Religion, Spirituality and the Formation of Youth Identities:

The case of the Assemblies of God in East London

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By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation entitled: "Religion, Spirituality and the Formation of Youth Identities: The case of the Assemblies of God in East London" is my own independent work and that it has not been previously or in part submitted for any qualification at/in another Institution.

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ABSTRACT

The present study considers the role of religion and spirituality on the formation of youth identities by focusing on the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, particularly the Assemblies of God, at East London, in the Eastern Cape. It looks at the conceptualisation of religion, particularly Christianity, by young 'born-again' Christians; explores the role of spirituality in the construction of youth identities; and examines the impact of both religion and spirituality in the decision-making, life style, and roles of young people in the society. These factors are explored within the South African socio-religious context, where the larger population of the country claims to be Christian. The study used Nicholas Bhekinkosi Bhengu, with his 'Back to God Crusade' as a point of reference to the conceptualisation of spirituality, and identity formation in the Assemblies of God.

Key words:

Religion, Spirituality, Youth, Identity, Born-Free, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Christianity

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFM   Apostolic Faith Mission

AIC   African Independent/Initiated Churches

AOG   Assemblies of God

ATR   African Traditional Religions

DACB   Dictionary of African Christian Biographies

DRC   Dutch Reformed Church

FGC   Full Gospel Church

SSA   Statistics South Africa

WWJD   What Would Jesus Do?

CHAPTER I
GENERAL INTRODUCTIONS

Introduction and Background

1.1. Introduction

This chapter foregrounds the introductory parts of this research. As such, aspects such as the background to the study, the research problem, research questions, the aims and objectives of the research, the significance of the study and the definition of key terms are addressed. The afore-mentioned aspects inform the reader about what to expect in this chapter.

1.2. Background

Over the past years, a considerable amount of research has emerged that demonstrates the benefits of religious practice within society (Fagan, 2006:1). Religious practice play a central role in shaping human experiences and how individuals act, react and interact with one another in various aspects of the environment in which they live. This role has attracted a large number of theologians, sociologists and social scientists, all over the world, to study and explore the impact of religion and spirituality on the lives of people in various social contexts. Akinfenwa, Fagbamila, and Abdulganiyu (2014:8) assert that sociologists have studied and continue to study religion as both a belief system and as a social institution. As a belief system, sociologists regard religion as a phenomenon that shapes what people think and how they see the world; and as a social institution, religion is seen as a pattern of social action organised around the beliefs and practices that people develop to answer questions about the meaning of existence.

However, from a sociological perspective, it is not important what one believes about religion. What is important is the ability to examine religion objectively in its social and cultural context (Akinfenwa *et al.*, 2014:9). This has led sociologists such as Emile Durkheim (1912) and Max Weber (1913) to examine religion objectively. They view it as a belief system that provides a cultural framework - as its practice contributes to the cohesion of the society - and as a social institution that provides a sense of identity and belonging. Theologians and social scientists, on the contrary, do not only see religion as a belief system and as a social institution but perceive it as a discipline of meta-physics as well (Motlhabi, 2001:3). While meta-physics ask questions about the nature of reality, religion in this perspective, tries to find answers to practical questions concerning the human quest for meaning and fulfilment in relation to ultimate realities

and values (Motlhabi, 2001:3; Cauthen, 1984:114), and thus, bringing the aspect of spirituality into surface.

This quest for meaning and fulfilment is embedded within the strand of given moral codes, identification, and an ideological perspective. Religion and spirituality, in this sense, implies an ethical response to whatever is regarded as supreme or ultimate in Being and this active response forms part of an identification process. That is why, those who adhere to the ethical demands of Christ, identify themselves as Christians; those who worship other deities identify and subject themselves to the demands of such gods. Religious meaning and spirituality therefore is somehow attached to the issues of moral codes and identification. The balance between the two: moral ethic and identification, is imperative - these two aspects determine the role, impact, and continuity of religious meaning in the lives of people.

However, as Collins-Mayo (2010:1) noted, if we are to understand the meaning, role and impact of religion in the contemporary society and glimpse its future, "we need to turn our attention to young people. Young people are the generation at the forefront of cultural and social change." It is through their active involvement in religion, religious ideologies and religious institutional structures that we get to know how resilient and productive religious belief systems and practices are, and what they hold for the coming generations. Furthermore, a number of scholars indicate that the youth's conception or understanding of religion and spirituality does contribute to the development of self-concepts, which in turn permeates to other aspects of their lives, such as their moral ethic and lifestyle (Ufimtseva, 2014:74; King, 2003:198; Seul, 1999:558; Ysseldyk et al., 2010:60).

This, however, has not always been the case. There are instances where this process is not evident. For example in South Africa, 85.6% of the overall population claims to be Christian (SSA, 2013). The youth constitute 70% of the overall population, and a large number belongs, by identification, to the Christian religion (Malila 2013:12). Yet, the rates of crime, violence, rape, abuse and other inhumane activities are escalating. Young people have become the primary source of social unrests and injustices (Malila, 2013:12). There is no correlation between their moral ethics and religious identification - the two main aspects which are supposed to be interwoven within the belief system and religious practices of the Christian religion. This stands against the norms and values of the Christian religion.

Scholars like Donahue (1995:146), further states that the major religious belief systems contains some prohibitions against substance abuse, risky sexual behaviours, violence, and crime; but these are the primary issues that continue to threaten the lives of young people, especially the 'born-free' generation in South Africa. Against this background, one wonders whether religion does have a significant role to play in the moral and spiritual lives of young people; whether it has an impact in the construction of their identities; or has any influence on their decision making, lifestyle and ethical values. This is further problematised by a group of Christians who claim to live a puritan life such as the Pentecostals and Charismatics.

The Pentecostals/Charismatics are a rapidly growing religious group within Christianity. According to Barrett and Johnson (1998:26), there were about 74 million Pentecostals/Charismatics in the world in 1970, and this constituted 6 percent of the global Christian population. In 1998, this figure had grown to 461 million, which constituted 25 percent of the overall world Christian population. Chetty (2009:4) asserts that "this figure accounted for more than the global numbers of 'Protestants' and 'Anglicans' combined together." In South Africa, according to Statistics South Africa (2001), the Pentecostals/Charismatics constituted an 8.2 percent of the overall 79.7 percent of the Christian population in 2001. Barrett and Johnson (1998:26) further estimates that by 2025, the Pentecostals/Charismatics will constitute more than 28 percent of the world Christian population.

This gives the impression that Pentecostal/Charismatic churches are one of the fastest growing groups within Christianity. But if the number of Pentecostals/Charismatics is immensely growing, internationally and nationally, why are the levels of moral decay, promiscuity, violence and crime not decreasing, particularly in South Africa? Are the puritan principles and moral ethics of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity failing to bring about a positive change in the lives of people, particularly young people, seeing that they are the primary cause of several social unrests and injustices? Or has Christianity lost its positive impact in society, more especially on young people? No doubt, there are those who believe that religion is a positive reinforcement for ethical behaviour (King & Furrow, 2004; Donahue & Benson, 1995; Youniss, McLellan, Su, & Yates, 1999).

King (2003:200), for instance, notes that within the Judeo-Christian tradition, believers are taught to experience themselves as being in a special relationship with God. In this sense, believers are to understand themselves as "sons or daughters of God." And as "sons or daughters

of God", believers are encouraged to live holy lives, and to refrain from acts of crime, violence, promiscuity or any other practices that stand against the principles of God. In light of this identification – "sons or daughters of God" – and the ethical demands of holiness, which are required from those who presume this identity, how come there is little or no impact extended on the lives of young people considering the current debased condition of young people in South Africa? This issue has to be addressed because King (2003:201) asserts that religion and spirituality offers a profound sense of connectedness with either supernatural or human other that invokes a sense of awareness to self in relation to the other.

If religion and spirituality offers a heightened consciousness of the self and triggers an understanding of others, which makes us somehow responsible for the other, why do all these acts of crime, violence, promiscuity and social unrests continue to plunge the country? There must be a reason behind all this. It is either the impact of religion and spirituality is not evident in the lives of young people, or that young people do not properly understand the concept of religion and spirituality, and the ethical demands that govern such an understanding thereof. That is why this study has been undertaken to explore and evaluate the role of religion, in this case, Christianity and spirituality on youth identities. And to establish whether religion and spirituality does influence the life style, decision-making and values of young people on their daily experiences.

1.3. The site of the study

The site in which this study was conducted is East London. The researcher indentified all the participants who participated in this study within the vicinity of East London. As a result, the participants came from various areas around East London, including the following: *Inner City* - Vincent Mall; *Townships* – Amalinda, Mdantsane NU13, NU2; and *Villages* - Duncan village/Sphunzana. The Maps of these geographical locations have been attached in the Appendix Section: Appendix IV: Diagrams (A).

1.4. Statement of the problem

The main problem of the study resonates from the fact that South Africa is viewed as a Christian and a religious country but the behaviour of most young people reflect an opposite attitude, which is contrary to the norms and values of the Christian religion. Over the years, South Africa has witnessed a number of vicious occurrences of aggression and moral degeneration. Ruthless acts of hostility such as xenophobic attacks, the escalating number of rape incidences, perpetual criminal offenses, and various incidences of abuse reflect the magnitude of this problem. With

all such occurrences, one wonders exactly what the role of religion and spirituality is on the formation of youth identities, and as to what role religion and spirituality plays in the moral or ethical lives of young people.

Young people seem to be the primary cause of social injustices and unrests. And yet, a great number of them, by affiliation, belong to the Christian religion, which prohibits all kinds of violent acts, criminal and promiscuous activities, but imposes a good conduct, ethical standards and a genuine concern for others. It is therefore the intention of this study to explore the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities. The researcher further intends to find out how religion and spirituality influences the life style, decision-making and ethical values of young people in the daily issues of life.

1.5. Research questions

- What does religion mean to the South African youth?
- What is the role of spirituality in the construction of the self-concept on youth?
- To what extent does religion and spirituality impact youth decision-making, life style and roles in society?

1.6. Research objectives

- To investigate the meaning of religion on the South African youth.
- To examine the role played by spirituality in the construction of the self-concept on youth.
- To explore how religion and spirituality impacts youth decision-making, life style and roles in society.

1.7. The purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the role of religion and spirituality on the formation of youth identities. The study intended to explore what religion means to the youth in light of the current socio-religious context of South Africa sought to assess the role of religion and spirituality by evaluating their influence in the decision-making processes, lifestyle, and moral values of young people. The study focused on the Christian youth, belonging to the Assemblies of God by religious affiliation, and who are living in the various areas around East London, including the following: the inner city, rural areas and townships.

1.8. Significance of the study

The significance of the study is optimised for the following social groups and social processes: (a) its value for intellectual community – The proposed research is likely to generate interest on the role of religion and spirituality on the formation of youth identities and thereby fostering some scholarly debates on the subject. (b) Its value for practice – The proposed study is hoped to contribute directly to youth's religious behaviour and practices in that it sought to establish the link between the theoretical models of religious identity and behavioural outcomes in youth. (c) Its value for the Christian community – The study is hoped to benefit Christians, especially the Assemblies of God church, who are considered in this study, by drawing Christians' attention to the impact that religion and spirituality plays in the lived experiences of young people. It is also hoped to make them aware of the meaningful role that religion and spirituality plays in youth's understanding of the self in relation to themselves, significant others and the community in general. (d) Its value for the general society – the study is hoped to benefit the society by promoting good ethical conduct on youth and to assist in disseminating durable, sustainable and democratic values that foster meaningful models for youth.

1.9. Definition of key concepts

Born-free generation: The 'Born-frees', also known as 'The Mandela' generation refers to young people who were born after the Apartheid era, and they account for 40 percent of the overall South African population (Lefevre, 2014; Mattes, 2011:7).

Identities: Identities are the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is (Leary and Tangney, 2012:69).

Self-concept: Self-concept is defined as an organised informational summary of perceived facts about oneself, including such things as one's traits, values, social roles, interests, physical characteristics, and personal history (Bergner and Holmes, 2000:36).

Youth: Youth is viewed as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence; or as all the people within a specific age group; or as a state of being. The age groups that constitute youth vary from 10 to 35 years of age (Cnaan, Gelles and Sinha, 2004:175; Nugent, 2005:2; Mattes, 2011:5). In South Africa, the National Youth Policy defines youth as anyone between the ages of 14 and 35 years (SSA, 2001:1; Malila, 2013:12).

Christianity: Christianity is a religion that was inspired by the life and death of its founder, the Jewish prophet Jesus of Nazareth (d. ca. 35 C.E). The name of the religion is drawn from the appellation Christ, Greek for the Hebrew "Messiah," which means "anointed" (Goucher, LeGuin and Walton, 1998:1).

1.10. Chapter outline

Chapter I: Looks at the introductory parts of the research, and the components such as the background to the study, the research problem, research questions, the aims and objectives of the research, the purpose of the study, significance of the study and the definition of key terms are covered.

Chapter II: Looks at the already existing review of literature concerning the topic of the study and covers a number of aspects such as the theoretical framework of the study, the concept of religion, the nature of religion, the concept of spirituality, the link between religion and spirituality, Christianity and religion, the Assemblies of God as part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, the understanding of spirituality in the AOG, and the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities.

Chapter III: Looks at the methodological components of the research. As such, the following aspects are adequately discussed: the research paradigm, research methods, research design, the population of the study, sample and sampling, research instruments, procedure for data collection, procedure for data analysis, the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, transferability of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study, and some ethical considerations.

Chapter IV: Deals with data presentation. As a result, the background information of the participants, and the data collected from the participants have been categorically presented.

Chapter V: Deals with the analysis. As such, the following aspects are addressed: the meaning of religion to the South African youth; the role of spirituality in the construction of the self-concept on youth; and the impact of religion and spirituality on youth decision-making, life style and roles in the society.

Chapter VI: Deals with conclusions and the recommendations of the study. as such, the following aspects are addressed: Summary of the findings of the study; conclusions to the findings of the study; recommendations for future studies; and concluding remarks.

1.11. Summary

This chapter looked at the introductory aspects of the research. The following components were adequately addressed: the background to the study, the research problem, research questions, the aims and objectives of the research, the purpose of the study, significance of the study and the definition of key terms. The chapter closes with an outline of the following chapters.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter of the research looks at the already existing literature dealing with the subject of religion, spirituality and youth identities. The researcher firstly, looked at the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study, and later addressed the literary components that concern the topic of the study.

2.2. Theoretical frameworks

Over the years, religion has been studies from both a scholarly and scientific perspectives. Early scholars and social scientists such as Tyler (1871), Frazier (1890), Durkheim (1912), James (1902) and Weber (1930) tried to explain religion from a naturalistic perspective, without invoking the actual existence of supernatural agents or events (Wilson and Green, 2007:1). Currently, due to the pioneering work of these scholars and social scientists, there is a substantial body of work on religious phenomena from a naturalistic perspective. A great deal of this work is descriptive but there is also a considerable amount of quantitative data, gathered and analysed through the use of modern science. Some scholarly studies of religion have been conducted without any underlying theoretical framework, but those that use theoretical frameworks usually use the following: Marxist theory, Freudian psychology, evolutionary theory, functionalism, interpretive sociology, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and rational choice theory (Wilson and Green, 2007:1; Goldstein, 2006:1).

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011:40), citing Barker, a theoretical framework is "a model or pattern containing a set of legitimated assumptions and a design for collecting and interpreting data". Crotty (1998:3) further defines a theoretical framework as "the philosophical stance informing the methodology". This means that a theoretical framework "has implications for every decision made in the research process" (Mertens, 1998:3). The above mentioned theoretical frameworks are therefore used within the four competing paradigms of qualitative research. These four competing paradigms are classified by Guba and Lincon (1994:109-111) as: (1) positivism, (2) post-positivism, (3) critical theory, and (4) constructivism.

Theoretical frameworks such as Freudian, Functionalism and Marxism are usually associated with positivism (Goldstein, 2006:1); while evolutionary theories are associated with post-positivism (Wilson and Green, 2007:2). Furthermore, the theoretical framework of rationale choice theory falls under the critical theory (Goldstein, 2006:1); while that of interpretive sociology, phenomenology, lived religion, and symbolic interactionism falls under the constructivism paradigm. Since this research utilises the constructivism paradigm, the researcher has only discussed the theoretical frameworks that are associated with the constructivist perspective. These include the following: interpretive sociology, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism. Each of the above is elaborated below. The researcher further used the self-concept and lived religions theories to complement the listed theoretical frameworks in this study.

2.2.1. Interpretive sociology

The interpretive framework of explaining human, social and cultural realities has its roots in the sociology of Weber (1930), who placed "the study of society in the context of human beings acting and interacting" (Crotty, 1998:68). The interpretive sociological perspective asserts that human beings are to be viewed as social beings, who interact socially with one another, and that the results of such interactions develop the fabric patterns of the society, the cultural world in which individuals live out their lives, and provides a sense of identification for individuals to locate themselves within that society. From this perspective, society is "central to forming what the human being is" (Charon, 2001:200).

The interpretive sociology as a theoretical framework is closely linked with hermeneutics and the philosophical construct of phenomenology. Hermeneutics is the study of interpretive understanding or meaning. Constructivists use the term more generally, seeing hermeneutics as a way to interpret the meaning of something from a certain standpoint or situation (Mertens, 2005:12). Phenomenology emphasises the individual's subjective experience (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003:110-120). It seeks the individual's perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon or experience. Applied in this study, the theoretical framework guided the researcher in the interpretive understanding or meaning of participants' lived experiences from their standpoint or situation.

This theoretical framework is relevant to the study in that it seeks to re-surface the perceptions of young people regarding the role and value of religion and spirituality in their lives. If a great number of the South African youth claim to be Christians, it is therefore important to understand

how they perceive Christianity. Perhaps this will shed some light as to why young people go against some of the Christian norms and values, as they are involved in social unrests, violence, crime and all forms of abuse. Through this framework, the researcher looked at how young people locate themselves within the broader context of society, and how they interpret their social world in relation to their religious belief system - Christianity.

2.2.2. Phenomenology

Phenomenology, as a theoretical concept, is said to have been founded by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), even though other prominent exponents have contributed immensely towards its improvement (Zahavi, 2007:661; Moran, 2000:2-3). Kafle (2011:181) states that phenomenology is "an umbrella term encompassing both a philosophical movement and a range of research approaches". When applied to research, Finlay (2009:6) states that phenomenology refers to the study of phenomena: their nature and meanings. According to Langdridge (2007:4), phenomenology is a theoretical construct that "aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them". It focuses on people's lived experiences and is concerned with the meaning and the way in which meaning arises out of human experiences.

Thus, the phenomenological perspective investigates the essence or essential meaning of phenomena (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:7). The term 'essence', in this context, is defined by Heidegger (1977:3) as the essential meaning of a phenomenon: that which makes a thing what it is. Applied to the current study, this theoretical framework guided the researcher in capturing the interpretations of lived experiences of young people when investigating the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities.

This theoretical framework is relevant to the study in that it seeks to discover how young people find meaning in being Christians. It assisted the researcher in finding out why young people chose to become Christians and what it means to be a 'young Christian' in South Africa. This has also assisted the researcher in finding out whether young people's identification with Christianity has any influence on their decision-making, values and lifestyles. Through the use of phenomenology, the researcher has explored the perceptions of young people as to what being a 'young Christian' means to them. This enabled the researcher to determine whether Christian norms and values are properly understood or misunderstood by young people.

2.2.3. Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is considered to be one of the most important interpretive theoretical frameworks in social research (Charon, 2001:11). Its eminence grew out of the necessity to understand society, particularly the influence of culture on human behaviour and the place of an individual in society. The foundations of symbolic interactionism, according to some scholars, are attributed to George Herber Mead, even though his ideas were developed by other social scientists such as John Dewey, Charles Cooley, William Thomas, Herbert Blumer and others (Crotty, 1998; Denzin, 1995; Gray, 2014). These social scientists wanted to develop a way of conceptualising human behaviour that focused on people's practices and lived realities, and thus developed the theoretical construct of symbolic interactionism.

Central to the study of social behaviour through symbolic interactionism is the notion of meaning. All human interactions with the world, according to this framework, are mediated through the process of meaning-making and interpretation. Gray (2014:24) and Denzin (1995:45) list some of the tenets of symbolic interactionism: people interpret the meaning of objects and actions in the world and then act upon those interpretations; meanings arise from the process of social interaction; and meanings are handled in, and are modified by, an interactive process used by people in dealing with the phenomena that are encountered.

This means that symbolic interactionism is the primary means by which human beings are able to form social or joint acts (Blumer, 1981:153). Therefore, symbolic interactionism holds that meanings are not fixed or stable but are revised on the basis of experiences. This includes the definition of 'self' and who we are (Blumer, 1981:153; Willis, 2007:177). Applied to this study, the theoretical framework guided the researcher in investigating the subject's definition of 'self' and who they are on the basis of their experience in exploring the role of religion and spirituality in their lives.

This theoretical framework is relevant to the study in that it looks at how young people define and express their self-concept in relation to the influences of significant others. Since youth is a development stage, young people are constantly challenged to fit in and to conform to the demands of social interactions. This framework assisted the researcher in exploring how young people locate their sense of identity within a dynamic society. Furthermore, symbolic interactionism assisted the researcher in exploring how social structures such as the community, social groups or the church influence the moral grounding, identification and ethical values of young people. This may indicate whether there is a correlation between the theoretical

conceptions (belief) of religion and the practical outcomes thereof (behaviour), which may signify the level of religious impact on the lives of young people.

2.2.4.   Self-concept theory

According to Stein (1995:187), the self-concept theory, "is based on the cognitive approach to social psychology". Over the last 20 years, it has become the prevailing paradigm in that discipline. McConnell and Strain (2007:52) and Gecas (1982:1), further state that the self-concept theory has "been a central concept within symbolic interactionism since the seminal writings of Mead (1934), Cooley (1902) and James (1890)". This means that the self-concept theory has been extensively used in social psychology within the concept of symbolic interactionism, which is one of the frameworks that are used by the researcher in this study. According to Shavelson and Bolus (1982:1), the theory looks at the perceptions of individuals and how they identify themselves. They (Shavelson and Bolus, 1982:1) state that the individuals' perceptions of who they are "are formed through one's experience with and interpretations of one's environment; they are influenced especially by reinforcements, evaluations of significant others, and one's attributions for one's behaviour".

The self-concept theory therefore looks at the formation of identity from a social perspective. It holds that identities are formed and developed through individual experiences, by the interpretation of one's environment, through positive reinforcements and by the evaluation of significant others. Gecas (1982:1) further indicates that there are different dimensions of self-conception. He (Gecas, 1982:1) states that "an elementary but useful distinction is between the content of self-conceptions (e.g. identities) and self-evaluations (e.g. self-esteem)". The conceptions of identities are said to focus on the meanings comprising the self as an object, gives structure and content to self-concept, and anchors the self to social systems.

The self-esteem conceptions on the other hand, deal with the evaluative and emotional dimensions of the self-concept. Owing to the aims and objectives of this research, the researcher has specifically looked at the self-conceptions of identities and not those of self-esteem. This theoretical framework is relevant to the study in that it looks at how religion, more specifically Christianity, provides the content of self-concept in youth which anchors the 'self' to social systems. Through the use of the self-concept theory, the researcher has looked at how religion contributes to the formation and development of youth identities. The researcher, in this framework, has focused on the meanings that comprise the self as an object, that gives structure and content to self-concept, and one that anchors the self to social systems.

2.2.5.   Lived religion theory

According to Robert Orsi (2003:172), the study of lived religion situates all religious creativity within the strand of culture, and approaches all religions as either lived experiences, as a theology no less than lighting a candle for a troubled loved one, and as spirituality, as well as other less culturally sanctioned forms of religious expressions. Within the strand of culture, the study of lived religion focuses on the institutions and persons, texts and rituals, practices and theology, and things and ideas – that is, all the aspects that makes and unmakes the worlds. Orsi (2003:172) further asserts that the basic concern for this culture regards "what people do with religious idioms, how they use them, what they make of themselves and their worlds…, and how, in turn, men, women, and children are fundamentally shaped by the worlds they are making as they make these worlds".

Approached in this manner, lived religion regards the ordinary concerns of religious life. It looks at religious practices and individual experiences, and these, according to McGuire (2008:185), are generally not "fixed, unitary, or even particularly coherent" but miscellaneous. This means that religious practices and individual experiences are unique and unpredictable, even though there may be shared religious traditions. Thus, lived religion looks at how individuals practice their religion and how their individual experiences influence their everyday actions (Sikkink, 2010:593). As a theoretical framework, lived religion maintains that "religion is always religion-in-action; religion-in-relationships between people, between the way the world is and the way people imagine or want it to be" (Orsi, 2003:172).

This means that lived religion implies a religious, individual, and a cooperate practice that provides people with an outlook of the world or how it should be perceived. In the sociology of religion, the notion of practice is used to refer to the everyday, lived religion of ordinary people, as opposed to formal, institutionalised religion (Ganzevoort & Roeland, 2014:93). As a framework for this study, the theory assisted the researcher in exploring the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities by focusing on their religious understanding and practice of Christianity. This is done by paying attention to the youth in the AOG, which forms part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. The researcher has therefore investigated the religious practices and individual experiences of young people in the AOG in order to evaluate the impact of religion and spirituality on their identities. Therefore, it has been shown above how these theoretical frameworks are employed in this research study.

2.3. The concept of religion

Religion has been defined in many and various ways by a number of scholars (Oppong, 2013:11). However, there is currently no consensus on the general definition that can do justice to the nature of the discipline. Religion seems to be a difficult concept to define, probably because it refers to a number of diversified belief systems, religious experiences and collective social and ritualistic practices. By implication, this means that religion has been defined within the context of a particular school of thought or discipline. For example, a great deal of scientific approaches defines religion in terms of its social or psychological functions and its belief contents (Berger, 1974:125; Dow, 2007:1-2). Anthropologists further look upon religion as an extension of the field of people's social relationships beyond the confines of a pure human society (Horton, 1960:211).

However, the etymological concept of religion is derived from the Latin word *religare*, "to bind back" or "to rebind," meaning to re-establish by worship a lost or broken intimacy between God and worshipers (Griffiths, 2000; Oppong, 2013:11). This implies that religion is a practice that facilitates the reconnection, through worship, of a missing link or broken intimacy between God and worshipers. In this regard, religion has both a divine (spiritual) and an anthropological (human) element as it facilitates a reciprocal interaction between what is considered divine or supernatural and that which is mortal. A great number of theological definitions follow this school of thought.

This is reflected by Anil (1992:31), citing Schlermacher's definition of religion:

> Religion is the feeling of man's absolute dependency. This absolute dependence was encouraged by man's sense of inadequate protection, provision, sustenance, and supremacy as such he has to depend on the divine for all those things he cannot provide for himself.

Anil (1992:68) further states that "the essence of religion lies in the belief in this Supernatural Being, who though, he or she may not be seen physically is believed to be existent and imbued with superhuman qualities and quantities." Otto's definition of religion shares a common feature with that of Schlermacher. They both acknowledge the existence of a Supernatural Being that is believed to be endowed with superhuman qualities.

Schlermacher further mentions the feeling of dependence faced by humans, especially when confronted with a sense of inadequacy; they attach themselves to the divine for completion. Religion, in this context, is a tool that enables people to find completion and personal fulfilment from their inadequacy by reconnecting with supernatural beings. These reconnections with

supernatural beings "rebind" the missing links and restore humans to a state of adequacy. Thus, the element of supernatural beings is needed in religion in order to complete those necessary areas unreached by human limitations. This definition therefore focuses on the functional aspect of religion which, in this case, is to bring stability or enable the harmonious survival of a social or cultural entity (Beckford, 1980:2).

Therefore, religion has a functional capacity at three levels: *firstly*, at a personal level - to help people overcome problems of personality imbalances, self-identity, finding meaning in life and moral reasoning. *Secondly*, at the communal level: to integrate possibly rootless people into groups and associations which provide direction and meaning in personal life as well as supportive points of reference within the larger scale of the society where individuals may feel vulnerable to powerful bureaucratic systems. *Lastly*, at the societal level: it provides a social context for the legitimisation of prevailing social order.

The functional definition of religion proves to be useful when dealing with the issues of personality imbalances, such as self-identity, finding meaning in life and moral reasoning; or communal issues, such as finding social groups or associations that provide a sense of direction, and offer some points of reference against powerful bureaucratic systems; or societal issues, such as the legitimisation of prevailing social order. However, this definition does not address the aspect of ideology or belief system. In view of the distinction between the functional aspect and the ideological construct of religion, the functionalist definition of religion does not go very far in accentuating the distinctiveness of religion; and for this reason, a substantive definition may be helpful.

According to Beckford (1980:3), "the strongest form of substantive definitions holds that religion has an essence or essential nature which can be known for certain only by intuition and introspection". This means that the uniqueness of religion or religious experiences is positioned within their radical differences from all other forms of experiences: they are experiences of the holy (Otto, 1950:141). The concept of the 'holy,' in this context, includes a multitude of other non-empirical instruments which are functionally equivalent to the representation of deities, such as charms or medicines. These experiences of the 'holy' shape our worldviews, define our belief systems and enforce various moral obligations. Hence Schmidt *et al* (1990:10), looking at the substantive definition of religion, observed that it is a system of meaning "embodied in a pattern of life, a community of faith, and a worldview that articulates a view of the sacred and of what ultimately matters".

This means that the knowledge of the presence and experiences of the 'holy' drives individuals to re-evaluate, not only their beliefs or doctrines, but the way they live, and interact with the general community. The individuals are expected to live in a certain way, and to regard all of life, including the sacred visible or invisible entities, from a particular perspective. This implies that a Jew, Christian or Buddhist should live in a manner worthy of the identification of his/her religious perspective; as the opposite would mean that one has no regard for the deity or sacred entity, belief system and moral obligations of such a religious identification.

In essence, this means that the substantive definition of religion draws upon the knowledge and experiences of the holy, and requires that individuals formulate their belief systems or doctrine within a particular perspective. Furthermore, the knowledge and acceptance of the holy demands a moral obligation and a genuine regard for all of life, including the sacred visible or invisible. This in turn forms a community of faith, which has a certain way of life and religious expectations. Taking the functionalist and substantive definitions of religion into account, we find a balanced description of the nature of religion. Thus, religion can be defined, even though not exhaustively, both by its functional and substantive arrangements. That is how this study looks upon the concept of religion: from its functional and substantive arrangements.

2.4. The nature of religion

The modern world is quite religious; and religion has become a universal practice. O'Brien and Palmer (2007:14), state that 80 percent of people worldwide, profess some religious affiliation. Knitter and Netland (2013:19) further state that there are roughly 2.1 billion Christians, 1.3 billion Muslims, 860 million Hindus, 380 million Buddhists, 25 million Sikhs, and 15 million Jews in the world. These numbers do not include many more millions of people who affiliate with or follow indigenous religious traditions and other new religious movements or sects. The statistical figures that are enumerated here prompt one to earnestly mull over the aspect of religiosity.

