

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS, AGE DIFFERENCES AND
CONFLICT IN A CHURCH CONTEXT**

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DECLARATION

I, Christian Khanyisani Ndlovu declare that

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of mixed generations in the church has resulted in age related differences in worldviews that have eventually amounted to conflicts in the church branch. This research surfaces the underpinning structures of these age related conflicts and the emerging leadership dynamics by looking at the individual, organisational and societal levels of analysis of a church branch. The main objective was to sensitise the church on these issues in order to carefully manage the consequences. This research was undertaken as a case study at the Umlazi branch of the African Gospel Church, a SADEC Pentecostal church founded in the 1940s in Durban. This church subscribes religiously to the founders identity, such that the church has been at conflict as the older church members supported the traditionalist agenda whilst the youth were very contemporary in the interpretation of their needs and expectations from the church.

As a practitioner researcher I adopted a critical systems approach at meta-methodological level, where I used a repertoire of methods to critically intervene and expose the complexities that exist in this church context. I followed Soft Systems Methodology (*SSM*) as a dominant method of intervention as it exposed a rich picture of the situation and Critical Systems Heuristics for boundary critique. The empirical tools of research were questionnaires, open ended interviews and focus group discussions.

The research revealed that age related conflicts were mere manifestations of a problem that is deeply rooted in the doctrines and the ecclesiastic teachings of the church, thus implying that the church has elevated its legacy to a level higher than the generic doctrine of the gospel. This situation has resulted in the youth being powerless and rejecting the church system as they argue that the times have shifted and the church has to reflect this change. The characteristics of this church are such that leaders and pastors are generally appointed at old age, thus leaders subscribe to the traditionalist agenda by default.

I have not as yet reverted to the branch to close the *SSM* loop, where we would have discussed the possible solutions for implementation. I believe a further intervention would be necessary as the findings suggest that there are deeper tensions than I had anticipated. Thus, in the tradition of Critical Systems Practice, I would need to go into a further reflexive and creative mode to plan a next step. Due to the limitations of time and understanding the restraints of a short dissertation I have not done this. This research, however, managed to fulfil its objective by exposing the issues

of concern and possible approaches of addressing them from a theoretical framework. An ecclesiastical discourse to address leadership competency, change management and intergenerational activities would need to be given special attention as a recommendation.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

A church has become an increasingly complex organisation in recent years, this could be attributed to a notion that there are newer generations that enter the church that come from emancipated and more liberal backgrounds as the years go by. This is a complete opposite of how the church was perceived in olden days based on the medieval generations where the church was law and all had to abide religiously with no room for debate, the church was very simple. This introduction of newer generations poses serious integration challenges across generations in a church with time, as a result, age related conflicts exist even though they may not be obvious. This places the church as a plural-complex organisation thus there are serious complexities and dynamics that need attention in the church before a talk of the complexities relating to age differences, leadership and group dynamics.

Religion and Christianity have played a pivotal role in world history from pre-civilisation age to the end of apartheid era in South Africa. We consistently see political decisions, debates and headlines worldwide that are largely motivated by religion, these headlines include Middle East Conflicts, Darfur conflicts and parliament decisions on social issues such as abortion, gays and lesbians issues. Leadership dynamics and conflicts in a religious context tend to be overlooked or sometimes receive secondary attention, thus the profiles of the emerging dynamics are generally not well captured. The main reason for this neglect could be based on that religion had become a very sensitive subject of late such that some researchers and writers outside of the religious field would hold conflicting views on the religious subject as argued by Fox (2001).

In this research I present the leadership dynamics, age dynamics and conflicts in the church, as a religious organisation. These dynamics can be defined as the feedback that results due to interactions within the church system boundaries. I will demonstrate in chapters to follow that the coexistence of mixed generations in the church results in differences in worldviews and possibly different paradigms in the church. As a critical systems research practitioner it is my intention to demonstrate that the cleavages in worldviews are necessary for the growth of any organisation even some minor conflicts that are attached to these differences. However, if these differences are not managed and appreciated properly they could result in serious conflicts. The newer generation needs to honour and respect older generations and, hopefully they must learn from them, this is

backed by literature on organisations, church teaching and cultural grounds from a South African context, especially Zulu culture which is the cornerstone social system of this research.

Social systems are a good example of a Complex Adaptive System (CAS) as they are mainly composed of human agents that interact with the environment and continue to adapt to create a new order, Rice (1994), however a church system is a social system that is generally mistaken as a linear system as church members would not open up easily and readily Krause *et al.* (2000). Krause *et al.* (2000) also state that church is a plural environment rather than coercive, but the human agent interactions within the church are interpreted as predictable and somehow prescribed, which is not the case and this is a general trend in most mainline and traditional churches where there is very limited room for debate and very little freedom of speech especially along the age lines. These churches, in my opinion, are still far away from being learning organisations and they are also of the belief that the theory of a learning organisation is irrelevant to them.

Learning is still a foreign concept in most traditional and mainline churches and that is most likely the main reason why churches do not embrace change easily. You cannot change what you do not know, and you cannot know without a learning agenda in an organisational environment. This research is merely a pursuit of knowledge where I articulate the underpinning structures of age related conflicts and the emergent dynamics in a church context. This study is based on three levels of analysis, namely at individual level, organisational level as well as at societal level.

The basis of my research is that there are age related conflicts and tensions in the church that are prevalent and that they have negative impact on members and leadership. Often, churches are in denial of these issues and most churches generally tend to turn a blind eye on these issues. These conflicts have resulted in subsequent paralysis of growth of most churches as stated in Becker (1993). An understanding of the underpinning structures of conflicts is necessary before any problem solving intervention methods are sought. I am of the opinion that organisations need to understand both positive and negative impacts of conflicts in their organisations and they would need to be more open about them. I will expose the impacts of age related conflicts in this research to demonstrate this point.

1.2 The Purpose of the Research

It is my concern to surface the underpinning structures of age related conflicts that exist in a church and also to carefully identify the leadership dynamics that result due to these age related conflicts using critical systems practices. This research included producing an intergenerational profile of the church membership which was based on age stratification that was relevant to the specific church branch of study. This research looked at abstract and complex issues of human factors, future uncertainties and possible future positions from a leadership point of view.

Leadership research in a church could not be complete without looking at these human and uncertainty aspects, thus a critical systems perspective was adopted for this research. I also extended this study into looking at inter-member relations in the church, whereby I advised members and leadership on what to do to be sensitive to the worldviews of each generation.

1.3 Focus of Study

I approached this research as a case study at the African Gospel Church (AGC) at Umlazi Township. Isichei (1995) states that the African Gospel Church is a Pentecostal church which owes its existence to the Full Gospel Church and the African Independent Churches and this church was founded in Durban in 1942 by Rev Job Chiliza (1886 – 1963) who was also its first moderator. The African Gospel Church is a church which has grown in all South African provinces and all over Southern Africa countries, such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi and has an un-audited membership count of about one million members. The church branch of my study is an Umlazi branch which is a headquarter of the church and its pastor is the moderator of the entire African Gospel Church denomination. This church branch has a congregation of over 500 black members and has a few smaller branches that report to it. The church branch has an overlap of generations and age differences, thus there is enough room for researching age related conflicts and leadership dynamics within this church branch.

In this research I looked at the sources and nature of the age related conflicts and I also investigated the dynamics on leadership, current resolution interventions and their consequences to the entire church. The nature of conflicts included research on the characteristics of the church, member socialisation backgrounds as well as the spectrum of worldviews that may be present in this branch. The study of leadership dynamics was mainly interested in understanding the current

leadership competencies, leader profiles, the issues of power allocations as well as emergent leadership in the church.

Foner (1974) states that one of the causes of conflicts is when people perceive their future positions as incompatible and this means that where there are different visions, conflicts will abound. Before looking at the effects of conflict I first had to find the perceived incompatibility of the future positions which actually amounts to some groups being threatened, thus resulting in conflicts.

The literature by Foner (1974) that relates to age stratification and conflicts demonstrates a need to do a case study for a specific church branch and make findings that will be specific to a branch as the dynamics have been proved to be unique for each system. Thus the first level of research was looking at the individual motivation that could be responsible for causing people to be at conflicts. Organisational characteristics and organisational objectives have a lot to do with the relationships and the emergent culture in the church, this involved looking at the ecclesiastical pedagogy and the indoctrination practices within the church, thus creating a cultural model for the specific branch in question. A church is a fairly defined and a predictable institution, thus an ideal culture of the church could be well articulated so as to expose the emerging gaps and differences between the idea and the real. This analysis of an ideal model and the real model of the church as perceived by the members assisted in sourcing the appropriate intervention in this particular system.

A church or any other organisation does not operate in isolation, thus environmental and societal issues could not be neglected in this case study as they are very necessary for looking at the larger boundaries that have an impact on the church. In this research I looked at the present times, the current trends of other churches and the expectations from the community at which the church is based. The external influences were critical to this study as they informed the research on the analysis of a church from a learning organisation point of view as well as from a change management point of view as shall be demonstrated in the literature review section of this dissertation.

Leadership dynamics form an important part of this research as it is my belief that leaders have a greater role to play in the direction and the destination of an organisation. Thus, in this research I looked at the leadership profile, the leadership competence, leadership styles, and the perceptions

of followers and the leadership's overall effectiveness in turbulent times of conflicts. This information on leadership dynamics was very critical for informing the research and intervention strategy that would ensure the ultimate research recommendations embrace a full picture of the system in question.

1.4 Problem Statement

The main purpose of this research was to capture the leadership dynamics in a church as a result of conflicts related to age differences with an intention to advise leadership on the required interventions on how to mitigate conflicts. I drilled deeper into understanding the structures of these age related conflicts and surfaced the underpinning issues that were responsible for the conflicts and tensions in the church with respect to age.

This research aimed at providing answers to these research questions.

- To what extent do age differences affect leadership dynamics?
- What are the dynamics that emerge?
- What has been done in the past to address the emerging leadership issues and age related conflicts? This was supported by literature survey.
- What would be recommended for this specific case study?

These questions were key for the purposes of ensuring that the research context and framework are well captured.

1.5 Expectations from Research

I expected the findings to reveal that the structures of age related conflicts were rooted in the worldviews and socialisation as well as rooted on the history and indoctrination of the church, such that the church member behaviours in this context were trended to history exposure of each member.

1.6 Motivation for the Study

As a young leadership practitioner in a church I was interested in advising leadership on improving interpersonal relations within the church, with specific interest to age related relationships. I have been a victim of the supposed age related negative relations in the church as I ended up exiting this specific church branch. I approached this research as a practitioner in the system even though I now belong in another church, this position gave me an open mind as I had access to this church branch of study and the outside church environment.

It was my intention to pursue this research on this church that I had exited as it had rich information on the subject at hand, the new church that I have joined was only 3 years old and did not offer a fair split of age groups and lacked richness in history. I then chose to undertake this study at the African Gospel Church branch of Umlazi as this church descends back in history from the time of the founders in the 1940's to this time. I regarded this church as a church with richness in interactions with respect to age differences and intergenerational relations, thus I was able to extract meaningful data for my research.

Anderson (2005) states that Pentecostalism has enjoyed phenomenal growth since 1980 whilst traditional churches are slowly losing membership or were sitting at stagnant membership numbers, since mostly younger people were exiting the church and they were joining newer ministries. It was concerning to me that the younger members were exiting the church whilst the older generations were dying due to old age and health issue, thus putting such traditional churches in grave danger of extinction. Wortmann (2007) also states that the older church members are generally complaining about the younger members' behaviour, and on the other hand younger members claimed that they were not welcome enough in the church. I saw a big role for church leadership in bridging this generational gap, thus eliminating the age related conflict.

I was of the opinion that the older people who have been exposed to the founders were very uncomfortable with the current direction of the church relative to the original teachings of the founders as they would normally complain about the lost doctrine of the church. The younger and newer generations also complained of a church that was reluctant to learn, change and adapt. The environment tended to become coercive between older and younger generations with little attention being paid to these interactions.

I had also regarded myself as a victim of unhealthy relations due to my generational orientation, as I was a youth in a traditionalist church. I was open to the idea that this study could also prove that I was not only a victim of age related conflicts, but I was also a culprit as I had been trying to drive change which could have negatively affected the older age groups. We have had some generations that were introduced in the church since the founders' generations and capturing their encounter would be of benefit to this study in terms of generating a rich picture of the system. The splits that were evident in the church could also be categorised in age groups based in exposures in the youth years in terms of church history, indoctrination, socialisation backgrounds and impact of political history in South Africa.

As a leader in a church system and a leadership researcher, I was of the opinion that a church should be a supreme example of leadership. Citizens, influential leaders and business leaders attend church for motivation and spiritual upliftment, so it would be unfortunate if church leaders were not competent enough to handle people across all classes of society. The opposite was generally observed as Wortmann (2007) states that most church leaders in African Independent Church and Pentecostals never received any leadership training at all as highlighted in this report. The study exposed the impact of this scenario on the church growth and what leadership role could the church play in a society.

Maxfield (1996) states that the two key principles for a successful organisation is that it has to at least match the environmental change and to regard its people as the important assets. These two main principles are a true representation of complexity in the organisation and they need careful attention, this was fully applicable in the church as an organisation since the church is only a church because of people. This study would expose the response of this church in attempting to match its environmental change and also how it values its people.

A church stands at a very good advantage of being a world class benchmark for leadership as churches are generally not unionised. Maxfield (1996) states that examples of effective organisations are organisations that are not unionised, I have not seen a unionised church, nor have I found literature that states that, but I have observed that negative interactions could result in the formation of task groups that could end up taking the role of unions in the church. In this research I carefully examined the impact of this fact on leadership dynamics and age related conflicts and also observed if the emerging leadership dynamics such as cliques that resembled unionised environments.

Denison (1995) *et al.* stated that effective leaders are the ones that exhibit a variety of leadership roles, and these leaders are able to simultaneously integrate and differentiate and also simultaneously deliver results and manage interpersonal aspects. This means a leader must be able to work effectively in contradictions and paradox environment and be able to assume a leadership role that will best handle the situation at hand. I tested this finding as part of the case study as I strongly believed that this theory would be applicable in the church leadership system, this is where I tested the leadership qualities of current leaders.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations of Study

This research was limited to a case study of a specific church branch, that is the AGC Umlazi branch, thus all extended areas of the research were intended at exploring dynamics within this church branch. Data collection, was done in the church congregational branch, denominational level and outside the church, and was applicable to the conclusions for this AGC church branch. This research also included looking at the church at denominational level as a suprasystem as well as to look at the impacts of the environment which involved looking at the trends of other churches and their impact on this church branch.

