churches, and how can these needs be addressed so as to keep them there? It seems as though a number of Lutheran churches completely neglect the young adults in their congregation, that is, if there are any at all. As the researcher herself falls into this category, she feels strongly about providing appropriate care for young adults in the Lutheran Church, and hopes that through this research she will be able to provide an example of a workable solution for other congregations who are struggling to keep young adults in their midst.

This research will involve the established Young Adults Group of the Lutheran Church in Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg. The group is diverse in composition, and often changing. This group of Christians meets once a week, and it is at these meetings that the data will be collected, using this group as a focus group for this purpose<sup>1</sup>. The data will be collected over a period of three - four months. The issues to be focused on in this group and the research, are the spiritual, physical, safety, belongingness, esteem and self-actualisation needs (Maslow, 1970, in Meyer, Moore and Viljoen 2003: 337) of the young adults in the group within the church context, i.e., the needs and expectations of Young Adults in the Lutheran Church, Hayfields.

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<sup>1</sup> The Focus Group Schedules as well as the Informed Consent Form can be found in the Appendix, pages 117 – 122 of this document.

Churches have the resources and responsibility to meet the needs of the community, and this can be in the form of growth groups (Clinebell 1977: 128 –129). In any group, the dynamics of the group are important to investigate and pay attention to, in order to effectively understand and work with it (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 69 –80). Focus groups have special interaction dynamics that need to be taken into account during the process of facilitation and analysis (Smithson 2000: 103, Hydèn & Bülow 2003: 305). The group dynamics will also therefore be observed in order to ensure accurate understanding of the needs and expectations of the group. The transcribed text<sup>2</sup> recorded at the meetings will be analysed using thematic analysis (Boyatzis 1998: 4). With the needs of the group clearly established, a programme will be developed that could be used in this specific group, to address these needs. The content of the programme will depend on the needs of the group and the observations of the researcher. This programme will follow a holistic, growth framework.

## **1.2 Purpose and research questions**

The purpose of this research is to determine the needs of the young adults in the Lutheran Church in Hayfields, and from this to develop a programme, based on growth and wholeness principles, that will address these needs.

The research will pose these questions related to the needs of youth:

- Why do young adults keep going to church?
- What can be done to keep them there?

In order to meet the aim of this research, the following key question will be asked:

- What are the needs of the young adults (spiritual, physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem and self-actualisation needs)?

(Clinebell 1980: 94)

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<sup>2</sup> A sample of the transcribed text can be found in the Appendix, pages 123 – 124 of this document.

Questions relating to the interactions within the group:

- What group dynamics are present in the group?
- How do these dynamics effect the identification of needs by the young adults?

The second broad aim is to develop a programme that addresses these needs (questions to be asked for every exercise in the programme):

- Does this exercise strive to fulfil the individual's potential (in the group)?
- Does this exercise strive to bring about growth and wholeness?

### **1.3 Method**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcribed data. Thematic analysis involves the encoding of data and the seeking out and development of themes that emerge (Boyatzis 1998: 4). Themes were deductively produced from theory, while still leaving room for themes emerging from the data through an inductive component. Six main themes were extracted from theory, labelled and described.

Thematic analysis can be viewed as a “process for encoding qualitative information” (Boyatzis 1998: 4). It involves the seeking out of themes that emerge as vital in understanding and describing the phenomenon being investigated (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman 1997 in Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 4). A theme can be seen as a pattern that occurs in the data. This pattern can be identified on two different levels: the manifest and the latent level (: 4). Information that is directly observable and results in the describing and organising of the data is viewed on the manifest level. Underlying information that leads to the interpretation of the phenomenon is viewed on the latent level. Themes can be generated deductively from theory or previous research; inductively from the raw data (: 4); or using a combination of the two (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 2). Due to the nature of this research, a combination of the inductive and deductive methods will be used. Thematic analysis was decided upon as a preferred method, as its

emphasis is on meaning and not the frequency of particular points of views (Millward 2000: 319).

In order to identify themes, the data needs to be studied carefully, and read through repeatedly (Rice & Ezzy 1999: 258 in Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 5). Before themes can be developed, the data must be encoded. This helps to organise the data and thus themes can be identified and developed (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 5). Coding happens when a significant moment is recognised and encoded, before interpretation. Boyatzis states, “A good thematic code captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon” (1998: 31).

Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006: 4 – 8) suggest a combined inductive/deductive method, which was used in this research. This method consists of six stages.

1. Developing the code manual
2. Testing the reliability of the code
3. Summarising data and identifying initial themes
4. Applying template of codes and additional coding
5. Connecting the codes and identifying themes
6. Corroborating and legitimating coded themes

The initial code manual was developed from a combination of theories of adults’ and young adults’ needs (Maslow 1954 in Papalia & Wedkos-Olds 1986, Clinebell 1982, 1997, Maynard 2001, Robinson 2004). A good code must consist of a label, a definition of the theme that is being encoded, as well as a description of the theme, in order to recognize it when it occurs (Boyatzis 1998: 31).

#### *Code 1*

Physiological needs.

Needs concerned with survival.

This concerns the need for food, water, sleep, oxygen and exercise (Maynard 2001: 16).

### *Code 2*

Safety needs.

Needs concerning feelings of security, safety and being out of danger.

This involves the acquisition of security, stability, protection, structure, law and order, limits, and freedom from fear (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2003: 339). Including feeling physically safe, as well as financially safe, in other words, having access to a steady income.

### *Code 3*

Belongingness and love needs.

The need to affiliate with others, be accepted and belong (Papalia & Wendkos Olds 1986: 387).

This entails the need to belong somewhere and with someone – a feeling of having a place in the world where one does not feel isolated, but accepted and where one can be oneself (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2003: 339). Being accepted implies the presence of a non-judgemental entity. Belongingness and love needs include the ability to receive and give love.

### *Code 4*

Self-esteem needs.

The need to achieve, be competent and gain approval and recognition.

Self-esteem needs refer to a sense of confidence in one's own abilities, as well as the need for others to recognise and appreciate one's competence (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2003: 339). This need is about accomplishment, evaluating oneself positively, as well as receiving positive feedback from others. The need for self-esteem is essentially a need for self-respect, and one of having your human dignity respected by others (Jordaan & Jordaan 1998: 582).

### *Code 5*

Self-actualisation needs.

The need for self-fulfilment and realising one's potential (Papalia & Wendkos Olds 1986: 387).

Self-actualisation means making full use of one's talents and abilities, and is about becoming all one is capable of being (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1003: 342). Self-actualisation is about striving to discover and realise one's full and true potential. This includes the pursuit for knowledge (growth of the mind), the appreciation of beauty, playfulness, fun, humour, creativity, insight into truth, self-sufficiency, meaningfulness and the ability to rise above circumstances, not just adapt to them (Papalia & Wendkos Olds 1988: 386 & 465). Self-actualisation needs are egocentric, and thus focus on the betterment of the individual.

#### *Code 6*

Spiritual or self-transcendent needs.

Needs that rise above the self.

Spiritual needs concern the highest and most all-encompassing stages of human awareness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than as means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to the environment (growth awareness of ecology and ecological care), and to the entire universe (Maslow 1971: 279). Spiritual needs refer to values that are promoted by religion, for example truth, goodness, compassion and completeness. Religion proposes a rise above an egocentric level to a level where humans work towards higher transcendent needs (Meadow & Kahoe 1984: 25). Spiritual needs include improving our relationship with God, enhancing our faith and value systems and making meaning of our lives through God, so as to give us earthly purpose (Clinebell 1982: 37).

Stage two of the thematic analysis method involves the testing of the reliability of the code (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 5). This step is included so as to ensure that the code is applicable to the raw data. By reading through the transcripts of the focus groups and testing the code on a few sections, it is clear that the code developed from theory, consisting of 6 codes, is suitable to be used in analysis of this data.

The next stage involves the summarising of the main points of the focus group (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 5). By reading through the raw data several times, it is possible for the researcher to summarise the main points raised in the focus group. Through this process, additional themes as well as themes that already exist in the initial code can be identified consciously by the researcher (: 6). This process of summarising of both phases of the focus groups will be dealt with in Chapters 3 and 4.

Following this, the template of codes will be applied to the transcripts (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 6 – 7). As the codes for this research encompass all the different types of human needs, new codes and themes that are separate from the initial codes will not be created as such, as there are no other existing human needs than those presented in the codes. Modifications or additions will, however, be made to the initial codes so as to accurately reflect the themes present in the raw data.

As the current research only consists of one type of raw data (namely the focus group), the last two stages of thematic analysis will not be relevant in this case. The last two stages involve the identifying of common themes across different sets of data. The information needed to complete this research is merely the identification of the specific needs of young adults in the Lutheran Church in Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg. These themes will be used to develop a programme that will address these very needs.

#### **1.4 Limitations**

This research was conducted in the most specific of contexts. The Young Adults Group is made up of a composition of people that is unique to it. Thus, the findings as well as the recommendations in the programme cannot be transferred to other contexts. The nature of the data analysis and the theoretical framework used to develop the themes is very subjective, and thus the findings and the resultant programme is determined by the theoretical framework, and to some extent, personal opinion of the researcher. Moreover, the analysis was completed by only one individual, the researcher, and thus there is no

way of verifying whether the findings are, indeed reliable. Another limitation is encountered in that the researcher is not only fulfilling the role of the facilitator, the observer, and is a part of the young adults age group, but additionally, the researcher is a member of the Young Adults Group with which the research was conducted. This draws into question the objectivity of the study. The method of thematic analysis inherently assumes that people are willing to express themselves, and are always honest about what they are feeling and thinking. Despite efforts by the researcher to control the effect of the focus group dynamics, and to take them into account during analysis, these still have an unknown effect on the results. Additionally, once the programme to address the needs of young adults has been designed, it will not have been tested, and thus it will be unclear whether the programme is effective or not.

## **1.5 Terminology**

*Young adulthood* is defined by chronological age, and includes persons between the ages of 18 to 35.

*Group dynamics* can be defined as “a field of inquiry dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their development, and their interrelations with individuals, other groups, and larger institutions” (Cartwright & Zander 1968: 7).

*Focus group* is a relatively structured interview that involves a small group of participants, moderated by a facilitator<sup>3</sup> and focused on a specific topic (Wilkinson 2004: 177).

*Focus group dynamics* are group dynamics that are specific to focus groups (Smithson 2000: 103, Hydèn & Bülow 2003: 305).

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<sup>3</sup> The “facilitator” and the “researcher” are one and the same person, and it is assumed that the reader is aware of this fact.



*Growth* is a movement towards a more complete, whole state. Growth happens in all areas of life (Hurding 1998: 11 – 12).

*Wholeness* is a state of completeness and well-being, and people strive to attain it, through growth (Hurding 1998: 11 – 12).

*Pastoral care* is a broad area and refers to "the church's overall ministries of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling people to God and to one another" (Collins 1988: 16). Pastoral care can be classified as a "supportive ministry" (Hulme 1981: 9).

*Pastoral counselling* is a more specialised area and involves "helping individuals, families or groups as they cope with the pressures and crises of life" (Collins 1988: 16). It employs a variety of methods that affirm biblical teachings and helps to achieve healing, learning and personal-spiritual growth (1988: 17).

## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Young adulthood is a challenging and exciting time in one's life. In order to understand this life stage, the researcher will address definitions, contexts within which young adults live, as well as the needs of young adults. Data was collected using a focus group of young adults. In any group there are dynamics that govern the interactions within it. Focus groups, in addition to normal group dynamics, include specific focus group dynamics. After the needs of the Young Adults Group have been established, a programme will be developed that will address these needs. This programme will follow a growth and wholeness framework, and these concepts will be described below.

### **2.2 Young adulthood**

#### *2.2.1 The elusiveness of young adulthood*

The definition of young adulthood is one that is often contested (Maynard 2001: 9 - 13, Parks 1991: 1 - 8, Atkinson 1995: 3). No single defining criterion exists, as the beginning of adulthood is demarcated by a number of different factors, such as age, legal responsibilities (such as being allowed to vote, or drive), or socio-cultural factors (such as marriage, or parenthood). Furthermore, some of these factors are sometimes in conflict with each other, thus complicating the definition of young adulthood even more. Parks, however, offers a workable solution, namely defining adulthood as a "way of making meaning" (: 6). Young adulthood is thus the beginning of this endeavour of making meaning. For the sake of this research, however, young adulthood is defined by chronological age, and includes persons between the ages of 18 to 35.

### *2.2.2 The context in which young adults live*

We do not live in isolation, and our context influences our behaviour, experiences and shapes our personalities (Steele 1995: 94 - 96). The context with which we interact include biological, family, social and historical/cultural issues/factors. At different ages in our lives, these factors impact on us in varying strength and importance. Yet, in young adulthood, all these factors seem to converge, and are seen as equally important, as the individual seeks to construct a life of his or her own (attempts to make meaning).

Biological issues (innate physical abilities) influence young adults' decisions regarding lifestyle and career. The way in which young adults have been parented has a profound effect on their general development. It will affect the way in which they deal with conflict, intimacy, partner selection and the young adults' resultant parenting structures. The "economic class, level of education, occupation, religion and the young adults' circle of friends and acquaintances" have a profound impact on their development (Steele 1995: 95). As we are dealing with young adults in the church, religious factors play an important role. These young adults will be concerned with whether or not their life decisions are congruent with the will of God, as they believe it to be.

In mainline churches it is apparent that people, especially the youth, are leaving these churches. According to Mugambi (1994: 160 – 161), pastoral care is focused mainly on youth and not on young adults and students. Due to this lack of emphasis on young adults, congregations are struggling to keep this age group of people as members. In previous research, it was found that mainline churches are not meeting the needs of young adults, and this is one of the reasons for many young adults moving to charismatic churches (Brunke 2005: 3).

Society is moving at a very fast pace, and the current social and cultural context for youth and young adults is very different to that experienced by their parents (Bainbridge, 2004: 125). There are many bad influences and an onslaught of temptations facing young people today (Ngara 2004: 28).

Young adults are constantly bombarded with images in the media of how they should be: what clothes they should wear, how much they should weigh, which cars they should drive etc. (Maynard 2001: 14 - 15). The message that is being sent out to young adults is that it is not acceptable to just be an ordinary person. Even sex is considered by the world as a sport, and this puts young adults in the church under a lot of pressure. Sex has always been seen by the church as something that is confined to marriage (Schmid 2005: 2), and thus young adults in the church are caught in conflict between the church's teachings and society's. This change in society's view of sex is due to the breakdown of institutions such as marriage and family, and also the change in attitude about the sanctity of marriage (Robinson 2004: 4). Due to globalisation and mobility, there has been an increasing awareness of religious and cultural diversity, which has extended the scope of information that youth and young adults are bombarded with daily. This is magnified by technological advances such as the Internet. From a young age, we are subjected to peer pressure, influenced by the values of a few select people that are portrayed in the media, and surrounded by materialism and a consumer culture (Maynard 2001: 14).

Our society has become obsessed with consumerism: "You are what you buy" (Bainbridge, 2004: 125 - 126). Acquiring the latest trends in fashion, technology etc. has become the measure by which happiness, status and worthiness is attained. Even Christianity and spirituality in general are often approached with these consumerist attitudes, resulting in youths and young adults "moving from one to the other [spiritualities] fairly easily and constructing their identities from whatever takes their fancy" (:126). Our society has also become increasingly individualist, subscribing to a "survival of the fittest" framework (Maynard 2001: 14 - 15). A sense of community, even in the church, is not often established, even though it is needed. In this rapidly changing society, young adults are also struggling with the pressure to find security - in relationships, their futures and financially.

The university environment also poses its own challenges for young adults (Robinson 2004: 103 - 106). Especially when students have moved to a city away from home, this can prove to be a stressful adjustment. University life is often very different from the life

at home, and some might have to develop skills to manage a life on their own. University work is often also very different to the work at school, and students frequently struggle to make the shift. A heavy workload and examinations could also lead to anxiety and stress. As a non-working student, another (sometimes) prominent point of concern is the lack of adequate finances.

The young adults that were involved in this research were mostly students, and many of them have come from other cities to study in Pietermaritzburg. Some are married, some have partners, and others are single. Yet, all of them fall between the ages of 18 – 35. Thus, the context that has been discussed here applies to all the young adults that were involved in this research.

### *2.2.3 Different understandings of young adulthood*

Young adulthood can be viewed from a number of different perspectives. Developmental psychologists have put forward theories of psychosocial, lifespan, cognitive, social psychological and affective development in young adulthood. Apart from psychological understandings of young adulthood, we also encounter sociological understandings. Furthermore, young adults can also be understood from a religious perspective (Elias 1995: 9 - 19).

Erik Erikson (1980, in Steele 1995: 96 - 99) describes human development mainly as the resolution of particular psychosocial crises. In young adulthood, there are two of these crises, namely the continuation (of the task of adolescence) of identity formation, as well as the development of intimate relationships with one or more persons. According to Erikson (1963 in Newman & Newman 1991: 494 - 498), the main psychosocial crisis in young adulthood is “intimacy versus isolation” (: 494). This involves being able to establish intimate, supportive relationships with others without losing one’s own identity.

Cognitive developmentalists (such as Piaget<sup>4</sup> and Fowler<sup>5</sup>) view young adulthood as "efforts to develop meaning systems and cognitive processes which stress autonomy or independence, individual choice, personal reflection, critical thinking and decision-making" (Elias 1995: 10). Some theorists, such as Kimmel and Havinghurst, view development in young adulthood as the handling of certain developmental tasks within specific social contexts (: 11). These social contexts are occupation, family and community (: 11). Less attention has been paid to the affective development of young adults. Yet the development of feelings, attitudes and values in young adulthood are crucial when seeking an understanding of this stage of life.

The Christian tradition also offers an understanding of young adulthood (Elias 1995: 12). In the Bible we find the concept of maturity - this has a direct bearing on understanding young adulthood from a Christian perspective. Christian maturity is about the achievement of stability, and adherence. This maturity is achieved within a community of Christians, as the ultimate goal is to build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). Christian maturity is also portrayed as a process, and thus, the achievement of stability needs to be accompanied by risk taking, and attempting new and unknown things. Young adults are also seen as students of the "true meaning of life" (: 14). Young adults have a desire to learn about the spiritual life, as many, in the midst of this tumultuous time, and realise that their lives will not be satisfying, unless they learn the true meaning of life.

It is clear that there are many understandings of young adulthood and many perspectives from which to view their development. As the elusiveness of its definition has already suggested, young adulthood is complex in all aspects. As has previously been indicated, Parks (1991: 6) defines young adulthood as the beginning of a process of making meaning. She further suggests that making meaning is associated with faith; indeed, making meaning is an activity of faith<sup>6</sup>. Faith is the "activity of seeking, composing, and being composed by a meaning both ultimate and intimate" (: 42). Thus faith involves all

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<sup>4</sup> Piaget, also known as one of the grandfathers of developmental psychology, studied the development of intellectual awareness in childhood.

<sup>5</sup> Fowler (1981) developed six stages of faith development.

<sup>6</sup> See Parks (1991: Chapter 3).

activities of making meaning: including those developmental processes identified as psychosocial, cognitive, psychological, social and affective. Parks notes that the activity of making meaning cannot simply be reduced to these psychological processes, but that recognising and understanding these processes leads to a greater understanding of faith.

James Fowler was the first to investigate the relationship between developmental psychologies and faith. He developed six stages of faith development. These stages are not concerned with specific beliefs, but focus on the structures and processes of faith. The stages are ordered according to age, but Fowler (1997: 169) notes that because faith development involves all dimensions of human development, chronological or biological adulthood can be reached while still remaining in the faith developmental stages of childhood.

Fowler (1996 in Robinson 2004: 107 - 108) regards young adulthood as the stage of “Individuative-reflective faith”, and in this stage,

...faith meaning is more personally chosen and believed. There is an awareness that one’s view is different from others, and can be expressed in abstract terms. The faith developed at this stage is for the sake of the person and of making sense of his or her life in family or community.

Two tasks need to be achieved in this stage, either sequentially or in parallel. The first of which involves the critical evaluation of one’s previous belief system, in other words the stories and symbols that have determined your selfhood, and therefore your roles in relationships are now questioned. Secondly, a new identity needs to be forged independently of the previous identity that was informed by previous roles, relationships and belief systems. In this stage people explore different perspectives of interpreting reality and this often leads to narcissism and over-confidence in their criticality and could lead to the individual “over-assimilating” these multiple perspectives (Fowler 1997: 173-174).

The next stage of faith development is termed “conjunctive faith” (: 174). In this stage, the individual must come to terms with the fact that previously accepted belief systems were built partly on illusions, and decisions to accept these beliefs were made with incomplete self-knowledge. This stage involves “making peace with the tension arising from the realization that truth must be approached from a number of different directions and angles of vision” (: 174). This calls for an acceptance of paradoxes and “grey areas” in religion.

Parks, drawing on both Fowler and Perry (1968), develops her own model of faith development in young adulthood<sup>7</sup>. Most models of faith development tend to reach the same general conclusions about this development in young adulthood. The faith journey suggested is one of moving from an assumed knowledge of faith in adolescence through to a critically aware faith. Between these two stages there is some sort of transition - a "wilderness" (Parks 1991: 73).