Why are people so religious? What is the meaning of religion to these people? And, what does religion offer these people? These questions and many more arise when one tries to comprehend the aspect of religiosity, and there are, of course, countless ways of responding to these questions. But the researcher presumes that the last question will directly respond to the first two questions.

What religion offers seems to make people want to be religious; and people seem to be religious because they find meaning in religion. This, however, cannot be entirely accurate until it has been ascertained. In order to appreciate what religion offers, we may have to look at the three general facets of religion, namely these are: (1) religion as a belief system, (2) religion as an identity, and (3) religion as a way of life. These three general facets relate to the essence or nature of religion. There may possibly be more facets of religion which are not identified here, but the three are most likely to be involved in the nature of religion (Gunn, 2003:199).

2.4.1. Religion as a belief system

According to Gunn (2003:199), religion as a belief system pertains to the convictions that people hold regarding such matters as God, truth, or doctrines of faith. These religious convictions may emphasise, for example, a strict adherence to doctrines such as the total depravity of man, the transmigration of souls, *karma*, *dharma*, the wisdom of the *Lotus Sutra*, the five pillars of Islam, or the syncretistic message that many religious doctrines reveal an underlying reality. Religion, as a belief system, generally gives an emphasis to the significance of the individual's proper understanding of doctrines. These belief systems dictate the links and connections that people make within the society. They set boundaries as to who should be accepted and who is to be rejected.

Under normal circumstances, individuals' belief system would naturally draw them closer to those of like-mindedness; and thus, deeming them acceptable to that particular community. The opposite is also true. People do not like to associate with other people who contradict or undermine their belief systems. Those who seem to disapprove the belief systems that an individual or a particular group holds are often ignored, and thus, rejected by that society. In order to belong, one must have the same belief systems as those s/he desires to associate with. Therefore, this is how the element of *belief systems* dictates social connections. In a manner of speaking, it can be said that a belief system gives one a sense of belonging, particularly to a group that shares the same beliefs as those of that person.

In terms of religion, a religious affiliation also offers one a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging can manifest itself in a number of ways. It can be found in various religious institutions such as the Church, Mosque, Temple, Synagogue or many other religious establishments that are considered to be sacred. It can also be found in social organisations such as clubs, associations, cults or many other religious engagements. People normally find meaning, discover themselves, and feel welcomed in these social structures. They look upon

these social arrangements as a haven of safety against potential threats of rejection, isolation, exclusion and abandonment. In that way, they find a sense of belonging, direction and companionship from those who share their values. Even though this may not be enough, it does however bring them some form of satisfaction. This is probably why so many people are religious. Religion, as a belief system, offers them a sense of belonging.

2.4.2. Religion as an identity

Religion as an identity refers to the intimate link between religion and ethnicity. A number of scholars seem to think that there is little doubt about the intimate link between religion and ethnicity (Marty, 1972:5-21; Stout, 1975:204-224; Padgett, 1980:55-77). This means that religion can be used as a point of reference for ethnic identification. Abramson (1980:869-875) argues that in some instances, such as the Amish, Hutterites, Mormons, and Jews, ethnicity equals religion. By implication, this means that were it not for religion, these ethnic groups would have not existed. In this sense, religion is an identity. The correlation therefore, between religion and ethnicity, holds that whether one perceives ethnicity subjectively or objectively, or whether ethnicity is measured along the lines of acculturation or of assimilation, the involvement of religion in the characteristics of one's ethnic group is always judged to be dominant when correlated with ethnic identity (Hammond, 1980:2).

The construct of identity, on the other hand, is not so apparent, as the correlation between religion and ethnicity, it has a dualistic temperament. This means that there is no single way of defining identity, hence some scholars look at it in two different but complementary ways. Hammond (1980:2), citing Hans Mol, states that:

> The first way of looking at identity suggests the immutable, or at least the slowly changing core of personality that shows up in all of a person's encounters, irrespective of differing role-partners. The second way suggests the transient and changeable self as persons move from one social encounter to another, offering a somewhat different identity, as it were, in each place.

Commenting on the two ways of looking at identity, Oppong (2013:13) states that the first way of conceptualising identity "brings up the issue of involuntary dimension of identity, while, the second raises the issue of adaptability of identity".

The involuntary dimension of identity concerns the elementary core of personality which does not change or at least changes slowly over a long period of time. This kind of identity is enforced by primary groups, precisely parents or care-takers, arguably in the early stages of life and remains intact throughout one's lifespan. The adaptability of identity concerns the transitory

changes and developments in identity that occurs due to new life experiences, and social milieu outside of primary groups. These two conceptualisations of identity seem to be suitable and therefore relevant to the concept of religion.

Scholars such as Hammond (1980:2) and Oppong (2013:13) assert that some institutional spheres, especially in terms of family, are naturally important in the first sense, while other institutional spheres, such as religion and ethnicity stand out as examples of the second conceptualisation of identity. This means that both the primary and secondary groups play a significant role in the formation of an individual's or group identity. This is especially when the elements of religion are involved in the characteristics of group or ethnic identities. Religion, in that case, becomes an identity.

The implication of the first way of looking at identity entails that some people are born with a religious identity. It has already been indicated before, that in some ethnic groups, such as the Amish, Hutterites, Mormons, and Jews, ethnicity equals religion. In this sense, if, in one's primary group, ethnicity equals religion, then the identity of that individual becomes something they are born with rather than something to which they are converted. If one is born a Jew, they identify themselves as Jewish even if they no longer hold to Jewish convictions. This is also true for the Arabs. People may regard themselves as Muslims on the basis of ethnicity, even though they have never been inside a mosque. Gunn (2003:201), citing Ziad Abu-Amr states that "Arabs, regardless of whether they observe the outward manifestations of religion or not, insist that they were born and remain Muslims." Therefore, religion in this context, is an identity.

The second way of looking at identity implies that ethnicity, within the primary group, is less important for identity; rather, identity becomes more important when expanded beyond the limits of primary groups. This means that the assimilation of an individual into a secondary group offers them a more solid identity than that provided by their primary group. Secondary groups include religious institutions. The form of identity that these religious institutions offers enables the individuals to locate themselves within the broader context of the society, helps them discover their purpose in life and gives them a sense of direction. In this way, religious institutions become an important factor in the formation of an individual's identity. Since religion is the centre of both the primary and secondary groups, and is closely linked to ethnicity and group assimilation identity, it can therefore be said that religion is a major causative factor in identity formation.

2.4.3. Religion as a way of life

Religion as a way of life refers to the model of life in which the persons from one particular religion distinguish themselves from other religious or non-religious groups. This facet is rationally distinctive from the preceding two, but is closely attached to each in the mind of a religious person. Gunn (2003:204) states that this facet of religion "is associated with actions, rituals, customs, and traditions that may distinguish the believer from adherents of other religions". For example, religion as a way of life may motivate people to live in monasteries, religious communities, to observe many rituals, including praying, meditation, and circumcision or to refrain from certain practices such as the consumption of alcohol. This facet therefore accentuates the moral practice of religious beliefs and associated traditional obligations.

The facet of religion as a way of life therefore implies that all religious groups demand a practical obligation. For some, it may demand that prayers be made five times a day, that they may wear certain types of clothes and that their beards be grown. To others, it may demand a constant effort to propagate the religion, the refusal to eat pork or it may require that one should go to church every Sunday. Therefore, each religion has its demands and obligations, and these outline the distinction between one religious group and another. Hence, one can differentiate and draw a distinction between the demands and practical obligations of the Jewish faith, Islam or Christianity.

These demands and practical obligations are normally incorporated into a person's outlook of life so that they can become his or her way of life. Jews will strive to align their actions to the demands and moral obligations of the Jewish faith, and so will Arabs to Islam, and Christians to Christianity. Thus, religion, in this sense, becomes a way of life. These three facets therefore seem to respond to the aspect of people's religiosity. People are religious because religion has something to offer them. Religion gives them *a belief system* that enables them to understand themselves, their destiny and a way in which to make sense of their world. It provides a sense of belonging, in their potential threats against loneliness, exclusion and rejection. It makes them feel appreciated, welcomed and important in a group that shares their values, aspiration and concerns.

Religion gives them a sense of purpose, meaning and a place within the boarder context of society. Religion further grounds their sense of self or identity. Whether this comes through the assistance of primary or secondary institutions, religion serves *as an identity*. It provides a significant link between their ethnic and group assimilation identity, which helps them to

discover who they are, and how they should perceive themselves in relation to other religious or non-religious groups around them. Lastly, religion gives people *a way of life*. It guides and directs their behaviour, actions and attitudes, and challenges them to be socially and ethically responsible for their conduct within the societies in which they live. So, it is not difficult to understand why so many people in the world are religious. Religion gives them what they need but do not have.

2.5. The concept of spirituality

The concept of spirituality is very broad and subjective. It means a number of things to different people. It refers to the "human quest for personal meaning, mutually fulfilling relationships among people, the nonhuman environment, and for some, God" (Canda *et al*, 1999:243). Others argue that spirituality refers to "a subjective experience of the sacred" (Vaughan, 1991:105). The sacred, in this case, means anything that people can revere as an ultimate object of devotion. Yet again, others obscure this concept by stating that spirituality refers to "that vast realm of human potential dealing with ultimate purposes, with higher entities, with God, with love, with compassion, with purpose" (Tart, 1983:4). Spirituality, in this regard, acquires a very broad but subjective interpretation in which there is not a single meaning.

Even though the concept of spirituality is broad and subjective, a number of scholars agree that spirituality can be expressed "through participation in religious institutions or traditions… or through philosophical views…," (Miller, and Martin, 1988:14; Canda *at al*, 1999:4). Religious institutions and their philosophical views seem to be valuable instruments that can offer a rich context for spiritual growth. Citing a number of scholars, Lindsey (2005:19) argues that spiritual beliefs that are associated with religious practices are "a source of potential healing that can provide a sense of connectedness to self, others and/or a larger meaning or purpose…, a way of providing protection and coping with the trials of everyday life…"

This means that the aspect of spirituality is closely connected to religiosity. Scholars like Rossiter argue that religiosity is "spirituality that is clearly referenced to religion" (Rossiter, 2010:7). Spirituality offers individuals a personal belief system, which seeks to develop a sense of connectedness to self, and others; thus, its complimentary expressions are adequately realised through religious practices that are afforded by religious institutions. However, this does not mean that the expressions of spirituality are restricted to religious institutions. Spirituality can be expressed and practised beyond the confines of institutional religions. But, its practices are

closely connected to religious institutions as well as their philosophical views. Hence, there is a profound correlation between religion and spirituality.

2.6. The link between religion and spirituality

There is a great link between religion and spirituality as both constructs can be practised harmoniously. According to Zinnbauer *et al*. (1997:550), historically, spirituality was not distinguished from religiousness until the rise of secularism in the 21st century. The distinction between the two arose out of the popular disillusionment with religious institutions as a hindrance to personal experiences of the sacred. Bender (2007:2) further notes that until recently, the terms *religion* and *spirituality* have been used more or less interchangeably. Nowadays, religion denotes something different from spirituality. The construct of religion, within the field of social research, has adopted either a functionalist or substantive approach (Pargament, 1997), while spirituality has acquired a positive undertone through its association with personal experiences of the transcendent (Zinnbauer *et al*, 1997:551).

The functionalist approach to religion looks at the functions that religion offers in the lives of individuals while the substantive approach focuses on the beliefs, emotions, practices, and relationships of individuals in relation to a higher power or divine being (Zinnbauer *et al*, 1997:551). Currently, religion denotes something different from spirituality; so, it is worth exploring how religion differs from, and/or links with spirituality. Remarking on the current distinctions and overlap between religion and spirituality, Hill *et al*., (2000:60) states that religion, historically, was a "broad-band construct" that included both individual and institutional elements, but it is now seen as a "narrow-band construct" that has much more to do with the institutional alone. The conceptualisation of religion as a "narrow-band construct" creates the impression that religion is a rigid and structured institution that restricts or inhibits human potential (Pargament, 1997:6).

Spirituality, on the other hand, seems to be "the favored term to describe individual experience and is identified with such things as personal transcendence, supra-conscious sensitivity, and meaningfulness" (Hill *et al*, 2000:60). As a result, spirituality is "increasingly reserved for the loftier/functional side of life" (Pargament, 1997:6). Even though religion is perceived to be different from spirituality, Cashwell and Young (2011:9) maintain that religion "provides a structure for human spirituality." This means that religion offers a sympathetic setting for people to engage in the quest for meaning, purpose and relations with the sacred (Magaldi-Dopman and Park-Taylor, 2010:383).

In this sense, religion becomes the institutional means by which spirituality is expressed, and this forges the link between religion and spirituality. By implication, this means that the expressions of spirituality can be best accommodated within the institutional structures of religion, and thus, bringing the two closer together.

2.7. Christianity and religion

The construct of religion has been generally used for a number of different faiths and religious groups at a formal level (Griffiths, 2000). Some of these faiths include religious groups such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and many others. Apart from its general use, the term "religion" can be used as a label for a particular system of belief and its practices. Parson Thwackum, for instance, in Henry Fielding's novel (1995:83), '*The History of Tom Jones,*' used the term "religion" specifically. Thwackum asserted that, "When I mention religion, I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England". Thwackum, in this instance, used the term "religion" as a label for the beliefs and practices of his preferred form of Christianity, his Protestant Church, and that is the Church of England.

In that manner, the researcher adopted Thwackum's usage of the term, which employs "religion" as a label for the beliefs and practices of a preferred form of Christianity. And in this study, the concept of religion is discussed within the scope and limits of the Christian faith. As a result, the researcher looked at the Pentecostal and Charismatic spirituality, with a specific focus on the Assemblies of God Church at East London.

2.7.1. Christianity as a religion

The Latin word "*religio*", from which from which the term "religion" comes, was not an important term for pre-Christian thinkers (Griffiths, 2000). For instance, the Latin version of the New Testament, which was the standard text for the Western Christians for a thousand years, only uses the term "*religio*" six times in its versions (Griffiths, 2000). Furthermore, the King James Version (1611) again only uses the term "religion" or "religious" five times in its Greek New Testament translations (Griffiths, 2000). Thus, "religion" was simply not an important term for the Biblical lexicon. However, the term "religion" gained some theological significance at the end of the fourth century as scholars like Augustine paid more attention to it.

Augustine, in his work "*De vera religione*" (On True Religion), asserted that "religion" means worship, and by worship, he meant those patterns of action by which, in public, people self-consciously turn towards God in homage and praise (Griffiths, 2000). According to Griffiths (2000), since Augustine was a Catholic Christian, he thought that "Christian worship was, on the whole, identical with true religion; and that, although true religion (proper public and communal) was not found only within the bounds of the Christian church, it was found pre-eminently and most perfectly there". In this way, Augustine posited that Christianity was identical to religion even though he taught that there could be a right and proper (true) way of worshiping God, just as there could be improper and damnable (false) ways.

For the reason that "religion" meant worship, and had in it those patterns of actions by which, in public, people consciously turn towards God in homage and praise, the Christians in late antiquity perceived Christianity in that way. The Western Christians, as from the early fourth century, after the Constantine Edict of 313 which made Christianity a mode of worship, to the fifteenth century before the Reformation, looked upon Christianity as one religion among many (Griffiths, 2000). Christianity, by then, had no various divisions but was unified as one religion in the midst of many other religions. It is after the era of the Reformation that different genus of Christian orientations occurred within the Christian faith, and now we have Catholicism, Reformed, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic churches.

Owing to the aim and purpose of this study, the researcher found it appropriate to only focus on the development of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in South Africa, and how they produced classical Pentecostal churches such as the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Full Gospel Church and the Assemblies of God, particularly at East London.

2.7.2.   Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in South Africa

After the arrival of the first Dutch settlers in South Africa in 1652, Protestant Christianity possessed a major control through the Dutch Reformed Church. As a result, about three-quarters of the Black population belonged to various Protestant churches (Anderson, 2000). Recently, this figure now includes a majority of African Initiated/Independent Churches (AICs) and Pentecostals. About 10% of the overall three-quarters of the population have become Pentecostals (Anderson, 2000). Pentecostalism has been rapidly growing ever since the arrival of the earliest group of Pentecostal missionaries in South Africa in 1908.

According to Hollenweger (1972:120), these missionaries brought the light of Pentecostalism to South Africa. When they arrived, they came into the South African Christian Catholic Church of Zion, founded by John Alexander Dowie in 1904, which taught immersion and divine healing, but not Pentecost. Among these missionaries was the well-known Andrew Murray (1828-1917) who was the leader of the Holiness movement and later of the Apostolic Faith Mission. Maxwell (2006:38) further states that the other missionaries were John G Lake, Tom Hezmalhalch, Jacob O Lehman, and Ida Sackett and their families.

Hollenweger (1972:120) asserts that the first meetings of these missionaries, were conducted in conjunction with the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, which "later developed into the Pentecostal Apostolic Faith Mission." Hollenweger also mentions that the healing practice of the Christian Catholic Church provided the example that has been followed by the South African Pentecostal movements and independent churches that broke away from it (Hollenweger, 1972:120). Due to their dynamic messages about salvation, healing practice and the people's experiences of the 'Pentecost' or 'baptism in the Holy Spirit', these missionaries quickly gained entry, not only into the Christian Catholic Church but also into the Reformed Churches of South Africa (Hollenweger, 1972:121).

Elaborating on this statement, Maxwell (2006:41) states that the South African Pentecostalism moved along the channels of Methodism and other types of radical evangelism as it had done in the USA, Europe and other 'mission fields', but also took force along the circuits of Ethiopianism, and most importantly, within the Dutch Reformed Church. In consequence, the persuasion of Pentecostalism attracted both the Black and White. Since the Pentecostal missionaries preached about salvation or new birth, which was habitually followed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a new strand of Born-again movement was emerging. A Pentecostal movement, which sought to transform the lives of people through the power of the Holy Spirit, took shape and claimed its autonomy.

As a born-again movement, Pentecostalism drew people from various sub-denominations such as the Methodist, the Dutch Reformed, Ethiopian and Zion Churches. Maxwell (2006:41) maintains that the movement arrived in the closing stages of the 1906-1908 depression, a period of high unemployment amongst Afrikaners and Africans. The Afrikaners and Africans were plunged into drunkenness, gambling, promiscuity and poverty in what some described as a 'New Babylon.' The arrival of Pentecostalism offered people a chance to reform, and reduced the ills of the society. Having no need for church buildings or for the presence of professional

clergy, Maxwell (2006:41) asserts that Pentecostalism established itself in local neighbourhoods, pulling people away from alcoholism, petty crime and corruption.

As a result, "a counter-society was born in which the newly empowered believers, black or white, reordered their social lives around meetings and the nuclear family, learnt to discipline their speech and sexuality, and adopted a puritan work ethic" (Maxwell, 2006:41). However, as Pentecostalism gathered pace and grew considerably, another strand of charismatic philosophy developed. Some believers, among the 'spirit-filled,' radically cut across denominational boundaries, drawing together all those Christians who were open to the Gifts of the Spirit. In that way, the Charismatic movement was formed. The renewed Catholics and Protestants (usually Evangelicals) found themselves in close communion with the Pentecostals, with whom they now shared a belief in the practice of tongues, divine healing, prophecy and exorcism (Maxwell, 2006:110).

Even though the Charismatic movement held in common a number of doctrines with the Pentecostals, they did not subscribe to all Pentecostal doctrines. For instance, the Charismatic rejected the notion that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the only important post-convention experience (Maxwell, 2006:110). From these two movements, three classical Pentecostal/Charismatic churches of several denominations were formed (Anderson, 2004:109-110); the largest being the Assemblies of God (AOG), then the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), and the Full Gospel Church (FGC). Since this study looks at the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities, by paying attention to the Assemblies of God, the researcher has only given a full historical background of the AOG and provided a brief account of the developments of the AFM and FGC.

2.7.3. The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM)

As indicated earlier that a greater part of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion later developed into the Pentecostal Apostolic Faith Mission, the Apostolic Faith Mission was therefore the first Pentecostal church in South Africa (Hollenweger, 1972:121). According to Maxwell (2006:42), the Apostolic Faith Mission grew out of a committee based at the Central Tabernacle in Bree Street in September 1908. Its main founders were John G. Lake, and Tom Hezmalhalch, the two American missionaries who had come to South Africa "as 'apostolic faith' missionaries seeking to testify to, and demonstrate, the power of the Holy Spirit".

The pioneering work of John G. Lake and Tom Hezmalhalch is said to have taken a turn in 1913 when Pieter Le Roux was elected President of the AFM (Sundkler, 1976:51). Sundkler (1976:51) states that Le Roux became agitated with the distinctive taboos and dress code of Zionism, and so denounced them. The denunciation resulted in many black Zionists going their separate ways. The split resulted in the formation of the Apostolic Faith Mission, which now assumed a purely autonomous Pentecostal nature (Kiernan, 1994:73).

Those who went away started their own independent Zionist Churches and developed their Africanised version of Pentecostalism, which was very different in form and intent from the original American temperament (Maxwell, 2006:43). The group of people, who went away, according to Sundkler (1976:55), included Daniel Nkonyane, Elias Mahlangu, and Michael Ngomezulu. These are the leaders who used their relative autonomy and the informal links with AFM to develop their Africanised Pentecostalism. Since its occurrence in 1908 and its formal registration as an independent Church in November 1913, the AFM has become one of the massive Pentecostal churches in South Africa.

2.7.4. The Full Gospel Church

According to Du Plessis (1984:50), the Full Gospel Church, like the Apostolic Faith Mission, "dates back to the years 1908 and 1910." In its early years, Hofmeyer (1994:191) asserts that the Full Gospel Church evolved around two Pentecostal preachers, and these are namely: Archibald Cooper and George Bowie. Cooper was an English militant who had come to South Africa in 1901 for military service, but was converted in 1908 and became a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission (Chetty, 2002:34). While in the AFM, Hofmeyer (1994:191) reports that some tensions between Cooper and the leaders of the AFM arose, and this resulted in Cooper not being re-elected to the seven-member council of the Church. Subsequently, Cooper left the AFM to establish a mission in the Middleburg district (Chetty, 2002:34).

Meanwhile, George Bowie, a missionary from the Bethel Pentecostal Mission, based at the United States of America, arrived in South Africa in 1909 to establish a church. A year later (1910), Cooper joined Bowie to form the New Pentecostal Mission (Du Plessis, 1984:15-17). Unfortunately, some differences in opinions occurred in 1916, and the church was divided. Cooper moved out and formed another church by the name, "Church of God" (Hofmeyer, 1994:192). However, in 1920, Cooper and Bowie settled their differences and re-united their churches to form the now well-known Full Gospel Church (Chetty, 2002:35).

The FGC has had some major developments since its formation in 1920. For instance, in 1951 the FGC amalgamated with the Church of God in Cleveland Tennessee and this produced the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa (Chetty, 2002:35). Today, the FGC is a rapidly growing enterprise that attracts many thousands of people all over the world and has become a haven for many people who are searching for a personal experience with God.

2.8. The AOG as part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches

The origins of the Assemblies of God, like that of the AFM and the FGC were sparked by the arrival of foreign missionaries, who came to South Africa with the intention to plant Indigenous/African Pentecostal churches. This means that churches like the AFM, FGC and AOG were born out of the missionary intension to institute Indigenous/African Pentecostalism. According to Chatty (2009:4), the defining term 'Pentecostal', which these churches use to identify themselves, is derived from a Greek term denoting the Jewish Feast of Weeks. However, within the Christian perspective, the term denotes a festival that "focuses on the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, as described in the second chapter of the book of Acts" (Chetty, 2009:4).

The practical implications of this view therefore is that Pentecostal/Charismatic movements perceive themselves as the remnant of the church in Acts 2 and thereby profess to be experiencing a similar kind of spiritual power. To validate their claim, Chetty (2009:4) asserts that these churches turn to replicate the worship styles, general practices and ethos that prevailed in the early church. In line with Pentecostalism, Charismatic churches share the same views, general practices and ethos of Pentecostal movements but differ by putting more emphasis on the aspect of spiritual gifts rather than that of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Maxwell, 2006:110). Therefore, Pentecostalism is an overarching generic term that embraces a plethora of doctrinal and organisational positions (Chetty, 2009:4).

As part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic church, the AOG grew out of the influence of both the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in South Africa (Maxwell, 2006:111). According to Hofmeyer (1994:192), the earliest history of the Assemblies of God dates back to 1908, when Charles William Chawner, from the Canadian Pentecostal Missionary Society, started doing missionary work at Ladysmith, Weren and at Zululand (Chetty, 2002:42). William Chawner was later joined by R. M. Turney and his wife, and Miss H James. Together they started a mission station in the Middleberg district (Hofmeyer, 1994:192).

When the Assemblies of God Church was formed in the 1914 conference of Pentecostal ministries in Arkansas, U.S.A, the Turney's and Miss James applied to be recognised as missionaries of the new organisation (Saayman, 1993:42). Their request, according to Chetty (2002:42) was granted in 1917. Henry Turney, subsequently, registered the Assemblies of God with the Department of Interior at Pretoria in the same year, and the church was officially given a governmental recognition (Watt, 1992:21). From 1917, when the church was officially recognised, to the early 1930s, every missionary that worked under the banner of the AOG in South Africa predominantly worked amongst the Black communities.

Watt (1992:22) expresses this sentiment:

> While other Pentecostal churches worked mostly among Afrikaans-speaking White people, the A.O.G missionaries worked almost exclusively among the Black people. Even though the A.O.G was controlled by expatriate missionaries, the movement was a Black church before any White congregations were formed – it did not develop as a daughter church of a White church.

By implication, this means that there were no White congregations in the AOG before 1930 (Watt, 1992:22). Hofmeyer, (1994:193) further supplements this notion by stating that it was not until 1936 and onwards that White churches steadily increased in the AOG. The AOG is therefore one of the Pentecostal churches that penetrated the Black communities and reformed the lives of African people before moving to those who were plunged into drunkenness, gambling, promiscuity and poverty in White Afrikaans-speaking communities.

The influence of the AOG in Black communities had a very significant impact, because it gave people the chance to reform, reduced the occurrence of social ills and presented the people with hope for a better future against the then oppressive systems of racial laws. Even though the Black and White sections of the church were separated and functioned independently (Hollenweger, 1972:122), the contribution of Black pioneers was sufficiently recognised (Chetty, 2002:43). Watt (1992:33-42) notes that the significant role played by African leaders such as Alfred Gumede, Gideon Buthelezi and Nicholas Bhengu was well-regarded in the AOG. In addition, Watt (1992:42) asserts that Nicholas Bhengu was regarded as an "outstanding African apostle and father-figure in the A.O.G".

For the reason that Nicholas Bhengu worked and ministered at East London for the AOG, the researcher found it appropriate to look at his influence in the church and society while discussing the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities. This is necessary because the

study focused on the role of religion and spirituality in the lives of young people at East London, within the AOG, where Nicholas Bhengu baptised 1 300 converts after his Back to God Crusade in the late 1940s (Lephoko, 2010:115).

2.8.1.   The understanding of spirituality in the AOG

The conceptualisation of spirituality in the Assemblies of God is not clearly defined because of its Pentecostal/Charismatic predisposition. The Pentecostal/Charismatic movements focus more on the distinctive nature of Christian experience rather than a particular set of defined ritual practices that express spirituality (Cooke, 1994:51). As a result, social scientists are reluctant to pay serious scholarly attention to the study of religious experiences (Poloma, 2014:8). This is due to the scrupulous assumptions of atheism, which maintain that it is impossible to demonstrate that the divine does directly communicate with human beings using the methodological tools of social science. To avoid this dilemma, social scientists, using social scientific perspectives, generally choose to demonstrate that many people believe that they are in a dialogue and interaction with God, and that their definition of the situation has real social consequences (Poloma, 2014:8).

In this way, instead of studying religious experiences, social scientists study the perceptions of, and demonstrate the belief that people hold about having a dialogue and an encounter with the divine. Within the AOG, the concept of having a dialogue and an encounter with the divine is referred to as being "Slain in the Spirit". Dale Coulter, in the *Assemblies of God Heritage* (2010:45) states that the phrase, 'slain in the spirit' encapsulates an encounter with God, which is a battle for the very soul of the individual. In this battle, Coulter notes that the Spirit overcomes the strongholds of the enemy, the sinful thoughts and desires in a way that causes an individual to literally fall down under the power of God. From this perspective, the spiritual life of a believer is seen as warfare.

It is seen as warfare because it involves the conflict of divine, human, and demonic wills that occurs on the mental and spiritual plane (Coulter, 2010:45). This means that the believer is constantly in a war against following his or her own inclinations rather than those of God and should persistently be on guard against falling prey to the control of demonic powers. This implies that the human will has the capacity to neglect spiritual matters and therefore needs to be steered towards an encounter with God to avoid being used by demons. In this sense, the

believer's war is to wane off the control of evil desires and demonic powers by living a holy life, and immersing himself or herself deeper into God's presence (Coulter, 2010:45).

Apart from a religious experience and an encounter with God, the AOG looks upon the concept of spirituality as a transforming journey (Coulter, 2010:45). By transforming journey, the AOG relates to the relationship that one develops in the journey of following Christ, which transforms the believer by the bond of love. It is understood as a path of holiness that digs deeper into the human character in order to anchor one's relationship with God. Coulter (2010:45) asserts that this is important because the more the individual becomes Christ-like in character, the closer he or she draws nearer to Christ. The primary purpose therefore, of this transforming journey according to Coulter is to cultivate "the spiritual life" of believers.

As a sign of transformation in the journey with Christ, Wigglesworth, as cited by Coulter (2010:48), states that "there must first be the inner working power of God. It is He who changes the heart, and transforms the life, and before there is any real outward evidence there must be the inflow of divine life". This statement denotes that in order for a believer to walk uprightly in holiness with God, he or she must first be transformed by the working power of God, which changes the heart and makes believers demonstrate the evidence of such considerable change by an outward conduct. A personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ is therefore a vital component in this conception, and the evidence of such a relationship is generally observed through a godly moral conduct. This conceptualisation of spirituality in the AOG is evidenced by the content of messages that Nicholas Bhengu passed to his audiences at various places in East London.

Hollenweger (1972:128), citing Katesa Schlosser, states that the content of messages that Nicholas Bhengu preached to his audiences can be summed up under these headings: (a) the proof of God through the healing of the sick, and (b) the preaching of Jesus Christ as redeemer. Bhengu's preaching about the proof of God through the healing of the sick squared directly to the understanding of spirituality in the AOG as a religious experience and an encounter with God. Giving evidence to this assertion, Hartland (2000), in *For the Record*: *Reflections on the Assemblies of God*, states that after the crusade that was hosted by Nicholas Bhengu at East London, a thousand people were converted and baptised in the Baffalo River through Bhengu's messages.

Hartland (2000) describes the baptism event as follows:

> Bhengu, dressed in a deep-sea divers suit, presided over the baptisms which were conducted by helpers. Miraculous things happened. People were "slain in the spirit" by the score. It is said that even the unconverted bus drivers who tried to lift the inert passengers into their buses when five o'clock came and it was time to go home, fell under the power of the Holy Spirit as they touched their recumbent forms.