There were, however, instances where I collected data and conducted interviews with leaders from other churches or organisations where deemed necessary, but the purpose of these interviews was to seek advice on data collection approach and to facilitate intervention and recommendations in this church branch. The findings also form a fair theoretical framework for this study and other studies in future at a conceptual level.

I was of the opinion that the findings and recommendations of this study would be useful in other church settings as I envisage that this research would propose interventions at structural levels and not at operational levels. This was done by advising leadership on their role in such environments and also installing mindfulness in church members on how to be sensitive to age related differences so as to avert conflicts.

Due to the size and the sensitivity of this study, I could not close the loop of a research methodology as this study does not include discussions of the empirical findings with the church branch. Thus, this study was limited to providing the information to the church branch by

exposing the underpinning structures of conflicts. I envisaged that the discussion over these findings would most likely spark further conflicts as the findings of this research appeared to be very sensitive. The exclusion of the discussion of findings was a strategic decision on my part as there were plausible possibilities that the conclusion would not be reached easily thus there would most likely be unintended consequences.

1.8 Research Approach / Paradigm

In this research I adopted a critical systems perspective to address the issues of conflicts and leadership dynamics in a church branch. The paradigm of research was from a social point of view and looking at a church branch as a social system as well as looking at a church as an organisation. This paradigm was informed by the ecclesiastical discourse and the theological framework from which the church owes it legitimacy.

The research followed a qualitative approach as it was looking at a complex and plural system, since an ideal church is defined at this problem context. I intended following this approach due to the fact that I would not lose richness in the picture as qualitative methods are more applicable in complex and plural environments like social systems. This research was backed by literature survey and empirical research on the field such that Soft Systems Methodology was mostly used as a methodology for intervention to extract the rich picture and also, critical systems heuristics was used to critique the boundaries.

The most important item for me was to expose the issues that existed in the church as my research was departing from the hypothesis that there are age related conflicts that exist in the church and also there are some observable leadership dynamics as a result.

1.9 Summary

I have demonstrated that there is a plausible rationale for full investigation into this problem as it affects a wider community instead of affecting one church branch. This is due to the fact that there is no system that operates in isolation since every system interacts with its environment. This research will be critical addressing the human issues at the church as the church, like any other organization, exists because of its people. In this study, I will demonstrate through literature survey and empirical research there is a mesh of interactions that form part of this problem and I will ultimately provide recommendations on the possible future directions after a full use of

research pedagogy. This research would also pay attention to the leadership competencies and dynamics that would be necessary for creating a culture that would eliminate coerciveness and promote upward mobility in the church.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

No societies or even organisations are identical in this world and thus it is important to note that as much as I have used literature and previous example case studies, there is no case study, focus group or example that will ever match the dynamics of the current system in question. This research will utilise innovative and creative methods to surface the issues that are specific to this case study. There has been numerous research literatures on the conflicts in the congregation and denomination, however, Becker (1993), Starke (1996), Harris (1998), Toth Jr (1999) and Chou (2008) agree that it is difficult to generalise on the issues that could cause such conflicts. Most authors have researched specific intra-congregational or intra-denominational conflicts and have discovered that there are a lot of factors that make each conflict situation unique and that will require each conflict to be studied separately to expose its underpinning structure.

Becker (1993) and Starke (1996) state that the four common areas of conflict that have been observed on intra-congregational conflicts are liberal versus conservative agendas, external pressures, congregational issues versus denominational issues and differences between clergy and laity. These issues have been researched as the main issues that are capable of creating a full blown conflict that could cause members to exit the church or at the worst cause the church to split. Even though age related conflicts have not been found to be the main causes of extreme conflict, it is my opinion that they are an emergent result of a deeply rooted problem from a complexity point of view. No one cause can result in a split of the church or members to exit the church, we can only pinpoint a dominant cause without necessarily implying a causality relationship.

The main issues that were researched for understanding age related conflicts are the issues of worldviews, organisational characteristics, conflict theory, generational theory, power allocation and leadership in the church. This report looked carefully at these issues with the intention of formulating a theoretical framework that will inform this research. I researched the age related conflicts in the context of the church with an intension to expose the underpinning structures of such conflicts and also measure these conflicts relative to the main areas of conflicts that have been identified. These issues were also investigated with reference to (The Holy Bible)

2.2 Organisational Theory of the Church

Garner (2000) states that the characteristics that make a church unique from any other society or organisation are indoctrination, religious experience, exclusion and socialisation. Indoctrination is mainly about the methods and the approach of a church in teaching and in the Holy Bible knowledge, where religious experience would mainly be about the level and manifestation of freedom and spontaneity in participation in church meetings and in worship. Exclusion is both internal and external since the church can make a decision on how it sees itself as different from the civil society and circular world, thus making a boundary judgement. The internal exclusion would look at the internal participation level in the church based on aspects like salvation, gender, age, communion, baptism and other issues of salvation. Socialisation is mainly looking at a participation in church activities and prescribed conduct by members inside and outside the church based on the boundary judgments that have been made by and for the church. Ulrich's critical systems heuristics has been utilised to look at these boundaries between the church and the civil society or secular world and also to critique the internal boundaries relative to age related conflicts.

Podmore (2008) states that a church is mainly understood as a place of worship. It is important to at least look at the theory of organisation of the church to understand the composition of the church by looking at other structural characteristics of the church that are outside worship. Harris (1998) outlines the need for the understanding of church structure, not only on congregational level but also at the denominational level. The study of the church organisation at denominational level could also assist in understanding the supra issues that affect the denomination or a congregational church branch. Further to this, Harris further claims that there is a fair possibility that there exists an organisational model that could be applicable to the churches as they are generally expected to exhibit common features and experience similar problems.

The Book of Matthew Chapter 28 in (The Holy Bible) states:

“¹⁹. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

²⁰. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

These were the words by Jesus Christ where He commissioned His disciples to perform a function that would be the primary purpose of the church. This statement is regarded as The Great

Commission and thus the church has a mandate to collect people, teach them and keep them ready for the end of time. Thus a church can be regarded as an organisation that provides a service to the society at large without specific boundaries or jurisdiction in the world. (The Holy Bible) also highlights Apostle Paul as the man who was very active in founding and groom churches in the bible times. Apostle Paul in Acts 20 verse 28 instructs elders of the church to be the shepherds of the church of Ephesus which is in line with words of Jesus Christ.

Harris (1998) further states that recent research has proved that denominations will generally exhibit similar organisational features, regardless of their size, strictness, denomination, history, doctrine, funding or even geographical location. These organisational features include similar purposes, member expectations and the fact that ideally they all respond to the need of the community that they are established in. The churches mostly experience similar problems as the congregational goals are somehow hindered due to members' own expectations and also by pressures that are brought into the church by environmental and secular worldviews which result in unachievable religious goals.

It is important to clarify the level of organisational structure at this point and context of conflict studies. This research is purely looking at conflicts within one branch of a denomination, which is intra-congregational conflicts, which could be referred to as a church branch conflicts elsewhere in this report. I did not intend looking at denominational conflicts as the dynamics are totally different thus making it unfeasible for this research size. Becker (1993) states that denomination and congregation operate at two different organisational levels, however the two levels are generally tied by shared resources, theology, constituency and history, thus these relationships formed part of the research.

Church would generally compete for resources for internal projects which would be shared with the community based projects which are losing popularity in many churches. Churches will at some point or another face relationship problems between the pastors and lay people as a result of congregants' expectations which may be different to the ideas of the pastors. This is a common conflict point in most organisations, and also including conflicts amongst members.

An organisational model for a church as proposed by Harris (1998) is that of a voluntary association, where members participate in an organisation without the need and expectation for remuneration. The problem with this structure is that commitment to the organisation is entirely

at free will of a lay member, this gives them autonomy to start making demands to the church for their expectations to be met, if not they exit the church or they threaten the church somehow. The priority of any organisation is to retain its staff or membership or it will face survival challenges. Volunteers normally seek for an informal structure, friendliness and intimacy in association, volunteers generally do not feel comfortable in a formal or a somewhat coercive environment. As voluntary organisations grow, they tend to lose the basics of voluntary associations. A theory of voluntary association is not sufficient for the understanding of the church as it excludes the spiritual and religious benefits in the church.

Harris (1998) further states that a congregation is a special case voluntary associations as they cannot fully define their founding statements and ultimate goals and that the minister has special authority over the organisation. The goals of the congregation are founded under the main authority of (The Holy Bible) as interpreted by the church, there is generally no debate over this ceiling of principles by any member of the congregation. The real debate is normally around the interpretation of the Holy Bible, that is why we have multitudes of churches in the world. Members who dispute or feel uncomfortable with the principles above the ceiling will either keep silent and abide or exit the congregation. Harris (1998) calls the congregation a triple element organisation since it combines the three elements which are association feature, ministerial roles and ultimate goals.

Ulrich (2000) states that there is generally a separation of power in the civil society which is due to the idea that competence resides with the professional whilst the civilians are seen as incompetent. This separation then makes decision making to rest with the professional and with very little participation by civilians, this is a traditional approach to civil society of civil rights. The traditional civil society approach would be such that ordinary civilians would be seen as too irrational to make decisions that have a direct bearing on their lives, whilst the contemporary approach as Ulrich (2000) presents it is more inclined on civil competence than on civil rights. This typically means that church leadership seems to be regarded as competent in dictating the church direction compared to the lay members who are generally less empowered in the church as they are perceived as incompetent to an extent.

An understanding of the civil society is important in this instance since it has notable structural similarities with the church system in terms of service. I see clergies as the equivalent of the civil servants in a civil society and the church members being equivalent to the civilians. Ulrich (2000)

states that for you to understand the type of society you are in, you need to first understand the basis of its legitimacy, and for example the legitimacy of a civil society lies in its civilians and their participation in the democracy. A church in an organisational context, is not democratic but its legitimacy is, in theory, on the worshipping of the Supreme Being, but this model is good to understand worldviews as the church is generally made up of civilians. The type of worship for each congregation is generally described by the ecclesiastical discourse or indoctrination of a specific church branch and this would then expose the ecclesiastical characteristics of that particular church.

A church is a very dynamic and non-linear system, meaning that specific actions could lead to non-deterministic and probably disproportionate results. A Newtonian system, cited in Rice (1994) which states that for every action there is equal and opposite reaction, may not be applicable in complex systems such as a social system or churches in particular. **Heisenberg's uncertainty principle**, from quantum physics as cited in Rice (1994), states that it is impossible to simultaneously know the exact speed and location of any moving object. Thus I speculate that the organisational architecture of a church is another moving target, no matter how desperately people would attempt to keep it at a standstill. We may attempt to understand the church composition, but we need to be mindful of the fact that it will always evolve into a new state at any given time.

2.3 Ecclesiastical Characteristics of a Church

Browning (1997) states that the word “church” comes from the Greek word *ecclesia* which denotes an assembly of people of Israel, and this word appears in both the Old and the New Testaments. A model of a local church is also presented in the first book to the Corinthians in chapter 16 verse 19 in (The Holy Bible) where church assembly was held in the house of Aquila and Priscilla and Paul. What really defines the church is the people, not necessarily the buildings.

There are key ecclesiastical characteristics that define the power structure of a church, these are mainly defined by the founding doctrine of each church and the interpretation of its doctrine in the present day. Chan (2004) states that some churches define doctrine as fixed formulation with very little impact on the present day whilst other churches perceive it as an ecclesiastical experience that needs to be constantly re-enacted, renewed and constantly developed to meet the ever changing environment. The idea is not to debate these two schools of philosophy, but it is to

highlight the interpretations as they have a fundamental impact on the founding and prospects of churches.

Apostle Paul in (The Holy Bible) in the first book to the Corinthians in chapter 12 verse 28 states:

“²⁸ And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

This verse describes the structure and the composition of the church in order for it to fulfill its objective. All these layers of leadership are a biblical reference of how the church was original intended to be.

African Gospel Church is one of the Pentecostal churches in South Africa. Anderson (2005) states that South Africa is one of the first countries in Africa to receive Pentecostalism in 1908 as was sparked by the Azusa Street Revival in California in 1906 as it dispatched missionaries into over 50 nations within two years. Anderson (2005) also states that South African Pentecostalism is the most complex of church movements, since each of the over 4000 independent Pentecostal churches would tend to develop its own ecclesiastical characteristics, power structures and leadership styles.

South African Pentecostalism and Pentecostalism are also regarded as an *Ibandla LikaMoya* (A Zulu term describing a Holy Spirit Filled Church) and also embraces charismatic characteristics. The Pentecostal church is not fundamentally different to the African Initiated Churches and the Zionist Churches, the differences are on slight but fundamental indoctrination issues and that Pentecostals do not wear apparels. The African religion has managed to create their suitable way of religious experience through Pentecostalism.

Anderson (2005) also states that the earliest Christianity religion to be introduced in South Africa was the Episcopal Church which dates back to the first missionaries that came to Africa, and the Episcopal Church origin dates back to the times of Emperor Constantine in ancient Rome. The Episcopal church has a presiding bishop over the church and has structures which include diocese, province and primate to mention a few, for simplification purposes, the Episcopal church would include Roman Catholic Church, Anglican church and other churches of “*Umthetho*” (A Zulu term describing Episcopal church as a church of law/rules). There are a number of

Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that follow a typical structure of an Episcopal church in that they would have a bishop as a presiding pastor and there would be pastors underneath the bishop.

Corporate and industrial organisations have a luxury of choosing and selecting the members or employees that they think will be suitable for their organisations. Mainly, managers would decide on the character they want and choose accordingly. It is an opposite case with the church system as churches, pastor, clergies and church elders do not choose church members as the Holy Bible, the supreme church constitution, dictates so. The church, primarily and ideally, accepts social rejects that have to find a way living harmoniously with the so called elites, side by side in a family setup.

Lings (2006) states that traditional management and leadership theories are definitely not sufficient for such turbulent environments, like the church. The reality is that most pastors and church leaders, especially in black and lower class communities, have not even been trained on Leadership 101 to begin with. The African Gospel Church branch that I will research is no exception to this statement, thus an organisational and leadership model that would address this niche would be necessary.