#### *2.2.4 The needs of young adults*

According to Jordaan & Jordaan (1998: 580), all humans have needs, and these range from physical to intense emotional needs. Young adulthood encompasses many major changes and transitions (Newman & Newman 1991: 462), and therefore involves many unique needs: spiritual as well as others. Religion can meet these needs (Meadow & Kahoe 1984: 18 - 19).

In the area of general needs, Abraham Maslow (1954 in Papalia & Wendkos-Olds 1986) developed a "hierarchy of needs". These needs are ranked from lowest to highest: "physiological needs, safety needs, affiliation and love needs, self-esteem needs, self-actualisation needs" (Maslow, 1970, in Meyer, Moore and Viljoen 2003: 337) and later Maslow suggested "self-transcendent needs" (in Meadow and Kahoe 1984: 24).

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<sup>7</sup> See Parks (1991: Chapter 4 and 5).



Physiological needs are those needs that are concerned with survival and include things such as the need for food, water, oxygen and sleep. Safety needs revolve around the acquisition of “security, stability, protection, structure, law and order, limits, and freedom from fear” (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2003: 339). The need for affiliation and love can be described as a need to “belong somewhere and to belong with someone; to receive and give love” (: 339). In today’s modern world, much loneliness and isolation is experienced. Groups and societies with similar interests and needs form in order to meet this need of love and affiliation, and to experience a sense of belonging. Self-esteem needs refer to a sense of confidence in one’s own abilities, as well as the need for others to recognise and appreciate one’s competence. The need for self-esteem is essentially a need for self-respect.

Self-actualisation can be described as the need for self-fulfilment, and the realisation of one’s potential. Self-actualisation means making full use of one’s talents and abilities, and is about becoming all one is capable of being. It is achieved through the “quest for knowledge, valuing beauty, playfulness, self-sufficiency, insight into truth, and other growth-producing values” (Papalia & Wendkos Olds 1988: 386). Self-transcendent needs, or metaneeds involve needs that rise above the self (Meadow & Kahoe 1984: 24 - 25). Maslow asserts,

Transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than as means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos (1971: 279).

Metaneeds refer to values that are promoted by religion, for example truth, goodness, compassion and completeness. Religion suggests a rise above an egocentric level to a level where humans work towards higher transcendent needs (Meadow & Kahoe 1984: 25).

Clinebell (1982: 19 - 37) speaks of six dimensions in which growth can occur. In order to grow as human beings, it is necessary for certain needs to be fulfilled. Thus these

dimensions can also be seen as areas of life in which needs are present and should be fulfilled to facilitate growth. Growth can occur in the mind, body, in our relationships with other people, with the biosphere, in relation to organisations and institutions and in the spiritual realm (: 19).

Needs relating to the mind involve the development of our intellectual abilities and the many resources present in our many-sided personalities. Needs relating to the body involve looking after one's body, being aware of it, and enjoying it. In relationships, there is a need to grow in intimacy, openness and depth, by strengthening our intimate relationships. There is a need for us to improve our relationship with the biosphere, so as to grow in our ecological care and awareness. In relation to organisations and institutions, we need to "enhance our relation with and help to improve those organisations and institutions that can sustain our growth" (: 32) (for example, the church.). Growth in the spiritual realm is the central dimension, as it unites all the other dimensions. Spiritual needs include improving our relationship with God, enhancing our faith and value systems as well as making meaning of our lives so as to give us purpose. All things that are central to the spiritual realm have a profound effect on all other areas of life/growth<sup>8</sup>.

Later Clinebell suggested seven areas of well being (or areas of growth), namely: spiritual, mental, physical, relationship, work, play and the environment (world) (1997: 25 – 27). The spiritual dimension is at the heart of all well being. Well being at work involves satisfying the need for a sense of purpose, sense of self and achievement, while well being in play refers to making time for play and fun, as well as learning to laugh at ourselves (: 26).

Robinson (2004: 110 - 112, 136) notes that students, at some time or other, wrestle with the construction of meaning and purpose in their lives. Often this is encountered in a faith crisis (in the transition phase between adolescent faith and critical awareness faith of adulthood), or occasionally when one is engaging in postgraduate studies. Making

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<sup>8</sup> In support of Parks who notes that making meaning is an activity of faith, and thus faith encompasses all developmental processes.

meaning of one's life, and finding a purpose is thus an important need and task in young adulthood.

Erikson (1950, in Joy 1995: 150) found that, during the transition to adulthood, young adults go through a search for meaning, uniqueness and significance. Joy (1995: 141) notes that, in young adulthood, the yearning for significance and meaning in life reaches its peak. He notes that young adults have a need for "spiritual wellness, inner wholeness" and a need to be "reconciled with the moral centre of the universe, God" (: 141). Young adults are often questioning, and do not readily accept what they are told. As their faith becomes more critically aware, young adults have the need to discuss tough and even taboo questions about faith, religion and the world.

Maynard (2001: 16 - 21) discusses the primary needs of young adults. Firstly, physical needs are those needs concerned with the need to sleep, eat, drink, exercise and breathe air. Young adults are at their peak physically, and thus sometimes neglect their health by eating badly, using drugs and alcohol, and not sleeping enough. Young adults have a need for physical and emotional security, which includes a feeling of acceptance. In the Christian context, this involves the assurance that Christ's acceptance is eternal. Experiencing this unconditional acceptance fulfils a need for security.

Young adults also have a need for affection. The need for affection is an emotional need, and young adults, both married and single, greatly value friendships, as these fulfil their need for affection. Young adults need to feel appreciated and significant. This is especially important as young adults are establishing themselves in their careers, as parents, and as spouses. Joy (1995: 147) notes that young adults have a need, and are "profoundly vulnerable" for social approval. Linked with this, is another primary need of young adults, namely the need to accomplish something (Maynard 2001: 20). Lastly, young adults have the need to be creative. This need can be met by experiencing novelties, such as a new job, establishing new relationships, or taking risks (for example bungee jumping) and being adventurous (: 20). The need for creativity can also be met through art, drama, music, or any other expression of a young adult's talents.

## **2.3 Focus groups**

A focus group is a small group of participants, moderated by a facilitator and focused on a specific topic, and makes use of relatively structured interviews. A focus group is a research tool and generates qualitative data (Millward 2000: 304). Focus groups have specific dynamics that need to be taken into account (Hydèn & Bülow 2003: 311 – 320, Smithson 2000: 107 – 115). Many of these dynamics can be controlled through facilitation or by taking them into account during analysis, as the researcher will demonstrate.

Focus groups were originally used in social science settings, but mainly became associated with market research (Morgan 1998: 37). It is only recently that focus groups have become popular and respected in many academic and non-academic fields (Macnaghten & Myers: 2004: 65).

A focus group is a group of people that, in discussion, are focused on a particular topic (Wilkinson 2004: 177). In this research, the topic focused on was the needs of young adults. The participants of the focus group displayed certain common characteristics that were linked with the theme of the focus group (Krueger 1994: 6). All members of the focus group used in this research fall into the age group of young adulthood, and all attend the Young Adults Group at the Lutheran Church in Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg.

Thus a focus group is a carefully planned dialogue that is used to gain insights into a specific theme, in an environment that is non-threatening. It is different from any other group, in that its primary purpose is to gather data for use in research (Hydèn & Bülow 2003: 305 - 306). One of the core elements of a focus group is the presence of a moderator or leader that guides the group with prepared questions and/or exercises (Puchta & Potter 2004: 6). The amount of people involved in a focus group varies. According to Stewart & Shamdasani (1998: 505), focus groups should consist of between 8 and 12 members. The research focus group used consisted of 13 members altogether, although only 11 members were present at each phase of the focus group.

A focus group is a qualitative research method (Morgan 1998: 11). Qualitative research methods are valuable for exploring and understanding themes and groups of people about which not much is known (: 12). Hence the use of a focus group for this research is justified, as the specific needs of young adults within the South African Lutheran Church have not yet been explored. Through the group discussions, participants share and compare with each other, and thus themes are explored and interpreted in the context in which they happen. All interactions in the group, as well as the interpretation of results, are only meaningful if they are understood within the context in which they happened (Millward 2000: 306).

The main aim of a focus group is to get closer to the participant's understandings of and perspectives on certain issues (: 305). Thus a focus group is a place where participants can express their opinions, beliefs, values, understandings and attitudes, "as valid in their own right" (: 305). Focus groups are less time-consuming than interviews and the interactions between the members can create rich and diverse responses (Stewart & Shamdasani 1998: 508 - 509).

Focus groups offer two sets of data (Millward 2000: 306 – 307). The first of which are the interactions within the group (thus the focus group dynamics), and secondly, the content that is generated through group discussions and interactions. Focus group dynamics are often ignored, so as to concentrate on the content. These dynamics are, however, important to consider, as they can affect the way in which people interact with each other, and the content of what people say.

## **2.4 Group dynamics**

The term “group dynamics” was originally coined by Lewin (1943, in Forsyth 1990: 13). Group dynamics can be defined as “a field of inquiry dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their development, and their interrelations with individuals, other groups, and larger institutions” (Cartwright & Zander 1968: 7). In any group, certain dynamics (positive and negative) exist that the researcher needs to be aware of at all times (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 69 - 70). In any group, be it task or treatment groups, it is important to investigate and pay attention to these dynamics, in order to effectively understand and work with groups. These include “communication and interaction patterns; cohesion; social control mechanisms, that is norms, roles and status; and group culture” (: 70).

### *2.4.1 Communication and interaction patterns*

The patterns of interpersonal relations in small groups are known as the group's structure (Rosenfeld 1973: 163). A small group is made up of individuals and their interactions (Palazzolo 1981: 64 - 65). Social interactions (communication and interaction patterns) are part of the group's structure and include verbal as well as non-verbal communication.

Communication is a process whereby people convey meanings to each other, using verbal and non-verbal communication (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 70 - 71). This process involves the encoding of a message by the sender into verbal and non-verbal symbols, the transmission of this message, and the decoding of this message by the receiver. In all steps of the communication process, interference could lead to distorted messages being sent and received, and thus creating miscommunication and often conflict. Messages are not only transmitted to convey a message, but also for a number of other reasons, amongst others: gaining power, persuading or provoking others, or gaining favour with others. Silence is also a way of communicating a message. In the focus group conducted during this research, it was found that most members transmitted messages for the

purpose of communication, and not for any other reason. In Phase two, however, it became clear that one member was transmitting messages in order to gain power and to provoke others. This was detected through the member's contradictory or inappropriate comments.

The receivers of the message can sometimes distort messages by selective perception (: 72). This means that, due to factors such as stereotypes, values, previous experience, assumptions etc of the receiver, the message is understood differently to its intended meaning. During the transmission of a message, distortion can also take place. Members from different cultures or language backgrounds could easily be misunderstood. Noise, or hearing impairments can also complicate the effective communication process. In order to avoid some of the distortions in the communication process, feedback and clarification can be used. This involves checking with the sender and the receiver that the meaning of the message has been correctly understood. For example, at many times during the focus group, members as well as the facilitator questioned the relevant members in order to ensure that the message had been understood correctly, and thus avoided distortion and the possibility of resultant conflict.

Communication networks are the "arrangement of lines of communication which are open between and among members of the group" (Rosenfeld 1973: 133). Different types of communication networks exist: free networks in which communication is open amongst all members, to restricted networks, in which members do not openly communicate with each other (: 149). Communication networks can also differ in tightness (this refers to the flexibility of the communication network) as well as in effectiveness (Rosenfeld 1973: 8). Toseland & Rivas (2001: 74) name a number of interaction patterns and state that, in small groups, interaction patterns should be group-centred. In a group-centred interaction pattern, open communication exists between the members and they communicate freely with each other.

The focus group used in this research displayed mostly a group-centred interaction pattern, as members felt free to communicate with each other, and did not focus their

interactions on the facilitator, but directed them at each other. The focus group in question did also, however, display an interaction pattern that was not as open as it may have been expected. This became clear when members admitted that they did not fully trust other members in the group. Interaction patterns are influenced by “cues and reinforcers, emotional bonds (or attraction networks), subgroups, size and physical arrangements and power and status relationships in the group” (: 74 – 78).

Cues and reinforcers, verbal or non-verbal, help to modify interaction patterns in the group. Cutting off loud members in the group, or drawing out quiet members is an example of this. An attraction network concerns who likes who, and the formation of cliques and subgroups (Rosenfeld 1973: 163). Negative or positive emotional bonds between group members can either increase or decrease interpersonal interactions and group solidarity (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 75).

Subgroups form from emotional bonds present among group members. In small groups, we often find patterns of interaction, which consist of either two, three or more party relations. A dyad is a pattern in a small group, where two people are in a partnership. A triad is a three-person partnership (Palazzolo 1981: 69 - 76). A clique is a subgroup that has more than three members (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 75). In small groups, we sometimes encounter isolates (members that do not interact with the group), or scapegoats (members that receive criticism and negative attention from the group). For example, in the second phase of the focus group, one member seemed to receive much negative attention from others in the group, such as members laughing at his or her comments, or the member in question being teased by others in the group.

Subgroups are not a threat to the group process, unless the subgroup becomes more important to its members than the group as a whole. When this is the case, members of the subgroup often fail to listen to those who do not belong to the subgroup, and subgroup members may also challenge the authority of the group facilitator (: 76). In the focus group used in this research, the subgroups present in the Young Adults Group rarely became a problem, and did not threaten the group process. When members of a subgroup



seemed to become distracted from the group's purpose, the facilitator addressed the situation immediately, with success.

The size of the group and its physical arrangement also influences the interaction patterns of the small group. As the number of members in the small group increases, so does the amount of possible relationships between them. Arranging the small group in a circle improves communication as opposed to arranging members in rows (: 76 – 77). This arrangement was used in the focus group for this research, and thus improved the communication amongst the members.

In a small group, communication between members is also influenced by the power and status of members. Power and status is based on the standing of members in the community, their physical qualities, and their position in the organisation (in the case of this research, their position in the church). Power and status does, however, change throughout the life of the group. Members who help the group or members by fulfilling a role that is important to its aims, increase in power and status. Communication is often directed at those members that have high power and status in the group. For example, it was suspected that the superior theological knowledge of some members could influence their power and status within the group. It was found, however, that most members seemed to enjoy an equal amount of power and status. Only in the second phase of the focus group was one member found to be of a lower status, and thus also enjoyed less power than the others.

Interaction within a small group usually follows a certain pattern, which is influenced by the dominance and submission, superiority and inferiority of its members (: 41). According to Rosenfeld (1973: 163), in small groups, communication networks and hierarchies are established due to factors other than the personalities of the members; factors such as dominance and submission. Contrary to this stance, in this research it was found that, due to the relatively equal power and status of members within the focus group, the personalities of the members were the most likely variable that influenced the interaction patterns.

### *2.4.2 Cohesion*

Group cohesion refers to the "degree of intensity with which group members are bonded together and motivated to work as a unit towards the achievement of goals" (Palazzolo 1981: 256). Group cohesiveness can also be defined as the strength of relationships between members and to the group (Forsyth 1990: 10 - 11). Successful groups tend to display high degrees of cohesiveness (Cragan & Wright 1980: 60 - 61). Cohesiveness can be seen as a measure of how successfully interaction and communication are managed in the group, as well as the distribution of roles, norms and the handling of conflict.

Cohesiveness can be understood on both an individual as well as a group level. Cohesiveness on an individual level involves each member's attraction to the other members in the group. Attraction comes in the forms of liking, respecting, and trusting others in the group. For example, in the focus group used for this research, it was found that most members respected each other and even liked each other. However, members clearly expressed that they did not trust everyone in the group. Thus, the degree of cohesion of the focus group was less than expected.

On a group level, cohesiveness refers to the feeling of togetherness and unity felt by the members of the group (Forsyth 1990: 11). Despite the fact that the research focus group made use of an existing group, the degree of unity and togetherness of the group was not very high. Members clearly expressed that they did not feel that the group was a unit, and one member admitted the he or she did not feel part of the group.

High cohesiveness in a small group leads to many positive outcomes such as the expression of feelings (both positive and negative), willingness of members to listen to each other, an increase in members' self-esteem and confidence, and the successful use of other members' feedback and evaluations (Yalom 1995: Chapter 3). Cohesiveness can, however, also have negative outcomes (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 80 – 81). "Groupthink" is one of the negative outcomes, and refers to members of the group considering unanimity as more important than their possibly differing individual opinions (: 80).

Group members need to be encouraged to express and respect differing opinions within the group. The research focus group, despite not displaying elevated levels of cohesion, worked well together to achieve the purpose of the focus group, which was to gather data. All members seemed to consider their individual opinions as more important than the unanimity of the group, as all members were willing to share their opinions, even if it conflicted with what others were saying.

#### *2.4.3 Social control mechanisms*

In every small group certain social control mechanisms need to be in place to facilitate and ensure its functioning (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 82 – 85). Without social control mechanisms, groups can be disorderly and chaotic. However, social control mechanisms cannot be too rigorous, as this can lead to dissatisfaction and conflict amongst group members. Thus, a balance is needed. Social control mechanisms are norms, roles and status.

Collective beliefs about suitable ways of how members should operate in a small group, are known as norms. Norms can be overt or covert. Overt norms are open, and are guiding principles for operations in the group that are openly discussed by the leader or the members. Covert norms are hidden, and thus never discussed, yet are important in influencing the interactions and behaviours of group members. Group members feel obliged to comply with group norms; failure to do so can result in negative consequences (Forsyth 1990: 162 - 163). At the outset, norms were presented to members of the research focus group, and these were agreed to by all. These are considered overt norms. For example, respect each other, listen to each other and participate. Covert norms were also present in the research focus group, such as the unspoken rule that the facilitator is in charge. This norm was adhered to without it ever being verbalised.

Norms can greatly influence interactions within the group. Not conforming to norms in the group can lead to conflict, and sometimes even alienation of the non-conforming member(s) from the rest of the small group. Toseland & Rivas (2001: 83) note that

deviations from the set norms are, however, not always a bad thing. Especially covert norms sometimes need to be challenged so as to bring about a change in dysfunctional or unethical norms.

Roles refer to the collective beliefs of group members about the functions and roles of individuals within the group (Palazzolo 1981: 28 – 29). Many different roles can exist in a small group. This depends on the nature of the group, as well as the members that comprise it. Roles in small groups can be divided into two main areas, namely task roles and socioemotional roles (Forsyth 1990: 112 –113). Task roles include roles such as the initiator/contributor, the information seeker/giver, the opinion seeker/giver and the critic. Socioemotional roles include the encourager, the harmoniser, the observer, the compromiser and the follower. Roles are not static, and roles emerge and evolve over time (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 84). As the research focus group is considered a task group, the roles that emerged were mostly task roles. Mainly members filled the roles of contributor and information giver, while the facilitator mostly filled the role of information seeker.

Status refers to the collective evaluation and ranking of the position of a member as compared to other members of the group (Rosenfeld 1973: 20). Status can be determined by external factors such as a members' position outside the group (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 84 – 85). However, status is largely dependent on the situation within the group at a given time, and also depends on the composition of the group. Conformity (and non-conformity) can be directly related to the status level of the members. For example, low-status members are more likely to deviate from the norms as they have nothing to lose by doing so, while medium-status members are likely to conform, so as to retain their status, or gain a higher status. As was mentioned previously, most members in the research focus group were seen as enjoying an equal status, and thus there was no need to conform with others to raise the status. However, in the second phase of the focus group, one member was considered to be of a lower status. Even though he or she did not violate any norms, it was clear that this member freely contradicted other members as he or she had nothing to lose as a low status member.

Social control mechanisms help regulate and stabilise the workings in the group, and thus help them to operate smoothly and effectively. Too stringent controls, however, lead to a lack of individuality, freedom and independence of group members. It is therefore important to be aware of the social control mechanisms and to balance them so as to encourage effective operations in the small group.

#### *2.4.4 Group culture*

Group culture can be defined as the common beliefs, values, traditions and customs held by a group (Toseland & Rivas 2001: 86 – 87). Depending on the diversity of the members in the group, group culture can emerge slowly, or, if group membership is more homogenous, more rapidly. The group culture can influence the group's capability to achieve goals while at the same time fulfilling members' socioemotional needs. When the group culture highlights openness and a multiplicity of opinions, the group is more likely to achieve both group goals and individual satisfaction. At times diversity in cultural or ethnic backgrounds can lead to conflict due to prejudices and/or stereotypes held by members. It is likely that this will impact the effective running of the group negatively. Thus, through interaction and discussion, stereotypes and prejudices can be dealt with and minimised. All members of the Young Adults Group are Christians, and thus have common beliefs. This group customarily meets on a Wednesday evening. The group is governed by a culture that allows for the open expression of opinions.

## **2.5 Focus group dynamics**

Apart from dynamics that usually feature in groups, focus groups have special interaction dynamics that need to be taken into account during the process of analysis (Smithson 2000: 103, Hydèn & Bülow 2003: 305).

There are two interactive problems that can be identified in focus groups (Hydèn & Bülow 2003: 311). The first of which revolves around “establishing common communicative ground” (: 311). Common ground can be established around the theme of the focus group, or the fact that participants in the group are from similar backgrounds. It can also happen that common ground is not established. When this is the case, members of the focus group interact as individuals and not as part of a group. For example, in the research focus group, a member that is married could have spoken about his needs in this light. Instead, the member spoke as a young adult and not as an individual but as part of the group. This pattern of establishing common ground is mainly found in focus groups that are made up of people that do not know each other. In groups that already exist, common ground has been established before the commencing of the focus group. The Young Adults Group used in this research is an established group and thus common ground already existed.