Bhengu's messages touched the hearts of listeners. And these messages were often followed by a demonstration of God's power. Hartland, on the above mentioned instance, states that miraculous things happened during the baptism. It is however not clear as to what these miraculous things were. But this probably referred to the healing practice of the sick because Hollenweger (1972:129) states that Bhengu was fond of demonstrating God's power by means of faith healing. To show Bhengu's zeal for faith healing, Hollenweger (1972:129), citing Schlosser's report, quotes Nicholas Bhengu saying the following:

> 'I will prove that there is a God and that He is stronger than the Devil!' He does this by faith healings, 'for without them my church would be as empty as the other Protestant missions'. 'If I was not convinced that the missionary command had to be carried out in all its parts, both teaching and healing, I would not have begun to preach'.

Nicholas Bhengu, at this level, was giving personal evidence of the religious experience that he had developed with God. And this experience enabled him to prove God's existence by means of faith healings. This religious experience was coupled by an encounter with God for those who were being baptised. Hartland states that many people were "slain in the spirit" and this, according to Coulter (2010:45), represented a personal encounter with God, in which individuals literally fell under the power of God. In this case, the power of God was too intense because it reached those who were non-converts, those who had gone by the Baffalo River merely to take those who were being baptised back home.

The second way of conceptualising spirituality in the AOG was that of a transforming journey with Christ. For Bhengu, this meant Salvation. Accepting Christ was the central part of his message. Nicholas Bhengu believed that a personal journey with Christ brings about a considerable change in the life of an individual (Hollenweger, 1972:131). He had first witnessed this change at his conversion. Hollenweger (1972:127) quotes him saying the following:

> What is gone wrong with me? A thought came – maybe this is the result of salvation. I knelt down to pray for the first time from the heart and said, 'Thank you God for Jesus your Son who died my death and now I am saved and have eternal life. My name is in the Book of Life.

Following his conversion, Bhengu testified about the change he had observed in his life, "Today I believe in the existence of God Almighty and fear him, for I have learnt that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. I am no longer what I used to be, *udlalani*, an aimless lover of women" (Hollenweger, 1972:129). As indicated by Wigglesworth in the *Assemblies of God Heritage* (2010:48) that the inner working power of God has to change the heart, and transform the life of an individual before there is any real outward evidence, Bhengu had experienced the inner working power of God and he was no longer what he used to be.

Subsequent to this substantial change in his life, Green (1992:14-15) states that Bhengu sought to reach out to sinners through the gospel of Christ and to rebuild the society. To achieve his goal, Nicholas Bhengu started the now well known "Back to God Crusade". The Crusade was first launched in October 1950 at Duncan Village, East London (DACB, 2014). The results of the Crusade were remarkable (Dubb, 1976:4). Hartland (2000) asserts that those who became converts and started a transforming journey with Christ "brought stolen goods and weapons to the meetings, laying them at the evangelists' feet in repentance." They had felt the inner working power of God, and so, confirmed it by outward actions. Because they were showing their inner conviction by an outward evidence of bringing back the weapons that they had used to harm others or the goods that they had stolen, an ill-willed person reported this to the police.

This was done with the hope that the Police would arrest those who had been seen bringing back the arms or stolen goods to the Evangelists. But when James Mullen, the then missionary of the Elim Four Square Movement in England and Ireland, that was financially sponsoring the Back to God Crusade, told the investigating Police Major what was actually happening, he said, "Mr Mullan, we don't want this to stop." Therefore, some arrangements were made for the police to collect the returned goods, and "three truckloads were collected" (Hartland, 2000).

Following Nicholas Bhengu's death, the "Back to God Crusade" ceased working at East London until recently. The "Back to God Crusade" was revived on 13 September 2015, when the AOG celebrated its platinum jubilee by the official reopening of the "Back to God Crusade" at Mdantsane Township (refer to Appendix IV: Diagrams – C). This marked the 39th year since the "Back to God Crusade" was last erected at East London.

For the reason that the AOG celebrated their 70th year as a church in 2015, the official reopening of the "Back to God Crusade" symbolised the restoration of the momentous work and the memory of the great African prophet, Nicholas Bhengu. Therefore, Nicholas Bhengus and the

converts' stories illustrate the conceptualisation of spirituality in the AOG, and that is the transforming journey with Christ. What this transforming journey with Christ entails is that the knowledge and inner working power of God in a believer brings about an outward conduct that is in line with the standards of spiritual living.

2.9.   The role of religion and spirituality on youth identities

A great number of scholars seem to agree that religion and spirituality have a positive role on youth identities. As such, scholars like King and Furrow (2004), Seul (1999), and Ysseldyk *et al* (2010) argue that religion and spirituality are essential aspects to youth identity formation. Erikson (1968), for instance, recognised the potential role of religion and spirituality in identity development. According to Bell (2009:57-59), Erikson regarded religion as an essential aspect of the socio-historical matrix in which identity takes place. King (2003:198) further maintains that Erikson argued that religion is the oldest and most enduring institution that promotes the emergence of fidelity, the commitment and loyalty to an ideology that emerges upon the successful resolution of the psychological crisis of identity formation.

Religion and spirituality, therefore, lays a solid foundation for youth to explore their identities. As the researcher has indicated, earlier, that a great number of scholars seem to consent that religion and spirituality play a positive role on youth identities, it would be beneficial to enquire about how religion and spirituality impact on youth identities. Addressing this matter, King argues that an "identity development that emerges out of the ideological, social and spiritual context embedded within religion is an identity that transcends the self and can promote a sense of commitment that not only fosters the individual well-being but promotes the good of society as well" (King, 2003:197).

This means that an identity development that is embedded within the strands of religion and spirituality services not only the well-being of an individual but that of the society as well. This is illustrated by the change of hearts on the converts that were saved on the "Back to God Crusade". Lephoko (2010:106) states that *tsotsis* (thieves) returned all the stolen goods and assumed a new identity. Murderers and gangsters did the same. They were no longer to be perceived as thieves, murderers, or gangsters but as upright citizen within their respective communities. Even though this does not directly refer to the youth, there were probably young people (*tsotsis or gangsters*) that attended the Crusade, and they may have been a part of those who returned stolen goods or weapons.

If that is the case, these young people, probably found a context in which they can express themselves, away from hostility or crime and shared their convictions by means of group assimilation with the members of the AOG. This means that the ideological content of religion and the spiritual connections that they had established with God empowered them to better make sense of their world and to locate their unique place in it. And this meant letting go of the dilapidated past in order to assume a new identity. Oppong (2013:14) remarks:

> Essentially, the transcendent meaning derived from religious affiliation is important for a youth identity development and well-being. In the absence of the viewpoint available through religious beliefs, the worldview it provides, and its role in shaping and guiding behaviour, the multiplicity of choices and options accessible to modern youth is more likely to breed despair, hopelessness and confusion.

This implies that without religious content and the affiliation derived thereof, the youth would not have had an ideological context in which they can find a standpoint in the multiplicity of choices, and in the midst of challenging issues in their lives. Furthermore, the youth would not have had the privilege to establish a spiritual connection with the divine, giving a young person an opportunity to experience himself or herself in relationship to God (King, 2004:200). Hence, Lerner (1996:56) refers to spirituality as "the awareness of the fundamental unity of all being, and of our connectedness to one another and the universe."

Religion and spirituality, in this manner, offer a rich context for youth to express their identities and provide solid answers to existential questions such as: Who am I? and, what is the meaning of Life? For example, within the Christian tradition, believers are encouraged to understand themselves as the "chosen people" (Thessalonians 2:13), and as "sons and daughters of God" (Galatians, 3:26). Young people, following this tradition, get to see themselves as special, unique and highly favoured. This is because the Christian tradition promotes the uniqueness and self-worth of every believer. Believers, in this tradition, perceive themselves as the beloved and chosen of God, and therefore valued and appreciated by the Creator.

This discussion gives an impression that religion and spirituality does have a positive role on youth identities. It impacts the essential aspects of identity development and assists the youth in conceptualising their sense of self and worth in relation to God, themselves, and significant others. These interactions give the youth an opportunity to grapple with the questions of life, locate their place in it and find a sense of belonging in the relationships that they forge with others. The instance of Nicholas Bhengu shows how religion and spirituality can influence

youth identities. Young people, who had given themselves to acts of crime such as stealing or involvement in gangs, returned the goods they had stolen, and yielded the weapons that they used to harm others.

Their lives were transformed as they assumed a new identity, a religious identity and practised spirituality. They realised who they were but looked forward to what they could become, apart from being known as criminals, trouble-makers or as notorious youth. They adopted a puritan life and refrained from things like drugs, alcohol, violence and promiscuity. They found a sense of belonging by assimilation with other members of the AOG, and found value in their selves. Instead of being defined by their past, they were now regarded as the 'children of God', 'sons and daughters of the Most High', and 'beloved of God.' Religion and spirituality, in this way, played a significant role in shaping their identities.

2.10. Summary

This chapter looked at the already existing literature concerning the topic of the study. As a result, the following aspects were discussed: the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, the concept of religion, the nature of religion, the concept of spirituality, the link between religion and spirituality, Christianity and religion, the Assemblies of God as part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, the understanding of spirituality in the AOG, and the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological strategies and the design approaches that underpin this study. As such, the following elements are discussed: research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sampling, research instruments, procedure for data collection, procedure for data analyses, and ethical considerations.

3.2. Research paradigm

Mertens (2005:7) defines a research paradigm as "a way of looking at the world". She asserts that "it is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action". Denzin and Lincoln (2005:183) further define a research paradigm as "a basic set of beliefs that guides action". A research paradigm therefore refers to a way of looking at the world which has certain theoretical conventions that guides and direct the thinking and the actions of the researcher in the research process. Moreover, a paradigm is encompassed by four interrelated terms: ethics (axiology), epistemology, ontology and methodology. Lincoln and Guba (2000:163-188) have identified four questions that help define a paradigm, namely: ethics; epistemology; ontology and methodology.

The ethical question is: "How will I be as a moral person in the world?" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:183); while the epistemological question asks: "What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the would-be known?"; the ontological question asks, "What is the nature of reality?" and the methodological question asks, "How can the knower go about obtaining the desired knowledge and understanding?" (Mertens, 2005:8). These four questions, which define a paradigm, guided the researcher in the ethical-moral stance towards the world, and in the various components of the research process. According to Danzin and Lincoln (2005: 183), there are several major paradigms that now structure and organise qualitative research, namely: positivism, post-positivism, and constructivism. For the purpose of this research, the researcher utilised the constructivism paradigm.

3.2.1.   The constructivism paradigm

According to Mertens (2005:12), the constructivist paradigm grew out of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Wilhelm Dilthey's and other German philosophers' study of interpretive understanding called hermeneutics. The constructivism paradigm asserts that we cannot discover meaning objectively, but rather that we construct meaning as we interact with the world. The assumption guiding the constructivism theory is that the social world has no meaning prior to one's experience of it. Meaning, according to constructivism, is not created but constructed by the interconnection of objectivity and subjectivity of realities that one experiences. Crotty (1998:8) describes this idea in the following way:

> Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of one's engagement with the realities in one's world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed. In this understanding of knowledge it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. In this view of things, subject and object emerge as partners in the generation of meaning.

The constructivism theory therefore holds that the individual is not just a passive recipient of a set meaning but an active, resourceful, and reflective participant in the construction of meaning. One's concept of things, events and reality can therefore be attributed to the type of engagement that occurs with objects and events, and how one relates and directs attention to them. The motivation for using this paradigm is that it allows individuals to construct, express and reflect on reality in a way that portrays their social world: it does not just create but constructs reality through one's experience of it. This is in line with the purpose and objectives of this research, which was to explore the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities by looking at young people's religious practices and individuals experiences and how such experiences or an understanding of religion and spirituality influences their decision-making processes, life style and roles in society.

3.3.   Research methods

There are generally three methods that are commonly used in social research and these are: the qualitative research; quantitative research; and mixed method research. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the qualitative research methods. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3) define qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world." They further that "It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 3) Thus, qualitative research is a suitable approach for studying "things in

their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Danzin and Lincoln, 2005: 3).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3-4) further state that:

> Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives.

The motivation for using this method is that it allowed the researcher to locate the participants' experiences from their natural settings, and how they make sense of, or view their world. This is in line with the constructivist view, from which the paradigm of this study is located (Mertens, 2005: 230-231).

3.4. Research design

A research design is defined by Nachmais and Nachmais (1992: 77-78) as a plan that "guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting observations." Flick (2007:36), citing Ragin elaborates on this view by stating that:

> (A) Research design is a plan for collecting and analysing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he or she has posed. The design of an investigation touches almost all aspects of the research, from the minute details of data collection to the selection of the techniques of data analysis.

This means that a research design is a blueprint or an overall plan used by the researcher in obtaining answers to the questions guiding the research study. Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2005:75) assert that it is useful to examine more closely the different kinds of questions that the researcher asks so that they can, if possible, be classified into two general types: empirical questions or non-empirical questions. Empirical questions deal with a problem in the world: a "real-life" problem. Whereas-non empirical questions are questions about entities: meaning of scientific concepts, trends in scholarship or competing theories. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a case study as a research design to obtain answers for the empirical questions guiding this research.

3.4.1. A case study

A case study is defined by Gillham (2000:1) as an investigation to answer specific research questions which seek a range of different evidences from the case settings. Yin (2012:4) further defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, set within its real-world context - especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". Creswell, as cited by de Vos *et al*, (2011:321), states that "a case study involves an exploration of a 'bounded system' (bounded by time, context and/or place), or a single or multiple case, over a period of time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information."

This means that the exploration and description of a case study takes place through a detailed, in-depth data collection method, which involves a number of sources. These sources can include interviews, documents, observations or archival records (de Vos *et al*, 2011:321). The researcher's motivation for using this design is that it permitted the researcher to use interviews as a mode of collecting the data that is indispensable for this research.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:254), case studies strive to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and 'thick description' of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about, and feelings for a situation. "They involve looking at a case or phenomenon in its real-life context...; they are descriptive and detailed, with a narrow focus, combining subjective and objective data" (Cohen *et al*., 2007:254). There are different types of case studies. Yin, as cited by Cohen (2007:254), identified three types in terms of their outcomes: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case studies. For the purpose of this research, the type of a case study that the researcher used is a descriptive case study. The motivation for using this type of a case study is determined by the research questions that this research is trying to address (Yin, 2012:4-5).

Therefore, a case study is an ideal research design for this research study because the researcher is investigating a real-life context, the lived experiences of, perceptions and thoughts about the world of participants, in this regard, of young people, in order to understand the role of religion and spirituality on their identities. This case study is an instrumental case study that has been used to examine a particular case in order to gain insight into an issue (Cohen et al, 2007:255), and consists of a single case study (Yin, 2012:7) in which the lived experiences of, perceptions and thoughts of young people were investigated to understand the role of religion and spirituality in their lives.

3.5. Population of the study

According to Levy and Lemeshow (1999:13), the population refers to the entire set of individuals to which findings of the survey are to be extrapolated. The population for this study is the Christian youths from the Assemblies of God Church, living in various areas of East London. The researcher has chosen the sample from this population in order to extrapolate his findings.

3.6. Sample and sampling

Trochim (2001:3) refers to a sample as an actual number of persons the researcher wishes to study. Webster (1985) further defines sampling as a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. The sample therefore refers to the total number of people the researcher wishes to study in order to gain information about the whole. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has chosen 28 young people to participate in the research study, and these are 14 males and 14 females between the ages of 18-35 years old. The sampling technique that the researcher used is simple random sampling. Mertens defines a random sample as a group of people in which every member of the population has a known, non-zero probability of being included in the sample (Mertens, 2005:314). Random, in this case, means that the selection of each unit is independent of the selection of any other unit.

Mertens (2005:314) further states that a simple random sampling means that each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected. For the purpose of this research, the researcher has chosen a simple random sample by assigning a number to every member of the population, using a table of random numbers, randomly selecting a row or column in the table, and taking all the numbers that correspond to the sampling units in that row or column. The random sampling procedure used in this study increases the generalisability of findings. Thus, the study is generalisable to some orientations of the Christian religion.

3.7. Research instruments

According to Seaman (1991:42), the research instruments refer to the devices that are used to collect data. Mertens (2005:247) further states that qualitative researchers normally use three main methods for collecting data: participant observation, interviews, and document and records review. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used both document analysis and interviews. Document analysis constitutes a review of the literature that is relevant to the subject matter of this research, and interviews worked as a tool that provides the necessary data for the exploration of the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities.

3.8. Procedure for data collection

As indicated in 3.7 above, the researcher used both document analysis and interviews to gather the data that is indispensable for this research study.

3.8.1. Document analysis

According to Bailey (1994:194), document analysis refers to the use of documents that contain information about a phenomenon that the researcher wishes to study. Payne and Payne (2004:6165) further describe document analysis as a technique that is used to categorise, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources. This means that researchers normally use document analysis to supplement the limitations of physical sources of data such as observations and interviews. In this study, document analysis is used to examine, and to identify what other scholars have written about the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities.

3.8.2. Interviews

According to Cohen *et al*. (2007:349), interviews are a mode in which pure information transfer occurs. This means that the information that the researcher obtains from the participants naturally emerges out of their personal experiences and is based on the realities of life. Interviews have been used by the researcher to get in touch with the lived experiences of young people, while gathering the data necessary for this research study. The type of interviews that the researcher used to obtain the data indispensable for this study was open-ended interviews (Yin, 2012:12). This type of interviews enabled the participants to express their personal views and experiences regarding the role of religion and spirituality in constructing their identities.

3.9. Procedure for data analysis

Data analysis is defined by Babbie (2007:378) as the assessment and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and pattern of relationships. Cohen *et al*. (2007:461) further states that qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for, and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. This means that the role of the researcher in qualitative data analysis is to assess and make interpretations of observations in order to discover underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. This process involves organising, accounting for, and explaining the data in order to make sense in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation.

The procedure for data analyses is determined by the principle of fitness for purpose. This means that the researcher must be clear about what he or she wants the data analysis to do as this determines the kind of analysis that is undertaken. Cohen *et al*, (2007:461) advises that the researcher should set out:

- To describe
- To portray
- To summarising
- To interpret
- To discover patterns
- To generate themes
- To understand individuals and idiographic features.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher set out to describe, portray, interpret, and explore the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities. This means that the researcher established the comprehension of meaning, texts and actions through interpretation. Babbie and Mouton (200:502) state that the data analysis phase of life history method begins by looking at the central theme of life. This means that each question in the research questions has been taken as a central theme, from which the role of religion and spirituality has been established in the construction of youth identities by interpretation. The researcher has therefore analysed the collected data by taking each research question as a central theme that will locate the lived experiences of the youth in relation to the role that religion and spirituality plays in their lives and in the formation of their self-concept.

3.10. Credibility and trustworthiness

According to Rossouw (2003:428), credibility in qualitative research refers to the extent to which results and inference techniques that are used to generate the findings that can be trusted. Mertens (2005:358) argues that the rationale that supports this criterion is the question: "Is there a correlation between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints?" Trustworthiness, on the other hand, refers to the dependability of the research inquiry process. Mertens (2005:351) asserts that the quality of the data collection can be determined by means of a dependability audit in which the change progress can be inspected to attest to the quality and appropriateness of the inquiry. She further highlights that the following research strategies can enhance the credibility of the results of a qualitative study:

1.   Prolonged and substantial engagement;

2.   Persistent observation;

3.   Peer debriefing;

4.   Negative case analysis;

5.   Progressive subjectivity;

6.   Member checks; and

7.   Triangulation.

In order to maintain the standards of credibility and trustworthiness in this study, the researcher ensured that there is a correlation between the participants' views and the researcher's construction and representation of these views. Furthermore, the researcher also used peer debriefing, member check and triangulation methods to increase the level of credibility. According to Cohen *et al*. (2007:141) triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. With regards to triangulation in this study, the researcher used both document analysis and interviews as the two methods that quantified the results of the research study.

3.11. Transferability

According to Babbie and Mouton (2005:277), transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. In qualitative research, as the researcher is not primarily interested in (statistical) generalisations, the observations of this study are defined by a specific context in which they occur.

3.12. Delimitations and limitations

According to Creswell (2003:147), delimitations and limitations are the two parameters that establish the boundaries, expectations, reservations and qualifications inherent in every study.

3.12.1. Delimitations

This study confined itself to the interviewing of the Christian youths from the Assemblies of God from various areas around East London, which will include: the inner city, rural areas and townships. The study focused on the role of religion and spirituality on the lived experiences of young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years. For that reason, the researcher has chosen 28 participants to partake in the study and these consist of 14 males and 14 females from various areas around East London.

3.12.2. Limitations

Although it examines the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities, this research limits its scope, for the generalisability of findings, to the Christian Pentecostal/Charismatic groups because it focuses on the Assemblies of God Church. Therefore, the finding of this study may not be relevant to other religious orientations, and thus limit the generalisability. The study may therefore not be generalisable to other religious orientation besides the Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians.

3.13. Ethical considerations

According to Mertens (2005:249), before the researcher can collect data, appropriate procedures to gain permission from the gatekeepers must be followed. The gatekeepers are the organisations, institutions, community or individuals with power to grant the permission for the undertaking of the research (Creswell, 2003:65). The researcher, in this study, has consulted all the relevant authorities in the host institution and from the participants who are involved in the process of the research (refer to the Appendix Section – Appendix I: ethical clearance issues). Furthermore, as the researcher anticipates data collection, the researcher respected the participants' site for research. The following ethical issues were considered:

3.13.1. Avoidance of harm to participants

The researcher has respected vulnerable participants and not put the participants at risk. The researcher avoided exposing the participants to physical, psychological, social, economic or legal harm (Creswell, 2003:64). Thus, even the stressful procedures that might cause emotional discomfort to participants were avoided.

3.13.2. Informed consent

The participants were informed about the nature of the research and its likeliness to impact them so that they can reasonably expect what to anticipate in the research study. The participants were given the right to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw their consent from participating further in the research at any time they wish to do so.

3.13.3. Right of privacy

The researcher also anticipated the possibility of harmful information being disclosed during the data collection process. The researcher made sure that the participants' rights of privacy were not violated. This means that any information about the participants that may be acquired during

the research study has to be treated as highly confidential and will not be made available to others without the consent of the participant. Furthermore, the names of the participants are not disclosed.

3.14. Summary

This section looked at the methodological aspect of the research; as such the following elements were discussed: research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sampling, research instruments, procedure for data collection, procedure for data analyses, and ethical considerations.

CHAPER IV
DATA PRESENTATION

4.1.   Introduction

This section of the chapter presents the data that was collected from the participants for the purpose of this study in order to establish the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities. The data was collected from 14 youths, who came from the Assemblies of God Church in East London, as well as another group of 14 youths, who come from various Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations in East London. In total, there were 28 participants who were interviewed for this study, and these included 14 males and 14 females. The researcher conducted both one-on-one interviews and focused group discussions with the participants.

The researcher classified the participants in the following way: The first male participant is classified as, Participant 1 Male Individual Group – P1MIG and the first female participant is classified as, Participant 1 Female Individual Group – P1FIG. In the focused groups, the first male participant is classified as, Participant 1 Male Focused Group – P1MFG, and the first female participant is classified as, Participant 1 Female Focused Group – P1FFG. The data has been presented by clustering common themes, reflections, tallying and by the ranking of responses to uncover the main issues that arise from the interviews and these will establish the findings of the study.

4.2.   Background information

The first part of the chapter gives the background information of the participants; this helped the researcher to find the basic information about the participants in the study. Therefore, all the participants that were interviewed were seen as suitable respondents, who could provide rich and accurate information in the process of establishing the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities. The collective background information of all the individual participants has been presented in the form of a table below. The individual (one-on-one) interviews with the participants from the AOG were taken as representing the experimental group, and the focused group discussions which included participants from various denominations were considered to be the control group for this study.

4.2.1. Participants' background information

Table 4.1: Individual group – both males and females

Participant No.	Religion of participant	Age group	Gender of participant	Educational level	AOG/other denomination	Years of church membership	Location of the participant
1	Christian	18-24 years	Male	Degree – Honours	AOG	6-15 years	Rural
2	Christian	30-35 years	Male	Degree – Honours	AOG	1-5 years	Inner City
3	Christian	30-35 years	Female	Masters – Doctorate	AOG	6-15 years	Inner City
4	Christian	18-24 years	Male	Degree – honours	AOG	1-5 years	Township
5	Christian	30-35 years	Male	Degree – Honours	AOG	6-15 yeas	Rural
6	Christian	25-29 years	Female	Matric – Diploma	AOG	1-5 years	Township
7	Christian	18-24 years	Female	Matric – Diploma	AOG	1-5 years	Township
8	Christian	30-35 years	Female	Matric – Diploma	AOG	6-15 years	Inner City
9	Christian	18-24 years	Female	Matric – Diploma	AOG	1-5 years	Rural
10	Christian	25-29 years	Female	Matric – Diploma	AOG	1-5 years	Rural
11	Christian	18-24 years	Female	Matric – Diploma	AOG	6-15 years	Township
12	Christian	30-35 years	Male	Degree – honours	AOG	6-15 years	Inner City
13	Christian	18-24 years	Male	Degree – honours	AOG	6-15 years	Township
14	Christian	25-29 years	Male	Degree – Honours	AOG	6-15 years	Township

Table 4.1 gives the collective background information of the participants that were approached for the individual group interviews, which included one-on-one interviews. The information reveals that there were seven males and seven females that were chosen as the individual group for this study. Four came from rural areas (highlighted grey), another four came from the inner city (highlighted blue), and six came from the township (highlighted orange). The age group of the participants ranged from 18-35 years. Six participants ranged between the ages 18-24 years, three ranged between the ages of 25-29 and five ranged between the ages of 30-35 years.

In terms of their educational levels, six participants had already completed their Matric or Diplomas, seven had already completed their degrees or Honours, and one had already completed their Masters or Doctorate by the time of the research. All the participants were born-again Christians who affiliated with the AOG. Eight of the participants had already been members of the church for 6-15 years, and the other six had been members for 1-5 years. This indicates that all the participants, which were approached as the experimental group for the one-on-one interviews, were capable enough to give the necessary information for this study.

4.2.2. Focused groups

The researcher also conducted two focused group discussions. These were conducted with participants from various Charismatic/Pentecostal denominations and represented the control group for the study. These participants came from various places around East London, such as the Inner city, Townships and the rural areas. Their age group was the same with the experimental group, as it ranged between 18-35 years old. The researcher chose seven males and seven females. The background information of both focused groups has been depicted in the form of the table below.

Table 4.2: Male group

Participant No.	Religion of participant	Age group	Gender of participant	Education al level	AOG/Other denomination	Years of church membership	Location of the participants
1	Christian	25-29 years	Male	Matric – Diploma	Other denomination	1-5 years	Rural
2	Christian	18-24 years	Male	Matric – diploma	Other denomination	1-5 years	Township
3	Christian	30-35 years	Male	Degree – Honours	Other denomination	6-15 years	Inner city
4	Christian	25-29 years	Male	Degree – Honours	Other denomination	6-15 years	Inner city
5	Christian	30-35 years	Male	Matric – Diploma	Other denomination	6-15 years	Rural
6	Christian	18-24 years	Male	Degree – Honours	Other denomination	1-5 years	Township
7	Christian	25-29 years	Male	Degree – Honours	Other denomination	1-5 years	Inner city

Table 4.2 shows the background information of the focused group which was conducted with participants from various Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations. The background information shows that these were seven male participants, who came from different places around East London. Two came from rural areas, another two from the township, and the other three from the inner city. Their age group ranged between 18-35 years, and all had already completed their Matric and/or Degrees by the time of the research. Furthermore, all the participants were born-again Christians and had already been members of their respective churches for 1-5 year (s) and above.

Table 4.3: Female group

Participant No.	Religion of participant	Age group	Gender of participant	Educatio nal level	AOG/Other denomination	Years of church membership	Location of the participants
1	Christian	30-35 years	Female	Matric – Diploma	Other denomination	16-15 years	Rural
2	Christian	18-24 years	Female	Degree - Honours	Other denomination	1-5 years	Rural
3	Christian	30-35 years	Female	Matric - Diploma	Other denomination	1-5 years	Inner city
4	Christian	30-35 years	Female	Degree – Honours	Other denomination	6-15 years	Township
5	Christian	30-35 years	Female	Matric – Diploma	Other denomination	6-15 years	Rural
6	Christian	25-29 years	Female	Degree – Honours	Other denomination	1-5 years	Township
7	Christian	18-24 years	Female	Degree – Honours	Other denomination	1-5 years	Inner city

Table 4.3 also shows the background information of the focused group which was conducted with participants from various Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations. The background information shows that these were seven female participants, who came from different places around East London. Three came from rural areas, two from the township, and another two from the inner city. Their age group ranged between 18-35 years, and all had already completed their Matric and/or Degrees by the time of the research. Furthermore, all the participants were born-again Christians and had already been members of their respective churches for 1-5 year (s) and above. The background information of both these focused groups indicates that all the participants, which were approached as the control group, were capable enough to give the necessary information for this study.

4.3.   The role of religion on the South African youth

Under each main research question, the participants were asked to respond to four sub-questions which sought to address the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities. The research found it appropriate to assess their knowledge about the meaning of religion, especially Christianity before they can respond to the role of religion in their lives. To investigate the meaning of religion on youth, the researcher asked two conceptual questions: 1. What does Christianity mean to them, and 2. Why they are Christians. These two questions were followed by other two quality control questions, which sought to establish the spiritual condition and orientation of the participants. These questions are asked in the following manner: 3. Tell me everything you remember about your born-again event and, 4. What was the next step after this event in terms of your spiritual journey?

The last two questions worked as quality control questions because they required that the participant retell a short story about their born-again event, and how they grew in their spiritual journey thereafter, which is imperative in this study because the study focuses on the Pentecostal/Charismatic temperament of religious convictions. Taken together, the four sub-questions try to address the role of religion, specifically Christianity, within the Pentecostal/Charismatic disposition by exploring the convictions of young "born-again" Christians at East London in the Assemblies of God Church. For the purpose of clarity, the researcher has categorised the responses of the participants, bellow, in the form of themes, so that they can easily be presented and analysed.