2.4 Worldviews

In this research I focused on the worldview differences in the church that could have contributed to the age related conflicts of church members as my intention was to expose the underpinning worldviews that were not managed properly and the ultimate goal being to create mutual appreciation of these worldviews.

Hofstede (1983) describes a concept of individualism versus collectivism, this concept critiques the relationship between an individual and his communities which could be it his fellow individuals, families or societies. A person looks after his or interests with individualism and would look after the interests of a bigger group on the collectivism. Hofstede (1983) also states that a collective culture would promote integrated societies with group beliefs and opinions, whereas an individualist culture would breed a loosely integrated society.

In Africa, most people who have accepted Christianity as their main religion have not really moved away from their pre-Christian worldviews as stated in Chike (2008). Early missionaries tried their best to separate Africans from their African worldview by substituting it with a western worldview. Eventually Africans went back to their African traditional worldview such that they are now “Proudly African and Proudly Christian” according as stated in Chike (2008). Chike (2008) also states that Africans had their own tradition before the arrival of any foreign religion in the continent, which was vilified by the foreigners. This African tradition is centred on the philosophies of Africa being the pillar of religion, high regard for communities as well as the unique African time concept. Africa understands the religion and spirituality as the African tradition has always had a spiritual insight since the pre-Christian era, this is evident by the amount of rituals that exist in Africa which are spiritual and their conception of the interpretation of the dead. This implies that an understanding of the African worldview is critical for a church or any organisation of such a social setup.

In this research I also acknowledge the fact that even though there are common worldviews based on age groups, there exist a mixture of worldviews amongst members of the church which may be based on people’s personalities, experiences and exposures. Thus personal versus common worldviews could be attributed to the individualism and collectivism as defined by Hofstede (1983). Kanitz (2005) states there are generalised perspective assumptions of a common Christianity worldview based on biblical principles and also assume that they are shared by all Christians, this is not the case if it is looked at from a society and human complexity perspective. Kanitz (2005) also states that a common Christian worldview study can only be effectively assumed once the effects of denominational, cultural history and background on the interpretation of scriptures have been questioned, however there are multiple agents that affect such worldviews.

In my study, I worked on the basis that we have a pluralist and a homogeneous Christian worldview, this means a denomination is set on a common or collective interpretation of scriptures as well as a common history of the church. This point of departure is very critical for my research as it moved my research away from being a purely theological and church research to being worldview study, thus I sought to understand the age group related worldviews that existed from an established Christian worldview. In organisational perspective this meant that I had to research on people from the same organisation with a predefined culture in order to expose

other cultures that emerge due to interactions in the church that were not fully pronounced, but if they were poorly managed they could result in conflicts.

The setting of this case study is in a 60 year old traditional Pentecostal church branch that is situated in a South African black township community. Garner (2000) states that Christianity continues to be a dominant religion in South Africa, and also that 90% of the black South Africans are considered or at least consider themselves as Christians. This finding is very much in line with my daily observations as I have not seen or heard of a township wedding or a funeral that had been conducted in any other way, except by Christianity and traditional practices would be added in some instances.

Garner (2000) also states that churches have a strong influence on the members' worldviews with respect to traditional ancestral and modern upward mobility. These worldview issues are underpinned by the church's specific indoctrination and generally people would adjust themselves to the dictates of the church. The interesting finding is that Pentecostal churches, which are similar to the case study, they subscribe to upward mobility such that they are vehemently opposed to the traditional ancestral issues which are seen as crippling peoples' progress. The only exception to these issues is *lobola*, (A Zulu term describing a process whereby a man pays to the family of the bride in cash or cows before marriage can be sanctioned). Garner's (2000) churches of study are based in Edendale township of Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu Natal, which is about 70km north of the setting of this case study.

Wortmann (2007) states that churches are changing with the intention to attract younger members, thus the churches start to introduce more contemporary activities that affect the church format and worship styles to match the changes. These changes then result in interpersonal conflicts between older, younger members and clergies and also structural conflicts over doctrine, teaching and policy. Wortmann (2007) also states that older members are greatly affected by these conflicts as they generally become intimately attached to the church as their home since they tend to find multiple meaning, security and continuity in the church. Wortmann (2007) also demonstrated that the churches do not have much of a choice as the over 60s constitute an average of 25% in the churches they studied, thus attracting more youth is a matter of survival.

Wortmann (2007) discovered through a case study research that the main difference in older and younger church members is that older members tend to be more traditional and have concept of a

home when it comes to church association and they contemplate more strongly about their life long investments in the church. The traditionalists would tend to think their way of seeing the church is sacred and everything else including secular views is of the devil, blasphemous or problematic. This was demonstrated by Barnes (2008) where he investigated the introduction of RAP music in the church. Barnes (2008) also states that younger members are contemporary, full of hype and are very interested in the introduction of new things. The worldviews that exist can be contradictory and may even result in conflicts and tensions in the church.

Ayers (2002) states that the church is constantly accused of being irrelevant in the society. Ayers (2002) argues that proper definitions of tradition, traditions and *traditionalism* need to be sought as these have critical distinctions. Tradition, in singular, is defined as the accepted practice or the founding orthodox of the Christian faith, such as doctrine, principles and moral standards that have been handed down from inception of the gospel. Traditions, in plural, are regarded as the extra-biblical preferences which have no bearing on the gospel and there are no verses in the Holy Bible that defines those traditions. Classical examples would be the use of instruments, time of service and other apparel issues. *Traditionalism* emerges from traditions, where people would end up not conquering new grounds simply because it had not been done before. This is the major risk of *traditionalism*, as it elevates traditions to divine level equivalent to the Holy Bible status and could hinder creativity, and upward mobility of the church.

Conflicts are viewed differently by people and organisations, such that Starke (1996) states that traditionalists view conflicts as undesirable and should be avoided at all cost, and they regard conflicts as source of organisational paralysis. Human relations practitioners see conflicts as a natural and an inevitable part of organisational life, and they regard conflicts as healthy to the organisation but agree with traditionalists that too much conflict will result in organisational paralysis. Starke (1996) introduces a third worldview of conflicts from an interactionist point of view that states that too little conflict results in complacency and lack of innovation in the organisation, however moderate conflict will spark bright ideas in the organisation.

I hold the position of an inter-actionist as I acknowledge that there are good and bad conflicts even though it could be difficult to draw the line. I believe a good conflict is the one that will ensure good results and growth at the end such that pleasing everybody should not necessarily be a fundamental criterion. I have deliberately sparked conflicts in the past, with an intention to discourage complacency and also to discourage taking things or people for granted. However, in

this research I acknowledge that congregants hold multiple worldviews about conflicts and this could even exacerbate organisational conflicts, and thus leadership interventions are necessary to ensure proper conflict management once conflict theory of a church is properly exposed.

2.5 Conflict Theory of a Church

The basis of my research is that there are undesirable age related conflicts and tensions in the church that are prevalent which have negative impact on members and leadership. Often, churches are in denial of these issues and they generally tend to turn a blind eye, thus leadership becomes a prime suspect for allowing conflicts and in most cases church members are suffering because of these negative relations. I approached this research from a multiple worldview perspective by demonstrating that conflicts surface as a result of some deeply rooted structures. An understanding of conflicts was very necessary for the full exposure of the underpinning structures of conflicts to occur.

Oberschall (1978) offers useful descriptions of conflicts from other authors, for example where he quotes (Bouldings 1963:5) definition of conflict.

“.. is a situation of competition in which parties are aware of incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other.”

I looked at the sources of these conflicts and looked at the nature of competition specifically to the church, and hopefully identify the scarce resources that would normally bring about competition in the church. I also investigated the dynamics of these conflicts by specifically looking at the types of conflicts, current conflict resolution interventions and their consequences to the entire church.

The conflict theory looked at this competition for resources in the church, and the incompatibility of the future positions which actually amounts to some groups being threatened. Krause (2000) states that in a church system the general conflicts are usually gossips, cliques, unresolved conflicts that have resulted in negative interactions in the church. In this research I looked at these common groups, this was limited to age grouping for this exercise, thus an exercise of age stratification was part of this research, where I looked at the sources and impact of conflicts in the church between younger and older church members.

Literature on intra-denominational conflicts was consulted as a starting point as this area is well researched according to Becker (1993). Roof and McKinney's (1989) as cited in Becker (1993) suggest that intra-denominational conflicts normally results when a church attempts to protect its identity against social changes and associated pressures and these identities are about liberal or conservative structures of the church. Takayama (1980) cited in Becker (1993) acknowledges Roof and McKinney's (1989) work, however he sees identity factors as dormant and suppressed, the real spark for conflicts being the organizational issues such as legitimacy of authority, hierarchy and issues of community changes.

Becker (1993) highlights that there is a fair amount of literature that shows conflict to be more prone in liberal type churches as they tend to be more democratic in decision making, but conservative churches are very rigid in decision making as they generally eliminate democracy in decision making. Differences in vision between clergies could also spark conflicts, it is very possible that leadership could see the direction of the church differently. Becker (1993) agrees with the motion that conflicts are mostly influenced by church characteristics. (The Holy Bible) is not a democratic document as it is the real gospel and thus churches that fully align themselves would be less prone to heated conflicts.

It is possible according to Becker (1993) that such conflicts become bigger in congregations than at denominational level as people see each other more often and there is a factor of interaction that may solidify conflicts. It is important to note that sometimes conflicts in a church branch are healthy, as these conflicts could be a good vessel for people to vent off and generally cause people to be more content with each other, thus there is a good chance of creating stability in the church and this is an inter-actionist point of view as also seen in Starke (1996). However, a few serious conflicts may divide the church into factions and could even cause people to exit the church. A caring and an organised church has been found to be less prone to serious conflicts.

Chou (2008) argues that some congregations are at higher risk of conflict than others, thus the characteristics of the church and its leaders are the main catalysts of the conflicts. Chou (2008) also states that conflict within a congregation may surface if a leader fails to secure compliance of members on specific issues mostly if members have diverse backgrounds or if some have more control of scarce resources. He further states that intra-congregational conflicts may result from innocent pursuits, whereby members need to advance their religious or spiritual interests and the

problem starts when the expectations associated with this quest are not met. I regard this argument as an indication that intra-congregational conflicts are due to fights over a scarce resource, which is called power, as members feel powerless to influence decisions to favour their aspirations in the church.

One needs to understand that as much as we anticipate the church to be a principled place and to treat other people equally, this is not always the case as the church is composed of people who are unpredictable. There may be good a guideline that tells people how to behave in an event of misunderstanding, but unfortunately there is no law that supernaturally forces people to follow that guideline. My argument is that churches are generally more inclined to recruiting people who would fit its profile. Garner (2000) managed to classify congregations of his research in the KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa according to socio-economic status this proved that there is a natural selection process that occurs in the members association. There are poor congregations, middle and rich congregations and these congregations tend to grow in direction of their socio-economic identity. Chou (2008) states that it has also been researched that exclusive churches tend to suffer less conflicts than liberal churches. The problem is that liberal churches tend to embrace secular worldviews which the congregation has not fully accepted at large.

The congregation of my research is also homogenous in composition, with low to middle class black membership. Chou (2008) states that the biggest challenge is that conflict might surface when socio-economically heterogeneous membership composition exists in the church. Chou (2008) also states that conflicts could also occur when newer members have different needs compared to the older members. The Pentecostal and charismatic churches, in spite of their astronomical growth since the turn of the 20th century as stated in Garner (2000), are very prone to intra-congregational conflicts. The charismatic movement has suppressed formality and hierarchy in churches and has allowed individuals to manifest their own interpretation of worship and this could result in conflicts if there are dispute on the manifestation Chou (2008).

Becker (1993) has demonstrated that intra-congregational conflicts can not afford to neglect the denominational and congregational characteristics. The church characteristics have everything to do with the leadership of the church, thus as part of this research I looked at these leadership dynamics and I further attempted to expose these dynamics with special focus to age related conflicts. The vision and the identity of the church or denomination also play a role in most

conflicts. I was of the opinion that in my particular case of study this would be the main cause of conflicts, and I expected the older members to uphold a conservative vision and the youth holding a more contemporary vision. I also expected to find that the denominational and congregation issues would be intertwined in this study because of overlap in structures, thus I focused on the congregational issues due to the amount of work in this research.

Becker (1993), Garner (2000), Starke (1996) and Wortmann (2007) point at doctrine, structure and worship as the contributing issues of intra-congregational conflict. One needed to appreciate the fact that this study attempted to expose these worldviews between the two schools and was not intended to shift people from their angle of seeing the world. The anticipated results of this research was to at least expose the problem and create a platform for appreciation of different worldviews by each school. For the leadership, I intended highlighting the leadership dynamics that could be attributable to intra-congregational conflict as the literature research reveals that leadership dynamics may either be a fuel or an extinguisher of conflicts in the church.

It was possible that this research could reveal that there were no issue between the older and the younger members, this could be the real case or it could be based on whether the data collected was authentic or whether or not church members were interested in the process. There was also a fair possibility that there could just be an existence of positive conflict in the church. Troye (2009) states that disagreements could result in unwanted conflicts and counterproductive results. Troye (2009) further states that there is a risk of “Group Think” in groups where disagreement is absent and these are the people who deliberately avoid conflicts and opt on consensus. Groupthink is not healthy as it could result in serious consequence. An introduction of newer ideas could be based on disagreement which could be sparked by a fewer individuals from time to time. Thus conflict theory also acknowledges that there is great value which can also be added by conflicts once they are fully understood and classified according to age groups for the purposes of this research.

2.6 Generation and Intergeneration Theory

Intergeneration theory as described by Gibson (2009) states that generations differ based on the time exposure in history of people, such that there are four generations that exist in the current USA family context. Codrington (2008) brings in similar analysis to this theory.

- Traditionalists/Veterans (born between 1922 – 1943 who have seen great depression and World War II),
- Baby Boomers (born between 1944 – 1960s Post World war II),
- Generation X's (1960s – 1980s raised by baby boomers) and
- Generation Y's or Millenials (born mid 1980s to present who were raised by older baby boomers and younger generation X's)

Gibson (2009) highlights notable characteristics of each generation personalities in term of career aspirations, attitudes, social habits and other trends. A South African perspective of intergeneration theory and differentiation has similar notable strands to the USA model, thus some leadership and age dynamics can also be extracted in such information as done by Gibson (2009) in an American context.