This raises the question of whether a focus group should ideally be made up of strangers, or acquaintances or even friends. Wells (1974: 134 in Nelson & Frontczak 1988: 41) states that a group consisting of acquaintances may display better productivity due to "naturalness and ease of conversation" than a group of strangers. Yet it is also noted that friends may be less open in a group consisting of people “that they see every day”. As the material for discussion in the focus group was not of a sensitive nature, the flow of conversation was easy and natural, and the familiarity of this established group did not inhibit the openness of its members.

The interaction patterns of focus groups raise another issue, namely that there is a need for participants to “add their contributions to the common ground” (Hydèn & Bülow:

311). By building a story together, or referring to what other participants have said in the group previously, members add to the common ground. This can become a problem when participants side with certain members to increase social coherence. Although this strengthens the group, it often leads to members discarding their individual opinions in order to fit in. If participants speak only as individuals, however, they will not be adding to the common ground, and will not be acting as or speaking as members of a group (: 319). It is important to gauge in what capacity the participants are speaking when analysing data, as this will help in understanding and interpreting what was said (: 320).

Another problem in focus groups is that of dominant members (Smithson 2000: 107). Often the opinions of dominant group members (one or more) are the only ones that are represented in the resultant focus group data. This sort of problem can be dealt with in different ways<sup>9</sup>. One of which is making sure that the focus groups is relatively homogenous in terms of age, sex and education. (: 108). Another method involves the drawing out of silent members by the facilitator. Due to the fact that the Young Adults Groups is quite similar in composition, in terms of age, faith and education, the problem of dominant voices was not as pronounced. To add to this, the majority of members were similarly verbal, suggesting that there were not one or two dominant members. There were, however, members that were more silent, and despite attempts by the facilitator to draw them out, these were often unsuccessful.

The attitudes and behaviour of the facilitator of the focus group also have an effect on the resultant data (Smithson 2000: 110). Facilitator bias can be reduced by making use of a facilitator that is of similar background and age as the participants. Thus, it was to an advantage that the researcher was from the same age group as the Young Adults Group. Yet, having a facilitator of similar background can also curb the criticality of the facilitator (: 111). In belonging to a similar age group and/or background as the participants, the facilitator may have certain expectations and opinions around the theme being discussed, and may thus unintentionally influence or lead participants to answer in

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<sup>9</sup> The issue of dominant voices is addressed in the analysis of the focus groups on pages 48 & 68 of this document.

certain ways (: 115). In such cases it can be said that a dual role will be played by the researcher during the data collection process – the researcher will act both as a participant and an observer (Dyer 1997: 152). While acting as a facilitator for the focus group, the researcher becomes fully engaged as an active participant of the focus group, while at the same time observing the group. This kind of research, and thus this specific research endeavour can be classified as participant observation research (: 152).

Due to fear of ridicule or possibly rejection, participants in focus groups often stick to what they assume to be the normal or standard view of the rest of the group (: 112 – 115). Facilitators can choose to stick to what the group clearly defines as “normal”, or encourage more unorthodox views, with the risk of alienating themselves from the group (: 112 – 113). This problem can surface more readily when dealing with sensitive or taboo topics. The debate around the acceptance of homosexuals, especially in churches is a case in point. The “normal” point of view on this topic would be the acceptance of homosexuals as people, but not of homosexual practices or marriage. An unorthodox view would be the condoning of homosexual marriages in churches.

Focus groups are a means of gaining access to public opinions, which are not necessarily the same as individual opinions (Kitzinger 1994 in Smithson 2000: 112). Opinions and views produced in the focus group context may be different from those produced in other contexts, but cannot be seen as wrong or inaccurate, but merely a product of that context (Smithson 2000: 112). Thus, the researcher needs to be aware of this context, and acknowledge the possibility of “the things which are left unsaid” (: 114). Focus groups do not always lean towards “normative discourses” and at times focus groups draw attention to conflicting points of view (: 115). In the focus group, much debate ensued around the issue of young people leaving mainline churches and joining charismatic ones. Despite their affiliation with the Lutheran Church, many challenged the way the services are conducted, the lack of acceptance and other issues that are not adequately meeting their needs. In a Lutheran setting, the normative discourse might be expected to be one that mainly accepts and acknowledges this tradition, yet this focus group discussion brought to light many criticisms.



## **2.6 Growth and wholeness**

Most religions and cultures in the world have some concept of wholeness. It is important to distinguish between wholeness and holism. Wholeness is a state of completeness and well-being, and people strive to attain it, through growth (Hurding 1998: 11 – 12). Holism is a term used to describe the view that humans function as wholes and that mind, body and the person and his or her world are interlinked (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2003: 330).

Wholeness can be understood both as a process and a goal (Hurding 1998: 27). It is a process in that it is an aspect of life that human beings can connect with through the choices that they make on a daily basis, but it is also the ultimate aim that they strive for (: 27). Growth and wholeness will be discussed as they appear in the following areas: African thought, psychology, and the Christian perspective.

### *2.6.1 African thought*

The African worldview is based on the principles of holism and anthropocentrism (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2003: 532). Thus, from an African perspective, humans are seen as connected and one with the cosmos – in unity with nature, other humans, and God. Thus, a balance and interdependency exists between all parts of creation (Buys 2000: 5). Anthropocentrism implies that humans are viewed as the centre of the universe – from which everything is understood and explained. Steyne (1990: 58) describes the principle of holism in the following way:

The world interacts with itself. The sky, the spirits, the earth, the physical world, the living and the deceased all act, interact and react in consort. One works on the other and one part can't exist nor be explained without the other. The universe, the spirit world and man are all part of the same fabric. Each needs the other to activate it.

Thus, humans do not distinguish between the physical, material and spiritual world, and there is an absence of any sort of categorization of life (Buys 2000: 5). Sacred and holy

things are never separated from secular things such as politics and economics. Disease and illness is understood as a state of fragmentation, while health and wellness is seen as wholeness and integration. During disease and illness, the whole person (i.e. physical, mental, spiritual etc.) is affected (Appiah-Kubi 1975: 231).

In African thought, humans strive towards wholeness through a growth in personhood, which is achieved through participation in various rites of passage. Humans go through processes of change during the course of their life, and this extends beyond death as well (Mbiti 1999:106). It is believed, due to African's connectedness with the physical and spiritual environment, their balanced use of both right and left hemispheres of the brain, and their collective existence, that they are better equipped to attain and maintain a state of wholeness and psychological health (Pasteur & Toldson 1982).

In African thought, important factors are “the survival of the community” and “union with nature” (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2003: 535). Thus, an individual's personality is shaped by the community (Solomon & Wane 2005: 62). This is succinctly expressed in the Xhosa saying: *Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*. This can be translated as: a person is a person through other people (: 62). Important values in African thought are “co-operation, interdependence and collective responsibility (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2003: 535). Thus, according to the African worldview, desirable behaviours are agreement with each other, and a group orientation.

As the members of the focus group are all from Western descent, they subscribe more to concepts such as individuality and autonomy. This was clearly visible through the interactions in the focus group. Habitually members did not agree with each other, and it was assumed by all that members were entitled to their own individual opinions. It can be assumed that most of the members subscribe to a Western worldview, and thus do not entertain holistic views of the world, although this is only speculation. Much can be learnt from other worldviews, however, and the concepts of growth and wholeness will be used in the development of a programme based on the needs of the young adults.

### 2.6.2 Psychology

Psychology can be divided into four broad systems: behaviourism, psychoanalysis, personalism and transpersonalism (Hurding 1998: 17). Although psychotherapeutic and behaviourism approaches strive towards betterment in a client's life, it was only through criticism of Freud that the concept of wholeness, and the growth towards it emerged in methodologies and theories (: 18). The pursuit of wholeness is mainly contained in the personalistic and transpersonalistic theories.

Carl Rogers (1902 – 1987) is most well known for developing person-centred therapy (Baruth & Huber 1985: 32). One of the most dominant principles within his theory and therapy, is that of growth (Hurding 1986: 115). Rogers saw growth as “the origin, pathway and destiny of man, alone and together” (Van Belle 1980: 98). This concept of growth implies that there is a natural progression as one's personality develops. The process of growth moves from simple physiological needs, to the development of a self concept and a sense of community. Eventually, the process of growth leads to a “transcendent awareness of the harmony and the unity of the cosmic system, including humankind” (Rogers in Van Belle 1980: 133). Another concept within Roger's theory is that of becoming a self-actualising individual (Baruth & Huber 1986: 34 – 35). Thus, one becomes a fully functioning person by realising what one's true self is like.

Maslow (1903 – 1970) developed the hierarchy of needs<sup>10</sup>, and, despite the fact that he was not the first to coin the term, he conducted much research that contributed to the deeper understanding of self-actualisation (Hurding 1998: 19). Self-actualisation is a “pathway to wholeness” and can be defined as developing and achieving one's full potential (: 19). Growth is also an important aspect of Maslow's theory (Hurding 1986: 152). Through growth one can be further propelled towards self-actualisation. Growth is not something that comes naturally, however, and is seen by Maslow as a dynamic concept that requires a conscious effort from the individual. The achievement of self-

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<sup>10</sup> See pages 16 – 17 of this document.

actualisation (although rare, according to Maslow) is followed by a transcendence of the self – thus moving beyond egotism and self-consciousness (: 153).

Gestalt psychology is concerned with growth and wholeness (Hurding 1998: 20). “Gestalt” comes from the German word for shape, form or pattern (Clarkson 1999: 1). This shape, form or pattern is seen in its entirety, as a whole, and more than the sum of its parts. Individuals are complex wholes made up of many different parts (such as thoughts, emotions, body etc.). Yet these parts cannot be understood outside the context of the whole person (Baruth & Huber 1985: 43). Thus the aim of Gestalt is to “discover, explore and experience one’s own shape, pattern and wholeness” (: 1). Many humans are said to have lost their wholeness and integrity, and are therefore in a state of fragmentation (Hurding 1986: 202). Gestalt is thus about integrating the different parts within a person, and allowing them to fully be what they are, and what they can be (Clarkson 1999: 1). This wholeness (or gestalt) can only be achieved through a process of self-awareness (Hurding 1986: 202).

Howard Clinebell developed what he calls Growth Counselling (Clinebell 1980: 81). According to Clinebell, Growth Counselling “helps people develop life in its fullness” (: 81). Growth counselling helps people discover their potential at all stage of their lives, while creating an environment and society in which people can develop their potential (: 82). Spiritual growth is at the heart of Growth Counselling, and is seen as the “integrating core of all human growth” (: 85). Growth counselling’s central methodology is that of growth groups. Growth groups are small groups in which the main aim is the personal growth of individuals on all levels – emotional, interpersonal, mental and spiritual (Clinebell 1977: 3). Growth groups in institutions such as the church can help to prevent the need for counselling, can allow people to discover their potential, as well as grow together as small communities.

In the church, pastoral care and counselling should focus not only on spiritual growth and development, but on growth in all areas of life. Mwaura (1994: 72 – 73) asserts that pastoral care in the church should be holistic, i.e., addressing all levels of human caring –

physical, emotional, spiritual and moral. According to Robinson (2004), pastoral care “seeks to foster people’s growth as full human beings together with development of ecologically holistic communities...” (: 101). Pastoral care and counselling can thus be described as a pathway to wholeness (Hurding 1998: Part 2).

### *2.6.3 Christian perspective*

The Christian perspective on wholeness is similar to the other perspectives in that it includes the personal, relational, communal, environmental and universal, yet it is different to those previously discussed, in that the Christian quest for wholeness is uniquely “resourced and fulfilled by our Trinitarian God” (Hurding 1998: 35). The eventual goal of the Christian pathway is wholeness – through progressive relationships with God, other and the self (Hurding 1986: 348). Wholeness does not imply that we have to be perfect, or that, once we have reached wholeness, we will stay there (Nash 1988: 46). For Christians touched by Christ, the journey towards wholeness is a continuous one (Hurding 1992: 70). Hurding writes, “Through Christ, we have been made whole, we are being made whole and we will be made whole” (: 70). It is God who is not only sought as the spring of all wholeness, but who also instigates the seeking (1998: 35).

Even though members of the focus group, coming from Lutheran backgrounds and traditions, emphasise humankind and dependency on God, it became clear throughout the interactions in the focus group that the young adults were in need of assurance from God. Despite their faith in God, they alluded to being unsure whether they were praying correctly, and if or how their prayers were being answered. They also expressed a desire to be used by God for a specific purpose, yet it appeared as though they were often unsure of where their giftedness and purpose lies. Despite the belief that God is seeking them out, the young adults expressed their doubts.

The description of wholeness in the Bible is very complex (Hurding 1998: 27). Wholeness in the Bible is seen as both a process and a goal, and on many levels – from

individual to the entire nation, including all of creation. A number of concepts of wholeness are found in the Bible: “forgiveness, healing, liberation, restoration, redemption, salvation, sanctification, holiness, fruitfulness, maturity, completeness, Christlikeness and glorification” (: 27). In the Old Testament, humans are created in the image of God, thus suggesting wholeness (Parvey 1983: 52). “Shalom”, found often in the Old Testament, can be defined as peace, overall well-being and wholeness (Hurding 1998: 27 – 30). This “shalom”, or wholeness thrives in relationships (Clinebell 1980: 89). Thus in a community of whole relationships, an environment is created for people to develop to their full potentials (: 89). Also, the terms for completeness, or perfection (“teleios” and “telos”) are often mentioned in the New Testament (: 30 – 34). Jesus said: “I came that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness” (John 10:10).

Clinebell notes that growth is a Biblical concept (Hurding 1986: 310). The image of growth appears often in the Bible (Clinebell 1980: 88). For example, in Psalm 1:3, the image of a “tree planted by streams of water” is used to illustrate a good human being. In Luke 18: 16 - 17, Jesus also mentions “childlikeness” as a requirement for entering God’s kingdom. Characteristics of children are openness and growth. This image is taken further in 1 Corinthians 13:11, where the “giving up on childish ways” points to the need for growth in human beings (Clinebell 1980: 88).

Through growth and liberation, there is a move towards wholeness (Clinebell 1984: 28 – 29). Christian wholeness involves “balanced, mutually enhancing interplay among your mind, body and spirit; between your work and play; and in your key relationships with other people and your community; with plants and animals; and, most important of all, with God” (1997: 18). The heart of these, and the unifying factor is the relationship with God, and spiritual growth and well being is the core of Christian wholeness (: 25).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The complexity of young adulthood was examined in this chapter. Young adulthood is complex in that differing criteria exist that define its parameters; young adults are placed

in and influenced by many challenging entities present in the context in which they live; and young adulthood can be understood from a number of different view points. Numerous needs of young adults were examined, according to various theorists. These parameters will be used later when analysing the needs of the young adults<sup>11</sup>. In addition, the main medium used to gather information, the focus group, was described in detail in this chapter. Group dynamics present in all groups, and those specific to focus group were examined and will be used at a later stage when analysing the data<sup>12</sup>. The programme developed in Chapter 5 is based on the principles of growth and wholeness, and thus understandings of these terms according to various disciplines were included. The following chapter focuses on Phase One of the focus group, which deals with the spiritual needs of young adults. This chapter includes the analysis of the content of the focus group session, as well as the group dynamics.

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapters 3 and 4 of this document

<sup>12</sup> See Chapters 3 and 4 of this document

## **Chapter 3 - Phase One: Spiritual Needs**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Phase One of the focus group was centred on the spiritual needs of young adults. The conversation could, however, not be confined to these boundaries at all times, and thus, despite direct questions and guidance from the facilitator, the content of the conversations often took unexpected turns. This reveals the true concerns of young adults and diminishes the influence of the facilitator's opinion on that of the members of the focus group. This chapter will focus on the group dynamics that were present in phase one of the focus group, as well as the spiritual needs of the young adults. Thus, needs that surfaced during this session but were not of a spiritual nature will be dealt with in the following chapter. In the same way, spiritual needs that surfaced in the second phase will be dealt with in this chapter. In phase one, the focus group consisted of five females and six males. The females in the group range from the ages 20 to 23, while the men range from the ages 21 to 31. Three of the eleven members are married. Seven of the members come from German-speaking households, and all members fall into the middle-class, white bracket. Even though all eleven belong to the Young Adults Group at the Lutheran Church, three members are not official members of this denomination. Five of the eleven members are, or have been theology students.

### **3.2 Group dynamics in Phase One of the focus group**

#### *3.2.1 Communication and interaction patterns*

The size of the group and its physical arrangement influences the interaction patterns of the small group. The focus group was of a relatively large size, consisting of eleven members. The reduction of this number might have increased the communication of the more silent members, it also would have decreased the amount of information gathered. To improve the communication among members, the focus group was arranged around a table.



During phase one of the focus group, the researcher did not pick up any obvious problems in terms of messages being distorted and used for reasons other than to communicate with each other (for example for gaining power, persuading or provoking others, or gaining favour with others). Members were eager to share their views, and were not timid in expressing their disagreement with opinion's of others. In this focus group, as well as through observations made during other Young Adult meetings, the members of this group value being true to themselves by expressing their opinions above pleasing others. There is also an amount of respect for each other that discourages the persuasion or provoking of others, and the need to gain power. In order to ensure that messages were received accurately, the facilitator, as well as the members, tried to give feedback by reflecting what was being said, and seeking clarification when the message was not clear. This also suggests that the interaction pattern in this group was group-centred and not leader-centred. For example:

**Facilitator:** Unpack that a little bit more.

...

**Facilitator:** So are you saying...?

...

**Member 5:** What do you mean...?

...

**Member 1:** Sorry, can you just be more specific?

...

**Member 10:** Are we all talking about the same "church"?

A free network of communication in which communication amongst all members of the focus group is completely open is not the reality. Even though all members seemed to communicate fairly openly with each other, there were some restrictions. The extent of the effect of these restrictions is very difficult to measure. But the fact that they exist and that the members were aware of them is made clear by the following examples:

**Member 4:** ...half of the stuff that is hidden at the moment, is because some people don't really know you. The other half is hidden because either you are self-conscious or you don't really like that about yourself and you want to improve on it...

...

**Member 1:** It's difficult to trust a group of people.

...  
**Member 5:** It's difficult to trust full stop I think.

Interaction patterns within the group can be influenced by many factors. The fact that many of the members of the focus group are theology students could have influenced the power and status of these individuals. It is interesting to note that the members that were quieter were those that were not theology students, thus suggesting that the power and status was placed in the hands of those that had theological knowledge, especially due to the fact that the discussion was focused on spiritual needs. On the other hand, three of those that were more out-going, and especially one that commented extensively, were not theology students, thus suggesting a more complicated explanation. The influence of members' personalities is crucial. The extent of the influence of this is, however, outside the scope of this research. There is no evidence to suggest that the position of one of the members in the church had an influence on the interaction patterns. There is also no evidence that points to the fact that the gender or the marital status of individuals influenced the interaction patterns.

Within the Young Adults Group, as well as in the combination of Young Adults that attended the first phase of the focus group, subgroups exist. Subgroups only become a problem, however, when the members of the subgroup consider it more important than the group as a whole. This was not the case in phase one of the focus group. The purpose of the focus group, which was to collect information from young adults, was the most important task within the focus group. This was recognised by all, and resulted in most members contributing regularly. Therefore, there was not one dominant member, with many contributing equally. There were, however, those who contributed less, and one member who hardly spoke.

In order to change the interaction patterns within the group, it was up to the facilitator to draw out the quieter members. However, in order to avoid members feeling uncomfortable in the group by singling them out, the encouragement of communication was directed at the whole group, or at certain parts of the group. Non-verbal

communication such as looking at those that had not spoken was also sometimes used. Only on rare occasions were members addressed directly:

**Facilitator:** Ok. Anybody else want to say anything about this?

...

**Facilitator:** Anything else? Member 11, you want to say something?

...

**Facilitator:** Has everybody said what they want to say?

...

**Facilitator:** Anybody on this side of the room?

...

**Facilitator:** I'm not picking... I'm just looking.

Whether this technique was effective or not is uncertain. Responding with silence is also a response. Yet, despite the fact that some members said little, it was often observed that they nodded in agreement when other members raised their opinions. Thus, there is a chance that their silence could simply be attributed to their more introverted natures. It has been observed in previous Young Adult Group meetings that some of the members communicate more openly and freely outside of the group context, and thus their reluctance to communicate and contribute in the focus group could be attributed to their fear or dislike of communicating in a group.

### *3.2.2 Cohesion*

As this focus group was formed from an already existing group, the degree of cohesion is expected to be relatively high. Many of the members know each other as friends even outside the context of the Young Adults Group, and thus the relationship between many of them is fairly strong. The group did well in sticking to the task at hand and were motivated to contribute so as to achieve the group's goal of information collection.

Cohesion can be understood on both an individual as well as a group level. According to the researcher's observations, at the time of the first phase of the focus group, each member respected every other member. It also became clear, however, that not all members trusted each other. Throughout the months of observation, it became apparent

that individual members trust certain individuals in the group more than they trust others, or the group as a whole:

**Member 1:** It's difficult to trust a group of people.

...