4.3.1. The meaning of Christianity to the 'born-again' youth

The first sub-question wanted to understand what Christianity meant to the born-again youth. When they were asked what Christianity meant to them, they described their understanding of Christianity in terms of imitating Christ, and as a way of life or their life style. The majority of the participants both on the individual and focused groups said that Christianity is about imitating Christ. Some of their responses, which they gave, are categorised and presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Christianity as the imitation of Christ

Interviewee	Responses (categorised)	Codes
Participant 1M	*"I think Christianity means to me to have a Christ-like character. To learn or copy the things that Christ did, trying to have His character..."*	P1MIG
Participant 1F	*"Christianity means the renewal of the broken bond between God and Mankind. The Bible says that we have all fallen short of the glory of God, and deserve to be judged but through Christ we are put right with God. This means that in order to please God, we must believe in Jesus Christ and walk in the pattern of life that Jesus exemplified."*	P1FFG
Participant 1M	*"I think Christianity means following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Hence, we are called Christians, we follow Jesus Christ."*	P1MFG
Participant 2M	*"Christianity means to be like Christ…"*	P2MIG
Participant 2F	*"Christianity comes from the word 'Christ.' And the followers of Christ are called Christians. So, Christianity for me means following Christ."*	P2FFG
Participant 3F	*"Christianity to me means to be like Christ. So, if you are like Christ, you do all the things that Christ did while He was on earth."*	P3FIG
Participant 3M	*"Christianity is about Christ. It means following the example of Christ,*	P3MFG

	and that's what Christians are expected to do, follow the example of Christ."	
Participant 7F	*"Christianity in my understanding means to rely on God, forsake the other gods, and stop worshiping the ancestral spirits and to follow the example of Jesus Christ as a saved person…"*	P7FIG
Participant 8F	*"I think Christianity means to live in a Christ like way…"*	P8FIG
Participant 10F	*"Christianity means following the laws of Christ and living the way Christ lived."*	P10FIG
Participant 11F	*"Christianity means knowing who Christ is and who God is and living in a way that will please God following the example of Christ.*	P11FIG
Participant 12M	*"To me Christianity means to be like Christ, because this term 'Christian' started in Antioch where the people saw the life style of the disciples and said they were imitating Christ, which meant that they were Christ-like."*	P12MIG
Participant 14M	*"Christianity to me means the connectedness to God through Jesus Christ because the bible says Christ is the mediator between us and God. This means that we worship God and please Him if we believe and follow the example of Jesus Christ. And that is what Christianity is all about."*	P14MIG

Table 4.4 shows the responses of participants who described Christianity as the imitation of Jesus Christ. Imitating Christ for them meant doing the things that Christ did or what he would do, and living the way he lived or the way he would live, if he were on earth (P3FIG). In their own words, imitating Christ meant "to learn or copy the things that Christ did, trying to have His character..." (P1MIG). Thus, Christianity for them meant to do things the 'Christ Way' – doing what he did or would do, and living the way he would. The participants, therefore, equated Christianity with "…trying to have His (Christ) Character."

The other remaining participants described Christianity as a way of life or as a life style. Even though these participants internalised Christianity more than the other participants and emphasised that Christianity is not only a matter of imitating Christ but a new way of life; the ultimate purpose of living in such a manner was to have the character of Christ. They expressed the meaning of Christianity on their lives as highlighted in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Christianity as a way of life/life style

Interviewee	Responses (categorised)	Codes
Participant 1F	*"Christianity means the renewal of the broken bond between God and Mankind. The Bible says that we have all fallen short of the glory of God, and deserve to be judged but through Christ we are put right with God. This means that in order to please God, we must believe in Jesus Christ and walk in the pattern of life that Jesus exemplified."*	P1FFG
Participant 2M	*"Christianity comes from the word 'Christ.' And the followers of Christ are called Christians. So, Christianity for me, means following Christ."*	P2MFG
Participant 3F	P3FFG: *"Christianity is a religion that centres on Christ. But the power of Christianity is on the ethical principles that it demands. More than the words people say, it is about character. It is a life style that makes us live in a certain way and that determines who is and is not a true Christian. So, Christianity is way of life that sets us apart from the people of the world."*	P3FFG
Participant 4M	*"Christianity to me means everything that I am. It tells me of who I am. It is a life style…"*	P4MIG
Participant 5M	*"To some Christianity is a hobby. To some, it is a status. But to me it means everything, my life as whole."*	P5MIG
Participant 6F	*"Christianity means the love that God has for us and it is the grace He has for us, which shows that God cares enough to give us the kind of life we do not deserve. Christianity is therefore a life style and a way we should walk before God."*	P6FIG
Participant 9F	*"I think Christianity is a religion, as they are many. But it is a religion that revolves around Christ. And the things that Christianity stands for are the things we find in the Bible, which includes to live a holy life and that is how you should live as a Christian, because you have chosen to follow Jesus Christ. Christianity is therefore a call to live a holy life."*	P9FIG
Participant 13M	*"To me it means a new way of life, that one lives or peruse, that basically brings to that person the real identity of a human being. Which I believe that we are originally created and from God, and therefore Christianity brings that awareness to someone. That's why I say Christianity is a way of life."*	P13MIG

Table 4.5 shows that a certain group of participants looked upon the construct of Christianity as a way of life or as a lifestyle. P6FIG for instance, said that Christianity is "a life style and a way we should walk before God." P2MFG substantiated this notion by stating that because Christianity is a life style, Christians should watch what they do, and how they behave since their life style says a lot to other people about their belief in Christ. P9FIG put this idea into context when she alleged that Christianity is "a call to live a holy life."

Another element, which these participant raised when talking about Christianity as a way of life, is the subject of identity. P13MIG said that Christianity "means a new way of life." This new way of life, according to P13MIG, brings about a real sense of awareness and identity. P4MIG understood Christianity the same way. He said that "Christianity to me means everything that I am. It tells me of who I am." P5MIG further shared the same sentiment. He said that Christianity "means everything, my life as a whole." In this sense, they saw Christianity as not just a matter of imitating Christ, but also a way of life, which is interwoven with the strands of their identity.

4.3.2.   Why the 'born-again' youth chose to be Christians

The second sub-question, which was asked to the participants, sought to understand why they were Christians. In response to the sub-question, the participants mentioned many reasons that made them chose to be Christian, with some solemn than others. These reasons included the following: (a) conviction by the word, (b) responding to the Christian call, (c) influenced by family members, (d) out of admiration of Christ/Christian life style, and (e) out of socio-religious factors. These reasons are organised and categorised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.6: Convicted by the word

Interviewee	Reason (s)	Responses (categorised)	Codes
Participant 1M	Convicted by the word	*"I am a Christian because I was convicted by the word of God."*	P1MIG
Participant 4M	Convicted by the word	*"I think I was taken by the word, because you will never be a Christian without the word. You must first hear the word, then once you are convinced by the word, then you will be convicted."*	P4MIG
Participant 7F	Convicted by the word	*"I am a Christian because I heard the word. I*	P7FFG

| | | *was in hospital, and at launch time, the nurses would read the word, preach and pray with us. So, in one of those prayer meetings, I accepted Jesus Christ and I was saved. That's why I became a Christian, I heard the word."* | |

Table 4.6 shows the participants that said they became Christians because they were convicted by the word of God. These participants did not come from religious (Born-again Christian) families but received Christ through evangelism. This constitutes as the first reason why born-again youth chose to be Christians.

Table 4.7: Answering the call of being a Christian

Interviewee	Reason (s)	Responses (categorised)	Codes
Participant 2M	Answering the call	*"I think to be a Christian is to answer the call of being a Christian. Also, our lives call out for us to be Christians.*	P2MIG
Participant 3M	Answering the call	*"The Bible says that God wants everyone to be saved and no-one to perish, so I became a Christian because God wanted me to be saved."*	P3MFG
Participant 3F	Answering the call	*"I think it is God's desire that we should accept Jesus Christ and be saved. So, there is nothing that forced me to be saved, I just wanted to obey God."*	P4FFG
Participant 6M	Answering the call	*"I believe in predestination, so I believe that God saved me. I did not choose to be saved but God saw it fit that I should be saved. So, when I lifted up my hand during the alter-call, I was responding to God's call of grace. And I was saved and became a Christian."*	P6MFG
Participant 7F	Answering the call	*"I am a Christian because the Bible says God created us to worship Him, so I was called to worship Him. That is why I am a Christian and chose to be born-again."*	P7FIG

Table 4.7 shows the participants that said they were Christian because they were responding to God's call of desiring everyone to be saved, and thus becoming Christians. These participants

came from religious families, even though some of their parents were not born-again Christians. This constitutes as the second reason why born-again youth chose to become Christians.

Table 4.8: Parents were/are Christians

Interviewee	Reason (s)	Responses (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 2F	Parents are Christian	*"I became a Christian because my parents are also Christians. So, I grew up in Christian family."*	P2FFG
Participant 3F	Parents are Christian	*"I am a Christian because I grew up in a Christian family."*	P3FIG
Participant 4F	Parents are Christian	*"I became a Christian because my parents are also Christians. So, I grew up in Christian family."*	P4FFG
Participant 9F	Parents are Christian	*"I am a Christian because we are Christians at home."*	P9FIG
Participant 10F	Parents are Christian	*"I am a Christian because my parents are Christians…"*	P10FIG

Table 4.8 shows the participants who said that they were Christian because they grew up in a Christian family or their parents were Christian. The choice of these participants to become Christian was largely influence by their parents or families, since they were coming from a religious background. This constitutes as the third reason why the born-again youth chose to become Christians.

Table 4.9: Admiration of Christ/Christian life style

Interviewee	Reason (s)	Responses (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 6F	Admiration of Christ or Christian life style	*"What made me a Christian is the way Jesus Christ lived. I admired His life, and thought to myself, if I can like Christ, my life would be safe and protected. That made me a Christian.*	P6FIG
Participant 7M	Admiration of Christ or Christian life style	*"I became a Christian because Christians are very nice people, when my mother was sick, they would come and have prayers with her, and sometimes, they would bring us some stuff to eat, and I appreciated that. So, I became a Christian too."*	P7MFG

Participant 12M	Admiration of Christ or Christian life style	*"...So, I accepted Christ as my Lord and Saviour so that I could be like Him."*	P12MIG

Table 4.9 shows the participants who said that they became Christians because they admired Christ and/or the life style of Christians. Some of these participants came from families that had no religious background while others did have particular religious orientations. This constitutes as the fourth reason why the born-again youth chose to become Christians.

Table 4.10: Socio-religious factors

Interviewee	Reason (s)	Responses (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 6F	Socio-religious factors	*"I am Christian because some people from a nearby church would visit my house and give us food, clothes and pray for us. After their prayers they would ask if anyone wants to accept Jesus Christ, so I did. And now I am a Christian."*	P6FFG
Participant 7M	Socio-religious factors	*"I became a Christian because Christians are very nice people, when my mother was sick, they would come and have prayers with her, and sometimes, they would bring us some stuff to eat, and I appreciated that. So, I became a Christian too."*	P7MFG
Participant 9F	Socio-religious factors	*"...So, I can say I am still a Christian because Christianity guides me, and helps me avoid a lot of things that the youth is doing, such as drugs, drinking, having sex before marriage and many more other thing."*	P9FIG
Participant 11F	Socio-religious factors	*"I am a Christian because I saw the things that God did for me. In all that I have encountered in my life, God seemed to be always there, and I would not have made it without Him."*	P11FIG

Table 4.10 shows the participants who said that they became Christian due to help of God, the church or other Christians when they were stranded. Some came from religious families and others from non-religious families, but their social and/or religious conditions lead them to become Christians. And this constitutes as the final reason why born-again youth became Christians.

4.3.3. The participants' born-again event

As stated earlier by the researcher that the sub-questions 3 and 4 were used as quality control questions for this study, the purpose of these two questions was to establish the spiritual condition and orientation of the participants. And this was achieved as all the participants that took part in the study were 'Born-again', belonged to a Pentecostal/Charismatic Church and had already been a member of their respective churches for a year and above. These questions therefore were asked in the following manner: (3). Tell me everything you remember about your born-again event and, (4). What was the next step after this event in terms of your spiritual journey? The participants' responses to these sub-questions will not be presented and analysed in this chapter, but they have been attached as part of the Appendices in the Appendix Section (Appendix III) of this research along with other relevant transcripts.

4.4. Spirituality in the construction the self-concept on youth

Under the second main question of the study, the participants were also asked to respond to four sub-questions which sought to establish the role of spirituality in the construction of the self-concept on youth. The participants were therefore asked to share their understanding on the concept of spirituality, how spirituality helps them understand their sense of self, how spirituality assists them in defining who they are, and how they practise their spirituality. The participants' responses to these sub-questions have been ordered and categorised so that they can easily be presented and analysed. Each sub-question has been presented as a sub topic under the main research question of the study so that the responses of the participants can be properly presented and analysed.

4.4.1. The meaning of Spirituality to the born-again youth

When asked what spirituality meant to them, the participants said that spirituality either meant (i) a connection with God, (ii) a belief in something, (iii) living according to the spirit, and (iv) is an agent that awakens the conscience and brings control to their morals.

Table 4.11: Spirituality as a connection with God

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 1M	*"I think Spirituality means to have a connection with the unseen God. I think spirituality is being able to consult God because first of all, God is unseen. So, I think being spiritual is to move beyond the body to have a spiritual connection with God."*	P1MIG
Participant 4F	*"Spirituality means the way we connect with God. It is the relationship*	P4FFG

	that we make that keeps us in touch with Him.”	
Participant 5M	*“Spirituality means a connection with God. It is how we communicate with Him.”*	P5MFG
Participant 5M	*“Spirituality means to be connected with God. This connection allows us to feel the presence of God everywhere we are, and this makes us live in a manner that will not offend the Holy Spirit, who connects us with God.”*	P5MIG
Participant 10F	*“Spirituality means connecting with God, maybe through a prayer or worship.”*	P10FIG
Participants 12M	*“Spirituality means the spiritual entity that is contained by the body which always seeks to connect with God…, so, spirituality means the ability of the inner spirit to communicate with God.”*	P12MIG

Table 4.11 shows the participants who said that the concept of spirituality is a connection with God. They further mentioned that this connection with God enables them to feel the presence of God wherever they are (P5MIG), and helps them create a relationship with God, in which they can stay in touch with Him at all times (P4FFG & P5MFG).

Table 4.12: Spirituality as a belief in something

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 2M	*“Spirituality means that a person believes in something. To me, spirituality means belief, believing in the divine Creator; the one who created me.”*	P2MIG
Participant 3F	*“Spirituality means believing in something that is considered sacred, or God. It is that supernatural being that has an influence on how we behave and treat each other as people. Because I am a Christian, that supernatural being to me is God, but I also think that to some, that supernatural being can be their ancestors.”*	P3FFG
Participant 6F	*“Spirituality means believing in a God that can connect with His people.”*	P6FIG
Participant 11F	*“Spirituality means to have a relationship with a higher power. This can be something or someone. But to me it's God.”*	P11FIG

Table 4.12 shows the participants that said that spirituality means believing in something. The participants indicated that they think the word 'something' can refer to the Divine Creator, God, or the ancestors. However, in their case, the word 'something' refers to God.

Table 4.13: Spirituality as living according to the spirit

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 3F	*"Spirituality to me means living according to the spirit. For example, if you are a born-again Christian, you turn to understand things in a spiritual way and be lead by the spirit. When you are born–again, you experience a spiritual connection with God because the Bible says we must be born of water and spirit. So, spirituality means to be lead by the spirit so that you can keep your connection with God."*	P3FIG
Participant 4M	*"Spirituality means to leave according to the spirit. It is the way we are supposed to live as Christian. This is because there are things which are of the flesh, which do not agree with the spirit. Look! I have noticed one thing, that all the things of the flesh do not build up the spirit but all the things of the spirit can build up the flesh. What am I saying when I say this? I mean that when you live by the spirit, there are things that your flesh gets protected from, which you cannot find yourself dubbed-in because the spiritual things require that you remain pure, and holy. So, you remove yourself from other things and refrain from things that may corrupt you. Therefore, you do not regret yourself because you depend on the spirit."*	P4MIG
Participant 6F	*"Spirituality means living by the spirit. It means that our inner person, which is the spirit contained by the body, links us with God whenever we pray or communicate with God."*	P6FF
Participant 8F	*"Because the Bible says that when Jesus went to Heaven He left us with the Holy Spirit. Spirituality therefore means to be filled by the spirit of God so that He can help us overcome sin, and help us live in a way that will please God."*	P8FIG

Table 4.13 shows the participants who said that spirituality means living according to the spirit. Living according to the spirit for them, meant not giving themselves up to the desires of the flesh. P4MIG explained this process by stating that there are "things which are of the flesh, which do not agree with the spirit." By this, he meant that there are things, which are desired by the flesh, but are not beneficial even for the spirit. He further noted that when one lives according to the spirit, they remove themselves or refrain from things that are impure and unholy, which may in turn corrupt them. Thus, living according to the spirit helps them overcome sin, and enable them to live in a way that will please God.

Table 4.14: Spirituality as an agent that awakens the conscience

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 2F	*"Spirituality refers to spirit in us, which quickens our conscience when we are doing what is wrong and tells us to repent. It helps us stay true to God and reminds us not to sin against Him."*	P2FF
Participant 13M	*"Spirituality to me means everything that brings control to your morals. It has everything to do with behaviour and the way you perceive things. Because the bible say God is spirit and all those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. So, it brings the link between the human and God. Because we communicate with God through the spirit, he talks to us through our spirit. Through that our conscience is being awakened, our morals are being controlled and our behaviours are under the same control, knowing that there is God in heaven who sees everything that we do."*	P13MIG

Table 4.14 shows the participants who said that spirituality refers to an agent that awakens the conscience and brings control to moral character of people. By conscience, the participant meant the ability to discern when one is doing wrong. Thus, spirituality working as an agent of conscience means that it helps to restrain their behaviour from doing impure or unholy things, and puts their morals under control. This is how the participants perceived the concept of spirituality. They said that spirituality either meant a connection with God, a belief in something, living according to the spirit, and/or an agent that awakens the conscience and brings control to their morals.

4.4.2. How spirituality helps youth understand their sense of self

Under this sub-question, the participants were asked how the Christian spirituality helps them understand their sense of self. The sub-question sought to understand how spirituality establishes the collective knowledge about self on youth and how such knowledge is being virtually used by young people to deal with the daily operations of their lives. When asked to explain how the Christian spirituality helps them understand their sense of self, they said that the Christian spirituality helps them understand that they are important and deeply loved by God, and that the Christian spirituality motivates them to behave in a manner that is worthy of God's love.

Table 4.15: Understanding themselves as appreciated by God

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 1M	*"...Because I am a born-again Christian, I believe that God loved me enough to send his beloved Son Jesus Christ to die for my sins. And because of Christ, I have escaped the judgement of God. I now understand that God loves me. Hence Christ gave Himself for me."*	P1MIG
Participant 1M	*"The Christian spirituality helps see myself as unique person. In spite of all the challenges I face in my life, God treats me as me, and does not compare me with other people. He accepts and loves me as I am, and does not give up on me, even though I make a lot of mistakes."*	PMFG
Participant 4M	*"More than anything, my Christian spirituality has helped me deal with my past. There are things about me and where I come from which somehow affected how I used to see myself. Now I know that I am a new creature, and God does not define me about my past. Even though I still make some mistakes, I understand that that's how I get to mature in life, rather than blaming myself. My Christian spirituality gives me a positive look on life, and that keeps me going, knowing that I matter to God."*	P4MFG
Participant 5M	*"It helps me realise that I am important before God. The bible says that sin had alienated me from God, which means that I had no connection with God. But Christ died so that I may rebuild that connection with God."*	P5MIG
Participant 7F	*"I think that the Christian spirituality helps me understand that I am special and that God expects me to act in such a manner."*	P7FIG
Participant 11F	*The Christian spirituality helps me understand that even though I am a sinner, in the process of salvation, God loves me still. So, it helps me understand that even in my weaknesses, I am still valuable and that God is patient with me. If He is patient with me, it means that I should not judge or condemn myself for the mistakes I make in life."*	P11FIG
Participant 12M	*"The Christian spirituality helps me know that I am complete in Christ, and that what God has deposited in me makes me unique. Even if other Christians may compromise their faith, my spirituality reminds me that I am not serving God to impress other people but because he finds favour with me. So, my Christian spirituality helps me in that way."*	P12MIG

Table 4.15 shows the participants who said that the Christian spirituality has helped them understand that God appreciates them. They used different words to express this sentiment.

Some of the words that they used to express God's appreciation, include the following: "God loves me", "I matter to God", "I am important before God", "I am special", "I am valuable", "I am unique", and that "God finds favour with me." These words express how these participants view the function that the Christian spirituality played in their understanding of the self.

Table 4.16: The moral consequence of the Christian spirituality on youth

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 2M	*"Spirituality helps me stay away from doing bad things. Whenever I think of doing what is wrong, the spirit quickens my conscience, lets me know that I am not supposed to be doing wrong. It helps keep my behaviour in control."*	P2MFG
Participant 3F	*"The Christian spirituality firstly, helps me to understand that I am a born-again Christian. And as a born-again Christian, it reminds me that I am not supposed to act anyhow wherever I am. It also says that I am a hare with Christ. And that makes me not doubt myself but understand that I am grounded in Christ and belong to the Christian family."*	P3FIG
Participant 4M	*"Before I was born-again, I was a hopeless barbarian. But after I was born-again, the spirit showed me that I had to change my ways. I tried but it was hard to repent without the spirit of God. So, I can say the spirit of God helped me change my life. Then I became a self-controlled person and understood that I am a child of God and I am not supposed to do the things I did."*	P4MIG
Participant 6F	*"I think it is the Christian spirituality that helps me understand why I should behave in a good manner, keep myself holy and why I should not jeopardise my life by engaging in the senseless things like promiscuity, theft or violence. So, I can say that the Christian spirituality helps me understand myself better as a person and how I should behave."*	P6FIG
Participant 10F	*"The Christian spirituality helps me understand that I am nothing on this earth apart from Christ. And that if I don't live in a manner that is worthy of God's love, I am loosing myself. So, it helps me know that as a Christian, I am a vessel of God's love."*	P10FIG
Participant 13M	*"The Christian spirituality conscientises me, and it also has an effect on my behaviour and the way I see people. It is because when your spirituality has been activated, you become sensitive first to God and also sensitive to other people around you. It gives you a new perspective of looking at what is happening around you. So, it has done*	P13MIG

	that. It has awaken my conscience, and now before I utter a word, I wonder what will God think if I could speak this word to someone else.”	
Participant 14M	*“The Christian spirituality deals a lot with character, self-worth and self restraint, so it helps me avoid a reckless behaviour and helps me value myself more, even more than I used to.”*	P14MIG

Table 4.16 shows the participants who said that Christian spirituality helps them understand their sense of self by awakening the moral ethic in their behaviour. They also mentioned that Christian spirituality helps them understand that they are supposed to be ethical or moral as Christians, and to be conscious about what they do or say to other people. Being ethical or moral for them is seen as a consequence of Christian spirituality, thus indicating the participants' belief in the contribution of Christian spirituality in understanding their sense of self.

4.4.3.   How spirituality assists the youth in defining who they are

In this sub-question, the participants were asked how their understanding of spirituality assists them in defining who they are. In essence, the sub-question sought to find out how young people define themselves. This was a question of identity, and the researcher wanted to know if their Christian background or religious affiliation assisted them in expressing who they are. The participants responded to this sub-question, in the following manner:

Table 4.17: As a unique person

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 1M	*“My understanding of spirituality makes me see myself as a different person. So, even though I know that we are all children of God, if we a born-again, but I believe that God has a special place for me, and sees me differently from others. So, we all matter, as a whole, and individually to God. And that makes it easy for me to define myself without trying to compare myself with others.”*	P1MIG
Participant 2M	*“To me spirituality is a heavenly blueprint of what I am here on earth. So without the blueprint, even if I were to be broken, there is no place where people could look and attempt to reconstruct me. But because God is my blueprint, even if something can happen to me, or I could be sick, I will always go to the very same God who created me, who knows my blueprint and my spirituality. He can help me stand and restore my identity. So, spirituality helps me perceive myself as a unique person,*	P2MIG

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
	the blueprint of heaven."	
Participant 3F	*"Spirituality has helped me establish myself, firstly, as a unique person, who does not need to conform to the ways of the world. Secondly, it has made me realise that I am special in the eyes of God. So, when people ask for my name, I tell them my name and that I am a born-again Christian who is deeply loved by God."*	P3FFG

Table 4.17 shows the participants who said that their understanding of spirituality has helped them define themselves in terms of their uniqueness. One of the participants referred to such uniqueness as the 'blueprint of heaven' (P2MIG). By the 'blueprint of heaven', the participant meant the component of an identity that can only be shaped by or gained through the spiritual connection with God. This understanding of spirituality, which assists the youth in defining who they are, therefore constitutes as the first of three ways in which spirituality assists young people to define who they are.

Table 4.18: As a child/chosen of God

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 5M	*"It helps me consider myself as a son that is highly favoured and protected by God. And as a son, I understand that God is in control of my life. So, no matter what happens, I live to please God, and to let others see Him through me."*	P5MIG
Participant 6M	*"I think we all define ourselves in terms of what we are, so I am a born-again Christian. I have been chosen by God, and live only to serve Him. That's how I define myself, as a chosen person."*	P6MFG
Participant 6F	*"...So, spirituality helps me define myself as a chosen person, who is called to live a holy life."*	P6FIG
Participant 7M	*"It helps me to fearlessly say that I am a child of God, loved beyond compare and highly esteemed by my Father in Heaven."*	P7MFG
Participant 7F	*"As for me! Concerning this question: how does your understanding of spirituality assist you in defining who you are? It is helping me, because I know that I am God's child, I am set apart. I am a child who has been bought by the blood. You see, if other people are saying I am coming from this and that home, for me I know that my home is in heaven."*	P7FIG
Participant 7F	*"The bible says we are hares with Christ. So, I am really favoured. I am a daughter of the Most-High, and hare of the heavenly Kingdom."*	P7FFG

Interviewee		Codes
Participant 8F	*"For me, it is helping in that, the bible says He knew us even before our parents came to know us. So, this makes me know that it is Him who knows me more, and in turn, I feel appreciated by Him. Because he knew me before I was even born, I would say, God has set me apart, and in Him, I finally understand who I am."*	P8FIG
Participant 9F	*"Spirituality helps me see myself in a positive way. When I look at my peers and the things that they do, I feel blessed to have been chosen by God."*	P9FIG

Table 4.18 shows the participants who said that their understanding of spirituality assists them to define themselves as either the "child of God", the "Son of God", as "Set apart", as "Chosen by God", and as "Hares with Christ". This is the second of three ways in which the participants said spirituality assists them in defining who they are.

Table 4.19: As moral persons

Interviewee	Response (Categorised)	Codes
Participant 3F	*"My understanding of spirituality assists me a lot in terms of making compromises. So, I feel like that sense of awareness which reminds me of who I am, protects me from lowering myself and possibly disgracing my faith."*	P3FIG
Participant 9F	*"Spirituality helps me see myself in a positive way. Now I define myself as a moral person, who does not shame herself but finds dignity by living according to the word of God."*	P9FIG
Participant 12M	*"...But when you are in Christ, there is this thing that stops you from doing what you like, even if there is no one around to tell you that what you are doing is wrong. That helps me understand myself as moral person, who lives by principles of God..."*	P12MIG

Table 4.19 shows the participants who said that their understanding of spirituality assists them in defining themselves as moral persons. They said that as Christians, what they do reflects who they are (P12MIG), and so, that sense of awareness, which reminds them who they are, protects them from ethically lowering themselves or disgracing their Christian faith. For them, good morals reveal their identity and help them define who they are. This is the last of three ways in which the participants said that their understanding of spirituality assist them to define who they are.

4.4.4. How the born-again youth practice their spirituality

The last sub-question under the main: *what is the role of spirituality in the construction of the self-concept on youth?"* sought to establish how the young 'born-again' youth practice their spirituality. The responses of the participants on this sub-question has been ordered and displayed in the form of a table below.

Table 4.20: How participants practise spirituality

Participant No.	Individual/Focused Group	Practice spirituality by	Coding
P1M	Individual Group	*"I practice my spirituality by praying and fasting. I also read the word of God."*	P1MIG
P1F	Focused Group	*"I practice my spirituality by going to church, reading the bible and prayer."*	P1FFG
P2M	Focused group	*"I practice my spirituality by attending church lessons, reading the Bible and fasting."*	P2MFG
P3F	Individual Group	*"Firstly I can say I practice my spirituality by reading the Word because as a Christian, I can say it is the way in which I feed my spirit. Secondly, by praying at all times, so it is how I practise my spirituality, so as to have power at all times in Christ."*	P3FIG
P3F	Focused Group	*"I would say I practice my spirituality by praying. Connecting with God helps me grow spiritually."*	P3FFG
P4M	Individual Group	*"The way I practise my spirituality is through prayer. I think also by engaging myself to fellowships, fasting and reading the Word. That is how I practise my spirituality.*	P4MIG
P4M	Focused Group	*"How I practice my spirituality neh? I can say by prayer and by reading the word of God."*	P4MFG
P4F	Focused Group	*"I practice my spirituality by going to church regularly, and by attending whole-night prayers. That's where I learn more about God and learn how to pray."*	P4FFG
P5M	Individual Group	*"I practice my spirituality by reading the bible, praying and fellowshipping with other Christians."*	P5MIG

Table 4.20 shows how the participants said they practise their spirituality. In their responses, the main four identical ways in which the participants practiced their spirituality was through prayer, reading the Bible (Word of God), going to church regularly, and by fasting. Praying, reading the Bible, going to church, and fasting were the mostly highlighted forms of practising spirituality by the participants. However, there were other ways in which they also practised their spirituality, and those included the following: witnessing or testifying to unbelievers (P6FIG; P12MIG), and singing or worship (P7FFG; P11FIG). These six elements therefore – prayer, reading the Bible, going to church, fasting, witnessing, and worshipping – shows how the participants practiced their spirituality.

4.5. The impact of religion and spirituality on youth

On the third and last main research question, the participants were asked to respond to four sub-questions, which sought to assess the impact of religion and spirituality on the decision making processes, life styles and roles that the youth assumes in the society. The participants were asked to bring up the most important principles of being a Christian, to express how Christians are expected to behave in terms of morality and ethical conduct in their respective churches and in the society, and to explain how their Christian identification affects their decisions and life style. The responses of the participants therefore, to these four sub-questions, have been ordered and categorised below, so that they can easily be presented and analysed.

4.5.1. The important principles of being a Christian to the youth

When the participants were asked what the most important principles of being a Christian were, they mentioned the following: (i) Character, (ii) Kindness, (iii) Considerate of others, (iv) Humility, (v) Obedience, (vi) Compliance, (vii) Follow Christ, (viii) Reading the Bible, (ix) Prayer, (x) Confessions (xi) Fasting, (xii) Witnessing, (xiii) Not being judgemental, (xiv) loving, (xv) forgiving (xvi) and (xvii) being respectable. These principles were highlighted by both the individual and focused groups. Below are the responses of both groups.