The research by Garner (2000) has demonstrated that the church has had a big influence in the society in a South African context and this influence is dependent on the doctrine and the activities of each denomination and does not point any leads to the idea that historical background has anything to do with conflicts and this is the case with other authors on religious conflicts. This could be due to the exclusivity that is enjoyed by a denominational setting, conflicts are general internally influenced than externally influenced in the church.

Frego (1995) states that the real issue between generations is that each generation does not know the other generation and there is very little effort in general for this cleavage to be managed. This is generally due to the lifestyles that have drastically changed, basically the emergence of nuclear families and the greatest encounter of the generations is in the media such that many youth only know the older people as weak, helpless, ugly and ready to die, thus there is no much value that could be extracted out of them. This is a concern as the youth would miss the opportunity of learning from older people. The media has been instrumental in spreading the propaganda that older people are only needy and sad, whilst promoting the stereotype that youth are only interested in crime, drugs, sex and violence.

Frego (1995) states that the intergenerational relations are very complex, since the younger children would relate better with older people than teenagers and adolescents would react with older people as younger children have a similar mindset with older people. The old people would talk about how useful they were in the past and the young children relate that easily with how

useful they want to be in the future, thus they connect as children find great value in such conversations. On the other hand, adolescents and young adults do not find any interest in what seems to be a hypothetical and abstract discussion. The intergenerational studies are very complex as there are more age groups in this study than youth and older people and their impact on the studies of leadership and intra-congregational conflicts are very unique as demonstrated in Foner (1974), Gibson (2009), Krause *et. al.* (2000) and Sloane (1983).

The cross generational stereotypes have penetrated to the church such that they have also contributed to the paralysis of relationships between these generations in the church. There is a stereotype by older generations that there is no youth that can be properly “saved” in the eyes of many older church members as a result and on the other hand there is no value that can come out of older church members and their time has come to an end in the eyes of the youth. Frego (1995) suggests formation of intergenerational activities that will enhance interaction between two or more generations, thus promote learning, passing down history and cultural or congregational identity. This then leads the intergenerational studies into the direction of the need for worldview appreciation as each generation needs to accept and respect the way the other sees the world.

2.7 Power Allocations and Resulting Conflicts

Foner (1974) states that age stratification is a process whereby individuals or groups of people are clustered according to similarities in age or similarities in life stage. Foner (1974) looked at political situations where he stated that the most likely reason for conflicts is that younger people are less likely to be given positions of power compared to their older counterparts. Foner (1974) also states that the main differences in behaviour or worldview with respect to age are mainly due to aging and the fact that people of different age groups are generally from different history period of life. He further makes an assertion that in politics, the older people tend to get more conservative and they have good access to power.

Gibson (2009) states that characteristics of each generation personalities are mainly in terms of career aspirations, attitudes, social habits and other trends. A South African perspective of intergeneration theory and differentiation will have to be sought based on the history periods and this information was also crucial in analysing embedded “mess” in age related conflicts in the church. This intergeneration study had to be performed by empirical research in the African Gospel church Umlazi, to fully understand the system in question.

Krause (2000) states that no two social systems have similar dynamics since the older people in the church tend to be moved away from the position of power and they feel being replaced by the younger people in the church. This is a different case if compared to Foner (1974)'s political system society where older people have access to power.

Sloane (1983) presented an issue of conflict in the church that affects adolescent youth which was a belief that religiousness decreases as the adolescents grow up. The findings were that there was no common pattern across denominations as each denomination had its own traits. The literature that relates to age stratification and conflicts demonstrate a need to do a case study for a specific church branch and make findings that will be specific to a branch as the dynamics have been shown to be unique for each system.

Toth Jr (1999) states that the biggest leadership threat is the emergence of informal leadership when there is formal and legitimate leadership that is instituted in the church, this is what is called cliques. This may also be an argument that there is a question of leadership legitimacy or vote of no confidence in a specific situation or in general. Cliques can be very dangerous as they are a good indication that there are at least two groups which are pulling in opposite directions as a possible result of members losing confidence in the current leadership or not content with a specific decision that is tabled.

Conflicts between older and younger members also introduce leadership challenges as they also create a platform for formation of cliques in the church as well as low morale. Krause (2000) states that older members often feel threatened when a younger member is given a leadership position in the church which could be interpreted as jealousy and older members would tend to feel that they are being replaced or marginalised in the church by inexperienced children. This results in older members not giving adequate support to the younger members and other older members would generally sit back to prove a point that the younger members cannot deliver. This is a crippling position for the church as these conflicts may not be pronounced or provable by leadership and thus there is no room for recourse. This undesirable situation also shows that power struggle exists between older and younger members in addition to the fact that older and younger members see the world differently. There is a need for leadership to carefully manage the power relations in the church between the younger and older members.

Toth Jr (1999) states that intra-congregational conflict is influenced by the age of church members, such that older active church members will tend to overly use their power, thus result in conflict in the church without them noticing it and this being noticed by younger members. Older members regard their use of power as part of church life instead of seeing this situation causing a coercive environment in the church. Younger active members tend to believe that existing power structures ignore their requirements and needs. Foner (1974) states that a similar power struggle is prevalent in political situations between the younger and older members, the main problem being that positions are generally reserved for older members.

In a black township church the youth would avoid confrontation of such a situation as a result of the principle of respect for elders and they would tend to stay for long without exiting the church even though they may be dissatisfied. The other reason would be that they may feel rooted in the church as some may have their entire family going into the same church or for lack of plausible alternative churches. Often leadership, according to Starke (1996) will often interpret this situation as meaning that members are satisfied.

There are deep cultural issues that are embedded in the black church that make power sharing a bit more complex between older and younger members. Older members know that younger members must submit to them, anything more than this is a crisis and ungodly. This approach is also supported by the teachings of (The Holy Bible) as it encourages younger people to respect their elders.

There are very few organisational instances where older members are at ease with taking direction from younger members in a Zulu cultural context. This situation is also observable in an employment setting, I have been in a situation where my subordinates were older Zulu men who expected to be called by the term “*baba*” (A Zulu term interpreted as “Sir”). This was not as a result of disrespect for authority, it was purely because they know that Zulu boys must respect elders, since they do not have such expectations from white boys. Leadership needs to appreciate such dynamics in a church context so as to create effective leadership models.

2.8 Leadership Dynamics

Toth Jr (1999) states that church leadership is influenced by the personal characteristics of its leader. Often a church leader will have to be able to deal with any form of conflict that may arise, but most importantly the leader will have to be able to create an environment that will not allow serious conflicts to spark and must have good strategies to quench conflicts that arise. Most church leaders confuse this with the skill of suppressing conflicts, whereas the real skill is not to suppress conflicts but to minimize conflict erupting encounters or situations and manage the conflicts that arise.

Chou (2008) states that intra-congregational conflicts may be as a result of members not being confident about their leaders, thus he argues that the legitimacy of leadership is an important consideration. He claims that a congregation led by an educated, elder and experienced male will experience less of such conflicts than the one with a less educated man, a woman or any younger leader. Chou (2008) further states that homogenous congregations are also less likely to experience conflicts, however they tend to experience problems when newer members enter the church sometimes, especially from different backgrounds. There are many types of churches in existence and his argument is that churches in general tend to attract similar people, in race and lifestyle and social standing, however people tend to exit the church if they feel marginalised or not fitting in the church.

Church leaders, particularly pastors and ministers, see their role as beyond the role of leader of any organisation as their leadership is seen as spiritually inspired. This view is supported by (The Holy Bible) as the leaders of the early church had also been led directly by the dictates of God. Example of such leaders would include Moses, Joshua, Paul and many other leaders from the Old and the New Testament.

Toth Jr (1999) states that church leaders would see themselves and are also seen by lay people as exhibiting some traditional or charismatic authority or a combination of the two and their authority structure is at a different level compared to that of the secular structures. This authority is understood to empower these leaders to dictate the direction, control lay people and even to interpret the vision and values of the congregation. These two authority structures operate at two distinct levels which run in parallel, such that the traditional authority which advises the church leader in congregational context and the charismatic to the secular and contemporary context. Toth Jr (1999) states that these leadership structures remain an unsolved issue of power struggle

between the clergy and the laity in the church, and church is usually left without a tool to solve such issues.

A charismatic leadership model is of utmost importance in the church setting since it is an important half, with the other half being the traditional authority as Toth Jr (1999) states. Conger (1987) regards charisma as a supernatural force and influence that leaders have on their followers, by which they follow his mission and vision. Conger (1987) goes further to describe charisma in biblical terms as a word of Greek origin which means gifts. This means that a church leader has to be gifted, which may seem very abstract, and that probably explains why Conger (1987) states that researchers of leadership avoid researching on charismatic leadership field as they find it elusive and cumbersome.

Conger (1987) believes that charismatic leadership is observable and thus it is no different to other leadership models. Conger (1987) and Potosky (2000) agree on the basis that it is possible to develop charismatic leadership qualities, and that charismatic leadership will develop effective leadership. Conger (1987) and Potosky (2000) described seven key characteristics of charismatic leaders as having self-confidence, a vision, articulation of the vision, strong convictions, unconventional behavior, perceived as a change agent, and sensitivity to environmental constraints and resources. The age related conflicts may be attributed to power sharing amongst members and the issues of misunderstanding of worldviews within the church. The leader needs to be able to balance between the traditional and charismatic structures within the church. This will ensure that the authentic congregational requirements are carefully balanced with the contemporary youth issues which are generally appealing to the youth. A new culture will emerge that will take care of the extreme world that remain a contradiction.

The statement by Maxfield (1996) that an organisation must pay attention to people and match the environmental change is in line with my hypothesis that the real issues are worldviews and power struggles which are both people and environmental concerns. As a leader in a church system and a practitioner researcher, I am of the opinion that a church should be a supreme example of leadership due to the nature of the organisation of a church. A church has managed to unite highly uncommon and unrelated people and make them believe in one vision. The Great Commission as quoted in (The Holy Bible) is also about people, where Jesus commanded His disciples to go out and make disciples.

The biggest challenge facing the congregation leadership is to ensure that the emerging power centres, namely, cliques in the church are well managed, as they may end up doing more harm in the congregation than the unions in any other organisations as these committees or cliques generally operate below board.

Denison (1995) *et al* state that effective leaders are the ones that exhibit a variety of leadership roles, and these leaders are able to simultaneously differentiate and integrate and also simultaneously deliver results and manage interpersonal aspects. The differentiation part as where the leader will ensure to first create an environment for exposing worldview and cultural differences between members of the church and then manage them as separate views before integrating them, rather a leader must seek to find diversities and commonalities first that can be integrated.

Denison (1995) *et al* states that a leader must be able to work effectively in contradictions and paradox environment and be able to assume a leadership role that will best handle the situation at hand. I think this type of leadership will be applicable to the church as there are embedded contradictions and paradoxes which increase as the church increases and as the church ages. A leader of a church needs to be able to work effectively in the opposite worlds and still achieve the results as the church is challenged with a dichotomy deeply entrenched worldview appreciation. Toth Jr (1999) states that black churches have become a hub for social interaction in communities thus making the church more attractive to the community and that this advantage of the black church also makes it more prone to conflicts and power struggles.

It is evident from Barnes (2008), Becker (1993), Starke (1996) and Wortmann (2007) that the leader will deal with a mesh of issues with the congregation, such that he may not be able to focus on a single issue. More often, the leader will be faced with problems which have been deeply buried in the church but have surfaced after a long time. This may force the leader to be upfront with his congregation to ensure that at least many of the problems and issues that may lead to conflicts are surfaced in early stages and managed upfront.

(The Holy Bible) provides guidelines on the qualities of a church leader as the first book of Timothy chapter 3 verses 1 to 10 states:

“¹. This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. ² A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; ³ Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; ⁴ One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; ⁵(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) ⁶. Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. ⁸ Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; ⁹ Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. ¹⁰ And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office.”

This passage pays special attention to ethical qualities of a church leader as the cornerstone of church leadership as the leaders need to treat their work as good. The leader must be able to teach and also be able to deal with people in the most ethical manner.

As part of this research I carefully examined Quinn’s Model as cited in Denison (1995) *et al* as a plausible leadership model for the church that could be aligned to the requirements of (The Holy Bible). Denison (1995) *et al* claim the model is able to deal with contradictions and the extremes of paradoxes. Quinn’s Model defines eight leadership roles that take care of these issues, namely innovator, broker, producer, director, coordinator, monitor, facilitator and mentor roles. Quinn’s Model has been evaluated as part of the research and has assisted in drafting research questionnaires, discussions and interviews.

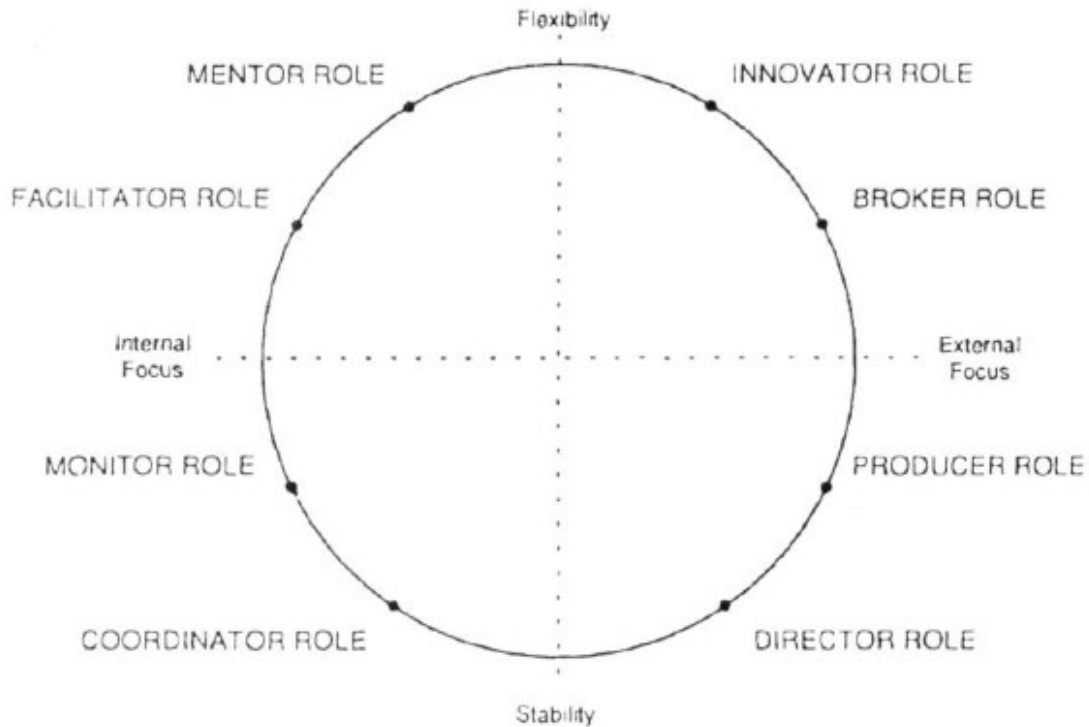


Figure 2. 1: Quinn's Model of Leadership Roles
 Source: Denison (1995) *et al* page 527

Quinn's Model can be interpreted in different ways, but for the framework of this research I have opted to interpret it in terms of quadrants. The upper right quadrant regards a leader as a creative person who is also able to scan the environment and consistently adapts to it. As we move clockwise with the model to the lower right quadrant we see a leader as able to exhibit the qualities of a producer and a director where a leader is able to set objectives and actually seeks closure and provides the necessary motivation to accomplish the deliverables.