**Member 5:** It's difficult to trust full stop I think.

**Member 3:** It's easier to trust somebody that you know for a longer period. And that you know you can trust.

**Member 4:** Precisely.

**Member 1:** But I told Facilitator my secret before and that was not a big deal.

**Member 8:** Then it's not so bad.

**Facilitator:** No but still in a group it was a problem for you.

**Member 1:** In a group. It was a problem.

**Member 4:** Member 3 put his finger on it. If I chose to give my secret to someone I probably would have given it to Member 11. I wouldn't just have given it anybody, you know.

Despite the fact that the focus group consisted of members that knew each other, and these individuals are together in an already existing group, the cohesion on a group level is not as high as would be expected:

**Member 11:** When I was in England I joined a Charismatic church and what I really liked about that was my cell group there. We didn't just meet on Sunday's at church and for our cell groups. We were all really good friends and we'd have coffee during the day when we felt like it. Most of us are really good friends but I don't think we have that group spirit going. I don't know if anyone else feels likes that but we're not a unit.

The degree of cohesion within this group allowed for the achievement of the goals of the group – the collection of information. If the group has too high a degree of cohesion, members value unanimity above their individual opinions. This was, however, not the case as members were eager to express their own opinions, and respected those of other members of the focus group.

### 3.2.3 Social control mechanisms

In order to control the focus group and to prevent disorder and chaos, norms were decided upon by the facilitator beforehand, and were presented to the members at the start of the focus group. These were:

1. Listen to each other
2. Confidentiality
3. Participate
4. Respect each other
5. Switch off your cell phones

This set of norms is overt. This means that they were openly discussed by the facilitator and the members and were seen as guiding principles for the group. Covert norms on the other hand are hidden, and thus never openly discussed. Yet everyone in the group knows about them. It was a given in the focus group that the researcher was the facilitator and that she would direct the questions and the discussions. This was never directly discussed, but was clear to everyone, and adhered to by all:

**Various:** Ok sshh. Sshh.

**Member 3:** Ok, Facilitator wants to talk.

Many different roles exist within a group. Due to the fact that this focus group was task-orientated, and not a therapeutic group, the roles occupied by members were mainly task roles. The roles that appeared most frequently in this focus group were that of the initiator/contributor, the information giver, as well as the critic. The facilitator was mostly in the information seeker role. Those members who were quieter than the others were probably in the observer role. Roles changed quickly and constantly, though, and thus it is impossible to analyse all the roles and role changes in phase one of the focus group.

A member's status is determined by that member's position outside the group, the situation in the group and the group's composition. As mentioned previously, many of the members of the focus group are theology students and thus could perhaps be seen by

others as having knowledge superior to theirs. However, according to observations made by the researcher, the composition of the phase one focus group did not produce any gross differences in status, and thus members had no need to conform so as to improve their status in the group. As no low-status members existed, norms were not violated.

The social control mechanisms in this focus group helped the group to function effectively. The controls were not too harsh, however, and members were able to freely express their personal opinions, and thus keep their individuality, freedom and independence of other group members.

#### *3.2.4 Group culture*

Group culture refers to common beliefs, values, traditions and customs held by a group. As the Young Adults Group consists of individuals that come from similar backgrounds and share characteristics (ethnic, religious, age and socio-economic factors), many beliefs, values, traditions and customs are also shared, yet are not only specific to the Young Adults Group. All members of this focus group are Christians, and thus they believe in God and His son, Jesus Christ. Meetings of the Young Adults Group customarily take place on a Wednesday night in the church. Through observation, it is clear to the researcher that the group culture allows for the expression of opinions, yet opinions about other people in the group are only expressed in the absence of that person, and in the presence of specific people (subgroups) they can trust. The openness towards expression of opinions led to the success of the focus group. The group culture of the Young Adults Group and thus the focus group is mainly about having fun together, reading the Bible and praying together. There is not a culture of complete openness and honesty, and thus there is no sharing of very personal information, and no total trust in the group as a whole.

### *3.2.5 Specific Focus group dynamics*

Within focus groups, common communicative ground can be established around the focus group theme or due to the fact that the members are from similar backgrounds. In groups that already exist, common ground has been established before the commencing of the focus group. The Young Adults Group is an established group and thus common ground already existed with the commencement of the first phase of the focus group.

As has already been established, the Young Adults Group and thus the focus group consist of individuals that know each other. The advantage of this is that the group may be more productive as members can communicate more easily with each other. It has also been established, however, that despite mutual respect, the members of the group often lack trust for each other in the group. Yet, as the material discussed during the focus group is not of a sensitive nature, the issue of trust is not of paramount importance, and in this case did not retard information gathering. Communication flowed openly and freely, as members of the group felt comfortable in the company of individuals with whom they were familiar.

Within focus groups a tension exists in that members want to add to the common ground of the focus group, yet at the same time want to speak as individuals. According to the researcher, these two points need not be seen as opposing sides or in tension with each other. It is possible to add to the common ground, while at the same time staying true to your individual beliefs. This only seems to become a problem when members add to the common ground merely to fit into the group, or members continuously speak as individuals and not as part of a group. As the members of the focus group are part of the Young Adults Group, and indeed are part of the young adults age group, they inherently become part of the group. Thus members felt free to agree or disagree with other members' opinions:

**Member 1:** I also agree with that.

...

**Member 3:** I don't want to disagree with you, but I experienced it in that way.

...  
**Member 7:** I don't think like that.

...  
**Member 1:** I know I understand all the arguments but you know. I don't want to be like that. So there we go. That's me.

...  
**Member 8:** Well, I tend to agree with what you said in the beginning...

This focus group did not have a problem with dominant voices. Many of the members in the focus group contributed regularly, and thus the opinions of many were heard, and not only those of a select few. Although it is only speculation, the researcher believes that the homogeneity of the group in terms of age, education, faith and ethnic background contributed to this. As theology students, some members probably consider themselves as equally knowledgeable. Another reason for the absence of dominant members could be the familiarity of members with each other. This eradicates initial misconceptions or judgements that can influence the power and status of individuals in a focus group. Familiarity also allows members to speak more freely and openly, as they are familiar with the reactions of other members towards them. The focus group also included more silent members<sup>13</sup>.

The facilitator of the focus group will always have an effect on the data that is produced. On the one hand, it is good that the facilitator was of similar background and age as participants in the focus group. The facilitator is a young adult and a member of the Young Adult Group. On the other hand, however, using a facilitator from a similar background can lead to a lack of objectivity and a lack of criticality. Due to the fact that the facilitator is a young adult, she has certain expectations and opinions about the topic discussed in the focus group. To add to that, the facilitator is the researcher, and thus had ideas and expectations about the outcome of the research and the data that she wanted to collect. Conscious effort was made not to lead members in certain directions. Occasionally, however, the facilitator did just that, merely by asking questions, steering or ending the conversation or making comments:

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<sup>13</sup> This has been addressed under the "Communication and Interaction Patterns" heading on page 40 of this document.



**Facilitator:** I see people are getting restless. One more question and then we do an exercise.

...

**Facilitator:** Ok. I think we should move on.

...

**Facilitator:** So what does this teach you?

However, in order to get to the information that is required, it is necessary to ask questions, as well as to keep the conversation focused on the relevant topic. By asking questions or commenting, the facilitator might touch on a point that is applicable to some members and thus has not led them into saying something they do not agree with, but has merely made them aware that the thought resides within them. The researcher in this case not only acts as an observer, but also acts as a participant and a member of the focus group. This is known as participant observation research.

Generally, members of a focus group stick to what they believe is the normal or standard view, particularly of taboo or sensitive topics, due to fear of rejection or ridicule from the other members of the group. As the topic of focus was not of a taboo or sensitive nature, this phenomenon was not clearly observed. In addition, members felt free to express their opinions and thus were free to disagree with each other. This draws attention to the fact that focus groups sometimes bring to light conflicting points of view. Many criticised the Lutheran Church, despite their affiliation with it, while others disagreed with them. Some criticised the church in general, and were again met with disagreement:

**Member 10:** ...I think that's more appealing to young people than whereas some of our liturgy or things like that would be seen or felt as old-fashioned.

...

**Member 4:** ...they followed such a stringent structured service and it was very very formal. And I think that youth tend to rebel from things that are forced on them. Especially society at the moment is very much more I don't know if abstract is the right word to use. But sort of "go with the flow" kind of thing. If there's a rigid structure to any sort of thing they might feel uncomfortable. Doesn't let them be free.

**Member 6:** Well I think the problem is we have so many old ballies in our church.

...

**Member 1:** I just want to say something else. You mentioned the old ballies. It's the old blue-haired ladies that love coming to the family service.

(Laughter)

**Member 1:** Love it! They love it! And they love seeing the youth do stuff...

...

**Member 3:** I think the church must get involved in social issues. I think the church is too busy with itself.

**Member 2:** Well I think it's balance. Cause otherwise, you know what happens to the church? They get so involved in social issues that pastorally they start lagging. It's a balance. Look after your community as well.

...

**Member 3:** It's like this whole Mohammed cartoon thing. When that came out? There was a big noise about that. First it was the gospel of Judas. No noise really. The Da Vinci Code. I sometimes get the feeling the church is just (shrugs) whatever.

**Member 1:** The church is not silent about the Da Vinci Code.

**Member 2:** No, not about that.

**Member 4:** The Catholic Church is suing the oke upstairs boy.

...

**Member 6:** We don't get angry with the Da Vinci Code, it's like ok.

**Member 2:** Yes! Somebody in a movie says Jesus Christ. I mean, how many of us get up and walk out?

**Member 7:** I mean, something like the cartoon. You all know South Park. South Park has a character called Jesus, it's Jesus. He has a talk show.

**Member 8:** Oh my gosh.

**Member 7:** It's like Member 3's saying. You have one cartoon about Mohammed and the whole Islam world gets inflamed and here's something on the TV show that that everyone knows... You know they have something that is quite frankly a lot worse...

**Member 1:** But sorry, I don't know if I want to be like that.

**Member 3:** No I'm just making examples.

**Member 1:** I know I understand all the arguments but you know. I don't want to be like that. So there we go. That's me.

### **3.3 Analysis of content of Phase One of the focus group**

#### *3.3.1 Summary of phase one*

**When asked to unpack the word “Church”, members said the following:** a religious community, a spiritual family, a building, a symbol for Christianity, a sense of being, worship, warmth, an exclusive community and a human institution.

**What the members expected from the church:** to provide them with a supportive, caring, accepting and non-judgemental family. The church should encourage spiritual growth, and openness and fulfil their spiritual needs. They expect the church to provide them with a foundation in life, and to be a place that gives them meaning. One member expected the church to be a catalyst for ministry.

**What members expect from the church as young adults:** for the church and the church leadership to know what is affecting them, and to be in touch with this age group. The church is expected to help young adults find direction in life. Young adults need to be able to ask difficult spiritual questions in the church and get satisfactory answers. A spiritual atmosphere and spiritual support are expected from the church. Once again a community and atmosphere where one won't be judged, but accepted, no matter how far behind or ahead you are on your spiritual journey. They expect the church not to take advantage of them when they are vulnerable. Many are concerned about the dwindling youth membership in the church. Some blamed the old-fashioned nature of the services, the number of older people in the church, the negative attitude of the middle-aged members towards the young adults, the lack of unity and the lack of a feeling of belongingness in the group, and the rigidity of the services. Others cited the large numbers of youth and young adults in other, more charismatic churches as attractive for young people.

**What members think is missing that the church should be providing:** an atmosphere of acceptance; a non-judgemental atmosphere. The church is missing an outward focus –

it is too busy with itself and is not dealing with burning social issues. It is phlegmatic about issues that offend or attack Christianity. On the other hand, it lacks being led spiritually – listening to where God is leading the church – and instead people only desire power. It is about balance between being concerned with itself, and being concerned with the world. The church and church leadership is not in touch with the young adults. There is a lack of openness to new ideas, and (small) ideas from people without a standing (such as young adults) are not taken seriously and judged. The church lacks a good standing in society. Young adults want to be able to talk about God and the Bible without getting critical or academic. Churches are missing an acceptance of change.

**The spiritual needs of young adults:** a place to feel safe, a small group. Young adults have a need to hear God<sup>14</sup>, and to receive assurance from God that their prayers are being answered. There is a need to grow spiritually – to learn how to hear God, to understand the Bible better, as well as to understand prayer better. One member expressed the need to minister to others. A number of members expressed the need for a spiritual outlet – to dance, to giggle, to worship through music (singing, playing piano, just listening to music), through thoughts, and other creativity. There is a need to find one’s spiritual niche – one’s purpose, where one belongs as well as to be able to discern one’s gifts. Young adults need quiet time to be alone with God, to get away from their busy lives, and to listen to God. One expressed the need to be happy, to laugh. Commitment is seen as essential for one’s faith. Young adults need to know that other Christians are praying for them.

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<sup>14</sup> Despite only one member of the group verbalising this need, affirmations by other members such as nodding or “yes” statements have been left out of the verbatim reports to facilitate reading. This phenomenon is found repeatedly throughout chapters 3 and 4, dealing with analysis of the data.

### 3.3.2 Applying template of codes and additional coding<sup>15</sup>

As this chapter is exclusively about the spiritual needs of young adults, the only applicable code is Code 6: Spiritual or self-transcendent needs. These are the needs that are concerned with rising above the self.

Spiritual needs concern the highest and most all-encompassing stages of human awareness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than as means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to the environment (growth awareness of ecology and ecological care), and to the entire universe (Maslow 1971: 279). Spiritual needs refer to values that are promoted by religion, for example truth, goodness, compassion and completeness. Religion proposes a rise above an egocentric level to a level where humans work towards higher transcendent needs (Meadow & Kahoe 1984: 25). Spiritual needs include improving our relationship with God, enhancing our faith and value systems and making meaning of our lives through God, so as to give us earthly purpose (Clinebell 1982: 37).

This single code covers a very broad need, and thus it will be broken down into more manageable themes that will be coded. The major themes that can be identified within the spiritual needs framework are: the need to grow spiritually – as individuals and as church; the need for a spiritual outlet and expression of one’s spirituality; the need to be used by God for a specific purpose; the need for assurance from God.

#### 3.3.2.1 The need to grow spiritually – as individuals and as church

Young adults have the need to grow spiritually. Individual spiritual growth includes many factors – such as learning more about the Bible, learning more about God, learning how to hear God and learning how to pray:

**Member 2:** To grow in such a way that I can actually maybe hear God.

...

**Member 2:** I dunno but maybe a group where they help you to understand the Bible better.

...

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<sup>15</sup> A sample of how the researcher has completed this task can be found in the Appendix, page 125 of this document.

**Member 4:** ...Time for yourself and like time for the Lord... In a sense time can be time for yourself you know.

**Member 10:** I think taking time to listen to what God wants.

**Member 2:** To get the group you're in to teach you how to pray. I don't think we actually realise about prayer, how it works and stuff. I've got a lot to learn about how to pray.

**Member 6:** I don't think there's a certain set way to pray. I think everybody can pray the way that's comfortable for them.

**Member 1:** I think maybe what Member 2 is saying is that maybe we don't understand it. You know. We take it for granted...

The young adults also expressed a need for the church to grow spiritually – for the church as a whole to be more open to God and new ideas, and to become more prophetic, and not so involved with itself. The church should be there as a place that helps young adults grow spiritually and to be a spiritual support for them.

**Member 2:** [The church should be] A place where you know you're going to grow.

**Facilitator:** Grow in what way?

**Member 2:** Spiritually.

...

**Member 11:** I also think, for young people especially, the church should be open to our problems. I think especially as a young person you often have very spiritual questions you need answered, and you need to have someone to be able to talk to about that in the church.

...

**Member 1:** I think a spiritual atmosphere. Because you know I can go and be part of the rowing club, but the rowing club's not going to give me spiritual support.

...

**Member 6:** I think what is missing with some churches is openness to new ideas.

...

**Member 10:** I think with all of that also for me, I know that in the greater sense of church I could find it in all different places but I think like I'd love to find it where I am right now and the church around me. The Christians. To be really spiritually led. Not that mainly charismatic churches are, they're all about the Holy Spirit and this and that. I'd like to find sort of the base on the Bible and Jesus and God's word but also to be spiritually led. That if somebody were to come up with a new idea or something that people would really pray about it and let that lead them...

...

**Member 11:** But I've noticed like with a lot of churches, people just forget what it's basically about, I mean, it's like always a fight for power. I mean, my dad's the pastor and he has hardly any say in our church. It's like all the people who have

been there for a hundred years they're the important ones. My dad's new he's not relevant you know. I think the people just they're forgetting what it's really about and I think that's really sad.

**Member 10:** And a place where everybody's taken seriously. From 20 year-olds to 70-year olds to 5-year olds really gets taken, their faith gets taken seriously.

...

**Member 3:** I think the church must get involved in social issues. I think the church is too busy with itself. And a good example is in Apartheid years the church opened its mouth against Apartheid. But where's it now against HIV and AIDS? Why aren't they playing that social role now?

### *3.3.2.2 The need for a spiritual outlet and expression of one's spirituality*

This need was mentioned often by a number of different members of the focus group. Spiritual expression or a spiritual outlet can take many different forms – worship, singing, dancing, spending quiet time with God and being creative in other ways.

**Member 10:** I think on that, a spiritual outlet. If you feel joy or something to be able to giggle to dance or to act on it. Not be frustrated and keep it inside. What must we do with it?

...

**Member 11:** Music is also very important. Not specifically listening but more playing piano. I've noticed if I don't practice by myself when no-one's listening, I get really really depressed. I've also noticed that when I sit down and I just play solidly for an hour to myself, especially when I play hymns, afterwards I just feel really elated and really happy. It's really important to me that I get to play my instrument regularly.

...

**Member 8:** Well, I tend to agree with what you said in the beginning as well, for me it's as well just to sing... I mean, especially now with the family services. It feels like you can really you know, participate and you really feel like almost complete afterwards. Where you can just, through singing that's how a spiritual need is fulfilled for me. Like choir or singing or anything like that.

...

**Member 10:** A spiritual need for me is worship. Which I think would be an outlet. I don't mean worship as in singing only, I mean it in different forms. Like playing piano or dancing or thinking or writing, drawing or like expressing. That you grow in that as well. Like, worship...

...

**Member 5:** Music. I like listening to music. And playing the piano.

**Member 4:** I think that your devotions - what you refer to as devotions - we tend to address as quiet times. I think that's the same thing. But other than that I think that there's sometimes I just found that I need space just to not only clear your

thoughts but sometimes just to do nothing. Maybe it's spiritual I don't really know. I don't generally think too much during that time but I find that if I don't do it I tend to... Everything else adds up. It gets complicated and stuff like that. Time for yourself and like time for the Lord... In a sense time can be time for yourself you know.

**Member 10:** Yes I think taking time to listen to what God wants.

### *3.3.2.3 The need to be used by God for a specific purpose*

Young adults have a need for a purpose and direction in life, and sometimes expect the church to help them to figure it out. Their purpose is what God wants them to do in life, and thus this process starts with the discernment of their gifts, so that they can be used according to their giftedness.

**Member 2:** [The church is] A place that gives you meaning.

...

**Member 7:** I think that, um. What the church should be doing for young adults specifically is giving them direction in life.

...

**Member 2:** Or where they discern your gifts you know. And that sort of thing.

...

**Member 1:** For me, like what I said before. Sort of that catalyst for ministry. For outreach ministry. Sort of like the outward focus not the inward focus. Oftentimes the church is so focused on I and my relationship with God, which is good and you do need to focus on that but for me... I really really want to be a part of something that is more than just this inward focused. I want to be a part of something that is outward focused. That's missing for me. Ministry is one of my needs. If I don't minister I feel empty if I don't.

...

**Member 9:** Your spiritual niche kind of thing. Your purpose. Where you belong, where you fit in and that.

...

**Member 2:** I would say that... I want them to help me find out what, how I can be used. And where God can use you to minister and stuff.

...

**Member 10:** I have need for a purpose. To know that maybe my life means something or to know that I'm not too far off.

...

**Member 12:** As a Christian I believe my purpose is directly linked with God, you know, my belief.



### 3.3.2.4 *The need for assurance from God*

Young adults express a need to receive assurance from God. They need to know that they are on the right path, that God is present at all times and that He listens to them and answers their prayers.

**Member 2:** I dunno. I think, help me hear God.

**Member 3:** Yah. Come down and answer me...

...

**Member 10:** I was also gonna say that every now and then an assurance from God. Just to know that... Evidence of a prayer being answered. I wouldn't believe without... But I think it would make it...

**Member 11:** Easier.

**Member 10:** Yes it makes it easier. It's easier to build on assurance or a little message from God every now and then.

...

**Member 4:** ...The assurance side I always feel guilty about it. It's almost tempting God, questioning God. I always think of the parable. Or I don't know it's just a story more than anything. Guy seems alone. Sees only one set of prints on the beach. Where were you? I was carrying you. So yes. I never question, but I know what you mean by the assurance thing. It would be really cool.