Table 4.21: Individual group

Principle		Participant	Responses (categorised)
i.	Character	P6FIG	*"It is the character: how you live, and how you behave."*
ii.	Kindness	P1MIG	*"It is to show kindness…"*
iii.	Considerate	P3FIG	*"…I should always be considerate of other people."*
iv.	Humility	P12MIG	*"I think the most important principle of being a Christian is humility."*
v.	Obedience	P10FIG	*"You must submit to God, to the church and other authorities…"*
vi.	Compliance	P2MIG	*"…Is to be a person of principles; there are laws, rules and regulations that govern you…, as a Christian, you do not do as you please.*
vii.	Follow Christ	P4MIG	*"For me, the first thing, I would say is to be Christ like."*
viii.	Read the Bible	P9FIG	*"You must be friends with your Bible."*
ix.	Prayer	P10FIG	*"You must pray…"*
x.	Confession	P9FIG	*"You must fast, confess and testify."*
xi.	Fasting	P9FIG	*"You must fast..."*
xii.	Witnessing	P10FIG	*"And you must testify about your salvation."*
xiii.	Non judgemental	P11FIG	*"I think the first one, is not to be judgemental. As Christians, we have the tendency of judging others."*
xiv.	loving	P1MIG	*"…to love people as the Bible says love your neighbour as you love yourself."*

xv.	Forgiveness	P14MIG	*"If I may summarise because I think there are many principles. Christianity, I would say, is about love and forgiveness."*
xvi.	Peace		*"I think when you are a Christian; you must have peace because peace is important."*
xvii.	Respect	P7FIG	*"It is to live a holy life, following the example of Christ, and treating other people with respect."*

Table 4.21, shows some of the responses that the individual group participants gave to the first sub-question. When asked what the most important principles of being a Christian were, they mentioned the following: (i) Character, (ii) Kindness, (iii) Considerate of others, (iv) Humility, (v) Obedience, (vi) Compliance, (vii) Follow Christ, (viii) Reading the Bible, (ix) Prayer, (x) Confessions (xi) Fasting, (xii) Witnessing, (xiii) Not being judgemental, (xiv) loving, (xv) forgiving (xvi) and (xvii) being respectable.

Table 4.22: Focused (control) group

Principle		Participant	Responses (categorised)
i.	Character	P1MFG	*"I think the most important principle of being a Christian is a Godly character. Without a godly character, we are the same as everyone else. It is the character that sets us apart as children of God."*
ii.	Kindness	P6FFG	*"I think it is kindness. A Christian should always be kind, so that people may see the love of God through him or her."*
iii.	Humility	P12MIG	*"The most important principles of being a Christian is love, being humble and being able to forgive."*
iv.	Obedience	P3MFG	*"I think the most important principle of being a Christian is obedience."*
v.	Read the Bible	P4FFG	*"I would say the most important principle of being a Christian is reading the bible, doing what it says, and emulating the example of Christ."*
vi.	Prayer	P5FFG	*"I think prayer is the most important principle of being a Christian. We only get to be close to God and achieve the ability to understand His word when we pray. So, prayer is the most important principle."*
vii.	Caring for others	P7MFG	*"Caring for others is the most important principle of being a Christian. The Bible says that we should love others as we love ourselves, so caring for others is the highest symbol of love."*

Table 4.22 shows the focus group participants who mentioned some of the overall principles mentioned by the individual group. Among the principles that they mentioned, the following were included: (i) character, (ii) kindness, (iii) humility, (iv) obedience, (v) reading the Bible, (vi) prayer, and (vii) caring for others.

4.5.2. Christian expectations from youth in terms of moral behaviour

On the second sub-question, the participants were asked to explain what is expected from them as Christians in terms of morality and ethical behaviour in their respective churches. This question sought to establish the moral obligations of the participants from their respective churches and how such moral obligations are upheld by the youth. The participants responded in the following manner to this sub-question.

Table 4.23 Christian expectation from youth

Participant	Group	Coding	Expectation	Responses (categorised)
P1M	Individual group	P1MIG	Exclusiveness	*"We must not conform ourselves as the world. The way we do things must be different from the youth that is not born-again."*
P2M	Individual group	P2MIG	Imitate Christ	*"It is expected that you live a life that reflects Christ…"*
P2M	Focused group	P2MFG	Bring a positive change	*"It is expected that a Christian bring a positive change in the society, but he or she must not be dubbed in the politics of the society."*
P4M	Focused group	P4MFG	Accountable	*"A Christian is expected to live a Christ-like life, and practice the principles of love, peace, and be accountable for his or her actions."*
P5M	Focused group	P5MFG	Good conduct	*"Err. A Christian should not drink alcohol, use drugs, steal or violate other people."*
P7F	Individual group	P7FIG	Submission	*"What is important firstly is to submit…, You need to submit under your pastor but you should submit to things that go along with the word of God.*
P9F	Individual group	P9FIG	Uphold the church principles	*"It is expected that you follow and respect the principles of the church. You need to behave and obey your leaders."*

Table 4.23 shows the list of conducts that the participants said are expected from the youth in terms of morality and behaviour in their respective churches. The participants said that they are expected to be (i) exclusive, and not to act as anyone else, (ii) to imitate Christ, (iii) to bring a positive change in the society, (iv) to be accountable for their actions, (v) to have a good conduct, which includes not drinking alcohol, using drugs, stealing or engaging in the acts of violence against other people, (vi) to submit to their church leaders and authorities, and (vii) to

uphold their church principles. This, therefore, is how the participants expressed what is expected from them in terms of behaviour and conduct from their respective churches.

4.5.3. The role of the youth as Christians in the society

Under this sub-question, the participants were asked explain their role as Christians in the society. This sub-question sought to understand and to assess the involvement of young people in communal affairs or social issues. The participants therefore responded in the following way to this question:

Table 4.24 Role of youth in society

Participant	Group	Coding	Expectation	Responses (categorised)
P1M	Individual group	P1MIG	Exclusiveness	*"We must not conform ourselves as the world. The way we do things must be different from the youth that is not born-again."*
P2M	Individual group	P2MIG	Imitate Christ	*"It is expected that you live a life that reflects Christ…"*
P2M	Focused group	P2MFG	Bring a positive change	*"It is expected that a Christian bring a positive change in the society, but he or she must not be dubbed in the politics of the society."*
P4M	Focused group	P4MFG	Accountable	*"A Christian is expected to live a Christ-like life, and practice the principles of love, peace, and be accountable for his or her actions."*
P5M	Focused group	P5MFG	Good conduct	*"Err. A Christian should not drink alcohol, use drugs, steal or violate other people."*
P7F	Individual group	P7FIG	Submission	*"What is important firstly is to submit…, You need to submit under your pastor but you should submit to things that go along with the word of God.*
P9F	Individual group	P9FIG	Uphold the church principles	*"It is expected that you follow and respect the principles of the church. You need to behave and obey your leaders."*

Table 4.24 shows the list of roles that the participants said that they play in the society as Christians. These roles, which the participants asserted that they play in the society is namely, to: (i) bring a positive change through various communal contributions, (ii) be the beacons of hope by being part of the solution in the society than a problem, (iii) pursue peace against all the animosity and violence breeding in their communities, (iv) empower others by initiating youth programmes, (v) be philanthropic to those who are less fortunate, (vi) be exemplary in conduct, (vii) intercede on behalf of others including authorities, and (viii) to witness the good news of the gospel to others.

4.5.4. Influence of Christian identity on youth

Under the fourth and last sub-question of the research, the participants were asked to explain how their Christian identification influences their decision making and life styles. The sub-question sought to understand whether the youth does reflect about their Christian identification before they can make or take major decisions in their lives, and to establish how such a Christian identification influences their life styles.

Table 4.25: The Christian identification as impacting both decisions and morals

Participant	Group	Coding	Kind of influence	Responses (categorised)
P1M	Individual group	P1MIG	Influences both decisions and morals	*"Mm! First of all, it helps me a lot to take good and positive decisions. Before doing anything I need to ask myself if it the right decision that I make."*
P1F	Focused group	P2FFG	Influenced both decisions and morals	*"My Christian identification helps me keep my morals in check at all times, because there are people who are always watching to see if I live what I preach. So, even the decisions that I make reflects the life I now live in Christ."*
P2M	Individual group	P2MIG	Influences both decisions and morals	*"When it comes to decision making, I do not just take decision as all other people…; I make sure that I evaluate that decision, so that when I have taken it, I can know what will be the results or consequences."*
P3F	Focused group	P3FFG	Influences both decisions and morals	*"It influences me in a positive way. In that, when I have to decide on something, I first think how my decision will affect other people. From there, I make decisions that will benefit me but also how it will not bring harm to others. In a way, my Christian identification makes me a responsible Christian."*
P3F	Individual group	P3FIG	Influences both decisions and morals	*"Ah! It helps me in that whenever I am going to take a decision ,firstly, I ask myself if the decision that I am taking is going to please God or not. That helps me to be a responsible Christian.*
P5F	Focused group	P5FFG	Influences both decisions and morals	*"Since I am a Christian, I have made a lot of good choices in my life. And I don't do the things I used to do before… My Christian identification has helped me. Now I am a reformed person because of my Christian identification."*
P7F	Individual group	P7FFG	Influences both decisions and morals	*"…So, in each and every decision that I make, I think twice. I think about how my decision will be like in front of God. I do not just take a decision and take actions but I think about my decisions and if I have a chance to pray about my decisions, I do so."*

Table 4.25 shows the participants who said that their Christian identification has a positive influence in their lives, both in the decisions that they make and on their moral values. They said

that their Christian identification helps them make good choices, and enable them to become responsible Christians. This is because before they can decide on a major issue, they either ask themselves how God would react after such a decision has been taken and how such a decision will affect other people. That kind of influence therefore brings about a sense of accountability, and awareness regarding their surroundings and recognisance of their relationships with the significant others.

Table 4.26: The Christian identification as limiting both decisions and morals

Participant	Group	Coding	Kind of influence	Responses (categorised)
P2M	Focused group	P2MFG	Limits both decisions and morals	*"Being a Christian is not easy because before you do something, you have to think about what other people will say. In that sense, it restricts the way you should act and how you think."*
P5M	Focused group	P5MFG	Limits both decisions and morals	*"I feel that my Christian identification sometimes limits my freedom. There are certain things we are not allowed to do because they might cause others to sin."*
P11F	Individual group	P11FIG	Limits both decisions and morals	*"Mm! it helps because it limits. It limits you in doing some other things because, for example, at the township, there are always bashes. And you cannot go to church today, and then to a bash tomorrow for dancing and drinking."*
P13M	Individual group	P13MIG	Limits both decisions and morals	*"...At some point, people perceive you in a certain way, then it makes you feel like you are less human. There are things which people do not expect you to do because you are a Christian. That is the disadvantage and some of these things are overrated."*
P14M	Individual group	P14MIG	Limits both decision and morals	*"The definition of Christianity as we know it is somehow restrictive, especially to the African context. For example, as Christians we are thought to think of our departed parents as demonic forces. And we are told to stay away from all traditional customs and rituals, but those things are practiced by our parents. So, I can say that Christianity is limiting."*

Table 4.26 shows the participants who said that their Christian identification restricts or limits their capacity to make certain decisions or act in a manner that they see fit for themselves. They said that these limitations were due to the things they are not allowed to do. For example, going to swim when the opposite sex is present is disallowed, because swimming requires that one take off his or clothes, and/or reveal certain parts of his or her body. Showing certain private bodily parts in public or to the opposite sex is considered a degradation of the body, so it not allowed (P5MFG).

Again, the participants indicated that the people's expectations on how Christians should live and act brings some amount of restrictions to their decisions and morals. They said that it is not easy for them to freely do things because they are always watched, and their mistakes a taken by people as the failure to live a complete Christian life (P13MIG). Furthermore, the participants said that the lack of interaction between Christianity and the African culture brings about some limitations in the exercise of their spirituality (P14MIG).

4.6. Summary

This part of the chapter dealt with data presentation. As such, the empirical data that was gathered from the participants for purpose of this study was presented following the processes indicated in the methodology section, under data analysis (Chapter III), in order to fulfil the purposes of this study. The subsequent chapter (Chapter V), analyses the data which has presented in this chapter, in order to put it into context and to establish the findings of the study.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS

5.1.   Introduction

This chapter analyses and discusses and the data that was presented in Chapter IV. The goal of the chapter is to interpret and put into context the presented data so that the researcher may establish the findings of the study. The discussions are set to follow the format that was used in Chapter IV, which means that each main research question of the study serves as the main heading for a particular topic, which has its own four elaborative sub-questions.

5.2.   The role of religion on the South African youth

As presented in Chapter IV, there were four sub-questions under this research question. The researcher indicated that only two sub-questions were addressed under this main question, as the other two worked as quality control questions. The researcher has therefore paid more attention to the previous two, and did not discuss the latter two. However, as indicated in the previous chapter, the transcripts of the latter two sub-questions, which are not discussed here, are included on the Appendix Section (Appendix III).

5.2.1. The meaning of Christianity to the 'born-again' youth

When asked what Christianity meant to them, the 'born-again' participants portrayed their conceptualisation of Christianity in two complementary levels. They portrayed Christianity: (1) as the imitation of Christ; and (2) as a way of life or life style. These two complementary levels fit the conceptual make up or facet of major religious beliefs - that of 'religion as a way of life'. Since this facet implies a specific pattern of life, it "is associated with actions, rituals, customs, and traditions that may distinguish the believer from adherents of other religions" (Gunn, 2003:204). It is the facet that motivates people to imitate an idolised person, such as Christ or Muhammad and prompts others to live in a certain way. This facet therefore accentuates the moral practices of religious beliefs and their associated traditional obligations.

5.2.1.1. Christianity as imitating Christ

According to Capes (2003:3), the moralists in the Greco-Roman era used a variety of literary and rhetorical conventions to exhort followers to live virtuous lives. Personal exemplars were a common device, considered more persuasive than other devices. Due to the influence of the Greco-Romans, Christians inherited a culture in which imitation and exemplars were part of the

moral dialogue. The Greco-Romans believed that "the closer the example the more likely it would affect one to lead the right kind of life (Capes, 2003:4)." So, Christians admonished and handed down this culture from one generation to the next.

Since the notion of imitation considered personal exemplars as more persuasive than literary devices, followers were implored to follow the example of people who did not only teach with their words but practiced what was right (Seneca, *Epistle* 52:1-9). According to Capes, (2003:11) appeals to personal exemplars for Christians never overshadowed the appeal to imitate Christ. Christ was/is seen as the most excellent of exemplars. In the writings of Peter (1Pet. 2:21-23KJV), for example, the Christian followers are urged to follow the example of Christ, even at the point of suffering:

> For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example,
> that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when
> he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to
> him that judgeth righteously.

The primary reason, for Christian authors, to urge followers to follow the example of Christ is that Christ was/is the epitome of righteousness. As the above cited verse states, he did not indulge himself in the practice of evil acts, nor propagate deceit because there was no guile found in his mouth. He represented goodness both by his words and his character. He did not just teach by words but practiced what was right. Astonished by his character, Christians looked up to him and found him to be a worthy model to be imitated. As a personal example of goodness, Christ became the model that his followers aspired to emulate.

The participants perceived their understanding of Christianity in this manner, even though not entirely; for some saw it as a way of life. They said that Christianity is to learn or copy the things that Christ did, trying to have his character. For them, this meant doing the things that Christ did or that he would do; and living the way he lived or would live if he were still on earth. In essence, the participants equated Christianity to the emulation of Christ. Christ represents the epitome of goodness for them. He is a model that they aspire to become.

5.2.1.2. Christianity as a way of life

Christianity as a way of life denotes a pattern of life that a person from a particular religious orientation distinguishes themselves from another religious or non-religious group. As Gunn (2003:204) notes this facet of religion is associated with actions, rituals, customs, and religious

traditions. The inclusion of rituals, customs and religious traditions in this facet forms part of the religious belief system. The definitive goal therefore of mingling the belief system and actions in the facet is that there should be an ideal concord between the theoretical components of belief and intended practice. According to Freddosso (2004:15), the theoretical components of belief are meant "to validate and sustain the practices."

When the participants portrayed their understanding of Christianity as a way of life, what they were actually saying is that they are patterning their lives according to the Christian principles and are validating and sustaining the theoretical components of Christianity by their practices. They plainly indicated this by stating that Christianity as a way of life refers to a life style and the way they should walk before God. This implies that the participants are following a particular guideline or belief system, which informs them when they are morally failing to measure up to the Christian standards. Hence they noted that Christians should watch what they do, and how they behave because their lives say a lot to other people about their belief in Christ.

According to Freddosso (2004:17), the participants' desire to measure up to the Christian standards, concurs with Socrates' notion that "human beings should be consistently reflecting on the nature of the best sort of life and on how their own lives compare with that ideal." By patterning their lives according to the Christian principles and belief systems, the participants are aspiring to live the best sort of life and are comparing their actions with the ideal embodiment of Christian living, since they stated that their new way of life is a call to live a holy life.

When expressed in this manner, this new way of life for participants, links with that of imitating Christ. This is because Christ serves as a guideline for holy living. Even though they did not specifically claim to imitate Christ, Christ is the ultimate ideal in which their noble acts or new way of life is aimed to reflect. These two, therefore commune with each other in the conceptualisation of Christianity to the participants.

5.2.2. Why the 'born-again' youth chose to be Christians

Regarding the second sub-question, the participants were asked to explain why they are Christians. They mentioned a number of reasons why they were Christians and these reasons were different, with some more solemn than others. The participants said that they were Christians because they: (a) were convicted by the word; (b) were responding to the Christian call; (c) were influenced by their parents or family members; (d) admired the Christian life style;

and (e) out of socio-religious factors. This means that some of the participants become Christians in response to God's call of grace, while others became Christians because they were influences by their significant others or socio-religious factors.

Some deliberate distinctions can therefore be made between these participants in order to categorise their preferences for Christianity. *Firstly,* there were those who became Christians out of reverence for, and in response to God's call wrought by the word of God in their lives. These are the participants who said they were convicted by the word or responding to God's call of salvation. A majority of these participants did not come from a Christian background, even though they may have been religious or came from religions families that affiliated with African traditional religions.

Secondly, there are those who grew up within Christian families - some devout and some nominal, who were influenced by their significant others to become Christians. Some of these participants may have not initially intended to become Christians but they were forced by their circumstances to follow that route. Since their parents or families were Christian, they adopted that kind of a lifestyle and classified themselves as Christians. Thus, they chose to be Christians because they were born in Christian families, their parents were Christians and they had gotten accustomed to the Christian life style to the point that they perceived themselves as Christians, even though they may have been nominal Christians.

Lastly, some became Christians because they were the recipients of Christian charitable benefits. These are the participants who said that they became Christians because Christians would visit their sick loved ones, bring them food or perform a number of philanthropic acts for them. These participants were influenced by their social needs, which were somehow met by Christian religious organisations - to become Christians. Due to charitable acts that the Christians did for them, they looked upon Christianity as the means by which they can escape their desperate situations and transform their social, health and spiritual problems.

5.3. The role of spirituality in constructing the self-concept on youth

According to Lippman and McIntosh (2010:1), spirituality (spiritual beliefs and practices) among youth is important enough to be monitored because a number of research studies from developmental science, sociology and character education has found out that spirituality is related to positive identity formation and moral development on youth. Spirituality in this way plays a significant role in the construction of the self-concept and lays a solid foundation for the

youth to explore and discover their identity (King, 2003:200). As the main question of the study, the research question sought to establish and to validate the role played by spirituality in the construction of the self-concept on youth. Under this main research question, the participants were asked to respond to four sub-questions which will be address below.

5.3.1. The meaning of spirituality to the 'born-again' youth

When asked what spirituality meant to them, the participants gave a range of answers which sought to express how they understood the concept of spirituality. They said that spirituality either meant a connection with God; a belief in something; living according to the spirit; and that it refers to an agent that awakens the conscience and brings about the element of control to their morals. Each participant defined spirituality in a general way and yet from a personal perspective. These conceptual variations in the depiction of spirituality by participants indicate that the concept of spirituality is not simplistic. This squares with what Zinnbauer *et al.* (1997:550) observe as the current definitions of spirituality are diverse and subjective.

As noted by the participants that spirituality is *a connection with God*, Benner (1989:20) also perceived and defined spirituality in that manner. He said that spirituality is "the human response to God's gracious call to a relationship with himself." Spirituality, in this context, implies a connection or a relationship with God or supernatural entities. Tart (1983:4) also believes that spirituality includes "that vast realm of human potential dealing with ultimate purposes, with higher entities, with God, with love, with compassion, with purpose." According to Tart (1983:4), the human potential to connect or form relationships with God or higher entities is attached to emotive components of human expression such as love, compassion and purpose.

This means that spirituality, in its broadest sense, is about forming and maintaining sacred relationships with God or higher entities. Furthermore, these sacred connections with God or higher entities are enacted through human emotive components such as love, compassion, and purpose. This is done to symbolise the essential unity needed between the sacred entities and humans. According to Vaughan (1991:105), the connection of human beings with God or supernatural entities, includes an element of subjectivity. Vaughan (1991:105) argues that spirituality concerns "a subjective experience of the sacred." This implies that even though the concept of spirituality may be general and practised in a similar manner, it holds a subjective or personal meaning for each practitioner.

This implies that the practice of spirituality does not grant each practitioner the same personal experiences as everyone else but that each practitioner internalises and evaluates their relationship with God or supernatural entities differently from others. For that reason, the participants raised the aspect of conscience and moral ethic in their understanding of spirituality. They noted that spirituality implies that one has to live according to the spirit. Living according to the spirit for them meant upholding the ethical demands of the Christian faith, which seeks to acclaim God rather than defame him. However, there are no basic standards that require one to act in a certain manner in order to fit the description of those who live according to the spirit. The realism of living according to the spirit is determined by the intimacy and personal relationship that one has with God or higher entities.

In this sense, living according to the spirit entails avoiding all the things that can hinder or dissolve the relationship that has been created with God. From this perspective, practitioners are free to practise their spirituality in a manner that they want, as long as they are not breaking the ethical demands of the Christian faith or offending God. In this way, spirituality enables them to adhere to Christian ethical guidelines and to keep their morals in check.

King (2003:200) has also noted that spirituality has the capacity to enhance the moral ethic and a sense of awareness to self and others in youth. She asserted that spirituality brings an awareness of the self in relationship to others: "Engaging in the spiritual provides connectedness with the divine, human, or natural other, giving a young person an opportunity to experience himself or herself in relationship to God, a community of believers, or nature for example" (King, 2004:200). That is why the participants said that spirituality is an agent that awakens their conscience and brings control to their moral ethic. Spirituality conveys a sense of consciousness to self and organises the strands of moral ethic in youth.

5.3.2. How spirituality helps the youth understand their sense of self

Spirituality and the discovery of the self-concept and/or identity has become a common topic in studies that deal with the period of youth (Bender, 2007:1; Bridges and Moore, 2002:3; Williams and Lindsey, 2005:19). Scholars want to find out how religion and spirituality helps young people understand their sense of self. For instance, Williams and Lindsey (2005:2) states that "theorists have noted that the developmental changes that occur in adolescence allow the youth to begin to think about spirituality differently than they did as children." This means that

the way the youth perceives and understands the concept of spirituality is utterly different from the way they perceived or understood it while they were children.

According to Williams and Lindsey (2005:2), this is because the spiritual development on youth is often achieved in the adolescence period, when there is an intellectual stage of development that lends itself to greater abstract thoughts. At this point, personal questions about God, the meaning of life, identity and the discovery of the self are dominant features of their enquiry (Fowler, 1981:154). To illustrate how the understanding of spirituality differs at adolescence from the childhood stage, Fowler (1981:154) states that adolescents tend to understand God as a powerful force that is located extremely to the self. This means that during the period of childhood, the concept of God is very vague. But during adolescence, where there is an intellectual growth, the adolescents tend to personalise the transcendent idea of God, and make their connections or relationships with God more intimate and subjective.

By personalising the transcendent idea of God and making their relationships with God more intimate and subjective, the youth establish "a profound sense of connection that has great implications for self-concept" (King, 2003:200). According to King (2003:200), the Judeo-Christian tradition creates a platform where believers get to experience themselves as being in a special relationship with God. This is precisely how the participants said spirituality assists them in understanding their self-concepts. They said that the Christian spirituality helps them understand that they are important and are deeply loved by God. To express the nature of the relationship that they have with God, the participants used the following expressions: "God loves me", "I matter to God", "I am important before God", "I am special", "I am valuable", "I am unique", and "God finds favour with me."

This means that the Christian spirituality provides a context in which the participants can not only learn about their sense of self and belonging to God but also get to experience themselves in a special relationship with God (King, 2003:200). In this way, the Christian spirituality helps the participants understand their self-concept by giving them a profound sense of self-worth. It enables them to perceive themselves as being in a special relationship with God. And because this relationship is commonly internalised, the participants tend to evaluate their sense of self in a positive way, knowing that they matter and are in a special relationship with God.

The consequence therefore of the participants' understanding of the self and the perception of being in a special relationship with God tends to enforce their inclination to good moral ethic. The participants said that the consequence of positively understanding their sense of self motivates them to behave in a matter that is worthy of God's love. They said that they are conscious of what they do and how they act because they do not want to offend God. This means that a positive self-concept in youth wrought by religious practice serves as the motivation for good ethical conduct. King and Furrow (2004:704) seem to have noticed the same sentiment when exploring the concept of religion as a resource for positive youth development.

They stated that religiousness in youth is associated with positive moral behaviours and attitudes. The Christian spirituality seems to have not only assisted the participants in understanding their sense of self in relation to the special relationship they have with God, but also motivates them to uphold a good moral ethic that seeks to honour their connection with God. This is how the participants said that their Christian spirituality helps them understand their sense of self.

5.3.3. How spirituality assists the youth in defining who they are

The definition of the self or identity is a component that is largely influenced by internal and individual factors such as personal traits, characteristics and values, but it can also be influenced by external sources like parents, social or religious groups (Deng 1995:1). How one defines himself or herself therefore brings into surface the elements of personal values and social categories (Jenkins, 1996:4; Deaux, 2001:2). Under this sub-question, the participants were asked to explain how their Christian spirituality assists them in defining who they are.

By this sub-question, the researcher sought to find out how the Christian spirituality influenced the participants' identity and how they in turn translated that identity when defining who they are. This is because the definition of the self, reveals "peoples' concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg and Abrams, 1988:2). When asked how the Christian spirituality assists them in defining who they are, the participants said that it helps them define themselves in terms of their uniqueness; as children, sons and/or daughters of God; and as moral persons.

As King (2003:200) noted that religion offers a positive context for the formation of youth identities and provide some solid answers to existential questions such as, who am I? And, what is the meaning of Life? Spirituality further improves their understanding of the self by strengthening their connections with God and others. That is why the participants said that they define themselves in terms of their uniqueness to God. Furthermore, King (2003:200) argues that the notion of participants to define themselves as 'children', 'sons', and 'daughters' of God is embedded within the Judeo-Christian traditions. The Jewish tradition encourages its followers to look upon themselves as a special people, chosen by God and as a race that is part of the royal priesthood in whose lineage the Messiah came.

The Christian tradition also encourages believers to understand themselves as the 'chosen people' (Thess. 2:13), and as the 'children of God' (John 1:12) and/or 'sons and daughters of God' (Galatians, 3:26). Therefore, the young people who are following these traditions get to see themselves as very special, unique and highly valued by God. Ultimately, this has a positive influence in the manner in which they perceive and define themselves. The construct of Christian spirituality therefore seems to be playing a significant role in promoting the uniqueness and self-worth of the participants. The participants are encouraged to perceive themselves as special, unique and therefore valued by God. Hence they said that they define themselves in terms of their uniqueness to God. Therefore, this is how the participants said that their Christian spirituality assists them define themselves.

5.3.4. How the youth practise their spirituality

The practice of spirituality among the youth is a common phenomenon all over the world (Lippman and McIntosh, 2010:1). Even though it is a common phenomenon, spirituality can be experienced and practised in a number of ways (Lippman and McIntosh, 2010:1). It is therefore important to examine the different ways in which the youth practice and express their spirituality. Regarding this sub-question, the participants were asked to explain how they practised their spirituality. By this sub-question, the researcher sought to identify the various ways in which the youth expresses their spirituality.

When asked how they practised their spirituality, the participants mentioned the following: (a) prayer, (b) reading the Bible/word of God, (c) regular church attendance, (d) fasting, (e) witnessing/testifying about Christ, and (f) singing/worshiping.

These practices, according to Idler (2008:1), have positive benefits to the health and well-being of the youth. The above cited author (2008:1) further states that these practices have the capability to "integrate different aspects of our human experience - our emotions with our intellect or our minds with our bodies - while connecting us with others who share similar beliefs." This means that the practice of Spirituality can operate as a tool that integrates the body and the mind, and allow the youth to connect with those who share their beliefs. Each practice therefore that has been highlighted by the participants has a positive impact on their lives.

Practices like prayer, reading the Bible, regular church attendance, worship, and witnessing are practices that seem to strengthen the youth's connection with God and others through church and communal fellowships (Cnaan, Gelles and Sinha, 2004:182). The other practices like fasting are beneficial for health, even though they are not solely practiced for that reason. Since these practices integrate the body and mind, they maintain some form of purity – "the purity of the body as the vessel of the soul" - and moderation in all things (Idler, 2008:2). If these practices are regularly practiced and freely expressed, they tend to become some sort of a lifestyle.

Idler (2008:2) for instance, states that the youth who say religion is important in their lives and attend religious services frequently "have lower rates of cigarette smoking, alcohol use, and marijuana use." This idea is further expressed by Cnaan *et al.* (2004:179) when they sate that a long list of scholars have found an association between religious perception and religious participation and reduced engagement in risk behaviours ranging from drug and alcohol abuse. This means that religious and spiritual practices have a positive role in youth; they connect them with God and others, and protect them against risky behaviours like drug abuse, alcohol consumption and marijuana use. These are the things that drive the youth to engage in the acts of crime, violence, theft and premarital sex. In this way, the practice of spirituality by the participants shields them from risky behaviours, while strengthen their connections with God and others.

5.4.   The impact of religion and spirituality on youth

The positive role of religion and Spirituality seems to be evident in the lives of young people (King and Furrow, 2004:704; Seul, 1999:558; Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman, 2010:62), but less has been said about how both religion and spirituality impacts youth decision-making processes, lifestyle and roles in society. By this main research question, the researcher sought to establish how religion and spirituality impacts the decision-making, lifestyle and roles of young

people in the society. Under this question, the participants were asked to respond to four sub-questions. These sub-questions are addressed below.

5.4.1.   The most important principles of being a Christian

According to Heidt (2010:6), people live according to a set of principles or ethical codes. Nolan (1995:120) defines principles as the standards by which we judge whether a moral action is right or wrong. He further states that the terms morals and ethics are closely related in their original meaning. The term morals come from the Latin *moralis,* while ethics comes from the Greek *ethos.* Both of these terms refer to "the custom or way of life" (Nolan, 1995:120). Under this sub-question, the participants were asked to mention some of the most important principles of being a Christian. The research sought to find out if the participants knew some of the important principles of being a Christian and whether they followed or lived by those ethical principles.