The lower left quadrant describes qualities where a leader focuses on internal issues of the organisation by seeking control and stability, this is where a leader is a problem solver and manages the organisation in terms of performance, quality and standards. The final top left quadrant defines a leader's ability to interact with people, provides support to subordinates and also opens up room for debate and negotiations, thus would promote human emancipation.

Quinn's model provides a fairly broad definition of qualities that need to be exhibited by a leader which I believe would form a good leadership template for the characteristics of a church leader.

These qualities are defined as aspects of behavioural complexity, and as stated in Denison (1995) *et al* that a leader who is able to exhibit a broader repertoire of these leadership aspects and also include an insight in operating in paradoxes and contradictions will be highly effective. This is due to the fact that this model seeks resonance and balance between internal integration as well as external or environmental adaptation, thus promoting flexibility and stability. The transactional and transformational leadership styles are embedded in this model since the leader would need to consistently scan his environment, the starting point would be within his church so as to move the church to a better level of growth.

A church in conflict can also be defined in part as an organisation that needs to strike a balance between flexibility and stability as typical church and congregational conflicts have been defined earlier in this chapter. Thus leadership intervention is crucial in dealing with a turbulent environment such as a church in conflict. There are various other leadership models that could be employed such as resonant leadership and servant leadership models that have been taken into consideration. A church leader also has to be a typical manager as he is responsible for the financial well being and discipline of the church, regardless of whether he acts as a church treasurer or not.

A good leader will not always avoid conflict and there are other deliberate means where disagreements should be the order of the day in order to promote creativity and learning and this is done by exception. Troye (2009) states that these deliberate situations can only have good results if disagreements do not amount to personal attacks and are only in line with information exchange theory which reconciles the different perspectives.

2.9 Change Management

South African history and the global history in entirety has largely been shaped by the church and thus a church has been a change agent in social and political context. It is documented through census reports quoted in Garner (2000) that the majority of South African civil society is Christian, thus Garner (2000) claims that a church can be a good vehicle to drive change in the civil society.

Garner (2000) also states that Christianity has had an important supporting act in the social changes and politics in South Africa as it was one instrument of colonisation and apartheid and

the church has also been a vehicle for freedom struggle and transformation into the new South Africa. This is very well supported by the number of past and present religious leaders that have been influential in the country's politics, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Reverend Frank Chikane and even the emergence of Christian based political parties such as the ACDP. The church has had a big impact on the societies around it and on its members, as it teaches prosperity gospel, abstinence from harmful practices and it also teaches budgeting through tithing as stated in Garner (2000). I see a church as a place that exposes people to a new worldview in a pluralistic manner that provides hope and compassion to the people.

The approach to church society landscape has been such that it is drifting from traditional to a more contemporary structure, however this drift is grossly overshadowed in black church community as this community is known for its attachment values on traditions. The traditional approach to church has been to focus on the expectations of what the church can benefit from individuals, now the focus is shifting more towards the benefits of church members from the church.

Anderson (2005) gives a fair account as to how the church has evolved to the present charismatic churches in a South African context. The move has been facilitated by specific members rejecting the apartheid policies of the church, the rigidity of structures and other worship aspects. In Anderson's work on the evolution of the *Pentecostalism* there is only mention of a few churches that changed from being white to multiethnic churches in South Africa. White churches have experienced more change than black churches and this was due to the fact that these churches had to denounce apartheid which was treated as doctrine in the past.

Anderson (2005) states that great leaders of charismatic churches emerged from mainline and Pentecostal churches as they cited lack of change and lack of willingness to embrace change. It is ironic that the church does not change, yet politicians come from church backgrounds and South Africa has a number of politicians who are clergies, pastors and bishops. Does this mean that there is no option of introducing change in a South African Pentecostal and mainline church?

Change management forms a cornerstone of this research as I based it on the hypothesis that there are coercive events, patterns and possibly structures that are prevalent in the church that result in age related conflicts. Coerciveness is an undesirable condition that needs to be eradicated such that the church returns to its pluralist condition, thus a project of change is required to achieve

this migration. Harris (1998) states that church systems have a general problem of organisational change, they just cannot welcome it, especially with the clergies and older members. The change is therefore seen as a threat to the church organisational system, therefore if change is sought in the church, there has to be creative means of introducing and implementing it thus quenching the inevitable conflicts that will result.

The problem areas that could seem to affect this environment of research is that change involves learning and that church members could have different ideas on what change for improvement purposes has to include and that change cannot offer certainty at any level thus a new vision of the future needs to be created. There needs to be a consensus on the idea that people need to accept the new vision as a new reality and people need to align themselves or be aligned in terms of attitudes, practices and policies. This process will by no means be easy as theory has demonstrated that the church is amongst the organisations that are on top of the list of organisations that rebuke change as stated in Garner (2000).

Resistance is inevitable in the process of change in the church and this is a very serious position that any organisation can adopt as it also means churches do not adopt a learning organisation mentality. In the Durban vicinity we hear of a new church ministry almost on monthly basis, the newer ministries are more contemporary, innovative and well off financially and most of them are founded by celebrities and prominent people. These ministries are slowly eating away membership from traditional and older churches in the area, yet very fewer traditional churches are adjusting to this new change in the religious landscape.

Hailey (2002) states that in turbulent environments an organisation has to have a learning capacity that is equal or greater than the rate of change of its environment for it to continue to survive. The political, social and economic environment is completely volatile and complex in nowadays, due to the issues of HIV/AIDS, recession, crime and political climate that is affecting townships these days. The church cannot continue to turn a blind eye on these issues as they are a reality that each of its member. Organisational change cannot be managed effectively without the appreciation of organisational learning that will start by promoting individual learning, capacity building as well as organisational development.

Leadership of the church tends to be tradition bound and would deliberately resist and reject secular and contemporary influences. An organisation that embraces learning would at least

analyse the impact of these environmental situations and would be a step ahead in ensuring that they are well managed within the church as there might be a potential for conflict in the church. It is arguable though that the youth tend to be more exposed to the secular and contemporary influences and these may affect their interactions within the church. Leadership needs to be able to manage these influences accordingly.

In this research I departed from the hypothesis that there are age related conflicts in the church that could be deeply rooted in the idea that there are multiple worldviews in the church between age groups which have resulted in conflicts as they are not properly managed. There is a lack of balance in power allocation, worldview management as well as on the leadership qualities and focus. Boyatzis (2005) state that any leader that exhibits lack of balance between its area of concern is operating in dissonance and should consider making intentional change to move back to resonance instead of waiting for resonance to emerge. Boyatzis (2005) introduced a theory of intentional change for leadership has been applied in this research at both leadership and organisation level in order to promote improvement.

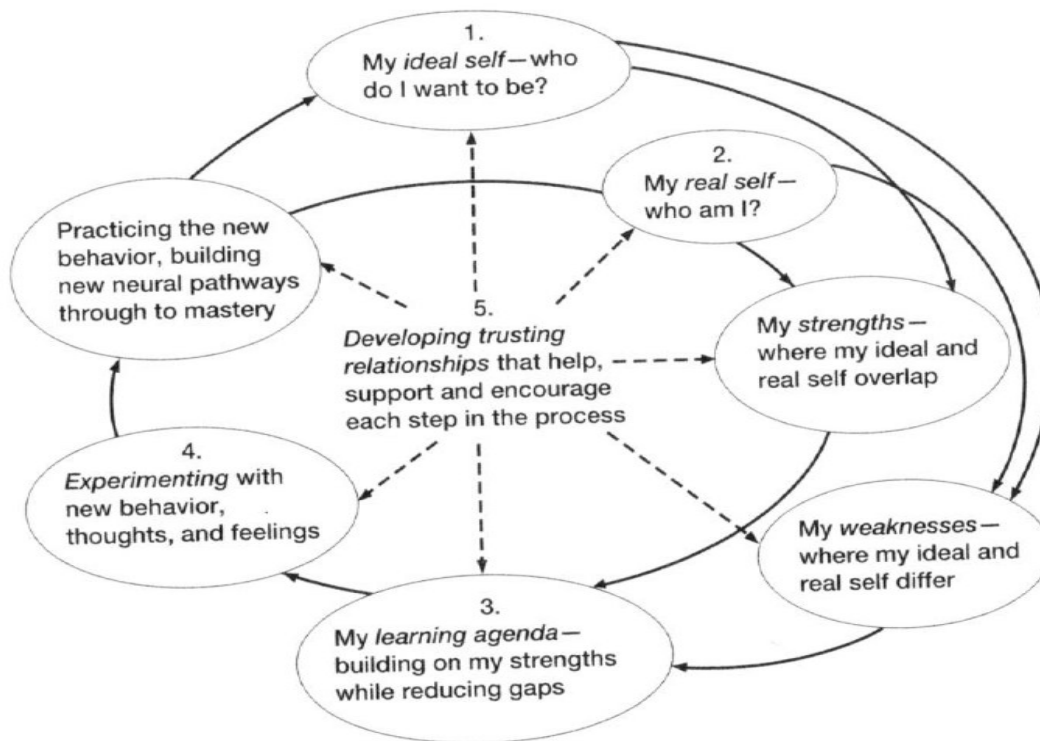


Figure 2. 2: Boyatzis’s Intentional Change Theory
 Source: Boyatzis (2005) page 89

Figure 2.2 is a tool for assisting a leader who appreciates a need for change in his personal life as presented by Boyatzis (2005) whereby a leader will implement and practice new behaviours in order that he move to the new desirable state of resonance. This can be achieved with ensuring that he creates healthy relationships that will be relevant to the learning agenda that the leader has implemented. This model is also applicable at an organisational level for effecting organisational change.

2.10 Summary

There is a good ground to accept that there are desirable and undesirable conflicts in the church, such that good conflicts will spark creativity, fight complacency and also promote information exchange. Proper management of these conflicts will ensure that conflicts do not end up turning to serious and undesirable conflicts.

Age related conflicts have been found to be more of issues of differing worldviews and on the issues of power allocation in the church. This does not necessarily mean there is a linear relationship between these two issues and conflict, the issue is complex. There are issues of church organisational characteristics, membership characteristics, leadership characteristics, cultural issues, history, environmental issues and other issues that may influence these conflicts. Empirical research will be informed by these considerations.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The literature survey sensitised me to a range of issues that affect a church congregation and denomination with respect to age related conflicts. In order to critically investigate and interpret the patterns and structures of age related conflicts in the church of my research I adopted a critical systems methodology. As a starting point, I made an assumption that the one which holds people together is greater than the one that divides them. I followed Soft Systems Methodology (*SSM*) to expose the different strands that exists.

The literature showed that one of the main contributors to conflicts in such context is the existence of multiple worldviews which are not well appreciated and not well managed that exist within an organisation. The previous chapter also demonstrated that the age related conflicts are not generally meant to result in hostility, as there also exist some conflicts that are necessary to bring about growth as well as to move an organisation away from complacency. The literature survey also demonstrated that, like most things, these conflicts may become hostile conflicts if they are not well managed. The other factor is the issues of power relations and allocation of power, thus the complexities around emancipation, debate and oppression come to the fore. Perceptions also pose a big threat between people of different ages, such that some groups may be perceived to be incompetent by another group when it comes to power allocations, however, each organisation will have its own dynamics when it comes to power allocation.

In this research I followed a critical systems approach at meta-methodological level, whereby I used a repertoire of methodologies such that every methodology I used was designed to extract specific attributes of the organisational cultures, socialisation systems as well as worldviews that exist within this organisation. As a critical systems practitioner I had to take caution when using multiple methodologies as this approach could create academic challenges in terms of research logic. Brocklesby (1996) states that mixing methodologies has serious challenges at philosophical, theoretical and at a practical level and this is mainly because the paradigms of application may not be common, thus the ineffectiveness of fitting the methodologies together or even lack of skills to use this approach may prevail.

The literature survey also exposed some of the deeper cultural considerations that needed to be addressed before this study was approached. The setting of this study also presented its own dynamics as it was undertaken in a Zulu township where the church also embraced the respect and relations that are part of this culture in addition to what (The Holy Bible) prescribes. This dynamic did not only affect the participants on this study, but I myself as a practitioner researcher could not be excluded from these dynamics. I had to carefully ensure that the quality of the results were not hindered by my approach in extracting data from the participants, especially with the older members as they proved to be very particular with the approach before any engagement could be established. Failure to approach older members with respect they deserve in the Zulu culture could result in serious challenges as they would most likely end up not fully participating.

As stated in Girod-Seville (1999) that the reality will always be dependent on the mind of the person that is observing, I then needed to carefully consider the possibility that I could end up introducing other dynamics in the system if my approach could not take into cognisance the complexities that are part of this church system. A strategic and systematic approach needed to be used in order to extract research information from participants with minimal possibility of distorting the facts due to my presence. This research required me to appoint mentors for myself who are very experienced in church leadership so that they could offer guidance on how I had to approach people in the church and ensuring that I obtained the best information out of them.

3.2 Objective of the Study

As a critical systems practitioner, I had a vested interest in unearthing the issues that result in conflicts due to age differences as I looked at the church as an organisation. These issues were exposed through case study research in a defined environment, by means of questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. I used typical questionnaires that allowed stratification church members according to age, gender, social standing and other aspects of each church member.