**Member 1:** Sometimes I wish God would just talk to us. Like "Hello. You're going the wrong way!"

(Laughter)

**Member 1:** "Don't go down that street".

## 3.4 Conclusion

The first phase of the focus group centred on the spiritual needs of young adults. The group dynamics, as well as the specific focus group dynamics were investigated. It was found that on the whole, the dynamics did not interfere significantly with the process of information gathering. Focus group members mostly felt free to express their opinions, and only one of the members was markedly quieter than the others. The thematic analysis method was used to analyse the data. A summary of the focus group was compiled, after which the data was coded using the existing codes. It was found that, within the spiritual needs of the young adults, four major themes emerged from the data. These were the need to grow spiritually – as individuals and as church; the need for a spiritual outlet and

expression of one's spirituality; the need to be used by God for a specific purpose; the need for assurance from God. The second phase of the focus group revolved around other needs that the young adults have. The group dynamics of the second phase, as well as the emerging themes will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 4 - Phase Two: Needs other than Spiritual**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Phase Two of the focus group was centred on all the needs of young adults other than the spiritual needs. As was the case in the first phase, the conversation could not always be confined to these boundaries, and thus the true concerns of young adults were revealed. The group dynamics of this second phase were different to those analysed in the first phase, due to a slight change in the composition of the group. These new dynamics will be investigated in this chapter. Moreover, needs that were expressed in the first phase that were not of a spiritual nature will be taken into account in this chapter, just as the spiritual needs that surfaced in this phase were included in the previous chapter. During phase two of the focus group, the composition of the group changed slightly. There were seven males and four females in the group. The females in the group are all aged 20, while the males range from ages 21 to 31. Three members of the group are married, and six are theology students. All but three are from German-speaking homes; the rest are English. All members can be classified as middle-class, white citizens. Despite all being members of the Young Adults Group of the Lutheran Church, three participants are not members of the Lutheran Congregation.

### **4.2 Group dynamics in Phase Two of the focus group**

#### *4.2.1 Communication and interaction patterns*

The size of the focus group for the second phase was the same as the one for the first phase. Two of the members of the first phase were replaced by two different members of the Young Adults Group. Thus, eleven people attended the second phase of the focus group. This number was manageable, and despite the fact that fewer members might have encouraged quieter members to speak, it also would have reduced the amount of data produced. To improve the communication among members, the focus group was arranged in a circle around a table.

The majority of members of the focus group in phase two were also present at phase one, and thus there was no change in their attitude of openness and willingness to share their opinions. According to the researcher, most members were honest about their views and expressed them with the purpose of communicating these views to others, and not to gain power, persuade or provoke others, or as a means of gaining favour with others. Through observations in the focus group, as well as in the Young Adults Group, it is clear to the researcher that one member communicates with others in order to gain power, or to provoke others. It appears as though this member tries to gain power through what he or she says, yet almost always fails. The member sometimes tries to gain power by expressing personal information that is inappropriate.

**Member 13:** I was in an autumn garden. As I looked across the garden... Of course some leaves. There was light breeze. And as I looked out on the garden, I saw some Impalas down in the field busy grazing. And then, in front of me as I daydreamed a bit, I saw some aspects of decisions that I needed to make. Which are quite good decisions. Which I needed to make. So yes.

...

**Member 13:** I mean this need especially came about as well like Member 6 said between a congregation, a home congregation which is in the country and this congregation here. I was once told by Member 3: why's my personality back home different than my personality here. And it is simply because here I have to set a face on, a smile face because this is what people might expect from me. But if I'm there back home I don't need to do that because everybody knows who I am and know my weaknesses and that frees me up to bring change in my life.

**F:** So are you saying that you actually can't be yourself in this congregation?

**Member 13:** I think so, yes. To be honest, I really think so. And this is a problem I have with this congregation. Of course, it's a number of other reasons as well, but this is the main, the main feeling that I have.

The researcher also noticed that the member in question often says things that she believes will impress people, yet her actions reveal otherwise, or she contradicts herself later.

**Member 13:** And this is a problem I have with this congregation. Of course, it's a number of other reasons as well, but this is the main, the main feeling that I have. I'm just not part of the group. And people say you have to be part of a group. You have to participate to be part of a group. But for me, that's not the essence of a group. And I think that's one thing that we need to look at as well.

...

**Member 13:** I think one thing that we once again should understand is the fact of, it's easy to say I need this, I need that. And unfortunately we human beings became needy people. But we've decided we're not going to do anything about it. And I think if you have a need, you need to be the person who leads this into a process of having that need fulfilled. For example, if I say, I have a need to be accepted by a community. Then I need to go into a community, in a specific community and be part of that community. Because if I don't do that, the need is not fulfilled. And if that need is not fulfilled, I would rather stay and then say bad things about that community than actually saying that's a good community. So I think that this whole thing of people saying I need this, I need that, it's rubbish. If you want it, go and get it. It's your responsibility.

The member also provokes others by disagreeing with what they have to say – not because she is genuinely in disagreement, but in order to provoke them.

**Member 13:** I don't think we need to write a pledge. I think we are all friends. We should start among ourselves to... On a very simple basis. And say, listen. How about you come over for a cup of coffee. I've just brewed some fresh coffee. I mean seriously, why should be pledge something? Why don't we just do something?

(Mumble)

**Facilitator:** Well I think the pledge just makes it more official.

**Member 4:** It makes you feel guilty...

(Mumble)

**Member 13:** Let me be honest with you guys. If I have to do something officially I'm not doing it.

**Facilitator:** It's sort of like you're rebelling against it...

(Mumble)

**Member 13:** It's exactly like currently with my sermon preparation. I should have done a long time ago already. But I'm not doing it because I've got other work to do and I know if I don't get that work out of my mind then I cannot concentrate on this work. So why do such things. It's a piece of paper and you waste your ink on it. If you write a pledge.

As is clear from the above examples, the facilitator tried to assist the receiving and sending of clear messages through clarification, reflection and feedback. Members would also engage in this practice, thus, as was found in phase one, it suggests that the interaction pattern for the second phase of the focus group was a group-centred pattern and not a leader-centred pattern. The network of communication amongst the members was not completely free, thus members did not communicate completely openly with

each other. No visible evidence of this can be found in the data, and this assumption is made from evidence found in focus group phase one, and on observations and experiences in the Young Adults Group. The lack of evidence could be due to the fact that the content of the topic that was focused on was not of a sensitive nature, and thus the need to restrict communication in order to protect oneself was not necessary.

As was evident in the first phase of the focus group, those members of the group that were theology students tended to speak more frequently in the group, while the quieter members turned out to be those that did not study theology. This could once again be understood as a power dynamic, created by the knowledge of theological matters. However, the discussion was not focused on spiritual issues, and it was clear that one member that was a theology student did not gain power through her status as a theology student. This suggests to the researcher that the personalities of the members play the most significant part in their degree of verbalisation. This theory is confirmed by the fact that other outspoken members were also not theology students. It is possible that the personalities of theology students are similar in that they are more comfortable with speaking in front of a group of people. The researcher found no evidence in the data that pointed to the influence of gender or marital status on the interaction patterns.

Overall, during the second phase of the focus group, subgroups did not become a problem. It was identified in the previous chapter that subgroups do exist in the Young Adults Group, and thus also in the focus group. Only on a few occasions during this focus group did the attention of some members shift to the subgroup, which at that point then became more important than the group as a whole. These incidents were confronted by the facilitator and sometimes other members and were sorted out quickly. They can thus not be considered a major hindrance to the purpose of the group.

**Facilitator:** Sorry just a second.

**Member 8:** Why are you laughing?

**Facilitator:** (Laughs) Sorry. Let's just give Member 3 a minute here. Cause it's very like disconcerting. Ok.

**Member 13:** They're just laughing at me.

**Facilitator:** And Member 2?!

**Member 8:** Why are you laughing?  
**Facilitator:** Wait a second.  
**Member 3:** (Laughing)  
**Member 8:** Why are you laughing?  
**Facilitator:** Ok I'm so sorry Member 13. Yes.  
...  
**Facilitator:** Sorry what's going on there?  
**Member 6:** No we're listening here.

Through observations made by the researcher in the focus group as well as in the Young Adults Group, one member of the group was not part of a subgroup, and most likely falls into the category of 'scapegoat'. This refers to a single member of the group that is often criticised by the group, or that receives negative attention. It was clear from phase two of the focus group that Member 13 often received negative attention from the other members (as can be seen in the above example).

As was the case in phase one, all members recognised and respected the purpose of the group, namely, the collection of information, and all members contributed. There were no dominant members in this second phase. However, some members did contribute more regularly than others. There were also those who contributed less, and one member who hardly spoke.

In order to draw out those members that were more withdrawn, the facilitator used a more general approach of asking for contributions from the group. The reason for using this method was to ensure that withdrawn members did not feel uncomfortable when singled out. The reason for their silence is, according to the researcher, most likely due to their more introverted natures, or the fact that they are not comfortable communicating in a group. Non-verbal communication was also used to draw out members, and on occasion members were addressed directly:

**Facilitator:** Anybody like to add anything?  
...  
**Facilitator:** I'm just like looking at those that haven't said anything.  
**Member 12:** Everybody look at Member 9.  
(Laughter) (Mumble)

**Facilitator:** I don't wanna put you on the spot if you don't have anything to say. Or you can just say I agree with what Member 10 said. Or otherwise you don't have to say anything.

...

#### *4.2.2 Cohesion*

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the degree of cohesion of the focus group during phase two is also expected to be relatively high due to the affiliation of members with each other outside the focus group, and even outside the Young Adults Group. According to the researcher, the members of the focus group in phase two appeared more restless. This could be due to a change in the degree of cohesion in the group, prompted by the presence of two new members, or the absence of the two members present in phase one. This is just speculation, however, and other reasons such as the moods of members or the topic focused on could be cited as the cause of this shift.

The degree of cohesion in a group can be seen on both an individual as well as a group level. From observations made by the researcher during the second phase of the focus group and in the Young Adults Group, most members respected each other. One member, although regarded as part of the group, is disliked by some other members of the group. Thus it was observed that not everyone in the group respected the individual in question. Everyone is aware of this dynamic, and this could have resulted in a decline in the degree of cohesiveness, and thus caused the resultant restlessness. The member in question is also aware of this dynamics, and thus does not feel as part of the group.

**Member 13:** And this is a problem I have with this congregation. Of course, it's a number of other reasons as well, but this is the main, the main feeling that I have. I'm just not part of the group. And people say you have to be part of a group. You have to participate to be part of a group. But for me that's not really the essence of a group. And I think that's one thing that we need to look at as well.

Despite this restlessness, the group did well to stick to the task of information collection, and thus the achievement of the group goals. Members readily expressed their opinions



and thus members valued their individual opinions above that of the unanimity of the group.

#### *4.2.3 Social control mechanisms*

The norms that were enforced during phase one of the focus group were used again in phase two, so as to ensure that the focus group was controlled and that there was no discord. The facilitator presented the norms to the members at the commencement of the focus group. These norms were openly discussed by the members and even questioned.

1. Listen to each other
2. Confidentiality
3. Participate
4. Respect each other
5. Switch off your cell phones

Once again it was clear in the group that the facilitator was in charge of the questioning and the guiding of the conversation. This was made clear by the reaction of members to the facilitator's questions. Moreover, when members were not compliant with what the facilitator expected, they accepted the facilitator's reprimands. Thus, despite the covert nature of this norm, it was clear to all that the facilitator was in charge, and all adhered to this.

The roles exhibited in phase two of the focus group were very much the same as those seen in phase one. Mainly task roles were evident as this focus group was task-orientated and not therapeutic. Members of the group filled certain roles at different times. Members were initiators/contributors, information givers, as well as critics. The facilitator once again filled the role of information seeker. Quieter members were observers.

A member's status is determined by that member's position outside the group, the situation in the group and the group's composition. It appeared to the researcher that the status of most members in the group was relatively equal. There was only one member in the group that appeared to have a low status. This member was disliked by some, and

many did not respect her. Even outside the context of this group and the Young Adults Group, only a select few considered the member in question as a friend. Even though this member did not violate any norms, she often contradicted what other members said. This could have been done to gain power, or because she had nothing to lose as a low-status member<sup>16</sup>.

**Member 13:** But then you have to be realistic first of all. I mean, seriously Member 6 that's not realistic.

...

**Member 13:** ...So why do such things. It's a piece of paper and you waste your ink on it. If you write a pledge.

**Member 12:** Then use a pencil.

**Member 13:** I'm serious guys.

**Facilitator:** Yes I heard. But once you've signed the pledge, you've signed the pledge.

**Member 13:** You're welcome to but don't expect me to do that.

Despite the above-mentioned problems, overall the focus group functioned successfully. The social control mechanisms were not too stringent, however, and thus members were able to communicate their individual views openly, and keep their individuality and independence from other members of the focus group.

#### *4.2.4 Group culture*

As the Young Adults Group is an already existing group, the group culture of the focus group in phase two, is the same as the group culture described in phase one.<sup>17</sup>

#### *4.2.5 Specific Focus group dynamics*

Common communicative ground can be established around the focus group theme or due to the fact that the members are from similar backgrounds. Common ground has been established before the commencing of a focus group in groups that already exist. Thus, as

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<sup>16</sup> See example on page 61.

<sup>17</sup> See page 46 of this document.

an established group, the Young Adults Group already has common ground that existed before the commencement of the focus group.

As has already been established, the Young Adults Group and thus the focus group consist of individuals that know each other. In the previous chapter, it was shown that the advantage of this is that the group may be more productive due to the fact that members can communicate more easily with each other. Previously it was mentioned that one member was not respected by the other members of the group. Moreover, trust is lacking in the group as a whole. The material discussed in phase two of the focus group was not of a sensitive nature, and thus the lack of trust did not interfere in the process of information collection. Despite the somewhat restless atmosphere and slight tension felt in phase two of the focus group, the researcher observed that members were able to communicate fairly openly and freely with each other.

A tension exists within focus groups in that members want to add to the common ground of the focus group, yet at the same time want to speak as individuals. These two points need not be seen as in tension with each other. It is possible to add to the common ground, but simultaneously staying true to your individual beliefs. This only seems to become a problem when members add to the common ground merely to fit into the group, or members continuously speak as individuals and not as part of a group. As has been shown earlier in the chapter, one member of the group did not consider him or herself as part of the group, and often spoke as an individual and not as part of the group. This was the exception, however, and members of the focus group felt free to agree and disagree with each other:

**Facilitator:** Ok. I see there's already some disagreement.

...

**Member 4:** I don't know if I agree with you...

...

**Facilitator:** Are you all agreeing here? Going back to the basics?

**Member 12:** But you can't... You need it but you can't always...

**Member 3:** No. Well you can't just always keep on the basics. For me, it's like a baby. If you always just feed it purity... Hello!

(Laughter)

**Member 4:** But Member 3. I think what he's getting at... Once they've progressed you still have to offer purity to the potential ones that are coming in.

During the second phase of the focus group, there were no problems with dominant voices. Many of the members in the focus group contributed regularly, and thus the opinions of many were heard, and not only those of a select few. The reason for this could be the homogeneity of the group in terms of age, race, education and faith background. The members of this focus group are also familiar with each other, as many of them study together, or know each other from the Young Adults Group. This leads to a more comfortable environment in which members can communicate freely and openly.

The data that is produced from the focus group is influenced by the facilitator and her techniques. The facilitator is a member of the young adult age group, and a member of the Young Adults Group. This can be seen as an advantage, as this creates familiarity on the side of the facilitator as well as the members of the focus group. This could also be considered as a disadvantage, however, as using a facilitator from a similar background can lead to a lack of objectivity and a lack of criticality. The facilitator is a young adult, and thus she has certain expectations and opinions about the topic discussed in the focus group. Moreover, the facilitator is the researcher, and thus had preconceived ideas and expectations about the outcome of the research and the data that she wanted to collect. Conscious effort was made not to lead members in certain directions. However, in order to illicit ideas from members about their needs, a framework of needs was used to guide along the discussion. On this occasion, and on several others, the researcher led members in a certain direction. Despite the disadvantages of this, it was necessary to impose these frameworks so as to obtain the relevant information. Once again the researcher/facilitator acted as a participant as well as an observer in the focus group.

**Facilitator:** I thought it would be a bit stupid if I say: so what are your needs? So I actually went to a theory. I'm sure you've all heard of Maslow, haven't you?

...

**Facilitator:** I don't really want to debate about the mechanics of the pyramid I just thought that it might be easier to say, ok what are your physiological needs, what are your safety needs, what are your relational needs, you know what I mean.

...

**Facilitator:** Ok we just need to tie this together now.

By and large, members of a focus group stick to what they believe is the normal or standard view, particularly of taboo or sensitive topics, due to fear of rejection or ridicule from the other members of the group. As the topic of focus was not of a taboo or sensitive nature, this phenomenon was once again not clearly detected. Members were able to freely express their opinions and thus were able to disagree with each other. Focus groups sometimes bring to light conflicts that people are faced with. Members of the phase two focus group felt very strongly about the way in which society is organised and the amount of pressure this puts on young people to perform. Basically this discussion can be considered a polemic of society.

**Member 3:** A lot of things are lost. And often I see also that the youth, especially the youth and even those students are being pushed. The youth are being pushed. If you don't do sport, if you don't this, if you don't do that... You're nothing in society. If you don't have these and these subjects you can't do anything.

...

**Member 2:** Unless you like have this, this and this, you're like a nobody. That's just. I feel very strongly about this. Your sense of personhood is determined by what you have. I mean, what is wrong with being just poor. I mean...

**Member 13:** What is wrong with just being single?

(Laughter)

**Member 2:** Exactly!

**Member 13:** I'm asking these questions because that's what society puts upon single people.

**Member 2:** It's a lot of pressure!

...

**Member 2:** Like this whole like Survivor and Apprentice that just shows us what society's like. It's dog eat dog. I think those programmes are a good reflection of our society. It's dog eat dog, it's who gets ahead, and if you can't handle the pressure then get out of the kitchen. That type of thing. No I mean it. It actually breaks people instead of building people up.

## **4.3 Analysis of content of Phase Two of the focus group**

### *4.3.1 Summary of phase two*

**Recap of the last phase:** all agreed with what was said in the last phase. A member that had not been present at the last phase expressed a need to be understood by someone in the church, someone that one can speak to in confidence. This member felt excluded from the group and not accepted. It was also said that the church in the city has become impersonal – people in the church prefer to rush home than stay behind after church to build relationships.

**The needs of young adults, other than spiritual:** physical needs such as food, water and shelter. There was a need for job security, financial security and a secure environment to live in. Young adults have a need to be loved, to be accepted, and a need to give love. A need for friends was expressed, as well as a need to be needed. Young adults have a need to be a part of something, a need to belong, a need to trust somebody and to be trustworthy – in other words, there is a need for the presence of trust. Often the need to be understood was expressed – especially by the church. Young adults expressed the need for recognition, and the need to be valued, important and appreciated. When one feels valuable, one is able to see others as valuable too. There is a need for attention, and a need for a purpose in life. Young adults want to be able to be assertive and confident and to stand up for what they believe in. There is a need amongst young adults to find personal giftedness in order to minister effectively. Young adults need to spoil themselves, have fun and find happiness. A need was expressed for nature – the importance of nature even when one dwells in the city. The argument was also put forward that it is the individual's responsibility to have his or her specific need fulfilled.

**Should the church be providing for ALL your needs?** Young adults believe the church is not only there to fulfil spiritual needs, but also social, belongingness, love and esteem needs. This does not give one the right to take advantage of the church. The church should provide for physical needs (such as food and shelter) for those who don't have it.

The church should provide purpose, assist in uncovering giftedness, and understand young adults' perspectives. Yet the church cannot provide everything. Young adults expressed the need for surety of faith. Some believe that this means going back to the basics, yet others disagreed. How does one marry different levels of spiritual development while still fulfilling everyone? Young adults in this day and age are bombarded with many different perspectives and information – this was expressed by one member as the biggest hindrance to faith. Life is so fast – it is not personal anymore, there is no time for God and to let God do God's work. Nothing is valued anymore. Youth and young adults are being pushed and are under pressure to perform. In order to be successful, valuable, and to be somebody in this world, one must possess certain items, or have particular qualifications. Too little time is spent on our faith and spiritual development. Even in the church there is pressure to be more spiritually developed than the next person. There is a need to prioritise, balance activities, and manage one's time. Sometimes the church seems not to be keeping up with society's fast pace, and this could be a reason for a decline in membership. The church should be aware of the pressures that face young adults and should not succumb to them, yet still keep up with society and not be old-fashioned. Young adults made it clear that everything should not be left up to the church – there is a give and take relationship between young adults and the church. Young adults must also do their part.

#### *4.3.2 Applying template of codes and additional coding<sup>18</sup>*

This chapter is concerned with all the other needs of young adults, apart from those needs that are spiritual. Thus, Code 1 through to Code 5 are applicable in this case. Code 1 are physiological needs and thus these are the needs concerned with survival. Code 2 are safety needs. These are needs concerning feelings of security, safety and being out of danger. Code 3 are belongingness and love needs and thus includes the need to affiliate with others, to be accepted and to belong. Code 4 are esteem needs. This is the need to

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<sup>18</sup> A sample of how the researcher has completed this task can be found in the Appendix, page 126 of this document

achieve, be competent and gain approval and recognition. Code 5 are self-actualisation needs. These include the need for self-fulfilment and realising one's potential.