When asked what were the most important principles of being a Christian, the participants listed the following: a godly character; showing kindness; being considerate to others; humility; obedience; compliance; imitating Christ; reading the Bible; being prayerful; confession; fasting; witnessing; non-judgmentalism; loving; forgiving; and respecting others. These were therefore the most important principles of being a Christian to the participants. Most of these principles concern the issues of intimate relations with God and that of moral character or ethical conduct. They seek to develop ones connections with God through the practice of prayer, reading the Bible, confessions, and fasting, while promoting the welfare of others through the display of kindness, by being considerate, showing humility, being compliant, being non-judgemental, more loving and forgiving as well. These principles therefore do not only benefit the participants but the society also.

When the participants are being morally upright, they refrain from acts of violence, crime, social unrest and avoid a number of risky behaviours like alcohol consumption, drug use, premarital sex and other related issues. They instead try to uphold the ethical principles which they have highlighted and to let them guide their daily activities. According to Nolan (1995:129), Christians derive the need for good moral or ethical conduct from the teachings of Jesus Christ. Nolan (1995:129) remarks:

> For Jesus morality was inner and positive, a matter of the "heart" or a disposition of the feeling and will. Goodness resided not simply in obedience to The Law, but in one's heart. Love was the supreme virtue..., Love of God and love of other humans is required. Each of us is under an obligation to promote the interests of the other people with whom we come in contact. Mutual

love, unselfishness, humility, equal regard, and generosity of spirit received a new emphasis in human relations.

This clearly shows that the need to live by principles is a requirement for Christians. A true Christian has the obligation to live a certain kind of life which is guided by the principles of love, unselfishness, humility, equal regard and generosity of spirit not only for one's self but for others as well. That is why it was import for the researcher to establish whether the participants knew these Christian principles and that they lived by or let them guide their lives. For the Christian life, in Nolan's (1995:129) words, "is a loving concern for the welfare of persons under the inspiration of devotion to the ideals of Jesus".

5.4.2.   Christian expectations from youth in terms of morality and behaviour

As it has been indicated that Christianity is a way of life, therefore the youth is expected to uphold the ethical values that comes with following such a way of life. And this is measured in terms of morality and behaviour (King and Furrow, 2004:704). Those who hold and commit to the principles of the Christian faith are considered to be devout Christians while those who fail to live up to these principles are regarded as nominal Christians (Wilberforce, 1797:126). Nominal Christians according to Bulacan (2011:1) refers "to Christians whose Christianity does not go beyond mere identification with a Christian group and their cause with affiliation to that cause in name only".

In order to assess the category in which the participants belonged into, the researcher asked the participants to explain what was expected from them in terms of morality and behaviour in their respective churches. The participants said that they are expected to be exclusive, imitate Christ, bring a positive change in society, to be accountable for their actions, to have a good conduct, to be submissive, and to uphold their church principles. These behavioural expectations revealed the commitment of participants to their Christian faith and to their respective churches. They said that their churches expect them to be exclusive, which meant that they are not expected to confirm to the standards of the world but only those of the Christian faith.

Their exclusiveness is represented by a godly conduct which is aligned with the imitation of Christ and an act of submission to the church and its principles. From this perspective, the behavioural expectations placed upon the participants by their respective churches sought to bring a sense of ethical conduct and personal accountability which was intended to validate the participants' commitment to Christianity and their churches. This sentiment is also endorsed by

Idler (2008:3) in the following way: "religious congregations offer rich social resources with a strong sense of ethics." The behavioural expectations placed upon the youth by their respective churches therefore worked as an incentive for good moral conduct.

5.4.3. The role of the youth as Christians in society

According to Cnaan, Gelles and Sinha (2004:176), what is currently known about the youth, especially teenagers, is their negative portrayal by the public and the media. They (2004:176) put this idea in the following way:

> At best, we see many teenagers as a generation of consumer, detached from the community, self-interested and isolated in front of a computer or Gameboy, who engage in acts of defiance through their dress, tattooing, and body piercing. At worse, both the public and media envision teenagers as a cauldron of violence, and drug use, which spills over into mass killings in schools and random violence on the street and in homes.

This means that the actions of the youth has attracted a negative attention in the society, so much that the public and the media chooses to focuses on the negative things that the youth do, like their involvement in acts of "violence, drugs, suicide, and other youth risk behaviours..." (Cnaan, *et al,* 2004:176). In this manner, they are only perceived as notorious, violent, and good in committing acts of crime, are highly involved in issues of drug abuse and are mixed up with other risky behaviours. Therefore, their positive roles in society have been overshadowed by their negative actions. Under this sub-question, the participants were asked to explain their role as Christians in society. When asked what their role was as Christians in society, the participants point out the following roles.

They said that they exist to bring change in their societies; to be a beacon of hope; to pursue peace; to empower others; to be philanthropic; to exemplary; to intercede on behalf of others; and to witness Christ. This means that the participants, as young people, see themselves as contributing positively in society even though they are perceived in a negative way. Some of these roles, which the participants have highlighted, are very crucial and needed for the development of the society, even though they are overshadowed by the negative general perception of the youth by both the public and media. The participants said that they want to be perceived as the beacons of hope, to be exemplary, to empower others through giving and to pursue peace.

This implies that even though there are many young people, who may be perpetuating some acts of violence, crime, social unrests, and xenophobic attacks (Malila, 2013:12), which are given to drunkenness, promiscuity and other related risky behaviours (Cnaan, *et al,* 2004:176); there are also those who are morally upright, who take responsibility for their actions, are compassionate, and constructive in their society. These are the young people who visit the elderly or elder persons' homes to assist with house chores, gardening and other necessary things; who initiate communal programmes to develop others; who shares what they have with those who are less fortunate; who make home visits for the sick and pray for the welfare of society.

This means therefore that there are young people who are positively contributing to their communities, by assisting where there is a need, whether it be the welfare of elderly persons, the sick people, or the other unemployed youth in the community. In some cases, they even take an extra-mile to benefit those who are in need or less fortunate than they by charitable acts and social empowerment programmes. These are the roles which are not highlighted by the public or the media, but the participants, as young people, claimed to be playing as Christians in the society. Therefore, these were the roles that the participants highlighted when asked what their roles were as Christians in the society.

5.4.4.   The influence of the Christian identity on youth

According to Oyserman, Elmore and Smith (2012:77), the self and identity are forces for action. They argue that "how one thinks about oneself produces action rather than simply being associated with it." This means that the people's understanding of the self or identity is normally expressed through their actions rather than mere association or identification. This implies that one's sense of identity produces the actions that seek to maintain or elevate the components of that identity rather than lower or sever them. Because of this, people become sensitive to meaningful features of their immediate environment and adjust their thinking and doing to what seems contextually relevant to them (Oyserman *et al,* 2012:84).

Under this last sub-question, the participants were asked to explain how their Christian identity influences their decision-making, life style and roles in society. By this sub-question, the researcher sought to establish whether the Christian identity had any bearing on the choices that young people make, the kind of life style that they live, and to the roles that they assume in society. When asked to explain how their Christian identification influences their decision-making, life style and role in society, the participants said that their Christian identification

influences them in two ways. They said: (1) it influences them positive by helping them make good decisions and improve their moral ethic; but (2) it also limits their freedom and actions.

5.4.4.1.   The Christian identification and its positive influence

The participants said that their Christian identification has a positive influence in their decision-making process, life style and role in society. They said that because they are Christians, they do not take the decisions that they make lightly. Before they can decide on an issue, they first consult God and think about how their decisions will affect their relationship with God. That sense of awareness and the need for God's approval brings about a sense of accountability to the participants, which without, the participants would act anyhow. By seeking to please God even with the decisions that they take, the participants indicate that they are placing a high value on the spiritual connections that they have with God and are willing to maintain them by making choices that will not sever those connections.

Furthermore, the participants said that their Christian identification improves their moral ethic. They said that they use the "What Would Jesus Do" (WWJD) motto to respond to some ethical challenges that they face in their daily lives. The motto seeks to help young people make the right moral choices, and to live the right kind of life by following the example of Christ. This is the same motto which Sheldon (2000:10) used to implore the members of the First Church to adopt when confronted by issues that challenge their course of imitating of Christ. The motto asks young Christians "not to do anything without first asking the question, 'What would Jesus do?" After asking that question, each believer is encouraged to follow Jesus as exactly as he/she knows how, no matter what the results may be (Sheldon, 2000:10). This motto seemed to be helpful in improving the ethical standards of the participants.

5.4.4.2   The Christian identification and its negative influence

Even though the participants clearly stated that their Christian identification has a positive influence on both their decisions and morals, they also said that there are restrictions or limitations which are associated with the Christian identity. The first concerns the issue of freedom. The participants said that their liberty to choose is sometimes restricted by the expectations that people have about the Christian identification. They said that people always expect them to be perfect, and not make mistakes. And that makes them feel like 'less humans', because when they have made a mistake, the society tends to judge them harshly. They described this phenomenon as a disadvantage in their Christian identification.

These expectations, which are placed by the society upon the participants prevents them to exercise their liberty. And this can hinder the development of their identities. This is because instead of freely choosing and adapting to the Christian principles, the participants feel as if they are forced to assume certain roles, and the failure of meeting such expectation result to harsh judgements against them. That is why they said their Christian identification has some restriction or limitation. It limits their freedom.

The second issue, which the participants raised, pertains to the way in which Christianity has been presented. The participants said that the current presentation of Christianity does not communicate to their African context. They said that the elements of their Christianity do not connect with their African culture. This is because the participants, as Christians, are taught to regard their dead loved ones as demons, or to cut ties with everything that comes from their African traditional customs. This experience challenges their identity, as they battle to understand how best they can be 'African Christians'.

This is further problematised by the fact that some of their parents do combine Christianity with their African traditional customs. This sentiment is also highlighted by Ntombana (2015:105). Even though he focused on the Mainline Churches, Ntombana (2015:105) argued that they are Christians, who are committed Christians, but continue to practise their African traditional customs in secret. This experience therefore sends a lot of mixed signals to the youth regarding their Christian identification, and their being Africans. They struggle to synchronise their Christian identity with their Africanness.

The main challenge is that, how can they be true Christians while Africans. This distinction between Christianity and their being Africans makes them question some of the elements of Christianity. More especially because some of the things which Christianity forbids them to do are part of their upbringing, such as *imbeleko* - the inclusion ritual of babies into the clan or *ukwaluka* - the rite of passage into adulthood (Ntombana, 2015:105). Because of these two reasons, the participants said that their Christian identification is somehow restrictive or limiting.

5.5. Reflections on the concept of spirituality in the AOG

The understanding of spirituality in the Assemblies of God seems to be consistent. In contrast to the current youth, the older generation understood spirituality as having an encounter with the divine, an act which is commonly known as being 'slain in the Spirit'. Coulter (2010:45) states

that the phrase, 'slain in the spirit' nicely encapsulates this encounter with God, which is a battle for the very soul of the individual. In this battle, Coulter (2010:45) notes that the Spirit overcomes the strongholds of the enemy, the sinful thoughts and desires in a way that causes an individual to literally fall down under the power of God.

From this perspective, spirituality means an encounter with God in which an individual is freed from the strongholds of the enemy and from sinful thoughts and desires so that they can live a holy life before God. This perspective links directly with the youth's understanding of spirituality as a connection with God. They conceptualised their notion of spirituality as connecting with God. Even though they did not highlight the aspect of being 'slain in the spirit', they mentioned that spirituality motivates them to live holy lives and to have high moral standards. Therefore, spirituality for both the older and newer generations refers to an encounter or connections with God in which individuals are empowered to act morally or to be upright before God.

Apart from perceiving spirituality as an encounter or connections with God, the AOG also looks upon the concept of spirituality as a transforming journey with Christ (Coulter, 2010:45). By a transforming journey with Christ, the AOG relates to the relationship that one develops in the journey of following Christ, which transforms the believer by the bond of love. It is understood as a path of holiness that digs deeper into the human character in order to anchor one's relationship with God. Coulter (2010:45) maintains that this transforming journey with Christ is important because the more the individual becomes Christ-like in character, the closer he or she draws nearer to Christ.

The youth also shared the same sentiment. They said that their spirituality involves the imitation of Christ. Christ is perceived as the epitome of righteousness. So, by following the example of Christ, the youth seek to transform their lives and to have his character. Christ represents all that is good; both by his words and his character. And as a personal example of goodness, the youth look at him as a model that they aspire to emulate. In this manner, the understanding of spirituality seems to be consistent in the AOG. However, how this spirituality has been expressed appears to be different. There is a visible distinction between the ways the older generation expressed their form of spirituality, and how the current youth expresses it.

For instance, in the time of Nicholas Bhengu, the expression of spirituality demanded that one should prove their genuineness of their encounter with God through outward actions. Those who have had an encounter with God had to stop smoking, drinking alcohol or their promiscuous acts. Thieves had to return back all the stolen goods or properties. And criminals had to surrender their weapons - guns, knives, axes, etc. Even though they had experienced an inner conviction, it was mostly important for them to prove their conviction by outward actions. Their actions had to prove their repentance. They had to let others know that they are no longer the same; their lives had changed and had now assumed a new identity.

They had to prove to the world and their communities that they had abandoned their old ways and are no longer what they used to be - drunkards, casanovas, thieves, or criminals. And they had to make amends where possible and pursue peace with those they had previously wronged. This is contrary to the more reserved and intimate form of spirituality expressed by the current youth. The current youth tends to internalise and make their form of spirituality more personal. It is highlighted by the youth's need to connect, find meaning, and to locate themselves in relation to God and significant others. This form of spirituality seeks to locate one's place in the world in relation to God and one's sense of belonging among the social interactions that transpire within the society.

The newer expressions of spirituality responds to the multitude of questions dealing with the meaning of life; the place of an individual in the world; and locating one's sense of self or identity in relation to God and by group assimilation or inclusion. These two distinct forms of expression therefore show how the practice of spirituality, even though meaning the same things, can change over time. None of these expressions is more significant than the other, but they both reflect the spiritual context of believers at a particular time in the history of the church. And this shows the evolution of the practice of spirituality and how it has been understood by different generations within the AOG.

5.6. Summary

This chapter analysed and discussed the data that was presented in Chapter IV. The goal was to interpret and put into context the presented data (Chapter IV), so that the researcher may establish the findings of the study. The discussions followed the format that was used in Chapter IV, which means that each main research question of the study served as the main heading for a particular topic, which had its own four elaborative sub-questions. As a result, the following topics were discussed: the role of religion to the South African youth; the role of spirituality in

the construction of youth identity; the impact of religion and spirituality in the decision-making, life style and roles of the youth is society; and lastly, some reflections on the concept of Spirituality in the Assemblies of God were made. The following chapter (VI) will present the summary of findings of the study, draw conclusions and make some recommendations.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMANDATIONS

6.1.   Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of this study, draws some conclusions on the findings of this study and makes some recommendations for future studies. The summary of the findings of this research are presented in line with the objectives of this study. Therefore, each research objective stands as a topic which contains its own set of findings.

6.2.   Summary of the findings

This study sought to explore the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities by focusing on the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, particularly the Assemblies of God, at East London, in the Eastern Cape. The objectives of this study were:

- To investigate the meaning of religion on the South African youth;
- To examine the role played by spirituality in the construction of the self-concept on youth;
- To explore how religion and spirituality impacts youth decision-making, life style and roles in society.

The objectives of this study were achieved, as the findings were established in Chapter V (Data analysis). This section of the research provides a summary of those findings. As the researcher indicated in the introduction, each research objective is addressed as a topic, with its own findings. Furthermore, the presentations of the summary of findings of this study are grounded within the theoretical frameworks that are used in this study, and these are: the interpretive sociology; phenomenology; symbolic interactionism; the self-concept theory, and lived religions theory. These theoretical frameworks, as applied in this study, provide the grounds in which the perceptions and views of the participants are understood and explained.

6.2.1.   The meaning of religion to the South African youth

The findings established under this topic revealed that the participants understood the concept of religion, especially that of Christianity. They associated Christianity with imitating Christ. In the imitation of Christ, the participants said that one must have a heightened sense of moral ethic, which seeks to reflect the character of Christ. They also referred to Christianity as a way of life. They said that the Christian way of life requires one to live by principles and maintain some form of ethical standards. In this sense, Christianity as a religion is expressed by good ethical conduct.

Since the role of religion is judged by behavioural outcomes, the study revealed that not all those who identify themselves as Christians adhere to the Christian principles. Apart from those participants who said that they became Christians because they were convicted by the word, wanted to please God or were responding to God's call of Salvation, some indicated that they merely became Christians because their parents were Christians. Otherwise, they did not intend to become Christians. Others said that they became Christians because they received charitable acts from Christians; otherwise Christianity was not their first preference. These are the Christians who did not entirely adhere to the Christian principles.

Even though this category of participants identified themselves as Christians, because they come from Christian families, or became Christians due to their socio-religious factors, the nature of their Christianity is nominal. Nominal Christians are those Christians whose Christianity does not go beyond mere identification with a Christian group and their affiliation to that cause in name only. This means that some of the participants referred to themselves as Christians even though their Christianity did not go beyond a mere identification, while others considered themselves to be Christian because they affiliate with the cause of Christianity only in name. The study therefore revealed that there are nominal Christians among the South African youth, who consider themselves to be Christians.

In light of these findings, one may have to question the position of nominal Christians. This is because the theory of lived religion states that "religion is always religion-in-action" (Orsi, 2003:172). This means that for a religion to be perceived as a religion, those who adhere to the convictions of that religion must put them into practice. And this is contrary to the idea of nominalism, where people merely identify with a particular religious group by name and ignore the practical components of that religion. According to the lived religions theory, belief systems must be translated into action. Otherwise, how can the aspect of religiosity be judged if not by behavioural outcomes? Actions play an important role within the conceptual make up of religious systems. Hence the theory of lived religion maintains that religion is always religion-in-action.

6.2.2. Spirituality on the construction of the self-concept in youth

The findings established under this topic revealed that spirituality plays a positive role in the construction of the self-concept on youth. The study established that the practice of spirituality assisted the participants to discover their sense of self in relation to the special connections that they have with God and others. Their spiritual connections with God provided a sense of self-

worth, which made them feel very special. These connections also created an environment in which they can internalise their experiences and perceive themselves in terms of their uniqueness to God. Hence they referred to themselves as "children", "sons", and "daughters" of God.

The subjectivity or internalisation of the spiritual connections which the participants created with God is grounded on the premises of phenomenology. Phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of people. It is concerned with the meaning and the way in which meaning arises out of human experiences (Langdridge, 2007:4). This means that the participants, even though they may have practised spirituality in the same way, derived different experiences from this phenomenon. As a result, each meaning derived from the practice of spirituality therefore allowed the participants to subjectively perceive themselves as unique and special to God, without comparing themselves with others.

This led the participants to believe that they matter, individually, to God even though they are all "children", "sons" and "daughters" of God. In order to protect their connections with God, the participants claimed to be upholding the ethical demands of the Christian faith, which sought to acclaim God rather than defame him. In their perspective, acclaiming God meant refraining from all the things that may harm others and sever their connections with God. This implies that the continuity of the participants' relationship with God is dependent on the treatments they give to other people - loving others as they love themselves. The embodiment of this notion is entrenched within the premise of interpretive sociology.

Interpretive sociology maintains that human beings are to be viewed as social beings, who interact socially with one another, and that the results of such interactions develop the fabric patterns of the society, the cultural world in which individuals live out their lives, and provides a sense of identification for individuals to locate themselves within that society (Cheron, 2001:200). In this perspective, by refraining from all the things that may harm other people, the participants are actually developing the fabric patterns of the society, which allows them to interact with other social beings in the places in which they live out their lives. Because they live with other people, the participants get to find a sense of belonging.

According to the interpretive sociological perspective, this "is central to forming what the human being is," (Cheron, 2001:200). This is because the participants also get to understand who they are, and how they fit in within the broader context of the society. In that way, they get

to solidify what they believe about themselves and develop their sense of self by integrating with others. Therefore, the findings indicate that spirituality plays a significant role in the construction of the self-concept on youth by creating an environment where they can locate their sense of self in relation to God and in the interactions provided by other social beings in the societies in which they live out their lives.

6.2.3.   The impact of religion and spirituality on youth

The findings established under this topic revealed that religion and spirituality have both a positive and a negative impact on the decision-making, life style and roles of the youth in society. The positive impact of religion and spirituality pertains to the improvement of moral ethic, which is grounded on the connections that the participants established with God and the significant others. The negative impact of religion and spirituality is entrenched in the way Christianity has been presented to the participants in relation to their African (traditional) culture. Therefore, both these aspects affect the development of identities in youth.

Regarding the positive impact, which religion and spirituality has on the participants, the study found out that religion improves the ethical conduct of the participants. This is because there are moral guidelines, which are enforced by religious institutions, which the participants are expected to uphold. These guidelines are enforced to promote the ethical standards of all members in these institutions and to maintain some form of purity which seeks to preserve their faith. By adhering to these guidelines, the moral ethic of the participants develops and significantly improves as they commit themselves more to these religious institutions.

Furthermore, the study revealed that by trying to uphold the ethical principles and guidelines of their religious institutions, the participants get to make good decisions. This is because the decision-making processes of the participants are guided by those religious principles and convictions. And this tends to protect the participants from engaging in the acts of violence, crime, social unrests and from engaging in risky behaviours, such as smoking, drinking alcohol or the practice of premarital sex. In this way, religion has a positive impact in the lives of the participants.

Because the good moral ethic and decisions of the participants are guided by religious principles enforced by their religious institutions, the behavioural outcomes of the participants can be based under the theory of the self-concept. The theory maintains that the individuals' perceptions of who they are "are formed through one's experience with and interpretations of

one's environment; they are influenced especially by reinforcements, evaluations of significant others, and one's attributions for one's behaviour" (Shavelson and Bolus, 1981:1). This means that the expectations placed upon the participants by their religious institutions work as a form of motivation or the reinforcement for good ethical behaviour and good decision-making processes.

In this regard, the reinforcements and evaluations of these institutions provide a context in which the participants get to interpret their environment in terms of what is considered to be right or wrong, and in terms of what is acceptable or not. In that way, the attributions of one's behaviour is referenced to the perceptions of whom one is in terms of shared identity or religious affiliation. Therefore, because they identify themselves with particular religious organisations, the participants try by all means to live up to the expectations of their religious groups and to abide by the set guidelines and ethical principles. In the process of this identification, the participants get to locate their place in these organisations and discover their sense of self in relation to the influences provided by significant others.

The practice of spirituality further provides a rich context in which the participants get to explore themselves in relation to God. By participating in spiritual activities like prayer, fasting or worship, the participants get to strengthen their connections with, and get to establish their sense of self-worth to God. To illustrate their value, and importance to God, the participants used the follow words to express the nature of their connections with God: "God loves me", "I matter to God", "I am important before God", "I am special", "I am valuable", "I am unique", and "God finds favour with me." This indicates that the exercise of spirituality has positive outcomes for the participants.

Regarding the negative impact, which both religion and spirituality has on the participants, the study found out that the Christian identification limits the freedom of the participants; and that the way Christianity has been presented defeats the practice of their African culture. The participants indicated that there are too many expectations placed upon them. And this does not give them the liberty to exercise their freewill by doing what would be best for them. They said that these expectations make them feel less human because the society treats them like perfect beings. As a result, this hinders their growth because when they make mistakes, they are harshly judged by the society.

Another issue which the participants raised was that as Christians, they are taught to consider everything about their culture as evil, and therefore not beneficial to their religious well-being. The troubling thought to the participants was that there are other elements within their culture, which are not so easy to cut off or escape from. These elements include the perception of dead loved ones - which are referred by Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians as demons; the traditional rites done to include one to the membership of the family - *imbeleko;* and the rite of passage to adulthood - *ulwaluko.* The study established that even though these traditional practices are not openly affirmed, some Christians do practise them secretly. Consequently, this tends to bring some form of confusion to the participants.

This issue is entrenched within the premise of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism grew out of the necessity to understand society, particularly the influence of culture on human behaviour and the place of an individual in society (Cheron, 2001:111). Within this framework, culture plays a significant role in the development of human behaviour. Therefore, one cannot just disregard the influence of culture in people's practices and lived realities. This is because traditional practices are part of a culture. So, by demanding that the participants cut ties with their culture, the Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians undermine the influence of culture on human behaviour.

Apart from this, one's culture forms part of an identity. Being African is an identity. This issue therefore challenges the identity of the participants. This is because they struggle to deduce how one can truly be a Christian while an African. In most cases, this appears to condone the aspect of double identities - one for the public and the other for the private life. In this case, Christianity is openly declared, while the African traditional culture remains a private way of life. Even though the traditional elements of culture are practised secretly, they do have an impact in the lives of participants. However, this leads to identity crisis in some participants. The study therefore found out that religion and spirituality have a dualistic temperament in the lives of young people - they have a positive and a negative impact on the decision-making, life style and roles of the youth in society.

6.3.   Conclusions of the study

The study explored the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities by focusing on the Assemblies of God, which is part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in South Africa. The purpose was to evaluate the impact of religion and spirituality in the lives of young people in light of the current socio-religious status of Christianity in the country. The study indicated that

85.6 percent of the overall population of South Africa claim to be Christians (SSA, 2013). And the youth constitute 70 percent of the overall population, and a large number belongs, by identification, to the Christian religion (Malila 2013:12). Yet, the rates of crime, violence, rape, abuse and other inhumane activities are escalating.

Furthermore, young people seem to be the primary source of these violent acts, social unrests and injustices (Malila, 2013:12). There is therefore no correlation between their moral ethics and religious identification - the two main aspects which are supposed to be interwoven within the belief system and religious practices of the Christian religion. The findings of this study therefore partly responded to this issue. The study found out that even though 85.6 percent of the population may be Christian, and the majority of the youth in the overall 70 percent of the population belongs to Christian organisations, some of them are nominal Christians. This means that a great number of Christians identify with Christianity by name only and do not uphold the ethical principles of the Christian faith.

The study further found out that some of the Christian youth only became Christians because their parents were Christians, and therefore Christianity was not their first preference. Had they been given a chance to choose, some would have probably not chosen any religion at all or instead chose to practice their African traditional cultures. Because they were born in Christian families, they considered themselves as Christians, even though they never chose to be Christians or adhered to the Christian principles. These could be the Christians who engage in a number of violent acts, social unrests and risky behaviours like drugs, drinking alcohol, smoking or premarital sex. This however cannot be established with certainty because no Christian would admit being a nominal Christian. That would give a negative impression about his or her Christianity.

Beyond that, the study found out that religion and spirituality do have a positive role in the construction of youth identities. Religion provides the youth with an environment in which they can explore themselves in relation to the connections they make with others and develop their moral ethic by following a set of religious guidelines and principles. Spirituality further gives them a spiritual context in which they can discover their identity and establish their sense of self-worth in relation to God. Therefore, both religion and spirituality are imperative in the construction of the self-concept in youth. The findings of this study therefore indicate that both religion and spirituality have a substantial role in the development of youth identities.

6.4.   Recommendations of the study

In light of the current socio-religious background of South Africa, the study found out that there are two categories within the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. The first is that of devout Christians, who are committed to their faith and abide by all the guidelines and principles of the Christian faith. The second category is that of nominal Christians, who only identify themselves with Christianity by name without adhering to the guidelines and principles of the Christian faith. Both these categories classify themselves as Christians. Therefore the researcher recommends the following:

- There should be more studies that will be conducted to explore the relationship between devout and nominal Christians in South Africa.
- There should be more studies that will explore the relationship between Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity and African traditional cultures.
- There should be more studies that will explore the issue of double identity - private practice of traditional rites and open declaration of Christianity - in youth and how the youth can be committed Christians while Africans at the same time.
- There should be more studies conducted on the issue of societal expectations and the pressure to perform in terms of moral conduct (perfectionism) on the born-again youth.

6.5.   Concluding remarks

This chapter presented a summary of the findings of this study, made some conclusions based on the findings of this study and made a few recommendations for future studies. The findings of this study were presented in line with the research objectives of this study and those objectives were achieved by this research study.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Ethical Clearance Issues

A.   Letter Requesting Participation

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Joel Mokhoathi and I am a Masters student at the University of the Free State. I am currently conducting a research on "The Role of Religion and Spirituality on Youth identities: The case of the Assemblies of God in East London." The purpose of this research is to better understand the role of religion and spirituality on youth by interviewing young 'born-again' Christians who are between the ages of 18-35 in various locations around East London.

I would like to request your participation in this research by recording in writing or by tape, your knowledge, thoughts and experience regarding the topic understudy.

I wish to assure you that your name will not be recorded and therefore confidentiality will be maintained.

Your participation is voluntary and I want to assure you that you are free to discontinue with the interview whenever you feel so.

Your participation is highly appreciated.

Yours truly,
Joel Mokhoathi

Signature: ………………………………………………………..

Date: ………………………………………………………………

B.   Consent Agreement

I………………………………….….hereby give consent to voluntary participate in your research on the role of religion and spirituality on youth identities: the case of the assemblies of God in East London. I understand that the information will be recorded without using my name. I further understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I wish to clearly state that no pressure has been placed on me to participate in this study.

Signature: ………………………………………………………………….

Date: ……………………………………………………………………………

Appendix II: Questionnaire Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Religion of participant : Christian ☐

2. Age group of participant : 18 to 24 yrs. ☐ 25 to 29 yrs. ☐ 30 to 35 yrs. ☐

3. Gender of participant : Female ☐ Male ☐

4. Educational level : Matric-Dip. ☐ Degree-Hons. ☐ Masters-PhD ☐

5. Are you a member of the AOG? : Yes ☐ No ☐

6. How long have you been a member? : 1 to 5 ☐ 6 to 15 ☐ 16 to 25 ☐

7. Location of participant : Inner City, ☐ Rural, ☐ Township ☐

MAIN/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. **What does religion mean to the South African Youth?**

   Ixela ntoni na inkolo yobuKristu kulutsha lwase Mzantsi Afrika?

   - What does Christianity mean to you?

     Ingaba ixela ntoni inkolo yobuKristu kuwe?

   - Why are you a Christian?

     Kutheni ungumKristu?

   - Tell me everything you remember about your "Born-again" event?

     Ndixelele konke okukhumbulayo ngesiganeko sokusindiswa kwakho?

   - What was the next step after this event, in terms of your spiritual journey?

     Liliph' inyathelo elalandela emva kwesi siganeko, ngoko hambo lukamoya?

2. **What is the role of spirituality in the construction of the self-concept on Youth?**

   Yeyiphi indima yobumoya ekwakhiweni kolwazi lokuziqonda kuLutsha?

   - What does Spirituality mean to you?

     Ingaba ubumoya buxela ntoni na kuwe?

   - Explain how the Christian spirituality helps you understand your sense of self?

     Cacisa ukuba ubumoya bobuKristu bukunceda njani ekwazini ubuwena?

   - How does your understanding of spirituality assist you in defining who you are?

     Ingaba ulwazi ngobumoya luyakunceda ekuzichazeni ukuba ungubani?

   - Explain how you practice your spirituality?

     Cacisa ukuba ubufezekisa njani ubumoya bakho?

3. **How does religion and spirituality impact youth decision making, life style and roles in society?**

   Ingaba inkolo nobumoya kuzichaphazela njani izigqibo, indlela yokuziphatha nenxaxheba yoluthsha ekuhlaleni?