I intended surfacing the structures of age related conflicts that exist in a church and also to carefully identify the leadership dynamics that resulted due to these differences using critical systems practices. Literature survey demonstrated that the resulting conflicts were mainly triggered by multiple worldviews that existed in the church and also the allocation of power in the church and that there are also necessary conflicts in any organisation which could get destructive

and very serious if not properly managed. The characteristics of an organisation and the legitimacy of leadership also play a pivotal role in the fuelling and extinguishing of serious conflicts, such that an appreciation of characteristics of an organisation becomes an important factor to conflict resolution interventions.

As I have worked for over five years in church structures I have observed that there are generally tensions that are prevalent in church structures between people of different age groups. Most of these tensions are as a result of one group being threatened by the other and sometimes both groups see the other group as a threat, thus the issue of competition may result.

The people's worldviews that exist in the church need to be appreciated properly such that the lingering threats of members exiting the church, hostile relations and church splits are well contained and eradicated. The church, and other organisations that do not always pay greater details to issues of age differences experience very little growth as compared to the organisations that deliberately embrace these issues as highlighted in the previous chapter. This proves the point by Becker (1993) that organisational characteristics have a great bearing on how prone the church is to conflicts and also on how it resolves the emergent conflicts.

The research methodology objectives were:

- To produce a social and a socialisation profile of the church.
- To surface the possible underpinning structures of age related conflicts in the church.
- To explain the relationship between the social and socialisation profile to the emergent age related conflicts in the church.
- To provide some interventions in ensuring that hostility and oppression do not dominate the research area...

Creative problem solving strategies were key to this research as it has been stated earlier that a church is amongst the organisations that least welcome change.

3.3 Research Approach / Paradigm

In this research I followed a critical systems perspective to address the issues of leadership dynamics in a church branch. The paradigm of research was from a social point of view and looking at a church branch as a social system, thus qualitative research approach was sought.

One may be tempted to define a church as a simple, homogenous and identifiable organisation, however, this is not the case regardless of the fact that the church members participate in a similar pattern in the church. People go to church for different reasons, as some expect spiritual connection, some for motivation, some to make connections and some people have nothing better to do. The starting point was to capture the worldviews that existed within the church by using systems thinking and producing a model for the system in study. The questionnaires and open ended interview questions were designed to expose the worldviews that exist in the church, whilst also categorising people according to the age groups.

A church, by design, is a complex plural environment, I have demonstrated the complexity context of the church by the notion that even though the participants have different worldviews and expectations form the church, they are generally united by one ultimate goal. Pluralism comes from the fact that the ethical context of the church is commonly understood by participants, namely participants are working towards a better life as their destiny in the church.

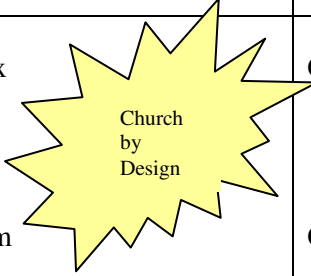

		PARTICIPANTS		
		UNITARY	PLURALIST	COERCIVE
SYSTEM	SIMPLE	Simple Unitary	Simple Pluralist	Simple Coercive
	COMPLEX	Complex Unitary	Complex Pluralism 	Complex Coercive 

Figure 3. 1: Complexity Grid of Problem Context.

Source: Adapted from Jackson (2000) figure 10.1, page 359, Jackson's Extended Version of Jackson and Keys's Grid of Problem Context.

I adopted an open mind when it came to choosing the paradigm position for this research, I adopted an interpretivist approach as well as a critical systems approach. The interpretive

approach looked at the church culture by exposing the relationships as well as the worldviews that existed and the critical systems approach looked at the boundary judgement and improvement. Girod-Seville (1999) states that there are some authors dating from the 1979 work of Burrell and Morgan who advocate isolationism as they say a researcher is limited to one paradigm and should not mix or interplay between paradigms as they are incommensurable and other authors believe a researcher needs to fix a paradigm first before any research is conducted. He further states that some authors tend to see an opportunity when working with different paradigms as this may lead to dialogue between paradigms. I analysed the interpretivist paradigm as if it is encapsulated inside the critical systems approach for the purposes of this research.

This research was performed as a case study, not only with the intention to identify a specific oppressed group in the church or to interpret relationships in the church. The research was also meant to attempt to look at the worldviews of all age groups in the church and then identify pending threats that are related to the destiny of each group within the church. The example of this approach assumed a rationale that some age groups may be the victims of oppression in one aspect and be the benefactors in another aspect. If this was the case with the branch in question, the interpretive systems approach would have sufficed.

Interpretive systems approach may prove very limiting in cases like the church branch in question, as for example Soft Systems Methodology (*SSM*) is arguably based on consensus worldview. The biggest challenge is that interpretive systems are interested in driving change, however this change will always be dependent on the power and hierarchical imbalances. Thus the change will tend to favour the ones in power, thus the emergence of alternatives would be grossly paralysed. The issue of power allocation appeared to be a pivotal point of this research, thus there would be enough basis to assume that the findings of this research would be inclined to take this point into consideration.

This brings a different paradigm as it is possible that there exists a different understanding in the church that is deeply rooted and has been cultivated in people over the years. The issue of conflict may be underpinned by lack of consensus on what needs to be improved. The interpretation of what needs improvement may now be at the mercy of the powerful, thus a high level debate or unconstrained discussion on interpretation of reality may be sought. This may be the core characteristic of this organisation that makes it prone to age related conflicts, as I mentioned in chapter 2 that the characteristics of a church would grossly influence its proneness to conflicts.

As much as the church is a plural environment, there is enough basis for defining the age related conflicts in the church as a coercive situation. Jackson (2000) defines a coercive situation as when there is a fundamental conflict between participants and typical resolutions are mainly achieved through the exercise of power and others being oppressed. This then outlined the need for emancipation commitment in the approach being used to intervene.

An approach that would first question the status quo or the social order of this organisation is sought, as this situation is suspect. Emancipatory Systems approaches as stated in Jackson (2000) would be needed that would seek to radically transform the status quo by ensuring that the oppressed and the dominated people are emancipated. The emancipatory systems would need to emancipate the age group that is dominated with an attempt to correct the social order of the church. The emancipatory systems would seek to correct the church image as the conflicts would regard it as a "psychic prison" or as an "instrument of domination" based on the metaphors used by Jackson (2000).

The only possibility for radical change in this environment would be for the church leadership to first appreciate the need for the change before any emancipatory systems are sought. This would then mean that leadership would have to shift from their original solitary paradigm of protecting the legacy of the church founders. Thus it would require deeply entrenched leadership dynamics that would include some contemporary leadership styles that would be targeting to implement and drive the change. The scope of this research would end at offering this advice on the leadership as well as on membership where warranted.

(The Holy Bible) states that the main purpose of Jesus Christ coming to earth was to “save” people from the imminent eternal death and introduce them to eternal life as per the epistle of John chapter 3 verse 16. However, Jesus had a methodology to first emancipate people from the religious structures of Pharisees, priests and Sadducees and also to reinstate the hierarchal order in the church as stated in the epistle of Luke chapter 11 verses 43 to 46 that:

“⁴². But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.⁴³. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. ⁴⁴. Woe unto

you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. ⁴⁵ Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. ⁴⁶. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.”

In this research I followed a qualitative approach as it was seen to be very applicable in a church system as it is a complex and plural system, richness in the picture was not lost as qualitative methods are more applicable in complex and plural environments like social systems. In this research I was mainly interested in looking at relationships as well as the effects of human interactions within the church, with specific focus on the age related relationships and not neglecting the effect of hierarchy. These relationship issues played a pivotal role into this research as I was working on the hypothesis that there are evident worldview trends that are common with people of similar age group, these trends were further outlined by the social as well as organisational exposures amongst church members.

These differing worldviews were arguably exhibiting organisational challenges from a theoretical point of view, as there also appeared to be oppression issues that ended up affecting boundary judgements. This situation ended up creating a new culture of the church, thus the status quo ended up being multiple worldviews. This research went further and analysed the emergent properties of this new culture and made a value judgement on whether these new properties best defined the current structure of the church.

I was faced with paradigm incommensurability issues in this research as it was evident that this research extended beyond diversity of worldviews to a point where people were operating at different platforms in terms of understanding the purpose and the goal of a church as an organisation. It was also my intention to unearth the underpinning structures for such gross divisions in one social system. For the purposes of this research I reduced the multiple paradigm situation into multiple worldviews operating in one paradigm as the SSM methodology works in one paradigm as stated in Brocklesby (1996).

3.4 Study Methodology

The theoretical framework that informs this research is that of critical awareness, promoting human emancipation and pluralism, thus a critical systems approach was followed for this research. The previous section of this research surfaced that the major issues that result in conflicts is issues of multiple worldviews, backgrounds and the organisational climate in the church. As a result, critical awareness on these societal and cultural issues became the cornerstone consideration on the methodology that was used.

The methodologies used in this research were such that they embraced pluralism as it is evident from the previous chapter that a church or any organisation is a pluralist environment. Pluralism acknowledges that no one worldview would sufficiently account for the entire research population. Jackson (1999) states that pluralism provides an unmatched benefit of applying a diversity of tools, theories and methods in confronting a variety of problems, thus ensuring that the problem situation is approached with increased efficiency and competence. The methodologies needed to go a step further in this regard as there are multiple worldviews and possibly multiple paradigms that exist in this church.

I had to be careful when dealing with this environment as I was dealing with an environment with multiple worldviews and with multiple paradigms, thus Critical Systems Practices (*CSP*) with its main commitments being critical awareness, pluralism and improvement was very appropriate. It is worth noting at this stage that the main objective of *CSP* was to ensure that diversity of worldviews and paradigms was protected and also to ensure that these diversities were well critiqued. This metamethodology was in line with what I had intended achieving in this case study.

Remenyi (1998) states that the risk of using case study as a research tactic is that this method is regarded as prejudice as it is always exposed to biasness and that it is also too expensive and time consuming to execute. However, Remenyi (1998) further states that biasness can always be introduced in any other research method and that case studies do not necessarily need to be excessively long and labour intensive in order for them to yield meaningful results. As stated in Remenyi (1998) that it is a myth to think that there could ever be a research without bias, thus bias can never be totally eliminated.

I was very cautious to minimize bias and subjectivity in this research, as has been shown in the previous chapter that there is no such a person called an objective researcher, I achieved this by ensuring that I obtained as many research respondents as possible. However bias could possibly come from the research or from the informants of the research. The main risk of introducing bias and subjectivity in this research was based on my selection of research informants and also the responses that come from informant. Some research informants were not able to give a true reflection of the situation as some avoided the consequences of the research and some were not in full support of participating in this research with some informants questioning the legitimacy of the study itself.

I had to use triangulation tactics in some instances in order to ascertain that bias is minimised. It is very difficult to use triangulation tactics in social sciences research since in this specific case study we are dealing with peoples' worldviews and their idea of an ideal future. It is not always practical to prove that a person sees the world differently to what he is telling you. The best triangulation tactic I used was to obtain multiple responses from a bigger sample, rather than trying to prove each individual response.

Where I sensed reluctance from participants, I always showed the letter of authorisation for research that comes from the church leadership as I kept a copy handy every time I went out to meet people for research purposes. This letter seemed to ease people's confidence and openness to the research process, thus legitimacy based bias was eliminated. This tactic proved very useful and very creative as my approach was literally to prove to the church members who are research subjects that the church leadership was very concerned about improving relationships in the church. I needed to approach older members as if I wanted them to assist on how we could get the youth back on track. This approach paid dividends as I found older members very eager to give advice to the youth and all other questions were automatically addressed once they started talking.

The other objection about case studies was that they cannot be applicable elsewhere, which is not true since it is possible to generalise on case study findings and then create some theoretical framework for other studies even though the settings are different. This point is proved by the fact that this research was also based on the theoretical framework that had been established from other literatures which were mostly case studies.

In this research I selected an individual population group which is one branch of a church as a sample as I was interested in looking at the specific dynamics of this group. However, the theories and the new knowledge from this case study could be used to create a theoretical framework for any other study where applicable. This case study was undertaken with an understanding and the hypothesis that there are age related conflicts in the church and that these conflicts are manageable with appropriate leadership interventions. The main objective of this research was not necessarily to measure the frequency of these conflicts but it was to support or reject this hypothesis and also expose the rationale that leads to the conclusions.

Jackson (2000) expresses situations where there is a need for some emancipation in terms of root metaphors that these organisations may be looked at as psychic prisons and instruments of domination. This can be attributed to the fact that some conflicts end up being suppressed, thus there is reason to assume that people are pressured within the system to exercise their will. Ulrich (1996) states that people must be competent in what they want so that they can be able to make meaningful improvement and thus they can be in control of their destiny.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

I started by going through literature on conflicts, age stratification, church leadership, South African sociology and leadership dynamics as part of my research literature, as seen in the previous chapters. The literature survey assisted me in ensuring that I had a good understanding of possible factors that were applicable to my study and also to identify appropriate research approach. The literature review output has been used as an input to the structuring of questionnaires, interview questions and focus group discussions.

The empirical research mainly consisted of questionnaires, open ended interviews and focus groups for data collection. The data collection was used as a basis for the forming a rich picture of the mess that is embedded in this research project. This mess would then be analysed in the next chapter to expose the underpinning structures of age related conflict and also to ultimately advise leadership on how to ensure that potential conflicts do not result in hostilities with the church.

The most important item for me was to expose the mess that existed in the church as my research departed from the hypothesis that there are age related conflicts that exist in the church and also

there are some observable leadership dynamics as a result. The interviews and focus groups formats were the first two stages of the SSM, where we sought to understand the problem situation. As a result of cultural complexities I had to consider running my interviews and questionnaires very indirectly with some of the elders as they were generally not comfortable with answering questionnaires and giving multiple choice answers. I had to be very strategic in extracting answers as I was just listening to the story that they were telling and I was just indirectly prompting specific answers from them as they talked.

3.5.1 Sampling

The church that I researched seemed to be rich in history as there were typically four history periods that I had identified on the questionnaires for stratification purposes. This situation prompted me to consider a fairly sizeable sample of research subjects so as to get a rich picture and also minimize sampling error. Marshal (1996) states that it is of no benefit to select a very large sample size as reasonable large sample will most likely yield similar results to a very large sample.