All of the above needs are very broad classifications of needs, and thus will be broken down into more manageable themes that emerge from the data. The major themes that can be identified within the broad classification of the above-mentioned needs are: physiological needs; safety needs; the need for acceptance and love and the absence of judgement; the need to be understood – by others and the church; the need to be valued and appreciated; the need to have fun; the need for nature; the need to delay life's pace and prioritise.

#### *4.3.2.1 Physiological needs*

Young adults have physical needs such as food, water and shelter.

**Member 5:** Shelter.

**Member 4:** Food, clothes.

**Member 6:** Sex.

(Laughter)<sup>19</sup>

#### *4.3.2.2 Safety needs*

Young adults expressed a need for safety and security – financial security, living in a secure and safe environment, as well as being part of a group in which they feel safe.

**Member 5:** Feeling safe.

**Member 2:** Like secure environment.

**Member 8:** Having a job and knowing you're financially safe.

...

**Member 6:** Having a gun or something like that.

(Laughter)

**Member 6:** Having a gun.

**Member 2:** Your anti-hijack.

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<sup>19</sup> As was mentioned previously, the group is not diversely constituted. Thus the needs of these young adults are similar and the basic needs for food, clothes and sex are not an issue.



**Member 8:** It's also what part of a city you live in. One part there's lots of crime, and the other part is safe. To live in a safe suburb.

...

**Member 1:** I think the need for a place to feel safe. Like a small group, like Young Adults.

#### *4.3.2.3 The need for acceptance and love and the absence of judgement*

This need was often expressed both in the first as well as in the second phase of the focus group. Young adults need to feel accepted and loved, yet they also have a need to give love. They have a need to be accepted and to feel as though they belong. With this comes the need not to be judged or feel judged by other people as well as the church. Young adults need friends and an atmosphere where they can be themselves, where they can trust and be trusted, and where they are supported.

**Member 5:** The need to be loved.

**Member 2:** To be accepted.

**Member 5:** Or to give love.

**Member 4:** Acceptance.

**Member 3:** Acceptance.

**Member 6:** To have friends.

**Member 4:** Highly, highly important.

**Member 10:** The need to be needed.

**Member 4:** You want to feel a part of something.

**Member 3:** The need to belong.

**Member 3:** Trust.

...

**Member 3:** A place where you feel you're accepted as you are. And not judged.

**Member 2:** Yes. Non-judgemental...

**Member 8:** And there's people to support you.

...

**Member 11:** [Church is] A place, well for me, I expect it to be a place, when I go to a new area, where I can go and I'll be accepted and I'll meet new people that'll want to talk to me.

...

**Member 2:** I don't know I just think it's a community where you know you're not going to be judged. Where it's not this idea of I'm more spiritually in tune with God or you know I'm closer to God. I want to be in a community where I know that we're all just human beings. It doesn't matter where I've been, what I've done. I'm just gonna be accepted.

...

**Facilitator:** What do you feel is missing that the church is not providing for you?

**Member 11:** An atmosphere where I'm not judged.

#### *4.3.2.4 The need to be understood - by others and the church*

Young adults expressed a need to be understood by other people, as well as for the church to understand them and their situation.

**Member 2:** But I think it's important for the church to understand young adults. And issues that we're facing. So that they can counsel us and that sort of thing. If we've got issues. Cause I get the feeling, at the moment, the church is out of touch with the 20, 30 something group. Cause it doesn't understand what issues we're facing.

**Member 12:** 20, 50 group actually.

...

**Member 13:** The need to be understood.

#### *4.3.2.5 The need to be valued and appreciated*

Young adults need to know that they are being appreciated for who they are, and that they are valued and important. They need to be complimented and built up, and recognised as somebody important. Although it is never directly addressed by the Young Adults, this points to the issues of self-esteem and self-worth. Many struggle with self-esteem in their lives, and the need of the young adults to be affirmed points directly to this.

**Member 4:** I mean if you get to such a point where what you do and say you get a lot of recognition for. People congratulate you, people enjoy working with you... It's great for your esteem. It builds your esteem. To know that you are more than just another brick in the wall as it were you know. You're part of the foundation of anything. Whatever. A group or in the work. Like a crucial cog in the mechanism. That's what builds your esteem up, need for esteem.

**Member 13:** I think this is a major problem in our youth work and within our work here in the congregation. In general people are not appreciating, not saying listen, you know, you have done something well today. Because if somebody would say to me I have done something well today, the next day I will do it even better.

...

**Member 11:** I need attention.

**Member 2:** To feel valuable.

**Member 2:** If you feel valuable you'll see others as valuable. And it affects the whole relational thing.

**Member 10:** And you'll allow others to see you as valuable.

#### *4.3.2.6 The need to have fun*

The young adults articulated a need to have fun. One cannot always be concerned with the seriousness of life, and needs to be spontaneous and spoil oneself every now and again.

**Member 12:** I think you need to be able to have the means to sometimes spoil yourself, to have fun. Ok I'm just talking about money. Sometimes you don't have enough money to do something you wanna do... Once in a while go to movies or a fire, or a video game. I think that's also a need.

**Member 2:** You need to be spoilt...

**Member 12:** You can live without these things...

**Member 2:** But it's nice once in a while.

**Member 6:** For me it is.

**Member 8:** They make you happy.

#### *4.3.2.7 The need for nature*

A need also expressed by the young adults was one for nature. Despite the fact that they live in the city, it is necessary to be in nature occasionally, or be surrounded by something from nature in the city.

**Member 12:** People need nature. You can't live in a city and just look at walls. I mean even people that never go out of the city, have plants in the house. Very rich people have a screen with fish or something going. You know. But people need nature. That's why we need parks.

#### *4.3.2.8 The need to delay life's pace and prioritise*

An issue was raised in the focus group about the fast pace of life, and how this has caused people to no longer value their relationships and faith. Thus, a need was expressed to balance the activities that are taken on. There was also a call to manage one's time properly, to make time for relaxation, and prioritise one's activities. Thus there is a need

to reflect on what is most important in one's life, and allocate enough time to those activities.

**Member 4:** I think it's a time issue. Maybe a time management issue. Time management. Because in the same sense that I use time for the faith and spiritual side of it, if I had more time, would I devote more time to it? Or would I go and do the work that I'm back-lagging on at varsity and stuff like that you know. You devote time to something else.

**Member 2:** Yes. This is important. We lead such fast lives.

**Member 4:** And now that it's so much faster...

**Member 2:** Fast!

**Member 8:** No time!

...

**Member 2:** It's technology. Interfacing. It makes things so impersonal. My connection with you is a cell phone. There's no personal interaction anymore.

...

**Member 3:** I mean, how many times do we sit in a church service...

**Member 2:** Looking at our watch. I do sometimes.

**Member 3:** What's going on today, the pastor... That's five minutes too long. You're not giving God time to work.

...

**Member 8:** Member 12 said that phones accelerate relationships.

**Member 2:** Yes. Fast, and that's the problem. Everything's fast. Fast relationships, fast spirituality, fast way of reading the Bible, fast...

**Member 6:** Divorce.

**Member 2:** Yes. Easy way out. Nothing's like... Nothing is like slowed down anymore. Nothing is valued.

**Member 6:** But don't you think it comes down to priorities? Instead of phoning Member 2 and saying how are you doing. Saying, ok, today I'm gonna drive to Member 2 and...

**Member 2:** Have coffee...

**Member 6:** And I'm gonna sit there and have coffee and ask you how you're doing.

**Facilitator:** So what you're saying is that we should actually be returning to this...

**Member 6:** Old ways...

**Facilitator:** Yes.

(Mumble)

**Member 4:** There are good points and stuff about it. But it's about using everything in moderation. And prioritising. I think moderation is a very important thing.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, it was found that one member of the phase two focus group was opposed to fellow members, and it was proven that the things she said were contrary to the purpose of information collection. Due to this or other possible unknown reasons, phase two was experienced as more restless than phase one. Despite these dynamics, valuable information was collected. The data collected in phase two was summarised, and the existing codes were applied to the data. Some of the original codes were kept on, while other, more relevant themes emerged from the data. The themes identified were: physiological needs; safety needs; the need for acceptance and love and the absence of judgement; the need to be understood – by others and the church; the need to be valued and appreciated; the need to have fun; the need for nature; the need to delay life's pace and prioritise. Using these themes of needs that emerged in this and the previous chapter, a framework for a workable programme for young adults will be suggested in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5 - A growth Group Solution**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Having identified the needs of the Young Adults at the Lutheran Church in Hayfields, these needs will now be translated into the development of a framework that could possibly be used in the work with the Young Adults and others in a similar age group in the future. The programme laid out in this chapter will consist of possible practical suggestions and examples. A number of the needs identified by the Young Adults are needs that cannot be addressed as exercises in the group, however, and should be viewed as principles and values that should guide the leaders and members, and govern the running of the group. The aim of this programme is to address the specific needs of the Young Adults, so as to encourage them to continue attending church, as well as to help them grow in all areas of life. Despite the fact that this programme is specific to the Lutheran Church in Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg, it might well be a useful tool for other congregations and groups of young adults in churches.

### **5.2 Physiological needs**

Despite the fact that the Young Adults identified food, water and shelter as one of their needs, it became clear that the young adults did not expect the church to fulfil these specific needs. When, however, these needs cannot be fulfilled by the individual him- or herself, the church could be providing these needs. Thus, the Young Adults were of the opinion that the church could be providing different resources for the different needs of people.

**M6:** The church must fulfil different needs for different people. Somebody who doesn't have shelter or food, the church must try to fulfil that. But I have shelter and food. For one, that need has been fulfilled, but I need something else.

Thus, as it is assumed that physiological needs are fulfilled for the Young Adults, these needs will not be included in the framework of the programme. However, if these needs are applicable in a different context, they can be addressed in creative ways.

### **5.3 Safety needs**

As is the case with the physiological needs, safety needs in terms of living in a secure neighbourhood, feeling safe, or financial security, are not needs that the church can be responsible for. However, if these needs are of central importance to young adults, informational talks can be offered to young adults that advise on issues of physical and financial safety. In addition, young adults should be advised as to where they can go to receive the information or services they are seeking.

Another need expressed by the Young Adults, which is viewed as a safety need, is the need to feel safe within a group. Thus it is assumed that a group exists within the church that provides a safe atmosphere for young adults. A safe atmosphere can be interpreted as an atmosphere in which one is able to freely express oneself, and in which trust exists. The creating of a safe atmosphere is largely dependent on the participants of the group, however, and thus cannot always be mediated by the exercises completed in the group, or the atmosphere created by the leader and the members. Practical suggestions that address belonging and acceptance, and thus create a safe atmosphere, will be discussed below.

### **5.4 The need for acceptance and love and the absence of judgement**

As addressed previously, the forging of a group that exhibits an atmosphere of acceptance, trust and belonging, is sometimes negated by the personalities of the individuals within the group. However, if this is the case, it creates a platform from which these issues can be addressed and improved upon. In order to create an atmosphere of acceptance, belonging, and a feeling of not being judged, these principles have to be lived out by the members as well as the leaders, and addressed on a regular basis.

Honesty on the part of the members and leaders regarding their true feelings towards each other as well as about their own lives can greatly enhance the feelings of acceptance and belonging within the group. By being honest with each other, members may realise that they are not alone in their struggles and experiences, and thus display more acceptance towards others. This should then, in turn, create a feeling of belonging amongst all members of the group, yet the actual achievement of a group that is accepting and non-judgemental may take time, or can be destroyed by the non-acceptance or judgmental attitudes of just one single person in the group.

There are a number of practical suggestions for the achievement of an accepting, non-judgemental and trustworthy group, as well as suggestions that help create a feeling of belonging in the group. The fact that members do not know each other well enough contributes to the group being perceived as non-judgemental or as non-accepting. Thus, members can be helped to get to know each other better through different exercises. These can be completed at the beginning of the meeting, before the topic of the week is introduced, or can be dealt with as a topic on its own.

New members or even members that are more reserved might find it daunting to speak in front of a whole group. If this is the case, members can be asked to break up into smaller groups or pairs. In these smaller groups they will share something about themselves with the other person or persons - it can be something trivial such as favourite movies or food, or something more meaningful such as sharing stories about one's family. Members can also become better acquainted by spending more time together. Camps or outings should be arranged with the group to encourage this contact. Alternatively, whole meetings can be devoted to increasing acquaintance, either through organised exercises, or simply through casual interactions. Another suggestion is to allow time at the start of the week's meeting for everyone to share about something that has happened to him or her during the week - positive or negative<sup>20</sup>. Alternatively, icebreaker exercises that encourage sharing can be used at the start of each meeting (See *The Big Book of Icebreakers* by Edie West).

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix, page 127 of this document for an example of a handout that could be used for this exercise.



In order to create an accepting atmosphere within the group, the leader needs to set the scene. Honesty can be encouraged through sharing in the group. Through the leader's example, it is hoped that others will also be encouraged to be honest. In the same manner, the sharing of personal experiences by the leader can encourage other members to follow suite. In doing this, a space will be created in which members feel comfortable and safe to share experiences that are personal. The leader is also responsible for encouraging members to meet outside the group. Following up when members have not attended a meeting is also a gesture that helps members feel accepted and cared for. Bible studies can be focused on the issues of acceptance and judgement (Matthew 7, Luke 6 and James 4) and concepts such as trustworthiness and the sin of gossiping (Proverbs 11: 9 - 13) can be dealt with in the group.

Addressing the need for acceptance and lack of condemnation from the church is a more challenging matter. Although the Young Adults Group may be able to influence the attitudes and beliefs of those within the group, it is unlikely that they are able to influence other members of the congregation. It is thus critical that the Young Adults Group becomes a source of support, which will allow the young adults to express themselves openly and honestly, in the event of this issue arising.

The Young Adults also expressed a need to give love. Assigning different members as prayer partners or care partners for one another for a certain amount of time can facilitate this need. This will involve praying for each other, knowing the other's life situation, or even undertaking a fun activity together. This can also be useful in getting to know the other better. It might be necessary, as a leader, to follow up on this strategy, and continuously encourage members to be in touch with their assigned partners. It is recommended that partners that are not already friends be assigned to one another. Prayer and care partners can be changed after a period of three months.

Another suggestion that will address the need for giving love is the linking up of the young adults with older members of the congregation. This would involve visiting older

members of the congregation, or helping them with chores such as doing the shopping. The young adults could also give of their time to other projects<sup>21</sup>.

### **5.5 The need to be understood - by others and the church**

This need links up with the previous need concerning acceptance and belonging. Once again, this is not something that can be addressed in a single meeting of the group, but is an attitude that has to be nurtured throughout the life of the group. The need to be understood by others is closely related to the degree of familiarity between members of a group. Thus, in order to increase the understanding members have for each other, it is necessary to facilitate and increase their knowledge about each other.

As was suggested previously, time can be taken at the beginning of each meeting to allow for sharing, otherwise a session can be dedicated to getting to know the other members of the group. Alternatively, or in addition, another activity can be used. Individual members can be asked to talk about experiences or topics of their interest. It can be arranged that at every weekly meeting, one member has the opportunity, in the first few minutes of the meeting, to present a topic of interest to the group. In order to vary this exercise, members can bring photos of their families or photos of when they were younger, and talk about their families. Alternatively, members can bring a recording of their favourite song, or talk about a meaningful Bible verse. The point of these exercises, and those addressed under previous headings, is to give members the opportunity to share more about themselves, so as to facilitate greater understanding within the group for each other. This exercise can also be completed in smaller groups - of two or three - as was mentioned under the previous heading.

In order for the church to understand the Young Adults, and to take them seriously, the responsibility cannot be shouldered solely by the church. The Young Adults also need to involve themselves in activities offered by the church. By becoming active members of the church community, the entire congregation will be able to recognise them as

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<sup>21</sup> An example of such a programme is the Kenosis Project that houses AIDS orphans.

contributors, and thus it will become easier for the Young Adults to be vocalised. For example, all the members of the Young Adults Group can become involved in the Family Services that are held every month, or can join other groups that the church has to offer, such as music groups. Additionally, the Young Adults can organise events for the church community, such as dances or theatre evenings.

It is also important to have a good relationship with the pastor. This could be achieved by inviting the pastor to some of the meetings of the Young Adults, or at least informing him about the happenings within the group. Another way the Young Adults can make themselves heard is by having representation on the church council. If this representative is a member of the Young Adults Group, there is an opportunity for this group to bring their needs to the church council.

## **5.6 The need to be valued and appreciated**

This need is a basic human need in our search for meaning, and should be constantly reinforced at all meetings of the Young Adults Group. Firstly, it is important to listen to members at all times when they are speaking. This helps members feel that people are listening to them, and thus appreciating and valuing them. Another simple principle is to praise members whenever they have done something well, or compliment them. Often this is neglected, yet it is a simple gesture that will build members up and possibly improve the acceptance, understanding and feelings of belonging in the group. This is, however, dependent on individual members, and not something that the leaders can enforce.

Yet, there are also some specific exercises, in the form of analogies, that can be used to show members that they are valued and appreciated. For example, the value of a bank note will not decrease whether you step on it, crumple it up, or even tear it. This can be used as an illustration for how valuable human beings are - regardless of their life circumstances and difficulties, their value does not decrease. To accompany this

demonstration, members can read the text in Luke 12: 6 - 7, where Jesus speaks of how valuable humans are to God.

Compatible with this idea, is the issue of self-esteem and self-worth. Despite the young adults not expressing this directly, it is implied by the need to be affirmed. In Mark 12: 31 it says "You shall love your neighbour as yourself". This implies that we can and indeed, should love ourselves. A number of books can be consulted dealing with the issue of self-esteem. these are: *Glad To Be Me* edited by Dov Peretz Elkins, *Revolution from Within* by Gloria Steinem, *Self-Care* by Ray Anderson, *Design for Wholeness* by Sofield, Juliano and Hammett and *Made in God's Image* by Del Olsen.

Another exercise that can be used to show that the young adults are appreciated and valued is known as gifting. This involves members of the group saying or writing down characteristics, skills or gifts that they appreciate about other members in the group. If the members wish, they can bring symbolic gifts to accompany the verbal or written gift. This exercise, when attempted sincerely, can lead to greater appreciation of members for each other.

### **5.7 The need to have fun**

In the Young Adults Group, a programme should not only concern serious issues, but also needs to include activities that are recreational and enjoyable for the whole group. Thus, it is advisable that, at least once a month, an activity is undertaken that the young adults consider to be recreational. This could translate into an activity such as going to the movies, having coffee, or watching a live sports event together. This might also take the form of playing a game of some sort, or simply meeting at a member's house. Normal meeting times could be used for this purpose, or, alternatively, a different day of the week, or part of the weekend. Even a weekend away with the whole group could be an opportunity to spend recreational time together. It is, however, important that the members of the group are consulted before any arrangements are made. With many different opinions in a group of people, it is often difficult to arrange an activity that is

enjoyable for all. Thus, if recreational activities are arranged relatively frequently, all members will be satisfied. Alternatively, in order to bring an element of recreation into every meeting, activities or even brainteasers<sup>22</sup> can be used as icebreakers. See *The Big Book of Icebreakers* by Edie West, and *The Big Book of Business Games* by Newstrom and Scannell.

### **5.8 The need for nature**

Due to the fact that the meetings for the Young Adults Group usually take place in the evening, it is unlikely that the need for nature will be fulfilled during those meetings. However, the need for nature can be fulfilled through other means, such as going on group outings in nature. For example, doing a day hike, going fishing, or beach walks. A trip to a botanical garden for some quiet time or fellowship could fulfil this need. Another way in which this need could be fulfilled is by for example, starting a herb garden at the church. The Young Adults would be responsible for the planting and looking after of the garden, and will be able to appreciate their efforts in maintaining the garden.

### **5.9 The need to delay life's pace and prioritise**

With life being so fast-paced, the Young Adults have a need to delay this life pace and prioritise. The existence of the group in itself can partly fulfil this need. By spending quiet, reflective time during the week with each other, studying God's word, and being in the presence of God, members will be able to reflect on their lives. It is fitting that the Young Adults Group meets on a Wednesday, as this is the middle of the week, and thus in the centre of the busy lives of the young adults.

Members should be encouraged to have quiet times in the mornings (or evenings) and it is even advisable that members are held accountable to each other. This does not imply that members should be suspicious of each other or have hidden agendas, but to be an accountability partner that is there to encourage growth in one's relationship with God.

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<sup>22</sup> See Appendix, page 128 – 129 of this document for examples.

This includes being honest with each other when life experiences are challenging one's faith, and supporting each other through these times. If this is not what members are used to, it might be difficult in the beginning, and it is thus advisable to concentrate on a certain book in the Bible (for example, one of the letters, such as James or Romans), or focus on daily prescribed texts.

Earlier it was mentioned that all members could be assigned another member as a prayer or care partner. These same partners can also be seen as accountability partners. As was mentioned previously, it is advisable that members that are paired up are not yet well acquainted. This will, apart from helping members to prioritise their activities by centring God, help members to get to know each other better, become more understanding and accepting of each other, as well as help to encourage spiritual growth. For more information on care, prayer and accountability partners, refer to *Spiritual Friend* by Tilden Edwards, *Spiritual Mentoring* by Anderson and Reese, and *The Wisdom of Each Other* by Eugene Peterson.