   - What are the most important principles of being a Christian?

     Yeyiphi eyona migaqo ebaluleke kakhulu ekubeni ngumkristu?

   - What is expected from a Christian, in terms of morality and behavior in your Church?

     Kulindeleke ntoni kumkristu, malunga nokuziphatha nesimilo enkonzweni yakho?

   - What is your role as a Christian in the society?

     Yeyiphi indima yakho njengomkristu ekuhlaleni?

   - Explain how your Christian identification influences your decision making and life style?

     Cacisa ukuba ukuhambiselana nenkolo yobuKristu kukuchaphazela njani kwizigqibo ozithathayo nendlela oziphathangayo?

Appendix III: Respondents transcripts

Respondent transcripts

1. What does religion mean to the South African Youth?

Under this main question, the participants were asked to respond to the following sub-questions:

- What does Christianity mean to you?

When asked what Christianity meant to them, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"I think Christianity means to me to have a Christ-like character. To learn or copy the things that Christ did, trying to have His character. To show Christ so that people who are not Christians may see a Christ like character in you."*

P2MIG: *"Christianity means to be like Christ, and to have a spiritual connection with God."*

P3FIG: *"Christianity to me means to be like Christ. So, if you are like Christ, you do all the things that Christ did while He was on earth."*

P4MIG: *"Christianity to me means everything that I am. It tells me of who I am. It is a lifestyle. That means I have to live a Christ-like life because I am a Christian."*

P5MIG: *"To some Christianity is a hobby. To some, it is a status. But to me it means everything, my life as whole."*

P6FIG: *"Christianity means the love that God has for us and it is the grace He has for us, which shows that God cares enough to give us the kind of life we do not deserve. Christianity is therefore a life style and a way we should walk before God."*

P7FIG: *"Christianity in my understanding means to rely on God, forsake the other gods, and stop worshiping the ancestral spirits, and to follow the example of Jesus Christ as a saved person. It also means to depend on Jesus Christ in everything you do because it is what you believe in."*

P8FIG: *"I think Christianity means to live in a Christ like way. Like there are many religions in the world, I chose Christianity because I wanted to live a life that is similar to that of Christ while he was on earth."*

P9FIG: *"I think Christianity is a religion, as they are many. But it is a religion that revolves around Christ. And the things that Christianity stands for are the things we find in the Bible, which includes to live a holy life and that is how you should live as a Christian, because you have chosen to follow Jesus Christ. Christianity is therefore a call to live a holy life."*

P10FIG: *"Christianity means following the laws of Christ and living the way Christ lived."*

P11FIG: *"Christianity means knowing who Christ is and who God is and living in a way that will please God following the example of Christ.*

P12MIG: *"To me Christianity means to be like Christ, because this term 'Christian' started in Antioch where the people saw the life style of the disciples and said they were imitating Christ, which meant that they were Christ-like. So, to me Christianity is about imitating Christ and doing what he did."*

P13MIG: *"To me it means a new way of life, that one lives or peruse, that basically brings to that person the real identity of a human being. Which I believe that we are originally created and from God, and therefore Christianity brings that awareness to someone. That's why I say Christianity is a way of life."*

P14MIG: *"Christianity to me means the connectedness to God through Jesus Christ because the bible says Christ is the mediator between us and God. This means that we worship God and please Him if we believe and follow the example of Jesus Christ. And that is what Christianity is all about."*

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When asked the same question: "*what does Christianity mean to you?*" The control group responded in the following manner:

P1MFG: "*I think Christianity means following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Hence, we are called Christians, we follow Jesus Christ.*"

P1FFG: "*Christianity means the renewal of the broken bond between God and Mankind. The Bible says that we have all fallen short of the glory of God, and deserve to be judged but through Christ we are put right with God. This means that in order to please God, we must believe in Jesus Christ and walk in the pattern of life that Jesus exemplified.*"

P2MFG: "*For me it means the life style that one has to live as a Christian. When you are a Christian, you watch what you do and how you behave because your life style says a lot to other people. In fact, it should reflect Christ.*"

P2FFG: "*Christianity comes from the word 'Christ.' And the followers of Christ are called Christians. So, Christianity for me means following Christ.*"

P3MFG: "*Christianity is about Christ. It means following the example of Christ, and that's what Christians are expected to do, follow the example of Christ.*"

P3FFG: "*Christianity is a religion that centres on Christ. But the power of Christianity is on the ethical principles that it demands. More than the words people say, it is about character. It is a life style that makes us live in a certain way and that determines who is and is not a true Christian. So, Christianity is way of life that sets us apart from the people of the world.*"

- Why are you a Christian?

When asked why they are Christians, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: "*I am a Christian because I was convicted by the word of God. And I am a Christian because I wanted to have those characters that Jesus Christ has, as I said that Christianity is to have the character of Christ. So, I wanted to have those characters that Christ has and since I am a born-again Christian, I was convicted by the word of God.*

P2MIG: "*I think to be a Christian is to answer the call of being a Christian. Also our lives call out for us to be Christians. There is a void that can only be filled by being a Christian. And from the onset of being a Christian everything within you says I have done the right thing. So, to be a Christian is to reflect Christ, to be an extension of God's family, to be a human being that is governed by principles, and is to be founded and grounded in the word of God.*"

P3FIG: "*I am a Christian because I grew up in a Christian family. So I grew up under that environment. But later I realised that everything on earth, whether the beginning or the end of the world is founded in God. So I realised that there is no other way, the only better life that one can live is by becoming a Christian. So that is why I am a Christian. Because at the end of the world, we will not live forever, at the end of the world only God will remain.*"

P4MIG: "*I think I was taken by the word, because you will never be a Christian without the word. You must first hear the word, then once you are convinced by the word, then you will be convicted. Once the word has touched you, you will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and then become a Christian. Therefore I am a Christian because I was convicted by the word.*"

P5MIG: "*I am a Christian because God saved me. I am born-again and I am proud of that.*"

P6FIG: "*What made me a Christian is the way Jesus Christ lived. I admired his life, and thought to myself, if I could live like Christ, my life would be safe and protected. That made me a Christian*"

P7FIG: *"I am a Christian because the bible says God created us to worship him, so I was called to worship Him. That is why I am a Christian and chose to be born-again. Secondly, the things of God are peculiar, and stand-out alone; I mean He does wonders, so I chose to serve a wonder working God."*

P8FIG: *"I am a Christian because I wanted to walk in God's ways and to receive the promises He promised me if I lived a holy life. He promised me that I will walk in the streets of gold, have eternal life and not die again. So I am a Christian because I want to receive the promises of God and to see Jesus Christ."*

P9FIG: *"I am a Christian because we are Christians at home. So, I can say I am still a Christian because Christianity guides me, and helps me avoid a lot of things that the youth is doing, such as drugs, drinking, having sex before marriage and many other things."*

P10FIG: *"I am a Christian because my parents are Christians, but more than that I am a Christian because I love Christ."*

P11FIG: *"I am a Christian because I saw the things that God did for me. In all that I have encountered in my life, God seemed to be always there, and I would not have made it without Him."*

P12MIG: *"Because I was saved and accepted Jesus Christ and I became a Christian. And the bible says we are becoming like Christ. So I accepted Christ as my Lord and Saviour so that I could be like Him."*

P13MIG: *"I am a Christian because I believe that there is a God in heaven, and I believe He is the divine power that created everything. I believe that He comes first and that everything else follows; and that there is a Christ who died for me and paid for all my sins."*

P14MIG: *"I am Christian because I was thought that it's only Christianity that makes us right with God, and that makes us identify ourselves with God as our Creator."*

When asked why they are Christians, the control group responded in the following manner:

P4MFG: *"The Bible says that God wants everyone to be saved and no-one to perish, so I became a Christian because God wanted me to be saved. So, I can say I am a Christian because God wanted it to be so"*

P4FFG: *"I became a Christian because my parents are also Christians. So, I grew up in Christian family."*

P5MFG: *"I think it is God's desire that we should accept Jesus Christ and be saved. So, there is nothing that forced me to be saved, I just wanted to obey God."*

P5FFG: *"I am Christian because I grew up in a Christian family, so I adopted that life."*

P6MFG: *"I believe in predestination, so I believe that God saved me. I did not choose to be saved but God saw it fit that I should be saved. So, when I lifted up my hand during the alter-call, I was responding to God's call of grace. And I was saved and became a Christian."*

P6FFG: *"I am Christian because some people from a nearby church would visit my house and give us food, clothes and pray for us. After their prayers they would ask if anyone wants to accept Jesus Christ, so I did. And now I am a Christian."*

P7MFG: *"I became a Christian because Christians are very nice people, when my mother was sick, they would come and have prayers with her, and sometimes, they would bring us some stuff to eat, and I appreciated that. So, I became a Christian too."*

P7FFG: *"I am a Christian because I heard the word. I was in hospital, and at launch time, the nurses would read the word, preach and pray with us. So, in one of those prayer meetings, I accepted Jesus Christ and I was saved. That's why I became a Christian, I heard the word."*

- Tell me everything you remember about your "Born-again" event?

When asked to tell everything they remembered about their "Born-again event, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"I was in a crusade at Port Elizabeth in 2008. Since I went to the crusade following my parents, I did not know that one time I was going to be born-again. So, this time, this man of God preached the word of God and I was triggered a lot since I was a child because I was naughty and going there for the sake of going. But this time, the man of preached the word of God. And I was triggered in my heart and ended up seeing myself in the alter-call lifting my hands, then accepting Jesus Christ. I asking myself what was happening. When I got at home, I asked my mother what was happening. She said I was accepting Jesus Christ as a personal saviour. Since that day, it is when I become a born-again Christian. Then I worked my salvation as years went by.*

P2MIG: *"It was at the University of Fort Hare, I was doing grade 11. So, there was a guy who was the University student, who assisted us with Maths and Physics. So, whenever we went out of the class we would run around the auditorium playing and doing all the naughty things. So, we heard some noise coming from one of the auditorium, when we arrived there it was the time for alter-call, the preacher said 'it is possible that you have not committed any crime, and a police van has not stopped by your house, so you consider yourself as a righteous person. But the bible says all our righteousness is like a filthy rag. So all your good deeds, no matter if you are doing good for people, but if you have not accepted Jesus Christ, you have committed greatest sin ever; the one of rejecting the blood of the Son of God.' And at that time, it felt like the best thing I should do. And all steps leading towards me lifting my hands just followed automatically. And after that, it seemed like everything just fell into place and my life has changed since then."*

P3FIG: *"It took me a long time to understand that there is a need to be born-again, in fact I did not know what being born-again meant. But as I gained more information about the bible and what it says about being born-again, I realised that I am not a born-again Christian. I was afraid to say I am born-again. So, one day, something came over me and persuaded me to be born-again, and I told a certain pastor that I wanted to be born-again. He prayed with me and from that day, I was born-again. I became bold and told people that I am saved."*

P4MIG: *"this is the story I like to tell because it is something I did not expect. I was washing the dishes at home, and a certain guy came at my place asking to share the gospel with me. He asked if I believed in Jesus Christ. I said yes. He then asked if I was born-again. I said no. he asked why? I told him I was not yet ready because I was drinking, had a lot of girlfriends, and was also smoking. He asked if these things were a problem to me. I said they were hindering me from being a Christian because I have heard the word and many people had been telling me about salvation. He said he wanted to pray with me, and I agreed. Thereafter I felt something strange in my heart. When I went to a shebeen to drink, something in me said I should not be drinking. I felt uncomfortable whenever I went to a shebeen. Then I started going to church. I don't know how I stopped drinking or smoking but I just hated the smell of alcohol and cigarette. And lastly, stopped being a player, I now live a holy life. I am son of God, as the word says, those who believe in Him a called to be the sons of God."*

P5MIG: *"I was at church, and the preacher called upon those who wanted to be saved. I went forward and confessed Jesus Christ as Lord over my life. After that I was changed completely and developed new tendencies."*

P6FIG: *"I was at Nqubela hospital at East London sick with Tuberculosis for three months. There was a certain preacher that visited the wards and conduct prayers with patients. He told us that God loves us and cares about what we are going through. He said that we needed to accept God's love so we can see him working in our lives. And that Jesus Christ was the proof of His love. So, I lifted up my hands and prayed, giving my life to Jesus Christ. Ever since that day, my life changed and I am glad I chose Christ as my saviour.*

P7FIG: *"On that day, the pastor really preached. He said if you don't have Christ, you're like someone who is dead. So, I thought to myself, I would like to experience the new life and live again. Because my life had no meaning, I was just leaving because I am a person. I therefore decided to accept Jesus Christ. I also wanted to have someone who could protect me from evil and fight for me. So that when the devil is tempting me, I can have someone who will say, 'not this one, this is my child, you cannot harm her'."*

P8FIG: *"On that day, I just felt weak and my knees started shaking as the pastor was preaching. He was talking about how bad things normally happen around the same family, which affected everything and everyone in the family. I felt like the pastor was talking to me or about my family. Things were bad and there was nothing positive coming from my family. So, when the pastor said Jesus can fix my situation, I just cried and went forward to be prayed for. After that, I accepted Jesus Christ. Since then, things are fine at home, and now I am the first to go to the university in my family."*

P9FIG: *"On the day I was born-again, the preacher was preaching, and at the end of the sermon, he called for those who wanted to be born-again. So, I went to the alter-call to accept Jesus Christ. In fact, many of my friends were born-again, and would talk about the miracles they had experienced since they were born-again, so, I decided to be born-again. I wanted to experience the miracles of God in my life."*

P10FIG: *"On that day, I was at home listening to Christian testimonies on TV. There was a phrase this lady said. She said, 'there is nothing more beyond Christ. You can trust anything in this world but Christ is the best there is.' Then it got to me that I am sitting here with nothing to hold on to. What was I trusting, because everything can be shaken? I then realised that I need Jesus Christ in my life because I needed something or some to trust in. I went to church and asked the pastor to pray for me so I can accept Jesus Christ. And that's how I was born-again."*

P11FIG: *"My Mom was sick. And by the time she was sick, she always kept on saying that she will pass on. And when she has passed on, God will be with us. After saying that, she would always ask us not to be afraid because God will take care of us. She said we should believe in God because He will always be there for us. She said we must not cry and not worry because God is there. After she passed on, it was difficult. But then, I sticked to her words that I must not worry too much. So, I gave my life to God by accepting Jesus Christ. That's what I remember."*

P12MIG: *"It was at high school around the exam time, a certain pastor came to our school to preach. As he was preaching, there was a parable that he made. The parable talked about how Christ came to protect us from evil. And because I came from the rural areas, there was an issue of witchcraft where I stayed, and everyone was afraid of witchcraft. So, as he preached, I realised that the pastor was talking about the protection we can find in Christ, so I wanted that protection. So, I raised up my hands to accept Jesus Christ during the alter-call.*

P13MIG: *"I will not have a specific event that I will say I was born-again, because I was unfortunate or fortunate that my parents were religious people. Then from birth I grew up in the church. There were many accounts, in which we were forced to say that we are born-again, and then until that matter came to reality; it's a sequence of events. So I can't have that one event in which I can say on that particular day I was born-again."*

P14MIG: *"I come from a religious family. But even then, I did not go to church. One day I was at a tavern drinking, and a certain guy took my stuff, so beat him more than I wanted to. His parents came over to my house to complain, so I thought I should run away and join a group of people who were going to a whole-night prayer. It is there that my life changed and I accepted Jesus Christ. I was running away from my crimes and found God in a whole-night prayer meeting."*

- What was the next step after this event, in terms of your spiritual journey?

When asked what the next step was after the born-again event in terms of their spiritual journey, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"first of all, I started to notice that ever since I am a born-again, there are things that changed in me. The way I used to think is no longer the way I think, the way I used to do, the way I used to speak to people. I started to see a change, and felt so comfortable in my heart. I felt relieved as if something was taken off from my shoulders. Then to work my spiritual journey, I read the word of God, so that I may know more about what I have just put myself in, and listened to different preachers from the television."*

P2MIG: *"The next step was to go to church. I used to go to my home church but then I never felt it was the relevant place, even though they spoke in my language, the Xhosa that I know, it seemed to me like they were speaking a language I cannot understand. So there was this hunger and thirst and the search for higher knowledge, then I went to a nearby Pentecostal church. That helped me a lot because I became grounded in the word."*

P3FIG: *"What I realised after I was born-again is that I grew spiritually, the Holy Spirit, I can say, revealed a lot about the things from the bible, and I became bold about saying I am born-again. Even in front of people, I would say I am born-again without feeling any shame or doubting myself. So the change was there, in growing spiritually, and being bold and proud about my salvation."*

P4MIG: *"After all this things happened, I realised that the Christians teach that prayer can keep a Christian. I used to pray but without understanding, so after I was born-again I started to realise the role of prayer and understood that praying is a way of keeping yourself, a way that brings you closer, and a way of communicating with God. So, I implemented these things. And ever since then, God has given me the knowledge to discern the difference between what is right and wrong."*

P5MIG: *"I started going to church, listened to Christian preaching, and participated in Christian fellowship prayers and other Christian activities."*

P6FIG: *"from that event, I moved from the church I used to go to and started going to a Pentecostal church. But my parents were not happy with this, because they wanted me stay in the church which the whole family went to. But I just felt like the Pentecostal church I went to suited me the most. And it really helped me grow what I had just received as young born-again Christian. It made me appreciate my salvation."*

P7FIG: *"I started attending church, made friends with people who were born-again, and went to bible study lessons."*

P8FIG: *"I started to go to church regularly, joined the church choir and participated in most of the church activities."*

P9FIG: *"I learnt to pray. Because at that time I did not really know how to pray, the pastor told me to recite the 'Our father which art in heaven' whenever I wanted to pray until I could use my our words. And every time when I wanted to pray, I would recite the 'Our father which art in heaven. One day, after reciting the 'Our father' I just heard myself really praying, as if I was communicating with God, and I felt like God was listening. After my prayer, I was overwhelmed with joy and knew that I can also pray."*

P10FIG: *"I went to church, joined the worship team, and read my bible."*

P11FIG: *"I told my friends that I was born-again, I read the word of God, and went to church regularly."*

P12MIG: *"I dedicated myself to the Lord, met with other Christians who were serious about their salvation, and then I was thought the principles of being a Christian. That's how I matured in my spiritual journey of faith."*

P13MIG: *"the next step for me was to be filled by the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the spiritual baptism. That moment brought sense to the whole thing, it brought life to me, it brought the true definition of who I am in terms of how God sees me. It's what kept me going. Since then, I was convinced that there is only this life, and I am living that life."*

P14MIG: *"fortunately, after that event, the pastor that conducted the whole-night prayer had a bible study programme, so I attended that study. I gained a lot there and I grew spiritually."*

2. What is the role of spirituality in the constriction of the self-concept on youth?

Under this main question, the participants were asked to respond to the following sub-questions:

- What does spirituality mean to you?

When asked what spirituality meant to them, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"I think being spiritual means to have a connection with the unseen God. I think spirituality is being able to consult God because first of all, God is an unseen God. So, I think being spiritual is to move beyond the body to have a spiritual connection with God. So, spirituality rests upon the connection with God and being able to communicate with Him."*

P2MIG: *"Spirituality means that a person believes in something. To me, spirituality means belief, believing in the divine Creator; the one who created me. Where I live my life giving credit to Him every step I take, whether I am drinking or whether I am eating, I am doing it for His glory. And it begins with wisdom, fearing this person that I am spiritually connected to. When I call Him I don't say it's a greater source or greater power but I say it is God Himself."*

P3FIG: *"Spirituality to me means living according to the spirit. For example, if you are a born-again Christian, you turn to understand things in a spiritual way and be lead by the spirit. When you are born–again, you experience a spiritual connection with God because the Bible says we must be born of water and spirit. So, spirituality means to be lead by the spirit so that you can keep your connection with God.*

P4MIG: *"Spirituality means to leave according to the spirit. It is the way we are supposed to live as Christian. This is because there are things which are of the flesh, which do not agree with the spirit. Look! I have noticed one thing, that all the things of the flesh do not build up the spirit but all the things of the spirit can build up the flesh. What am I saying when I say this? I mean that when you live by the spirit, there are things that your flesh gets protected from, which you cannot find yourself dubbed-in because the spiritual things require that you remain pure, and holy. So, you remove yourself from other things and refrain from things that may corrupt you. Therefore, you do not regret yourself because you depend on the spirit."*

P5MIG: *"Spirituality means to be connected with God. This connection allows us to feel the presence of God everywhere we are, and this makes us live in a manner that will not offend the Holy Spirit, who connects us to God. So, I think spirituality is connecting to God through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us."*

P6FIG: *"Spirituality means believing in a God that can connect with His people. It means to live by the spirit and not according to the flesh. So, to be spiritual means to live by the spirit of God."*

P7FIG: *"Spirituality is the way you communicate with God. It is how you talk to God and develop your relationship with Him."*

P8FIG: *"Because the Bible says that when Jesus went to Heaven He left us with the Holy Spirit. Spirituality therefore means to be filled by the spirit of God so that He can help us overcome sin, and help us live in a way that will please God."*

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P9FIG: *"Spirituality means to be filled with the Spirit of God. That's why some people speak in tongue and prophecy. The spirit fills us and helps us balance our relationship with God. So, spirituality means being filled with the spirit."*

P10FIG: *"Spirituality means connecting with God, maybe through a prayer or worship."*

P11FIG: *"Spirituality means to have a relationship with a higher power. This can be something or someone. But to me it's God."*

P12MIG: *"Spirituality means the spiritual entity that is contained by the body which always seeks to connect with God. The bible says we are made of the body and the spirit, and the spirit is the one that connect with God more than the body. So, spirituality means the ability of the inner spirit to communicate with God."*

P13MIG: *"spirituality to me means everything that brings control to your morals. It has everything to do with behaviour and the way you perceive things. Because the bible say God is spirit and all those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. So, it brings the link between the human and God. Because we communicate with God through the spirit, he talks to us through our spirit. Through that our conscience is being awakened, our morals are being controlled and our behaviours are under the same control, knowing that there is God in heaven who sees everything that we do."*

P14MIG: *"Spirituality means the connection with God and building a relationship with the Creator.*

When asked what spirituality meant to them, the control group responded in the following manner:

P2FFG: *"Spirituality refers to spirit in us, which quickens our conscience when we are doing what is wrong and tells us to repent. It helps us stay true to God and reminds us not to sin against Him."*

P3MFG: *"Spirituality means believing in something that is considered sacred, or God. it is that supernatural being that has an influence on how we behave and treat each other as people. Because I am a Christian, that supernatural being to me is God, but I also think that to some, that supernatural being can be their ancestors.*

P4FFG: *"Spirituality means the way we connect with God. It is the relationship that we make that keeps us in touch with Him."*

P5MFG: *"Spirituality means a connection with God. It is how we communicate with Him."*

P6FFG: *"Spirituality means living by the spirit. It means that our inner person, which is the spirit contained by the body, links us with God whenever we pray or communicate with God."*

- Explain how the Christian spirituality helps you understand your sense of self?

When asked to explain how the Christian spirituality helps them understand their sense of self, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"I think spirituality is the one that gives me an identity in Christ. Because I am a born-again Christian, I believe that God loved me enough to send his beloved Son Jesus Christ to die for my sins. And because of Christ, I have escaped the judgement of God. I now understand that God loves me. Hence Christ gave Himself for me."*

P2MIG: *"The Bible says God together with His word, are like a mirror that makes you understand who you are. By connecting to God or looking at His word, as one looking at a mirror, you see the reflection of yourself and who you are. And also, in order to know who you are, you have to know how you came into being, your origin and where you are going. And all that is accredited to God. The Bible tells me where I come from, and where I am going. In fact, the bible says God knew me before I was even born. So, I can say there is nothing that helps me understand myself than God and the Bible."*

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P3FIG: *"The Christian spirituality firstly, helps me to understand that I am a born-again Christian. And as a born-again Christian, it reminds me that I am not supposed to act anyhow wherever I am. It also says that I am a hare with Christ. And that makes me not doubt myself but understand that I am grounded in Christ and belong to the Christian family."*

P4MIG: *"Before I was born-again, I was a hopeless barbarian. But after I was born-again, the spirit showed me that I had to change my ways. I tried but it was hard to repent without the spirit of God. So, I can say the spirit of God helped me change my life. Then I became a self controlled person and understood that I am a child of God and I am not supposed to do the things I did."*

P5MIG: *"It helps me realise that I am important before God. The bible says that sin had alienated me from God, which means that I had no connection with God. But Christ died so that I may rebuild that connection with God."*

P6FIG: *"I think it is the Christian spirituality that helps me understand why I should behave in a good manner, keep myself holy and why I should not jeopardise my life by engaging in the senseless things like promiscuity, theft or violence. So, I can say that the Christian spirituality helps me understand myself better as a person and how I should behave."*

P7FIG: *"I think that the Christian spirituality helps me understand that I am special and that God expects me to act in such a manner. So, when I am tempted to do what is wrong, the spirit of God helps me remember that I am a child of God and if I give in to temptations, I am undermining my Christian identity."*

P8FIG: *"the Christian spirituality helps me understand that I am not what people say I am. I used to smoke, drink and sometimes sleep out. And people called me by names for that. But my pastor told me that when I accepted Jesus Christ, my sins were erased, and now I am a new person. So, instead of listening to the negative things that people say about me, I just tell myself that I am a changed person and that God has forgiven me."*

P9FIG: *"The Christian spirituality helps me understand my potential. See, I was a very shy person, and people would always take advantage of me because I was quiet. But since I started believing in Jesus Christ, I have became bold, trust myself and can easily speak my mind. I even have the courage to witness to my friends and tell them about Christ."*

P10FIG: *"The Christian spirituality helps me understand that I am nothing on this earth apart from Christ. And that if I don't live in a manner that is worthy of God's love, I am loosing myself. So, it helps me know that as a Christian, I am a vessel of God's love."*

P11FIG: *"The Christian spirituality helps me understand that even though I am a sinner, in the process of salvation, God loves me still. So, it helps me understand that even in my weaknesses, I am still valuable and that God is patient with me. If He is patient with me, it means that I should not judge or condemn myself for the mistakes I make in life."*

P12MIG: *"The Christian spirituality helps me know that I am complete in Christ, and that what God has deposited in me makes me unique. Even if other Christians may compromise their faith, my spirituality reminds me that I am not serving God to impress other people but because he finds favour with me. So, my Christian spirituality helps me in that way."*

P13MIG: *"The Christian spirituality conscientises me, and it also has an effect on my behaviour and the way I see people. It is because when your spirituality has been activated, you become sensitive first to God and also sensitive to other people around you. It gives you a new perspective of looking at what is happening around you. So, it has done that. It has awaken my conscience, and now before I utter a word, I wonder what will God think if I could speak this word to someone else. That person, how is that word going to impact his or her life, will it impact them*

negatively? So, I would rather impact people on a positive note. I mean make them trust themselves rather than to utter a destructive word. So it has awakened that sense of responsibility and that of consciousness as well."

P14MIG: *"The Christian spirituality deals a lot with character, self-worth and self restraint, so it helps me avoid a reckless behaviour and helps me value myself more, even more than I used to."*

When asked to explain how the Christian spirituality helps them understand their sense of self, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MFG: *"The Christian spirituality helps see myself as unique person. In spite of all the challenges I face in my life, God treats me as me, and does not compare me with other people. He accepts and loves me as I am, and does not give up on me, even though I make a lot of mistakes."*

P1FFG: *"My Christian spirituality helps understand that above my insecurities, I have a friend in Jesus, who does not only love me when I am doing right but even when I am in trouble. That gives me comfort and helps me overcome my fears because I know that God loves and that He gave me Christ to stand for me when I fall short."*

P2MFG: *"spirituality helps me stay away from doing bad things. Whenever I think of doing what is wrong, the spirit quickens my conscience, lets me know that I am not supposed to be doing wrong. It helps keep my behaviour in control."*

P4MFG: *"More than anything, my Christian spirituality has helped me deal with my past. There are things about me and where I come from which somehow affected how I used to see myself. Now I know that I am a new creature, and God does not define me about my past. Even though I still make some mistakes, I understand that that's how I get to mature in life, rather than blaming myself. My Christian spirituality gives me a positive look on life, and that keeps me going, knowing that I matter to God."*

P5FFG: *"well, I used to struggle to make friends, and I always tried my level best to impress them. But at the end of the day, I would blame myself for things we have done. My parent did not like me very much too because I was always in trouble. But after I became a Christian, I realised that I had to stop conforming. I stated going to church more and God helped me out. I was not longer troublesome and I understood that God cared for me, more that my friends ever did. And that helped me find myself. I think that's what my Christian spirituality has helped with, to discover that I am sufficient by myself and that I don't need to please other people to be happy."*

- How does your understanding of spirituality assist you in defining who you are?