My original plan was to carefully select my research participants for the interviews, questionnaires and focus groups as I was very familiar with most people within the church. I had opted for not choosing people randomly thus I was going for a judgement sample route. After consultation with academics and other church leaders, I decided to change my approach as my original approach was at a risk of yielding biased findings. I probably would have selected people that would have led the research to a specific conclusion of my interest, and there are fair chances that I would have oppressed other worldviews and some issues.

The biggest challenge was that there is an unconventional overlap of portfolios and committees in this congregation when it comes to age, such that we have people who are older than 50 years of age who are regarded as youth and some of which are in charge of youth, and this is a trend across the entire denomination. At denominational level, the youth leader is 76 years old. I deliberately excluded these misplaced people from analysis as they were carrying a double agenda at either direction of the groups. I defined the youth at an average age of 35 years for this research, as there were very few younger people who were active in church leadership at their early ages of less than 25 years. This is because older church members once objected to my service in the church as part of the youth committee when I was 28 years of age on the basis that I

was still young and I had just been “saved” for only a few years which they regarded as a very short time.

Since this a qualitative research, the sample that I selected for interviews considered the issues of size and selection criteria, unlike the quantitative research which answers the question “what”, qualitative research answers the questions “how” and ‘why”. Marshal (1996) states that random sampling works if population has evenly distributed research characteristics, but does not work for qualitative research as you can not just interview laymen on the issues of expertise.

Marshal (1996) recommends a smaller sample size, which has all the diverse research characteristics and the use of three approaches of sampling, namely convenience sampling, judgement sampling and theoretical sampling. I then opted to go for an open invitation to all church members over the age of 16 years and who were willing to participate and I also encouraged more people to participate where I also explained the benefits of the research to the church. This approach then managed to change people’s perceptions about the research as it made them to be at ease when responding to the research questions.

I followed a qualitative research sampling strategies as cited in Marshal (1996), namely convenience sampling, judgement sampling and theoretical sampling. Using convenience sampling assisted me in ensure to select the most accessible people to the research in terms of approachability and availability. Judgement sampling is typically equivalent to age stratification for this research, I used this approach simply because at some point I had to approach people directly when it comes to age balance in numbers. I then purposefully selected people according to their ages and group them accordingly as I realised that few people responded to the open call for participation.

Theoretical sampling was also used to an extent as I also needed to capture other issues with the research, such as the questions the research was attempting to answer, situational and contemporary answers. As stated in Marshal (1996) it is important to consider whether the respondents questions are not situation or time based. I used the critical systems heuristics to ensure that responses I could distinguish the circumstances that would render the responses relevant or irrelevant.

3.5.2 Questionnaires

I used questionnaires as a starting point for my research and these questionnaires were literally used for stratification purposes and for boundary critique purposes. The stratification part was first achieved by structuring the questions and choices of answers such that they first exposed the respondent's age, exposure in history times as well as their social standing. The boundary critique part of the questionnaires was addressed by first formulating questions that asked the respondents on how they perceive the church structures, the music and the style of worship in the church and then formulating a second set of questions which ask the respondents on how they think these issues ought to be in the church.

The questionnaires were mainly multiple choices questions which gave respondents up to four answer choices per questions, whereby these answers were covered all possible answers that could best represent the pluralism in the church. The questionnaires were recorded in writing. These questionnaires were then discussed with my research supervisor, my mentor and finally with the church leadership and were then accepted as suitable for the purpose of this research.

3.5.3 Interviews

I then used open-ended interviews as a primary means of collecting data from respondents about the climate and the leadership styles, this data focused on understanding the church at a bigger picture. In the interviews, I followed the guidelines as laid by Kvale (1996) where he states that interviews are merely a structured resemblance of an ordinary conversation. These interviews were done professionally in the sense that full records were kept of all questions and answers. Interview questions were generated before the commencement of the interview process and these questions were structured such that they were able to surface the information that was necessary to paint a rich picture of the problem. I originally intended conducting person to person interviews, however in extreme cases, some open-ended interview questions were handed out in writing and the respondents had to put their responses in writing. I made sure to perform the personal type interviews to older members as they were not at ease with fill up any form of paperwork.

The interview questions were generally used to expose the worldviews of each of members with an intention to expose the shared worldviews based on age groups. I also intended to go further within the interview and questionnaire process to understand how people perceive the critical

characteristics of a church and comparing these with what they perceive how these characteristics ought to be. The use of critical systems heuristics formed a major aspect of this study as I believe this introduced some interesting boundary critique around all angles of the church as was also done on the questionnaires. The interview type approach gave respondents an additional opportunity to explain freely their worldviews in their own words. The responses for interviews were recorded in both writing and on audio, as the interviews were conducted using both means.

3.5.4 Focus Groups

As I have stated above, I intended using interviews for church leadership, but for the church body I intended using focus groups. I also intended using information from the age stratification model to locate people to age groups and make them form focus groups, the age groups were dictated by either life stage, political history exposure or their church history exposure. The SSM approach was then seen as useful in this exercise as it was able to surface the issues as well as examine all the world views that exist in the specific church branch.

Krause (2000) states that focus groups must be homogeneous, such that there must be similarities between members of each group, but groups must be diverse. I also intended to run two separate focus groups of same age stage and separate them based on education or even location whether they live in township or suburb if there were dissimilarities in members. This was possible to sense as I was familiar with the split within the church as I was once a member of this church.

I then decided to coordinate one focus group with a choir group which has I was once part of. This group was of the same age group as myself and the participants were very open minded as they shared the sentiments that I shared about the implications of this case study. I wanted to run another focus group discussion with older members, but I realised during arrangements that the older members were not keen on speaking in one forum, thus I aborted the plans of forming this focus group.

I adopted the approach by Ghauri (1995) on focus groups as he stated that focus groups should not be too large or too small as there was a risk of inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the groups, a recommended size is between 5 and 10 people. I ran this focus group with 7 people from the choir group. As a moderator of the focus groups I introduced the topic and questions and also ensured that the discussions stay focused on the issues. I only conducted one focus group

discussion to capture mostly a youthful view of the church. The older member views were already captured since open-ended interviews were conducted mainly amongst this group.

I then made a recording of this focus group meeting, where I used a digital MP3 audio recorder as this was the only means of recording I had at the moment. Introducing gadgets in meeting with older people was a huge challenge, but this was well managed as this focus group was full of younger participants.

3.6 Summary

I perceive the methodology used in this research as very appropriate to ensure that I have meaningful data that I would analyse in order to capture the worldviews and paradigms that are part of the church. The tensions and conflicts that are part of our lives would be well managed once they are exposed and carefully analysed. The leadership dynamics would then be observed and then the research would advise leadership on how to carefully manage the age related conflicts.

I did not follow the SSM methodology to the end as this would have required me to go back to the research informants and discuss the finding with them. This literally meant that I followed the SSM methodology up to SSM Stage 5 as I concluded with conceptual models as the main objective of this research was to expose information on underpinning structures of conflicts, and not necessarily to close the entire conflict management loop. There were also serious ethical challenges with the presentation of results as they yielded sensitive findings as shall be seen on the next chapter, attempting to address these findings would have probably yielded other unwarranted results. The method and the results for using the SSM are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter covered the methodologies and techniques that I had used to collect the research information that would enable me to understand the “mess” associated with this system in question. My approach with the study was that there are differing worldviews between church youth and older church members that result in conflicts.

I present these results that I had obtained from interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussion. As I had highlighted in chapter 3, my approach was very strategic especially with older members, where I had to use creative means in order to extract useful research information from the church. I had to be more creative with older members since I had to make sure that the older members were free to talk without being pressured by paperwork for my research procedures. In most instances I used audio recording and explained to them that the recordings were for my records as it was difficult to take notes when an older person talks, it could well be interpreted as disrespect if you are not attentive when an older person speaks.

In this section I will present the research methodology findings based on SSM as a dominant methodology that I had followed, I will also highlight the results as yielded by other methods such as Critical Systems Heuristics that I had introduced at strategic points of this research. As this research was only for providing the information, I will provide a proper analysis of results without necessarily going back to the research subjects where we would have attempted to solve the “mess”. The analysis will present conceptual models and follow with the next stages of SSM from a theoretical point of view as the methodology did not close the loop of discussing findings with the research informants.

4.2 Findings

Creative methods had to be sourced from systems studies and leadership studies in order to surface the issues of relevance to this research on the basis of the established theoretical framework. Figure 4.1 represents a systems approach into the understanding of the church as a system. This diagram was very critical for me to understand the sharing of boundaries in the church and also to demonstrate that the church belongs to a bigger fraternity. The system map

also managed to illustrate that there are components that make up this church as a unit, namely youth organisations, leadership, women’s league as well as the interfacing of these groups with the regional and national offices. This church branch is part of a hierarchy of systems that maintain the legitimacy of this branch, thus the specific church branch in question cannot operate in isolation or outside the dictates of the bigger structures.

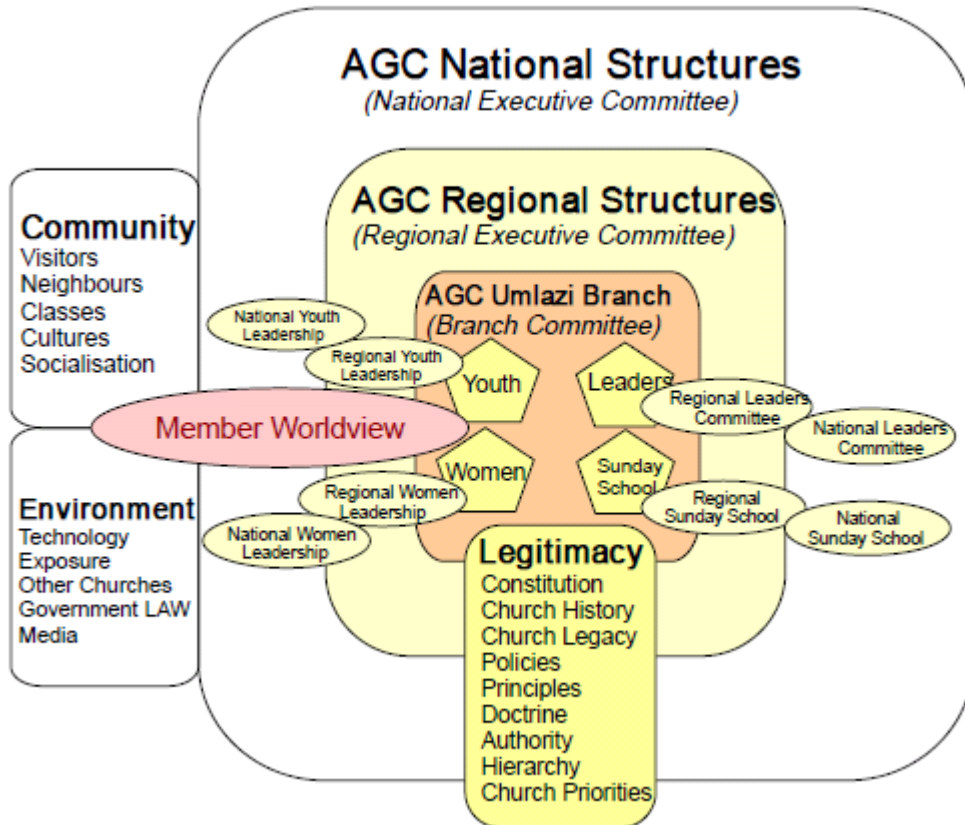


Figure 4. 1: System Boundaries Affecting the Area of Concern

As can be observed on the systems boundary map that the church branch in question does not operate as a sovereign church, it is just a branch of other church structures that operate at regional and at national levels. All these structures are guided by one set of constitution, principles and doctrine to mention a few. The African Gospel Church does appear to exhibit full qualities of a Pentecostal church and evidently, the organisation resembles a typical Episcopal architecture to an extent. This understanding is crucial for ensuring that proper interventions are sought and that they can be applicable within legitimate boundaries.

As I intend looking at worldviews and paradigms, it was necessary for me to look at other stakeholders that are part of the system, namely the influences of the communities and the environment. It was observable that the worldviews were also affected by the membership or the leadership role of a person being interviewed. Leaders tended to occupy a traditional worldview position when it came to the issues of transformation and identification of issues.

Figure 4.2 reflects my use of Systems Thinking in order to understand the dynamics that exist in the church that result in conflicts and hostile relationships, looking at a church congregation as a system and a denomination as a suprasystem. This diagram represents a multi-causal and influence relationship that exists between the components of the systems.

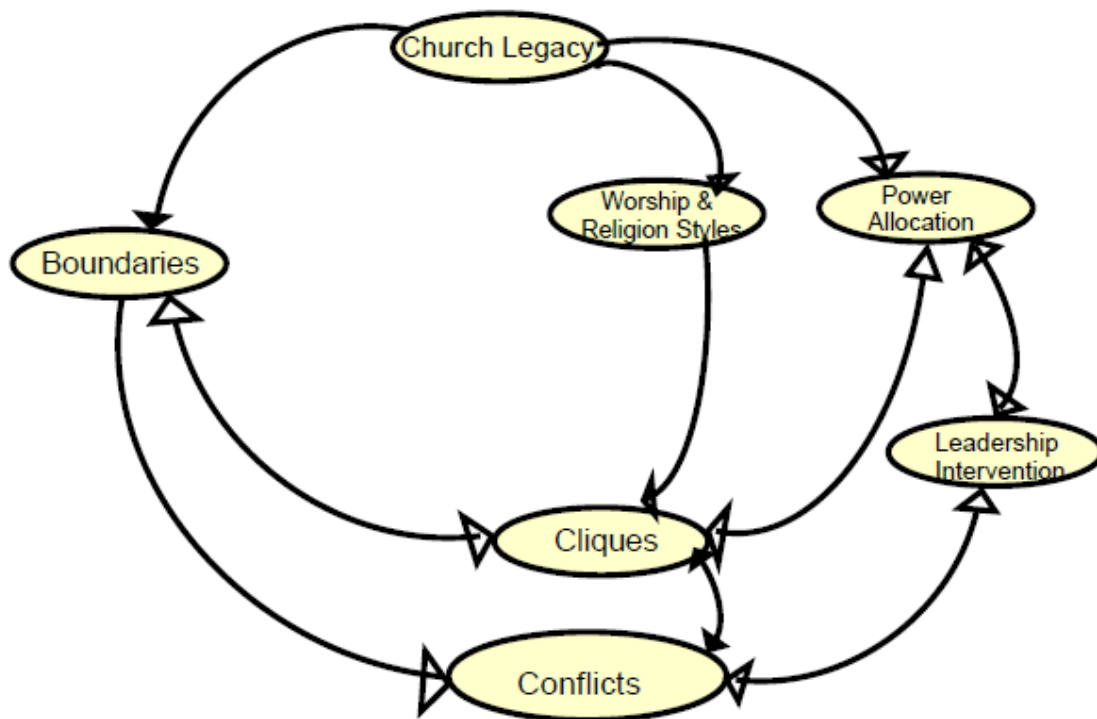


Figure 4. 2: Systems Multi Causal Diagram

The multi causal diagram represents a situation where church legacy has resulted in boundary discrepancies, religious and worship styles issues as well as power allocation issues. The church has been observed to have cliques as a result of these discrepancies, thus conflicts are bound to happen from this scenario. Leadership intervention and other creative interventions would be required to ensure that conflicts are minimized.