Time management is coupled with the prioritising of God and one's faith. A useful exercise in helping young adults become aware of how they manage their time is by making use of an illustration. Each member is given a page with a circle drawn on it. The circle represents a 24-hour day. Members are invited to divide the circle up into segments, according to how many hours they spend on different activities. For example, a third of the circle can be coloured in blue, representing 8 hours of sleep; another segment representing 4 hours of attending lectures, can be coloured in pink, and so forth. Other segments can represent leisure time, sports activities, time spent on God and faith, and time spent writing assignments and learning for tests or exams. When the drawing is complete, it will be clearly visible how much time is spent on each activity. With this in mind, young adults can make the changes they deem necessary in order to manage their time properly and prioritise important activities.

## **5.10 The need to grow spiritually – as individuals and as church**

Some of the exercises suggested previously can be used to help the Young Adults grow spiritually, such as the encouragement to engage in quiet times in the morning, or the assigning of prayer or care partners. In order to foster spiritual growth, the group needs a spiritual atmosphere. One way of helping to achieve this is to have meetings inside the church, as opposed to any other rooms in the church complex. It is also important to start and end the meetings with prayer.

In order to grow spiritually, it is vital to read and study the Bible (see *Living by the Book* by Hendricks and Hendricks). For example, a certain book of the Bible can be selected and studied in the group together. Members can be asked to read passages at home, and this will encourage them to read their Bible. Even though it is important to know about the historical background, and see the Bible from an academic perspective, spiritual growth happens when one is open to God's word. Thus all members should be able to feel free to share their personal experiences with what they have read. Members can also be encouraged to keep a spiritual journal, in which they can record spiritual experiences (see *How to Keep a Spiritual Journal* by Ronald Klug). Through this, they will be able to deepen their relationship with God and grow spiritually.

Learning more about God and learning how to hear God is a process that requires committed and consistent reading of the Bible, prayer and openness to God. Although most of this is the responsibility of the individual, it can be encouraged in the meetings of the young adults. This is again an important task that the accountability and prayer partners can fulfil by encouraging each other to pray, and read the Bible. It might also be useful, at the beginning of each meeting, to allow for an opportunity for the members to share their experiences with God during the week. This could include positive experiences, or prayers that God has answered, or, alternatively, it could be negative, frustrating experiences, such as not knowing God's will.

Prayer can be explored by examining what the Bible says about it (James 5: 16), or discussing members' personal experiences with it. Also consult *Praying with Power* edited by Bishop Joe Aldred, *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine* edited by Mark Kiley et al., *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, and *Andrew Murray on Prayer* by Andrew Murray. A useful idea is to have a prayer list, and each member can record, every week, what he or she is praying for. Apart from these forming part of the prayers said during the meeting, members will be asked to remember the needs of the others in their prayers during the week. In the following meeting, these prayers can be followed up on, in order to see how God has answered these prayers. This will not only help members to feel more cared for and accepted within the group, but together members will be able to see how God works in their lives, and thus grow spiritually.

Growing spiritually involves learning more about God through Bible study and prayer, and fellowship with other Christians. However, aimlessly reading Scripture may not achieve much. Spiritual growth can be effectively achieved if specific themes are addressed in a logical order. For example, the Young Adults Group could follow themes of the church year, focusing on events such as Lent through to Easter, or Advent through to Christmas. Or, the group could focus on Jesus, His life and His death (see *Who is Jesus?* by John Tooke). Instead of this, specific themes can be chosen, for example, finding a spiritual home, spiritual discipline – Bible study and prayer, caring for your body, the daily challenge of time, making sense of money, loving yourself, forgiveness, and exploring images of God (See *With Heart and Mind and Soul* by Neinast and Ettinger). Other themes could include getting to know yourself, building self-esteem and discovering your gifts. There are numerous themes that could be addressed within the Young Adults Group. Examples of possible activity plans are given at the end of this chapter.

Not only is there a need for the young adults to grow spiritually as individuals, but also as a church. As the Young Adults Group does not have much influence over the rest of the congregation, this spiritual growth can start within the group, amongst the young adults. The Young Adults can pray together for God's guidance for the group - where it should



be going and how they should be doing God's work. Apart from that, members can also collectively pray for the church and congregation, that they will be open to God, and His guidance in the life of the congregation and its members.

### **5. 11 The need for a spiritual outlet and expression of one's spirituality**

The expression of one's spirituality is often viewed as an activity that is completed individually - a very personal activity that is between the human being and God. Members of the Young Adults Group should be encouraged to express their spirituality in the way that is most meaningful to them. Members will naturally have different ways of expressing their spirituality, and thus the sharing of these ideas with each other can be useful and meaningful. Some members might be inclined to be more meditative and contemplative, while others would rather express themselves more verbally and visually though dancing and singing.

Members can be asked to demonstrate or speak about their unique way of expressing their spirituality. This could help other members to appreciate different forms of spiritual expression, and come to understand which form is most suited to them. The Young Adults Group should provide a platform where young adults are able to express their spirituality in the way that they want to, and be supported in this. For example, different ways of praying can be explored in meetings. See *Contemplative Prayer* by Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer* by Rev. Alan Placa, *Experiments in Prayer* by Peter Coleman, *The Way in Praying: Exercises in Meditation, Intercession and Worship* by Anonymous author, and *Praying with Icons* by Jim Forest.

For example, worship services can be held in the Young Adults meetings once a month and these services can be organised by different members of the group. This will give all members the opportunity to worship in the way that they find most meaningful. Songs can be sung, music listened to, poems read, or paintings meditated on. For example, members could use the theme of dying to oneself as a theme for the service. This could

be accompanied by the reading of a suitable story<sup>23</sup>. It is often impossible to accommodate all members' differing modes of spiritual expression, and thus it is important to give individual members the chance to organise this event. All members will thus have the opportunity to worship together as a group. Members could also arrange to meet at a Sunday service and worship together as a group.

### **5.12 The need to be used by God for a specific purpose**

The purpose of life for young adults that go to church is inextricably linked to God. Their purpose is in discovering what God wants them to do in life, and thus this process starts with the discernment of gifts. It will be useful for the Young Adults Group to examine what the Bible teaches about different gifts and virtues (Gal. 5: 22, Eph. 4: 11, 1 Cor. 14). An important part of finding one's giftedness and purpose is through prayer - individual prayer as well as collective prayer. Often it is also true that others see characteristics and gifts in you that you do not know about yourself. A suitable way of dealing with this topic in the group is to introduce the members of the group to Johari's Window<sup>24</sup>. Members of the Young Adults Group should help each other by pointing out characteristics and gifts in each other. This could help members who are unsure about where their giftedness lies, and thus what their purpose in life is. Even those members that have found their giftedness should be further encouraged to use these gifts for God's glory and constantly seek out God's will and purpose for their lives.

### **5.13 The need for assurance from God**

This need links up with the rest of the spiritual needs, especially the need to be used for a specific purpose. Often the Young Adults are unsure of whether they are on the right path or not - the path that God wants them to travel on. Through the discerning of gifts, the fellowship of other Christians and through individual and collective prayer, members might be able to feel and discover what the right paths for their lives are, and thus,

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<sup>23</sup> See Appendix, page 130 – 131 of this document.

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix, page 132 of this document.

through this, receive assurance from God. There will, however, always be problems along the path of life, and thus it is important to be part of a group that understands and supports you.

## **5.14 Examples of activity plan**

### *5.14.1 The role of group leader*

The leader of the group needs to be aware of the way in which members interact with each other, and the dynamics in the group. The leader should act as a facilitator, thus guiding and facilitating the group. The facilitator of the group should be aware that a group progresses through a number of different stages, and trust is slowly earned. In order to ensure that the group is run as smoothly as possible, the leader should adopt certain skills. These are:

Active listening - listening not only with your ears, but also with your posture. Really trying to understand what the person is saying.

Paraphrasing and clarifying - checking that what you have understood is what the person has meant.

Supporting - thanking members for contributions, and encouraging members to speak.

Focusing - bringing the group back when they are straying off course.

Respecting - respecting all members of the group, and focusing on their positive attributes.

Praying - members and facilitators should pray for each other consistently. When it is appropriate during meetings, the facilitator should initiate times of prayer or even silence.

Initiating sharing - as a leader, being the first to share about yourself in the group.

Relaxing - staying calm and trusting that the Lord will work through you in the group.

(See *Introduction to Group Work Practice* by Toseland and Rivas, and *Renew* for more information.)

### 5.14.2 From Lent to Easter

This is an example of an activity plan that could be used with the Young Adults Group during the time between Shrove Tuesday and Easter. This programme includes Scripture readings for every day, and activities that explore the themes of Lent and different ways of praying. This programme is based on the book *With Christ in the Wilderness* by Worlock and Sheppard.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Shrove Tuesday	Fun!	Baking and eating pancakes together.
Ash Wednesday	Introduction to Lent	Bible study and discussion
First week of Lent	Temptations	Contemplative prayer
Second week of Lent	Compassion	Bible study and discussion
Third week of Lent	Forgiveness	Meditation on Scripture
Fourth week of Lent	Love	Worship with music
Fifth week of Lent	The gifts and demands of being alive	Bible study and discussion
Last week in Lent	Serving one another	Washing one another's feet
Good Friday	Jesus' suffering	Praying with an icon of the crucifixion
Easter Sunday	The Lord is risen!	Easter treasure hunt

#### *Shrove Tuesday*

On Shrove Tuesday, the Young Adults will get together and enjoy each others company while baking and eating pancakes together. The baking of pancakes on this day symbolises the start of the fasting in Lent. Historically, the existing supplies of flour, eggs, butter and milk were used up on this day.

*Ash Wednesday* - Joel 2: 12 –18 (The Lord's invitation)

The meeting on this Wednesday should include an introduction to Lent and the programme. It could also involve a discussion regarding what each member of the Young Adult Group is giving up for Lent. A Bible study of the text from Joel will follow.

*Thursday* - Deuteronomy 30: 15 – 20 (Choose life, not death)

*Friday* - Isaiah 58: 1 – 9 (True religion part 1)

*Saturday* - Isaiah 58: 9 – 14 (True religion part 2)

### First week of Lent - Temptations

*Sunday* - Matthew 4: 1 – 11 (Jesus' temptation in desert)

*Monday* - Matthew 25: 31 – 46 (The final judgement)

*Tuesday* - Matthew 6: 7 – 15 (Prayer)

*Wednesday* - Luke 11: 29 – 32 (A sign from God)

The theme for this session is Temptations. Thus the story of Jesus' temptation will be used (Matthew 4: 1 - 11). Contemplative prayer consists of 5 basic steps (Placa 1976: 88). Firstly the passage is read aloud. After this there is a time of silence in which members turn the most important elements over in their hearts. Thirdly, the text is thought through - thinking of the context in which it happened and the implications of the text. Then follows the contemplation, in which one experiences the presence of God. Lastly, a time of shared prayer follows, during which members can pray aloud.

*Thursday* - Matthew 7: 7 – 12 (Ask, search, knock)

*Friday* - Ezekiel 18: 21 – 28 (The seriousness of sin)

*Saturday* - Matthew 5: 43 – 48 (Love)

## Second week of Lent - Compassion

*Sunday* - Matthew 17: 1 – 9 (The true glory of Jesus)

*Monday* - Luke 6: 36 – 38 (Compassion and judging others)

*Tuesday* - Matthew 23: 1 – 12 (Humility)

*Wednesday* - Matthew 20: 17 – 28 (Greatness is servanthood)

The theme for this session is compassion. The reading to be focused on in this session is found in Luke 6: 36 - 38. A discussion can be facilitated where members share stories of acts of compassion. This discussion can also be lead into issues concerning judgement and acceptance.

*Thursday* - Jeremiah 17: 9 –10 (God's knowledge of sin)

*Friday* - Matthew 21: 33 – 43, 45 – 46 (Obeying God's covenant)

*Saturday* - Micah 7: 14, 15, 18 – 20 (No one is like God)

## Third week of Lent - Forgiveness

*Sunday* - Romans 5: 1 - 2, 5 – 8 (What it means to be acceptable to God)

*Monday* - Luke 4: 24 – 30 (The people of Nazareth turn against Jesus)

*Tuesday* - Matthew 18: 21 – 35 (An official who refused to forgive)

*Wednesday* - Deuteronomy 4: 5 – 9 (Obedience)

The theme for this session is forgiveness. Meditation begins with a prayer - offering the time of meditation to God, and requesting the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Coleman 1961: 58). The selected passage is then read - in this case Matthew 18: 21 - 35. After this, time is spent on thinking about the context in which this took place. The text is then read a second time, more slowly and deliberately. With the reading of a text from the Gospel, it is useful to imagine what it would be like to be a disciple, or how you would feel

listening to Jesus telling this parable. This meditation can often lead to a new insight into the text, and thus the last stage involves seeking some application of the text to the world or ourselves (: 59). It may be useful to end the time of meditation with a prayer of thanksgiving.

*Thursday* - Jeremiah 7: 23 – 28 (Obedience)

*Friday* - Hosea 14: 2 – 10 (God's forgiveness)

*Saturday* - Hosea 5: 15 - 6: 6 (Faithfulness and commitment)

#### Fourth week of Lent - Love

*Sunday* - John 9: 1 – 41 (Jesus heals a blind man)

*Monday* - Isaiah 65: 17 – 21 (The Lord's new creation)

*Tuesday* - John 5: 1 - 3, 5 – 16 (Jesus heals a sick man)

*Wednesday* - John 3: 1 – 17 (Spiritual birth)

The theme for this session is love. The love that Jesus expressed through healing others, as well as the love that God has for us, that ultimately led to His son's death, so that we may live. In this session, the week's texts and other texts that express love, such as additional healing miracles can be read. During this time, songs can be played that deal with God's love for us. For example, *I could sing of your love forever* by Martin Smith, *Your love oh Lord* by Third Day, *Above all* by Lenny LeBlanc and Paul Baloche and *Jesus Christ I think upon your sacrifice (Once again)* by Matt Redman.

*Thursday* - Isaiah 49: 8 – 15 (The Lords' mercy)

*Friday* - John 5: 31 – 47 (Witnesses to Jesus)

*Saturday* - Jeremiah 11: 18 – 20 (The plot to kill Jeremiah)

### Fifth week of Lent – The gifts and demands of being alive

*Sunday* - Romans 8: 8 – 11 (Living by the power of God's Spirit)

*Monday* - John 8: 1 – 11 (We are all sinners)

*Tuesday* - John 8: 21 – 30 (Faith)

*Wednesday* - John 8: 31 – 42 (The truth will set you free)

The theme is the gifts and demands of being alive. All the readings of the week (including Thursday, Friday and Saturday) have some relevance to the theme. Thus it is up to the leader to choose to focus on one text, or a number of texts. The discussion can centre on those things that make members feel more alive and those that diminish life.

*Thursday* - Psalm 105: 4 – 9 (Trust in God's promise)

*Friday* - Jeremiah 20: 10 – 13 (Trusting in God when humans cannot be trusted)

*Saturday* - John 11: 45 – 57 (The plot to kill Jesus)

### Last week in Lent – Serving one another

*Palm Sunday* - Matthew 21: 1 – 11 (Jesus enters Jerusalem)

*Monday* - John 12: 1 – 11 (Mary anoints Jesus)

*Tuesday* - John 13: 21 - 33, 36 – 38 (A new commandment)

*Wednesday* - Matthew 26: 14 - 25 and John 13: 1 – 15 (Jesus washes the feet of his disciples)

The theme of this session is serving one another. The text in John will be read, and then all members of the group will wash one another's feet. It is up to the facilitator to decide whether every member will wash each other member's feet, or split up into pairs and complete the foot washing. The foot washing can be followed by a period of silence and prayer.



*Maundy Thursday* - John 13: 1 – 15 (Jesus washes the feet of his disciples)

*Good Friday* - John 18: 1 - 19: 42 (The passion of Jesus)

The story of Jesus' passion and suffering will be read in three parts from the text in John. An icon of Jesus on the cross should be put up for all to see. This picture will be reflected on while the text is being read. Alternatively, a passage about the crucifixion can be read (Forest: 1997: 81 - 84).

*Saturday* - Psalm 42: 2, 4 and Psalm 43: 3 – 4 (Worship)

*Easter Sunday* - John 20: 1 – 9 (The Lord is risen!)

On Easter, members of the group will be invited to the church service on Sunday morning. To end off this programme, a fun activity can be undertaken by all, such as hiding chocolate Easter eggs in the church garden, and looking for them together as a group. Alternatively, members can have breakfast, or lunch together, or arrange another fun activity. Easter is a time of rejoicing, and thus it is appropriate to undertake an activity that is joyful and fun for all.

#### *5.14.3 Discovering yourself, your giftedness and your purpose*

This is another example of an activity plan that can be used with the Young Adults. This programme runs over a period of five months (this time can be varied by the facilitator) and begins with spending a weekend together. This programme addresses issues of getting to know yourself, accepting yourself, discovering where your giftedness lies, and how these gifts can be used in ministry. This programme is based on the book *Lifekeys* by Kise, Stark and Hirsh. Alternatively, the book *Values and Faith* by Larson and Larson can also be used as a resource.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Friday	Getting to know each other	Games, sports, relaxing together
Saturday	Getting to know ourselves	Completing the Myers-Briggs (MBTI)
Sunday	Fun!	Relaxing
First Wednesday	Self-esteem	Bible study and discussion
Second Wednesday	Our interests	Completing the Strong Interest Inventory
Third Wednesday	Spiritual gifts	Discussing the different spiritual gifts
Fourth Wednesday	Where do I fit in?	Looking at how our personality types and gifts fit into the ministry
Fifth Wednesday	You are valuable	Gifting each other

### *The weekend*

The purpose of the weekend is to get to know other members of the group as well as ourselves a little better. The Friday afternoon and evening can be spent playing games, or sports, or just relaxing with each other. The members can cook supper together, and have a chat around the fire. The Saturday will be spent completing the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a personality type indicator. The test will need to be administered by a professional. If this is impossible to arrange, consult *Lifekeys* Chapter 4 for a condensed version of the test. Also consult *Gifts Differing* by Myers and Myers, and *Please Understand Me* by Keirse and Bates. The Sunday will once again be spent relaxing.

### *First Wednesday – Self esteem*

The focus of this session will be on self-esteem. Having discovered their personality types, it is important that members accept themselves. A number of Bible verses and exercises<sup>25</sup> can be used when dealing with this theme. The Bible verses include Luke 10: 25 - 28, Isaiah 43: 3, John 3: 16, 8: 1 -11, 10: 11 - 18, Psalm 139: 1 - 12, Matthew 18: 12 and 1 Peter 5: 7.

### *Second Wednesday – Our interests*

This session is about our interests. The Strong Interest Inventory is suitable to be used in this case. See *Lifekeys* Chapter 2 for details.

### *Third Wednesday – Spiritual gifts*

Start the session with the reading of 1 Peter 4: 10. There are a number of different spiritual gifts. These include: administration, discernment, encouraging and counselling, faith, giving, healing, knowledge, leadership, prophecy and many more. Each of these should be explained briefly and Biblical references given. All of the gifts are explained in *Lifekeys* Chapter 3.

### *Fourth Wednesday – Where do I fit in?*

Having uncovered their giftedness, their interests and personality types, the young adults could be asking themselves where they fit in, in terms of the ministry. By looking at their specific personality types, members can discover how these gifts may be used in the ministry - consult *Lifekeys* 138 - 153. Interests and spiritual gifts of individuals can be shared within the group, and members will be able to see the large variety of gifts that God has given, and how they can all work together to build God's kingdom. Also consult

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<sup>25</sup> See pages 83 and 84 of this document.

*Prayer and Temperament: Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types* by Chester and Norrissey.

*Fifth Wednesday – You are valuable*

The last session in this programme is devoted to showing appreciation towards each other, and expressing how valuable others are. This involves gifting each other - encouraging each other, or acknowledging positive attributes or gifts in others. Gifting can be verbal, or written, and can involve symbolic or real gifts. This is up to the participants. After the gifting has taken place, the meeting can shift to being more social - drinking coffee together, or simply enjoying one another's company.

### **5.15 Conclusion**

The Young Adults Group identified a number of needs. These needs have been used as a framework for a programme that is designed to fulfil the needs of the Young Adults and create an atmosphere within a group that is conducive to growth in all areas - personal (regarding needs of security, belonging and esteem) as well as spiritual. Even though two concrete examples of activity plans were given, there is much room for change and variation. Additionally, based on the needs of the young adults, alternative activity plans can be drawn up.

## **Chapter 6 - Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The purpose of this research was two-fold: to determine the needs of the Young Adults Group in the Lutheran Church in Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg, as well as to develop a programme that is in keeping with the principles of growth and wholeness, that would address these needs. It was the researcher's hope to discover the reasons for these young adults' continued church attendance and at the same time to discover what could be done to keep them there, as active members of the church community.

The aims of the research concerned three main areas: the needs of young adults, the group dynamics of the focus group used to collect data, and the programme designed to address these needs. In terms of needs, the aim was to investigate several different kinds of needs that the young adults recognised. In terms of the group dynamics, the aim was to identify and investigate these, as well as gauge how they affected the information-giving process. Lastly, the aims concerning the programme were to design a programme that fulfilled each member's potential, and brought about growth and a striving for wholeness in the group.