When asked to describe how their understanding of spirituality assists them in defining who they are, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"My understanding of spirituality makes me see myself as a different person. It makes me stand out from others by the way I do things, even the way I connect with God. We may all be born-again and have a connection with God, but each person experiences his or her salvation differently. So, even though I know that we are all children of God, if we a born-again, but I believe that God has a special place for me, and sees me differently from others. So, we all matter, as a whole, and individually to God. And that makes it easy for me to define myself without trying to compare myself with others."*

P2MIG: *"To me spirituality is a heavenly blueprint of what I am here on earth. So without the blueprint, even if I were to be broken, there is no place where people could look and attempt to reconstruct me. But because God is my blueprint, even if something can happen to me, or I could be sick, I will always go to the very same God who created me, who knows my blueprint and my spirituality. He can help me stand and restore my identity. So, spirituality helps me perceive myself as a unique person, the blueprint of heaven."*

P3FIG: *"My understanding of spirituality assists me a lot in terms of making compromises. There are situation where I feel forced to blend in with the crowed, but something in me would always remind me that I am a child of God, and should not be compromising my standards for other people. So, I feel like that sense of awareness which reminds me of who I am, protects me from lowering myself and possibly disgracing my faith."*

P4MIG: *"my understanding of spirituality helps recover after I have fallen short. It helps me understand that I am a sinner saved by grace. When I have done wrong, I would normally feel overwhelmed by guilt and the sense of shame. And before I was born-again, I would cut myself as punishment for the bad things I have done. But now, when I read the bible and begin to pray, I always feel at ease, knowing that God forgives me and does not keep a record of all my mistakes. So, instead of feeling bad or hurting myself, I just read the bible and pray. And that assures me that God has forgiven me and that He is giving me another chance."*

P5MIG: *"It helps me consider myself as a son that is highly favoured and protected by God. And as a son, I understand that God is in control of my life. So, no matter what happens, I live to please God, and to let others see Him through me."*

P6FIG: *"The bible compares a woman with the church of God. And the church of God is supposed to be pure, blameless and holy. So, when I look at myself, I define my life in terms of the attributes that the church possesses, and that is purity and holiness. This means that I am not supposed to be like everyone else, because I am chosen to reveal the character of God to the world. So, spirituality helps me define myself as a chosen person, who is called to live a holy life"*

P7FIG: *"As for me! Concerning this question: how does your understanding of spirituality assist you in defining who you are? It is helping me, because I know that I am God's child, I am set apart. I am a child who has been bought by the blood. You see, if other people are saying I am coming from this and that home, for me I know that my home is in heaven."*

P8FIG: *"For me, it is helping in that, the bible says He knew us even before our parents came to know us. So, this makes me know that it is Him who knows me more, and in turn, I feel appreciated by Him. Because he knew me before I was even born, I would say, God has set me apart, and in Him, I finally understand who I am."*

P9FIG: *"Spirituality helps me see myself in a positive way. When I look at my peers and the things that they do, I feel blessed to have been chosen by God. It has helped me a lot. Now I define myself as a moral person, who does not shame herself but finds dignity by living according to the word of God."*

P10FIG: *"It helps me to understand that I was died for, and that understanding helps me define myself as a valuable person in the eyes of the Lord."*

P11FIG: *"My understanding is that I am loved by God, and He knew me before I was in the womb of my Mom, so by that it means He has a purpose for me."*

P12MIG: *"As I have mentioned that if you are not saved you live anyhow, you just follow the path of your flesh. But when you are in Christ, there is this thing that stops you from doing what you like, even if there is no one around to tell you that what you are doing is wrong. That helps me understand myself as moral person, who lives by principles of God and should not accept the standards of the world because of the relationship I have with God. So, I can say, it helps me define myself as morally inclined person, who does not compromise his Christian standards with those of the world."*

P13MIG: *"Spirituality has helped me to understand that over and above that I am who I am, I am a son of God and I am created and designed according to the likeness of God, not the outer things but the spiritual me. So, I might be a physical being but the spiritual me has been made in the likeness of God."*

P14MIG: *I would define myself as someone who is moral. Christianity in a way, is seen as a faith that installs a sense of discipline and morality, and that is what is expected of one when they become a Christian. So, I think that is how it assists me, to try to be a moral person."*

When asked to describe how their understanding of spirituality assists them in defining who they are, the control group responded in the following manner:

P3FFG: *"spirituality has helped me establish myself, firstly, as a unique person, who does not need to conform to the ways of the world. Secondly, it has made me realise that I am special in the eyes of God. So, when people ask for my name, I tell them my name and that I am a born-again Christian who is deeply loved by God."*

P6MFG: *"I think we all define ourselves in terms of what we are, so I am a born-again Christian. I have been chosen by God, and live only to serve Him. That's how I define myself, as a chosen person."*

P7MFG: *"it helps me to fearlessly say that I am a child of God, loved beyond compare and highly esteemed by my Father in Heaven."*

P7FFG: *"The bible says we are hares with Christ. So, I am really favoured. I am a daughter of the Most-High, and hare of the heavenly Kingdom."*

- Explain how you practice your spirituality?

When asked to explain how they practice their spirituality, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"I practice my spirituality by praying and fasting. I also read the word of God."*

P2MIG: *"Firstly for me, from the fact that there is a spirit of God, which is Devine and has been deposited within me. One of the ways I practice my spirituality is to make sure that I establish the relationship that connects with the spirit of God, so that I can always be lead by the spirit of God. Secondly, the Spirit of God that dwells in me is like a muscle. In order for the Spirit to grow, one should exercise this Spirit of God by doing spiritual things, by being spiritually disciplined. I always pull my spiritual antennas, so that I can be aware of what is happening. I also practice my spirituality by trying to be a person of meditation and prayer."*

P3FIG: "*Firstly I can say I practice my spirituality by reading the Word because as a Christian, I can say it is the way in which I feed my spirit. Secondly, by praying at all times, so it is how I practise my spirituality, so as to have power at all times in Christ."*

P4MIG: "*The way I practise my spirituality is through prayer. I think also by engaging myself to fellowships, fasting and reading the Word. That is how I practise my spirituality. When you practice your spirituality through these things, they tell who you really are, because when you read the Word, you pray, you fast and you communicate with God, these things reveal the godliness in you, they reveal that you are living for Christ."*

P5MIG: *"I practice my spirituality by reading the bible, praying and fellowshipping with other Christians."*

P6FIG: *"I practice my spirituality by testifying to unbelievers. Testify to them on how my spiritual life has helped me. I testify to them, I advise and I encourage them. That is how I practice my spirituality."*

P7FIG: *"What makes me grow spiritually is prayer and when I have prayed even if there was something bothering me or whatever I want from God, I communicate it with God through prayer. Another thing which helps me is to read the bible."*

P8FIG: *"Firstly, the spirit of God does not stay in a place that in not clean, so I practice my spirituality by living a holy life. I also practice my spirituality by fasting, by reading the Word of God and by praying."*

P9FIG: *"For me, I read the bible and then, I try to do what I have been told to do. I stay with people who are also Christians, we share the Word, and we advice each other in order to keep each other on the way, you see. I go to fellowships and avoid being alone because the bible says we should not avoid the gathering of the saints. So I always want to be among people who have the same spirit as mine. That is how I practice my spirituality."*

P10FIG: *"I pray and I read the Word."*

P11FIG: *"By singing and praying. I am not a good reader of the Word, and then I practice by listing to someone telling me about the Word."*

P12MIG: *"Through living a Christian life, by prayer and by reading the Word."*

P13MIG: *"The first thing I feed myself with is the spiritual food, which is the Word. Also, I try by all means to make sure that I live according to the provisions that are made by the holy book. When I fail, I then submit myself through prayer, and confessions."*

P14MIG: *"There is no other way in which someone can master salvation besides by going according to the Word. Everything that the Word says, you should do. We have been given the spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. When the Word says you should do something then the spirit needs to confirm that within you. That is what I use and it helps me. I read and do what the Word says and listen to the Spirit of God."*

When asked to explain how they practice their spirituality, the control group responded in the following manner:

P1FFG: *"I practice my spirituality by going to church, reading the bible and prayer."*

P2MFG: *"I practice my spirituality by attending church lessons, reading the Bible and fasting."*

P3FFG: *"I would say I practice my spirituality by praying. Connecting with God helps me grow spiritually."*

P4MFG: *"How I practice my spirituality neh? I can say by prayer and by reading the word of God."*

P4FFG: *"I practice my spirituality by going to church regularly, and by attending whole-night prayers. That's where I learn more about God and learn how to pray."*

P5MFG: *"by reading the word, prayer and going to church."*

P6MFG: *"I read the Bible and pray."*

P7FFG: *"I think by prayer. But I am also a worshipper at church. That helps me connect with God."*

3. **How does religion and spirituality impact youth decision making, life styles and roles in society?**

Under this main question, the participants were asked to respond to the following sub-questions:

- What are the most important principles of being a Christian?

When asked "what are the most important principles of being a Christian?" the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"The most important principles of being a Christian, firstly as I have said, it is to have a Christ like character. It is to show kindness, to care for other people, to be humbled and to love people as the Bible says love your neighbour as you love yourself. Those are the principles of being a Christian."*

P2MIG: *"The very first principle of being a Christian is to be a person of principles; there are laws, rules and regulations that govern you, differently from other people who do as they please, but as a Christian, you do not do as you please. Secondly you need to live a life that is reflective of Christ. People have never seen Christ; they should see Christ in us. So, the life of a Christian is governed by morals, rules and ethics."*

P3FIG: *"I can say that the principles that are important to me as a Christian are that, firstly, I should behave as a Christian, which is something that deals with my character, and that, I should always be considerate of other people."*

P4MIG: *"For me, the first thing, I would say is to be Christ like. To be Christ-like is to follow the example of Christ, because when you are given the dos and don'ts, there is a point where you will fail. In fact, there is passage in the Bible where Paul says that everything is permissible to Christian but not everything is beneficial. So, one should be led by the spirit into following the example of Christ because that is beneficial. I think that is the most important principle of being a Christian."*

P5MIG: *"is to live a holly life."*

P6FIG: *"It is the character: how you live, and how you behave. Look, you can be a singer or gifted in anything, but if your character is loose, then your gift amounts to nothing. Your character is the most important thing. The way we live is what attracts people to God. So, character is the most important thing."*

P7FIG: *"It is to live a holy life, following the example of Christ, and treating other people with respect."*

P8FIG: *"it is the way you do things, the way you behave, how you speak with people, the way you deal with the situations you come across in front of the people, so, to sum up, I can say it is the character. To make an example, the bible says our doings should be like those of Christ, and again it says we should not preach with our lips, but our actions."*

P9FIG: *"You must be friends with your Bible. You must pray a lot. You must fast, confess and testify. It is good to testify because the word of testimony helps to protect you at all times. If you testify, people look at your life to see if you are not deceiving them by words. You must do what you say."*

P10FIG: *"You must submit to God, to the church and other authorities. you must pray. You must respect and love other people. And you must testify about your salvation."*

P11FIG: *"I think the first one, is not to be judgemental. As Christians, we have the tendency of judging others. But God accepts us the way we are. The second is to respect people. Even if they are not saved, we should respect them. And the last one is that as a Christian, you must live an exemplary life. People should see you as a good example for the youth in the society."*

P12MIG: *"I think the most important principle of being a Christian is humility. You must be humble because even Christ humbled Himself. Secondly, I think when you are a Christian; you must have peace because peace is important. There is absolutely nothing better about us that God should save us for, except to create peace between Himself and His people. So, peace is an important thing."*

P13MIG: *"I think you should be someone who is holy, and then you should read and follow the Ten Commandments."*

P14MIG: *"If I may summarise because I think there are many principles. Christianity, I would say, is about love and forgiveness. I think also Christianity helps to instil the sense of forgiveness, which is needed and is the first step when it comes to healing, and it promotes love; that people should love one another. I think those are the most crucial principles of being a Christian."*

When asked "what are the most important principles of being a Christian?" the control group responded in the following manner:

P1MFG: *"I think the most important principle of being a Christian is a Godly character. Without a godly character, we are the same as everyone else. It is the character that sets us apart as children of God."*

P2FFG: *"The most important principles of being a Christian is love, being humble and being able to forgive."*

P3MFG: *"I think the most important principle of being a Christian is obedience. Obedience calls attention to the ability to submit to God, to authorities and to the church. One cannot truly be a Christian apart from submission."*

P4FFG: *"I would say the most important principle of being a Christian is reading the bible, doing what it says, and emulating the example of Christ."*

P5FFG: *"I think prayer is the most important principle of being a Christian. We only get to be close to God and achieve the ability to understand His word when we pray. So, prayer is the most important principle."*

P6FFG: *"I think it is kindness. A Christian should always be kind, so that people may see the love of God through him or her."*

P7MFG: *"Caring for others is the most important principle of being a Christian. The Bible says that we should love others as we love ourselves, so caring for others is the highest symbol of love."*

- What is expected from a Christian in terms of morality and behaviour in your Church?

When asked "what is expected from a Christian in terms of morality and behaviour in their Church" the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"First of all, errr! We must not conform ourselves as the world. The way we do things must be different from the youth that is not born again. Even in terms of what you wear it should show that you are different from someone who is not saved. The way you talk must be different. The way you do things must be different. You must be different in all spheres, academically you must be different. The way you wear, the way you talk, you do things and they way you reveal yourself to people."*

P2MIG: *"It is expected that you live a life that reflects Christ and also when you are encountering problems you should ask yourself if Christ was in the same position as you, what would Christ do, and you try by all means to do the same. To be a person that is always humble, who is always willing to help others. It is expected that we should be the people who realise that they have the light and they have to share this light with others."*

P3FIG: *"It is not about the church, but because everyone belongs to a church, whatever the church does is a part of submitting to what the Word of God says. Now, what is expected from a Christian is a well behaviour. It's someone who gives to people, I can say in the society. It is expected to a Christian to behave well, a behaviour that will not allow people to have doubts about you in the society."*

P4MIG: *"What is important firstly is to submit. Secondly, you must behave well as a Christian. You need to submit under your pastor but you should submit to things that go along with the word of God. In fact, you should know why you should submit. Whether what you are submitting to is good. The Holy Spirit then helps you to decide. And then to morality and behaviour those things starts within one's self, they come from the heart and the behaviour also comes from the heart."*

P5MIG: *"Is to behave in a Godly and God glorifying manner."*

P6FIG: *"In church, I am expected to behave well, to have respect, to be able to welcome others because there are cases where we have a visitor in church. I am also expected to be humble."*

P7FIG: *"In church, when you are a Christian, you need to be someone who behaves, God has put the pastor in church so that he may guide us. So, we need to follow the pastor's orders in church and not behave in a manner that will disgrace the church. And that needs one to pray to God that He takes out the spirit of selfishness, and tell yourself that you are Gods' child and you will do what God says you should do. So, the pastor is receiving messages that come from God and thereafter, he pours/transfers that information to us in church. You need to behave and be a humble person especially to your leader and to the church. You need to follow and respect the pastors' orders. You also need to be supportive in church. I can say, you also need to pray and ask God to reveal your purpose in church. God will show you. If for example, you are a worshiper, you need to worship."*

P8FIG: *"It is expected, firstly to have love, and to have respect for others. Even if you are close to your pastor, you need to show respect to him. You need to respect every brother and sister in the church. When there is something you did not like from your brother or sister, you need to let him know what you did not like, instead of going around and spreading rumours about your brother."*

P9FIG: *"It is expected that you follow and respect the principles of the church. You need to behave and obey your leaders. You must not be easily angered and behave well."*

P10FIG: *"Mmmh, ok! Your behaviour should always be in line with the laws of God. You must be humble and give respect to those who are older than you."*

P11FIG: *"Morality and behaviour; behaviour, you must be ahh, a humble person, someone who is willing to be sent. You must be willing to be under authority. Morality in my church; you must not do wrong things and those in which they seem to be wrong, for example, drinking and dating. In my church those things are not promoted."*

P12MIG: *"In all things that are coming forth, holiness is the most promoted thing in my church, that one should be holy. The way you present yourself among other people, people should see. And you need to be active in the house of the Lord."*

P13MIG: *"We are expected to uphold and live according to the values that are found in the scriptures, and we are expected also to behave in a manner that will make people see us as Christians, we have to portray a Christ like character in everything that we do. In the work place we must portray a Christ like character, in the society, even in the sport field when we are playing. Whatever you do you must portray a Christ like character."*

P14MIG: *"One should maintain a discipline life style. You need to refrain from entertaining anything that is contrary to the Christian perception."*

When asked "what is expected from a Christian in terms of morality and behaviour in their Church" the control group responded in the following manner:

P1FFG: *"It is expected that we behave in a good way, in a manner that will not disgrace our church. We are also expected to avoid promiscuity and alcohol."*

P2MFG: *"It is expected that a Christian bring a positive change in the society, but he or she must not be dubbed in the politics of the society."*

P3FFG: *"That a Christian should be respectful and accept other people. Even if they are poor or come from disadvantaged backgrounds."*

P4MFG: *"A Christian is expected to live a Christ-like life, and practice the principles of love, peace, and be accountable for his or her actions."*

P5MFG: *"Err. A Christian should not drink alcohol, use drugs, steal or violate other people. He or she should pursue peace and live in harmony with all people."*

P6MFG: *"It is expected that a Christian should live in a way that will reflect Christ, so that other people may see the change that Christ can bring in a person's life.*

P7FFG: *"it is expected that a Christian should reflect his faith in God by what he or she does, and not only by his or her words. So, it is expected that a Christian should have a godly character and good behaviour and avoid immorality."*

- What is your role as a Christian in the society?

When asked "what is their role as a Christian in the society" the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MIG: *"Is to change the society. You must have an impact in your society. As a young person, you need to show a contribution to the society. People should see your role in the society and be able to recognise your impact in the society. Let me make an example, there are many things that one can do. I usually preach the word of God, I conduct sessions with the youth, especially to those that are challenged, and those who are taking drugs and tell them about my experiences. We need to be able to change the way things are being done in the society."*

P2MIG: *"I think as a Christian, it is important that I am a beacon of hope, so that the people of the community, when they look at me, they can see that they see hope because of the person that I am, and to also be a symbol of strength in the community. People should know that when things are collapsing there is someone who is staying there who can be the pillar. When people are in the darkness, they should know that there is someone who is staying there who carries the light. They should know that they can always go to that person because he can be able to come with a solution. Being a Christian to me in my society simply means that I am a person that is governed by principles and by no means am I supposed to see myself as above my community, and I am there to serve that community in the best of my ability."*

P3FIG: *"My answer to this question is very short. My role as a Christian in my society is to give. In my society, whenever I see a place where there is need, I always love to help where I can. So, that is the role that I am playing as a Christian in my society. Giving is part of Gods' word. People used to say 'action speaks louder than the words'. What you do in the society can let people define or differentiate whether this is a Christian or not."*

P4MIG: *"You see, to this thing of the role, there are many ways where you have to show your role. For example, at home I used to stay with children and teach them about the stories of the bible, some will have interest. There was a book I used to use which had pictures, then I would use that book to show them the stories that are in the bible. I do this because I believe that when you have planted a seed in a child, for example, the salvation was planted into me, in fact I grew up in church but as I grow up, I was being influenced to earthly things. What I am saying is this, when something has been planted to you when it comes back again and you are convinced by it again it is not easy to go back again to what you have been doing because now you can see the hardness of what you are coming from. My role is to help people to understand the Word. I also preach to people by testifying. Whenever when I am among community members I always talk about Christianity, and tell them about Christ."*

P5MIG: *"To be good example to the other youth by living a Christ-like life."*

P6FIG: *"As a Christian according to my belief. I believe that you need to be peoples' person. You need to value other people and stop being selfish. You should not only value only those whom you know but you should value each and every one whether you know them or not. It is very important to greet people, we may take this for granted but to greet someone is very vital, and ask how the person is. As Christians we need to make a change in our communities. You should know how your neighbours live. It is not that you are curious about their lives but you should be able to help and be a humbled person. It should not be hard for someone to come and ask for help from you."*

P7FIG: *"My role as a Christian starting from young people who are at the same age as I. As I am a born again person I am not like them. At times I call them and tell them about my God. I show them how wrong they do things, I even read the bible in front of them and show them that what I am saying is not just something coming from me but it is God's will from the bible. I always advise them when young woman are not doing well and I also advise those who dropped out from school. I show them the significance of going to school. So my role is to show them the right way."*

P8FIG: *"I am not that talkative, but I pray to God for the youth, I say my God please reach their hearts because they do not have hope without you as God."*

P9FIG: *"I do not say to people they should leave their beliefs but I tell people especially my friends about my salvation and also tell them that it does not cost. I encourage them to pray in hard times and through prayer they will reach their goals."*

P10FIG: *"You must be humble and remember that each and every adult is a parent to you. You need to listen to each and every person who comes to you and help them where possible."*

P11FIG: *"You must be a loving person, so that people may be able to talk with you, and if that the case you can be able to tell them about the gospel, because the purpose of the gospel is not about you only getting the help but is also about others knowing about the gospel and let them know that Christ is coming very soon."*

P12MIG: *"Ok! There are people who are in deep need in the society. If I may talk personally, I have the talent in young people. Where I come from for example, they do not consider education seriously. People they do not go further after grade 12. I do not go home more often since I am studying and I travel a lot working for the Lord. But I am thinking of doing something that will change my community, because when young people are far away it is really hard to speak with them you need to find ways of keeping them close. Now what I am thinking to do is to bring sport in order to attract them to get together as young people. I am sure that I may not get them all, but through sport surely I will get few. Another I think I may use is music, so those are still the plans which have not been implemented."*

P13MIG: *"As a Christian in the society I am expected to be the salt and being the salt it means to bring life where there is death; it is to bring hope to the hopeless, it is to be there for the needy, to make a difference without expecting anything."*

P14MIG: *"It is to be exemplary in terms of the principles of love and forgiveness. To strive by all means to display the picture of Jesus, because Christianity in its self suggest that we are Christ like."*

- What is your role as a Christian in the society?

When asked "what is their role as a Christian in the society" the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P2FFG: *"My role as a Christian is to pursue peace and to build good relations with others. There is too much animosity and hatred in my community. So, as a Christians, I am trying to stop that hate and violence by conducting programmes for the youth."*

P3MFG: *"Many young people are unemployed and do not have positive things to do. So, I and my friends have started a football club to keep young people busy, away from crime and drugs."*

P4FFG: *"As a Christian, my role is to witness to other people, so that they can accept the gospel and be saved."*

P4MFG: *"I think it is to be exemplary. To live in way that will makes other people want to be Christians."*

P6FFG: *"My role as a Christian in the society is to lead people to Christ, to be exemplary and to make sure that my behaviour does not make other people despise my faith."*

P7MFG: *"My role as Christian is to pray for people. The Bible says we must pray for all people, including our authorities so that we may live in peace. So, my role is to pray."*

P7FFG: *"It is to take care of the poor. I enjoy giving for those who do have and to assist the elderly persons in the community."*

- Explain how your Christian identification influences your decision making and life style?

When asked to explain how their Christian identification influences their decision making and life style, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

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P1MIG: *"Mmmm! First of all, it helps me a lot to take good and positive decisions. Before doing anything I need to ask myself if it the right decision that I make. I need to ask myself what does the bible say concerning my decision, and how is it going to help me in the future. It influences me a lot cause as the bible says in the book of Corinthians, as we are born again we have Christ's mind so our mind have been renewed. So whatever I do or whatever decision I take, I first ask myself as my mind is renewed that how my decision is going to reveal my Christianity."*

P2MIG: *"Because we are people as I have said that are governed by morals and some certain values. There are certain rules and regulations that are on top of our heads. So when it comes to decision making, I do not just take decision as all other people. Firstly, I make sure that I evaluate that decision, so that when I have taken it, I can know what will be the results or consequences. After each and every decision I have taken I should also evaluate whether it was a right decision or not. If the something could happen next time will I handle it the same way? So being a Christian helps a lot in decision making. In as much as we are human beings, we have emotions even when it comes to the issue of anger. As a human being I do get angry but I should get angry at the right thing for the right time, for the right amount of time but it does not lead me into sinning so when it comes to decision making at times I go back to the very same thing I have mentioned before, that if Christ was in the same situation what would He do. Then I also try to follow that pattern, just do something close to the one that Christ would do."*

P3FIG: *"Ah! It helps me in that, whenever I am going to take a decision ,firstly, I ask myself if the decision that I am taking is going to please God or not. That helps me to be a responsible Christian. Being a Christian helps me to know who I am. Knowing who I am helps me in taking good decisions in my life. As a Christian I know that I cannot do whatever I desire and I cannot just take any decision. In other words Christianity guides you in deciding the kind of decisions you need to take."*

P4MIG: *"It helps me a lot in terms of morality and when I have to take serious decisions. For example, at home neh, as a family, we have extended family members, and you find that they love traditions and there are things like sacrifices done for the ancestors. The bible says we should have one God, and as a born-again Christian, I cannot go there to worship the ancestors. I do not care what they will say to me for no attending, I just tell myself that I will not go there because I believe in Christ alone and I will serve no other gods besides God. You see, Christianity helps me to be bold and positive in making decisions, even if I feel the pain or challenging at times."*

P5MIG: *"It helps me to overcome the flesh and to be lead by God in everything I do."*

P6FIG: *"As I have said. This thing guides us, it does not deceive us. In this journey we meet different people who are not saved. There will be someone who will just come to you and talk in a manner that you do not like. As a Christian, you need to be calm because the Lord helped you, you do not need to put yourself in the same level as those who are not Christians. There should be a difference between you and someone who is not saved. If you are being attacked by a non Christian and you fight back then that shows that you are the same as him, there is no difference between the two of you. In most cases the devil uses people, so if someone comes to you sent by the devil, and by fighting back you are praising the devil not God. But if you come down and be humble then God is pleased because you have worn."*

P7FIG: *"Before I take decisions neh! What I know is that, each and every decision that I take counts in front of the Lord. As the bible says, when the Lord come the books of life will be opened, so I should know that if I decide to take the wrong decision the Lord is looking upon me when I am taking this decision, and it is the same decision I have taken that will make me not to get into the Kingdom of God."*

P8FIG: *"In everything that I do, it helps me to choose to do what is right. I always take the positive side of life. Whenever I want to do something bad, I think about what God would say."*

P9FIG: *"Before I take a decision I ask myself a question; what would Jesus do if He was in the same position as I am. I always take things in a positive way. Even when there is something bad or someone is fighting me, as much as I would like to fight back but I choose to be humble."*

P10FIG: *"It is not easy to make decisions because you have to consider if they won't puzzle people. You have to be sure that your decision is the right thing to do and people will not have questions about it. So it helps me to make right decisions, but it is not easy. You do not just make a decision; you have to think before you do something."*

P11FIG: *"Mm! it helps because it limits. It limits you in doing some other things because, for example, at the township, there are always bashes. And you cannot go to church today, and then to a bash tomorrow for dancing and drinking."*

P12MIG: *"As I have said from the beginning that when you are a Christina you have to be led by the Holy Spirit. It is wise to ask from God before you do anything, because there are things we do and you find half way that it was not God's plan. Then when God reveals His plan, then you realise that you should have consulted God first. You even need to involve God in your career, for example, you take a busy career like medicine, then half way you find that you have a calling from God and medicine needs you to be committed to it and also God's work needs commitment. So in each and everything you want to do, you need to put God first."*

P13MIG: *"Well, there are two things, there are good and bad things. At some point, people perceive you in a certain way, then it makes you feel like you are less human. There are things which people do not expect you to do because you are a Christian. that is the disadvantage and some of these things are overrated. But the good thing is that ah! It helps you to have peace with yourself and you have peace with the way things are happening to you in a sense that you know that there is someone over there that holds everything and He is the one who is still in control. As much as I hope to do these things there is someone who has a better way than the way you want. So then when you fail you are able to go back and motivate yourself."*

P14MIG: *"Quite frankly I have got to say that ah! I am trying by all means to restrain myself from a debate. The definition of Christianity as we know it is somehow restrictive, especially to the African context. I do not think that Christianity has been defined exactly as how it should be because it does not interact with the African culture. For example, as Christians we are thought to think of our departed parents as demonic forces. And we are told to stay away from all traditional customs and rituals, but those things are practiced by our parents. So, I can say that Christianity is limiting."*

- Explain how your Christian identification influences your decision making and life style?

When asked to explain how their Christian identification influences their decision making and life style, the experimental group responded in the following manner:

P1MFG: *"My Christian identification helps me keep my morals in check at all times, because there are people who are always watching to see if I live what I preach. So, even the decisions that I make reflects the life I now live in Christ. I can say then, that my Christian identification influences me in a positive way because it requires the best out of me."*

P2MFG: *"Being a Christian is not easy because before you do something, you have to think about what other people will say. In that sense, it restricts the way you should act and how you think. But such restrictions protect me from loosing myself and from acting like anyone else because I am a child of God."*

P3FFG: *"It influences me in a positive way. In that, when I have to decide on something, I first think how my decision will affect other people. From there, I make decisions that will benefit me but also that will not bring harm to others. In a way, my Christian identification makes me a responsible Christian."*

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P5MFG: *"I feel that my Christian identification sometimes limits my freedom. There are certain things we are not allowed to do because they might cause others to sin. For example, if you are a Christian, you cannot go to swim in the sea like anyone else, because you will have to wear clothes that reveal certain parts of your body, and that will be offensive to other Christians. But somehow, I understand that things like that are meant to protect us, so that we don't want to engage in sexual activities before marriage, and that also protects and dignifies our bodies.*

P5FFG: *"Since I am a Christian, I have made a lot of good choices in my life. And I don't do the things I used to do before. Many of my friends now respect me, and some want to be like me. My Christian identification has helped. Now I am a reformed person because of my Christian identification."*

P6MFG: *"Being a Christian has helped so much. I am no longer what I used to be. I used to be a naughty boy, and my parents had sent me away to live with my grandmother, but after I became a Christian, things just changed. I behave and respect people. And the people in my community said I have grown up, but I was helped by Christ."*

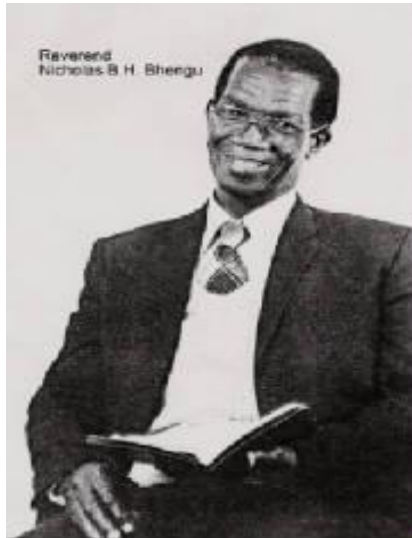## Appendix IV: Diagrams

A. Maps of the research site

Map of East London – Vincent Mall, Amalinda and Duncan Village
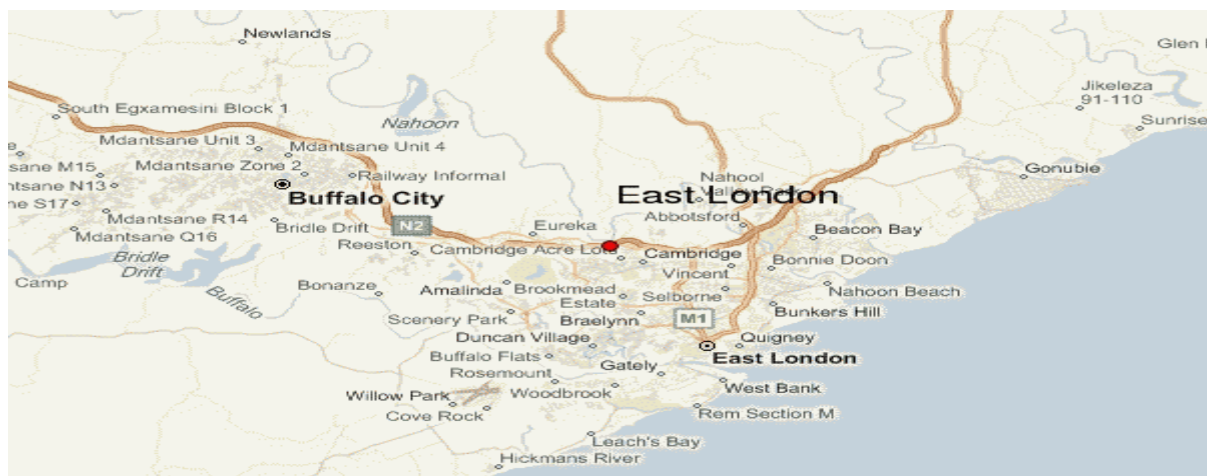
Map of Mdantsane – Mdantsane NU13, Mdantsane NU2

B.   Nicholas Bhekinkosi Bhengu

More than 1000 people were baptised in the
Buffalo River in East London

Nicholas Bhengu   **Bhengu preaching at East Rand in 1957   Bhengu baptizes more than 1000 in EL**

C.   Back to God Crusade

Erected on 13th of September 2015 at Mdantsane Township – 39 years after Bhengu's death

AOG Platinum Jubilee Celebration – 70 years since the AOG was instituted

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