Young adulthood is an exciting and challenging time. There are many outside influences and pressures that impact on the young adult's life, and as all human beings, young adults have specific needs. The data for this research was collected over a period of three to four months, through observations of the group dynamics of the Young Adult Group at the Lutheran Church, Hayfields, and specifically through the use of focus groups. Altogether thirteen young adults took part in the focus groups, eleven being present at every phase. Not only do group dynamics exist in the focus group, but also specific focus group dynamics exist, and these were observed. The focus groups interactions were recorded and transcribed.

The method used to analyse the transcribed focus group data is known as thematic analysis. The process of thematic analysis involves the encoding of data and the searching out of themes that emerge from the data. Existing codes were formed from

Maslow's hierarchy of needs. After the data was summarised, the data was encoded using the existing codes, and, in addition, new themes emerged from the data.

The first phase of the focus group concerned the spiritual needs of the young adults. The group dynamics and the specific focus group dynamics were identified and investigated. It was found that, despite the existence of interaction patterns and subgroups, as well as a lower degree of cohesion in the group than expected, these patterns did not seriously interfere in the information-giving process. It was found that members felt free to express themselves honestly. Through the encoding of the data for spiritual needs, four separate themes emerged. These were:

- i) The need to grow spiritually – as individuals and as church
- ii) The need for a spiritual outlet and expression of one's spirituality
- iii) The need to be used by God for a specific purpose
- iv) The need for assurance from God.

The second phase of the focus group addressed the needs of young adults other than spiritual. Due to the differing composition of the focus group, the group dynamics and focus group dynamics were slightly different. The members of the focus group were decidedly more restless. This may be due to several reasons. One of which could be the presence of a member in the group that is not liked and not respected by many. This member also often made contributions that were inappropriate or contradictory. Despite the tension caused by the presence of this member, the purpose of the focus group was not undermined, as all other members contributed honestly and readily. Several themes emerged after the encoding of data. These were:

- i) Physiological needs
- ii) Safety needs
- iii) The need for acceptance and love and the absence of judgement
- iv) The need to be understood – by others and the church
- v) The need to be valued and appreciated
- vi) The need to have fun
- vii) The need for nature

viii) The need to delay life's pace and prioritise.

These twelve themes of identified needs formed the framework of the programme that was designed for the Young Adults Group. Guidelines and examples of exercises were given, as well as two concrete activity plans, which covered six weeks and five months respectively, that could be used by the Young Adults Group. In all these examples, there is room for the facilitator to change or vary the exercises to suit him or her. All the guidelines and exercises are aimed at promoting growth - spiritual, emotional, and personal - and focus on fulfilling the individual's potential within the group.

Consequently, as was hoped, the research addressed the aims of investigating the needs of young adults, identifying and investigating group dynamics, and their effect on the process of information collection, as well as the designing of a programme that subscribed to the principles of growth and wholeness, and aimed to fulfil each member's potential. Therefore, through this research, the reasons for young adults coming to church were uncovered, and efforts were made to encourage their continued attendance, through the designing of a new programme for young adults.

However, this research has some limitations and is thus inconclusive. The needs of the young adults were investigated in a very specific context, and may not always be entirely transferable to other contexts. The method used is very subjective, and the resultant findings and programme are equally subjective. Despite the group and focus group dynamics being taken into account, these still have some unknown effects on the results. Additionally, despite the fact that a programme to address the needs of young adults has been designed, it has not been tested and therefore it cannot be concluded that it is a solution, and will keep young adults in the church. The newly designed programme was, however, presented to the Young Adults Group, and much positive response was received from members. Many, including the group's leadership team, expressed the desire to complete the programme in the new year.

When this programme is used in different contexts, it is recommended that the young adults in question be consulted before the time, so as to offer a programme that suites their specific needs. Further research can be conducted in testing the effectiveness of this programme in the context in which it was designed, by offering the programme in the Hayfields Lutheran Congregation in Pietermaritzburg. This research does by no means reflect the needs of all young adults in churches, and it is recommended that further research be focused on a broader scope of young adults - larger numbers of young adults from different contexts. It is also recommended that different researchers conduct the analysis, so as to improve the validity and reliability of results.



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## Appendix

### **INFORMED CONSENT**

**Study title:** Assessment of the needs of the young adults group in the Lutheran Church, Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg: A growth group solution.

**Project aims:** This study investigates the needs of the young adults in the Lutheran church in Hayfields, and this information will be used in the development of a programme for young adults in this church.

**Data collection:** The information used to carry out this study will be collected in the form of a focus group. A focus group is a group of individuals that meet and engage in a discussion focused on a particular topic.

You have been recruited as a member of the focus group, to help with the collection of information. Thank you for taking the time to help with this research. This research is being conducted for use in a dissertation, in partial fulfilment of a Masters in Theology at the University of KwaZulu Natal. By being a member of the focus group, you give the researcher the right to analyse information given and draw conclusions regarding the research topic.

**Time schedule:** The data will be collected over a period of 3 – 4 months. The focus group will take place in two phases, with each phase lasting 1 – 2 hours each.

**Audio and visual recordings:** The focus group will be recorded on tape recorder, as well as on videotape. Transcripts will be made of the information recorded. If you so wish, these transcripts can be sent to you in order to correct any mistakes, or verify the contents.

**Confidentiality:** The information revealed in the focus group sessions will be known only to myself as researcher, and my supervisor. The audio and video tapes will be erased

after transcription, and before such time will, under no circumstances be released. The transcripts of the focus groups will also not be released.

**Option not to participate:** Please note that you have the right not to partake in the focus group, or stop at any stage, even after you have completed the focus group, without fear of consequence.

I understand all the aspects of this research and hereby give my consent:

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Witness: .....

Date: .....

**Researcher:** Karen Brunke .....  
(076 382 6520)

**Project Supervisor:** Dr. Edwina Ward .....  
(033 260 5574)

## **FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE**

### *Phase 1*

1. Prayer
2. Welcome
3. Setting of norms

4. Icebreaker exercise: Johari's window.

*Introduce Johari's window. Then ask members to think of something about themselves that few people know, that they would like to share with the group.*

5. Process feelings

*Talk about the experience of sharing something new with the group, and the experience of finding out new things about others.*

6. Questions:

*Brainstorm about the word CHURCH: what does it mean to you.*

*What do you expect from the church?*

*What should the church be providing for you as a young adult?*

*What can the church provide for you as a young adult that is unique?*

*What do you feel is missing that the church is not providing for you?*

7. Fun exercise: the trust exercise

*Members are asked to write down a secret that they don't want the others to know. This is placed in an envelope and passed to the next person. After processing feelings, the envelope goes to the next person who opens it, but does not read it. After this, it is passed back to the owner.*

8. Process feelings

*Talk about the experience of trusting another person with your secret, and how it feels to have that secret in your hand.*

9. General needs questions:

*Ask the group to take a second to think about their spiritual needs - give examples from own life. Then go around the circle and brainstorm ideas. Facilitate a discussion around these ideas – link those that have similar ideas etc.*

9. Closing

*Ask the group to think about the session, and their spiritual need, but also about other needs – social, relationship etc. Further discussion will follow in the next phase.*

10. Prayer



## FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

### *Phase 2*

1. Prayer

2. Reminder of norms

3. Icebreaker exercise: My garden guided imagery

*Lead the group in a guided imagery exercise where they imagine their perfect garden. Encourage members to explore the garden, look at the plants, water features if any, are they alone in the garden, is it light or dark etc.*

4. Process

*Allow time for all members to describe their gardens briefly.*

5. Recap of last week

*This depends on what was said in the previous phase. The spiritual needs will be presented to the group to ensure that what was said was understood correctly by the researcher. Time will be given to add to the list, question, or just reflect on what was identified.*

6. Fun exercise: Crocodile River

*Read Crocodile River story to the group. Ask each individual to record the person's names, in order of worst (in terms of morals) to best. Each person should share his or her list in the group and then debate!*

7. Discussion of social, relationship, physical and other needs

*Members will be asked to take a minute to reflect on other needs that they have, other than spiritual. Examples will be given of other needs, such as the need for affiliation etc. Once again all members will be asked for their ideas, and a discussion will be facilitated regarding these needs. Lastly, the members will be asked if they believe that the church or a young adults group should fulfil these general needs.*

8. Closing exercise: Johari's window

*Invite members to circulate paper on which their names appear. Each member must write something nice, an encouraging word, a trait that they appreciate etc about the others.*

10. Closing discussion

*What have the members learnt from these phases? Ask for any last remarks regarding the needs of young adults in the church – spiritual or other.*

11. Prayer

## SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED FOCUS GROUP INTERACTIONS

...

**F:** Ok. CHURCH.

**M5:** Just what we think of it?

**F:** Yah. What does church mean to you? And just throw out some ideas here.

**M3:** Are we going to go around, or what?

**F:** I just think an open discussion would be good.

**M2:** A religious community.

**F:** Ok. Religious community.

**M8:** Spiritual family.

**F:** Spiritual family.

**M7:** I think of a building.

**F:** A building.

**M5:** Yah. So do I.

**M3:** Sense of being.

(mumble)

**M5:** Where I go most Sundays.

(Laughter)

**M1:** Um... Sorry. I don't know.

(Laughter)

**M3:** Worship.

**M1:** I think like warmth.

**M2:** Depends which church you're in.

(Laughter)

**M2:** No no, generally yah.

**M1:** Mainly my experiences with church have been positive.

(Laughter)

**M4:** Church is quite symbolic.

**F:** Ok. Unpack that a little bit more.

**M4:** Um. Well. If you look at church and you break it down into the one part... If I was Muslim, a Mosque would be very symbolic. So church, in the same way that the cross represents Christianity, the church will represent all of the things that are Christian.

**M1:** Yeah, well I guess we all think of Christianity within the church.

**M3:** An exclusive community.

(Mumble).

**M2:** It's a human institution.

**M3:** Yah.

**M1:** No it's not, Member 2, it's divine.

(Laughter)

**M2:** You really had good experiences of church.

(Laughter)

**M1:** I'm teasing.

**M2:** Yah, I know you are.

**F:** Ok. Next question. What do you expect from the church?

**M1:** Caring.

**M6:** To fill my spiritual needs.

**F:** Caring. Ok, to fill your spiritual needs.

**M1:** Were you being serious?

**M6:** Yah.

**M10:** I'd say a sense of family.

**F:** Ok. Are you saying..

**M10:** That's what I expect.

**F:** You're wanting that. Ok.

**M2:** I place where you know you're going to grow.

**M1:** Openness.

**F:** Openness. Grow in what way?

**M2:** Spiritually.

**M3:** A place where you feel you're accepted as you are. And not judged.

**M2:** Yes. Non-judgemental...

**M8:** And there's people to support you.

**M6:** To give me a job.

(Laughter)

**F:** I'm sure Member 3 agrees.

**M11:** A place, well for me it's become I expect it to be a place, when I go to a new area, where I can go and I'll be accepted and I'll meet new people that'll want to talk to me.

...

**F:** Ok. Anybody else?

**M4:** It's also a foundation.

**F:** Ok.

**M1:** (Nods)

**M2:** A place that gives you meaning.

**M1:** Also. Um. A place that will like um enhance like. I don't know how to put this. Member 2 like... Is like a catalyst for my ministry. Like where I can make contacts and um and know that this guy is you know he's a hardware store owner and if I ever need paint for something then I can go to him and he'll you know. Or...

**M4:** Fellowship.

**M2:** Fellowship.

**M5:** Give you free paint.

**M1:** Yeah give me free paint. But I mean, also, I mean the programmes that our church... That I would like our church to have would be more like outward, instead of like when I go there, there's something that I can get involved with, to minister to other people. I expect that from churches.

**F:** Right. What should the church be providing you as a young adult? Is that different from what you've just told me? Expecting, in other words. What you've just told me about expecting from the church. What should the church be providing you as a young adult?

**M2:** I think as a young adult I want the church to know where I'm at, and what the issues I'm facing are. That means an understanding of like the broader context. Um. You know society in general. What issues do young people face? So I think just a church that's aware of my... Of my context. My personal context and then the broader context.

...

## SAMPLE OF ENCODING OF DATA AND EMERGENCE OF THEMES - SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Underlined phrases = Code 6 (Spiritual needs)

Highlighted = emergence of new themes

The need to grow spiritually

The need for a spiritual outlet and expression of one's spirituality

The need for assurance from God

M2: To grow in such a way that I can actually maybe hear God.

F: Yes Member 10.

M10: I was also gonna say that every now and then an assurance from God. Just to know that. Evidence of a prayer being answered or. Not that I wouldn't believe without... But I think it would make it easier. It's easier to build on assurance or a little message from God every now and then.

...

M1: Sometimes I wish God would just talk to us. Like "Hello. You're going the wrong way!"

(Laughter)

M1: "Don't go down that street".

M2: I dunno but maybe a group where they help you to understand the Bible better.

M6: And not just argue about it.

M2: Or where they discern your gifts you know. And that sort of thing.

...

M10: I think on that a spiritual outlet. Like if you feel joy or something to be able to giggle to dance or to act on it. Not be frustrated and keep it inside. Like what must we do with it?

...

## SAMPLE OF ENCODING OF DATA AND EMERGENCE OF THEMES - NEEDS OTHER THAN SPIRITUAL

Underlined phrases = Code 3 (Belongingness and love needs)

Highlighted = emergence of new themes

The need for acceptance and love and the absence of judgement

The need to be understood

The need to be valued and appreciated

...

M5: The need to be loved.

M2: To be accepted.

M5: Or to give love.

M4: Acceptance.

M3: Acceptance.

M6: To have friends.

M4: Highly, highly important.

M10: The need to be needed.

M3: Yes.

F: Ok.

M4: You want to feel a part of something.

F: A part of something, ok.

M3: The need to belong.

M4: Mmh.

F: To belong.

M3: Trust.

F: Ok.

M13: The need to be understood.

F: Ok.

...

**Member 13:** I think this is a major problem in our youth work and within our work here in the congregation. In general people are not appreciating, not saying listen, you know, you have done something well today. Because if somebody would say to me I have done something well today I will the next day I will do it even better. If I am not hearing it I'm gonna puff back. And I think this is one thing where people must be extremely careful on how you deal with youth and with young people. Because if I feel I'm not needed here then I back off. That's how principles work. Show appreciation.

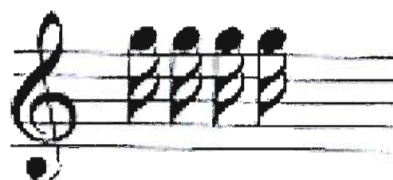
M11: I need attention.

M2: To feel valuable.

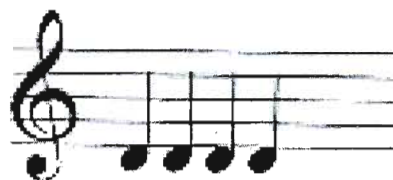
...

# HIGH NOTE ACTIVITY SHEET

HANDOUT



High Notes:



Medium Notes:



Low Notes:

1 belt hitting	2 <b>EXIT LEG</b>	3 often not often not often	4 night fly
5 <b>MIGRAINE</b>	6 SPRING SUMMER AUTUMN WINTER	7 <b>9ALL5</b>	8 once upon a time 
9 GIVE GET GIVE GET GIVE GET GIVE GET	10 <b>breth</b>	11 ←○○-□WZ↑	12 <b>esroh riding</b>
13 EMPLOY T MEN	14 wire just	15 DIRTY FILTY UNWASHED SOILED UNCLEAN SULLED SMUDGED DESPOILED FOUL TARNISHED SOOTY DUSTY	16 <b>DO12"OR</b>

1.	Hitting below the belt
2.	Out on a limb
3.	More often than not
4.	Fly by night
5.	A splitting headache
6.	A man for all seasons
7.	All in a day's work
8.	Westside story
9.	Forgive and forget
10.	Short of breath
11.	Accident prone
12.	Horseback riding
13.	Men out of work
14.	Just under the wire
15.	Dirty dozen
16.	A foot in the door

Taken from *The Big Book of Business Games* by Newstrom & Scannell



1 COUNTRY COUNTRY	2 1 + T < WHOLE	3 shrift	4 GRATIS ALL ALL ALL ALL
5 THE SAND	6 COLLAR 102°	7 to ngue ngue	8 COLT Jr.
9 NOW IN HERE	10 RN	11 income	12 D DUMP D U goose U M feathers M P DUMP P
13 ME IT IT IT IT IT IT IT IT IT	14 ACUM	15 GAG U	16 LEAST

1.	Cross country
2.	The whole is greater than the sum of its parts
3.	Short shrift
4.	Free for all
5.	Head in the sand
6.	Hot under the collar
7.	Forked tongue or tongue twister
8.	Son of a gun
9.	Nowhere in sight
10.	Little big horn
11.	High income brackets
12.	Down in the dumps
13.	It's below me
14.	See you in the morning
15.	The gag's on you
16.	Last but not least

Taken from *The Big Book of Business Games* by Newstrom & Scannell

## **A call to serve: the Bamboo Story**

Once upon a time in the heart of the Western kingdom, lay a beautiful garden. And there in the cool of the day was the Master of the garden who went for a walk. Of all the dwellers of the garden, the most beautiful and beloved was a gracious and noble Bamboo. Year after year, Bamboo grew yet more beautiful and gracious. He was conscious of his master's love and watchful delight, yet he was modest and in all things gentle.

Often the Wind came to revel in the garden, Bamboo would throw aside his dignity. He would dance and sway merrily, tossing and leaping and bowing in joyous abandon. He would lead the great dance of the garden which most delighted his master's heart.

One day the master himself drew near to look at his Bamboo with eyes of curious expectancy. And Bamboo, in a passion of love, bowed his great head to the ground in joyful greeting. The master spoke:

"Bamboo, I would use you."

Bamboo flung his head to the sky in utter delight. The day of days had been growing hour by hour, the day in which he would find his completion and destiny! His voice came low:

"Master, I am ready, use me as you want."

"Bamboo," the master's voice was grave, "I would be obliged to take you and cut you down."

A trembling of great horror shook Bamboo.

"Cut .... me ..... down? Me whom you, Master, have made the most beautiful in all of your garden? To cut me down, ah, not that, not that. Use me for your joy, oh master, but cut me not down."

"Beloved Bamboo," the master's voice grew graver still. "If I do not cut you down, then I cannot use you."

The garden grew still. Wind held her breath. Bamboo slowly bent his proud and glorious head. There came a whisper.

"Master, if you cannot use me unless you cut me down, then do your will and cut."

"Bamboo, beloved Bamboo, I would cut your leaves and branches from you also."

"Master, master, spare me. Cut me down and lay my beauty in the dust, but would you take from me my leaves and branches also?"

"Bamboo alas! If I do not cut them away, I cannot use you."

The sun hid her face. A listening butterfly glided fearfully away. Bamboo shivered in terrible expectancy, whispering low.

"Master, cut away."

"Bamboo, Bamboo, I would divided you in two and cut your heart, for if I do not cut so, I cannot use you."

"Master, master, then cut and divide."

So the master of the garden took Bamboo and cut him down and hacked off his branches and stripped off his leaves and divided him in two and cut out his heart, and lifting him gently, carried him to where there was a spring of fresh, sparkling water in the midst of the master's dry field. Then putting down one end of broken Bamboo into the spring and the other end into the water channel in his field, the master laid down gently his beloved Bamboo.

The spring sang welcome. The clear sparkling water raced joyously down the channel of Bamboo's tom body into the waiting fields. Then the rice was planted and the days went by. The shoots grew. The harvest came. In that day was Bamboo, once so glorious in his stately beauty, yet more glorious in his brokenness and humility. For in his beauty he was life abundant. But in his brokenness he became a channel of abundant life to his master's world.

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# JOHARI'S WINDOW

	KNOWN TO SELF	UNKNOWN TO SELF
KNOWN TO OTHERS	<p><i>The things you know about yourself which are known to others is called your</i></p> <p><b>FREE AREA</b></p> <p><u>It contains:</u> Your beginnings and your past, your education, your family, your work history, your achievements. Your personality and your maturity, your skills, your values and some of your limitations.</p>	<p><i>What you do not know about yourself which is known to others is called your</i></p> <p><b>BLIND AREA</b></p> <p><u>It contains:</u> How others see you and assess your ability. Intelligence and potential as well as your limitations. How they assess your personality, maturity, character, your manners, affections, degree of vanity, tolerance, stress levels and sincerity. Your reliability and consistency, charisma and selfishness. How they plan to help or use you, and what opportunities and future they see for you. Some may even know if you snore ...</p>
UNKNOWN TO OTHERS	<p><i>What you know about yourself which is unknown to others is called your</i></p> <p><b>HIDDEN AREA</b></p> <p><u>It contains:</u> Your feelings about yourself and your competence. Your need for company and for love. Your feelings about some others, the relationships you wish to enter into and the trust you have in some people. Your dreams, fantasies, hopes, goals and plans. Your real abilities and your perceived limitations and self-esteem. The degree to which you wish to change yourself. Some of your past history, your failures and some of your weaknesses. Your health and bank balance ...</p>	<p><i>What you do not know about yourself which are unknown to others is called your</i></p> <p><b>DARK AREA</b></p> <p><u>It contains:</u> Your future and your opportunities!</p>

Taken from *LifeLine* personal growth course