SSM was then applied in a seven stage model as described in Jackson (2000), at some strategic points of this research, I then introduced other methods and tools that ensured that complexities, pluralism and boundary judgements are exposed in this research. These methods and tools typically included Critical Systems Heuristics and other tools on social systems and operational research as shall be demonstrated in this chapter.

I followed Soft Systems Methodology as an empirical tool to capture the human activity that occurs within the system using a rich picture and as part of understanding the “mess”. I followed the seven stages of SSM as cited in Jackson (2000) by first collecting the information that will assist in expressing the problem situation. The *SSM Stage 1* involved getting all the information about the church branch being investigated, I achieved this by running interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions as well as doing an appropriate literature review.

I then followed *SSM Stage 2* where I expressed the problem situation with a rich picture. Figure 4.3 illustrates a rich picture that resulted from an exercise of gathering all the information from the system and the environment.

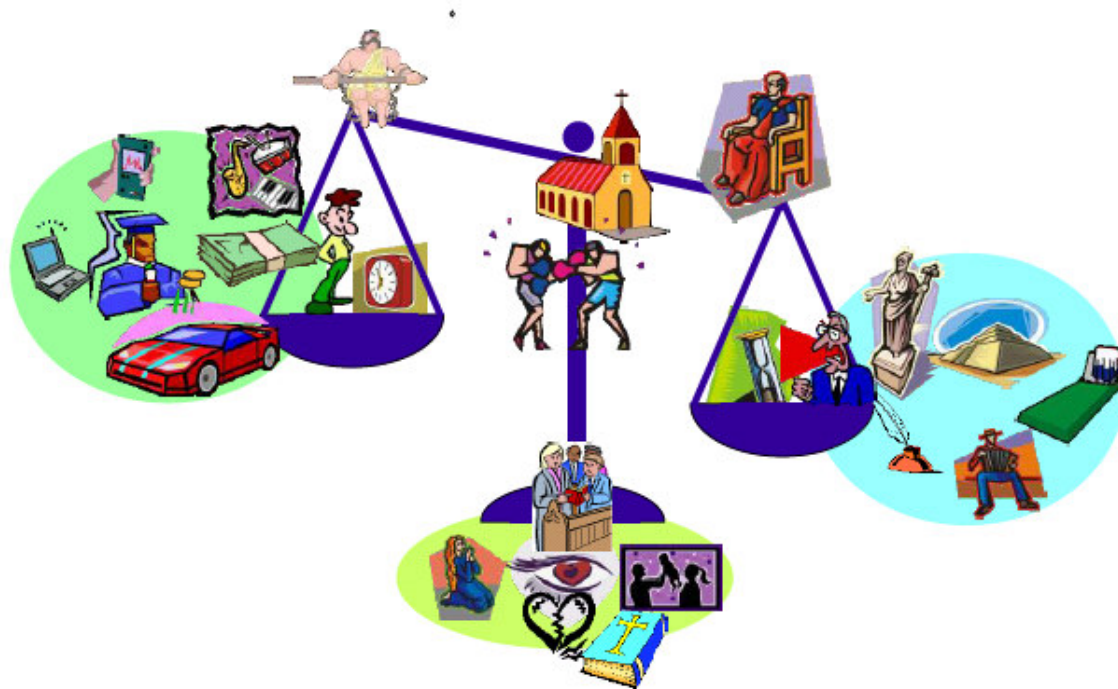


Figure 4. 3: Rich Picture Representing Problem Statement

The rich picture has been able to show that there are power allocation issues between the young and the older members such that the church is seen as belonging to the older members as illustrated by the tilted scales. The older members are seen as holding on to the items of the past as depicted by the statues, pyramids, graves, ancient writing inks and old music. This representation symbolises that older people in this church value legacy of the church as its legitimacy. Older people seem to be dominating in this structure as they are pictured on the throne that causes the scales to favour them such that even the church doors seem to be only facing at the older people's direction. This also means that the youth feel unwelcome in this church.

The rich picture also shows that younger members are seen as active and exposed to the newer technology, money, gadgets, fancy cars and good music. Unfortunately for the youth, they are still overpowered by the older members as the older members seem to be in a position of power, the youth are seen as in prison as picture shows them in chains. The youth seem to be fighting a losing battle even though they are on par with the times. The metaphors of a church as a *psychic prison* and *instrument of domination* are clearly expressed by the rich picture.

A true picture of how a church ought to be is represented at the bottom of the scales, proving that this picture is not visible and is downplayed in this branch. The suppressed picture represents a church with a vision of people that will worship in harmony, a church that will be guided by one Bible and a church that will be a home for all families that are members regardless of their age. The ideal church environment is not on the equation in this system, that is illustrated by the fact that this environment is at the bottom of the scales.

From this picture I was able to expose the mess and also to have special focus on the customers, actors, transformation process, worldview, owners and environmental constraints (CATWOE) of this church system. This special focus was *SSM Stage 3* where I had to produce a root definition of the problem situation. A root definition that emerged with *SSM Stage 3* was "*To create a progressing church branch where there would be a harmonious and balanced relationship between young and old members and also a church that will ensure that there is mutual appreciation of worldviews between the age groups.*"

It is important to note that I adopted Critical Systems approach at meta-methodology level as it allowed complete flexibility to use several other methods within it. SSM was then used as a

dominant method as it was best suited for complex problems and it assisted us to create conceptual models that were the input to solving our problem, this was *SSM Stage 4*. The conceptual models that emerged from this process were literally based on the root definition in order to make sure that the objectives of the root definition are realised.

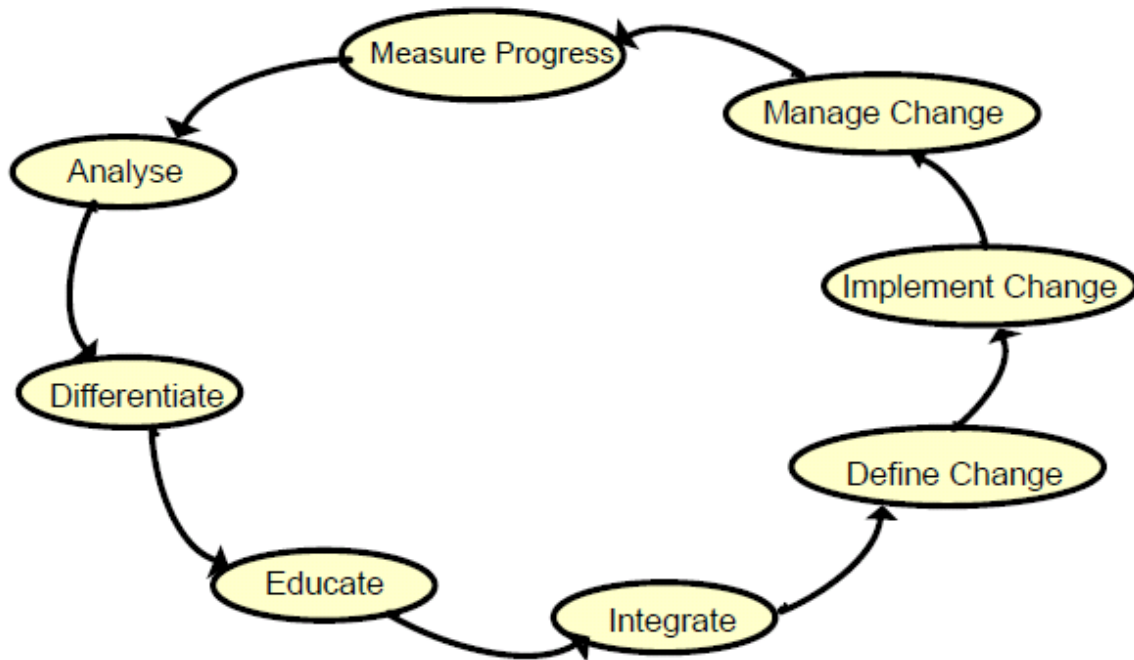


Figure 4. 4: Conceptual Model from *SSM Stage 5*

The conceptual model simply implies that there is a lack of progress in the church and mostly based on relationships between older and younger members. The approach is to first measure and analyse the extent of the problem amongst members. The approach is to group people and educate them based on their respective deficiencies, once this is done, then you can integrate them when they have a common understanding. Required change can then be defined, implemented and managed. This is a continuous process that will continue to assess, educate and drive change with a vision to promote growth.

These conceptual models were then compared with the real world situation at *SSM Stage 5* to see what ought to happen. Various answers as well as the real situation were obtained during the questionnaires, interviews and during focus group discussions. The main objective was to critique the status quo and compare it to the required improvements, which emerged to be emancipation

issues for other groups as well as creating appreciation of worldviews. These responses are summarised at the appendix of this dissertation.

I followed Ulrich (1996)'s Critical Systems Heuristics to deal with the issues of emancipation and boundary critiquing. Critical Systems Heuristics ensured that the interests of the participants are considered by ensuring that their value judgments are freely exercised in the process of improvement where needed. The questionnaires and interview questions were structured such that I went through the process of questioning what things ought to be and what things are at the moment. The interview questions and questionnaires were also structured such that they exposed how things are and also how things were ideally supposed to be.

It seemed desirable to implement a radical transformation process in the church as it appeared that the church had adopted a stagnant position when it comes to issues of technological advancements, this is in line with *SSM Stage 6*. However from a cultural and a legacy point of view, radical transformation seemed unfeasible, it actually sounds like we are saying we need to demolish the 150 year old Durban City hall and build a tavern. One needs to be sensitive to cultural issues as well as legacy issues before implementing any improvement proposal. One challenge is that the leaders of the church are seen as taking the change agent roles in the transformation, while they themselves need to be transformed.

The most feasible and desirable solution would be to probably aim at transformation as the ultimate goal by starting with the leadership first as the process would derail if they are not trained on the process or if they are not supportive of it. Leadership would typically need to follow the intentional change theory as described in Boyatzis (2005), the change would probably need to be gradual and incremental with the leadership. With the wider church membership, the approach would be to deliberately aim at introducing activities that involve all age groups. This would be the beginning of a transformation process, if possible. Hypothetically speaking, as people spend more time together, the more they tend to know and appreciate each other. It now transpires that as we try to conclude the *SSM Stage 7* we now seem to solve a problem different to the original. The emergent solution is addressing the need for people to appreciate each other rather than conflict resolution.

The following section gives an account of the responses that were obtained from interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and other empirical data collection processes. These accounts form a

basis for the rationale that resulted in the formation of the rich picture, the entire process of SSM and up to the desirable solution for implementation.

4.2.1 Questionnaires

The crux of my questionnaires was mainly for stratification purposes, such that I wanted to ensure that before I could do an interview I knew where a person fits in the church in terms of age, social standing and background. I wanted to stratify people according to how old they were, where they grew up, when they joined the church and what they expect out of the church especially when it comes to worship and relationships inside the church. I managed to obtain a total of 37 people between 16 and 70 years of age and I was able to categorise people in the criteria that I had prepared in the questionnaires. In the next subsections I have summed up the observations and responses that came from the 37 written and oral questionnaire submissions which were originally sent to 100 people.

4.2.1.1 Age Related Questions

I noticed from responses that the general trend was that church members who were at an age of 60 years and above had either grown up in rural areas or at Umkhumbaan, an old black township in the early years of urbanisation of blacks in Durban. The general trend was that church members below 50 years of age had grown up in townships and very few under 30s that had grown up in suburbs whilst the rest grew up in the townships. Most of the older members of the church had been part of the church for all their lives, some as early as the 1940's, and they had been exposed to the teachings of the church founders or at least they were exposed to the immediate protégés of church founders. These older members also believed that the real legacy and the legitimacy of the church lies in the original teachings of the church founders, thus the style of worship and relationships should not deviate from these teachings.

There was also a sizeable percentage of older members who joined the church at old age as they came from other churches and some were new converts at the time. These members seemed to be of the opinion that the church should be open to exploring newer methods of worship and they believed that the youth could be given an opportunity to add value in such fields.

The church structures have no specific age brackets for the youth such that any member of the church could choose to join the youth movement regardless of age. I ended up defining the youth in this specific church as anyone up to the age of 40 years, as most active members in the youth structures were in their 30's. Most youth members confessed to having tried hard to introduce more contemporary styles of worship and were only faced with resistance and with no support from anyone. These youth would fall into a category of radicals, whilst there were other youth that were happily tagging along with the status quo.

4.2.1.2 Exposures and Backgrounds

I have observed that people who have been exposed to the founders of the church are mainly older church members, such that these people reject any other teachings that are different to the original teachings. These older people believe it is their prerogative and responsibility to protect the legacy of these teachings, as they also highlighted that they would openly oppose any leader whom they deem to be teaching otherwise. This is true for people who were active in the times of Rev Job Chiliza (between 1940 and 1963), and also for people who have been mentored by people from this era. This group now consists of older members and younger members who have become loyalists and protégés of these older members. These protégés are generally in leadership positions or are blue eyed boys for the positions of leadership. This group is full of people who either spend more time in church or with church people as observed from their questionnaire responses.

A contemporary group, namely the majority of the youth, have only been active in the church since late 1990's. This is the most hi-tech group that spend most time in libraries, internet, *facebook*TM and they seem enlightened as they tend to fellowship with other contemporary churches from time to time without the knowledge and approval of this branch leadership. This is due to the fact that traditionalist members of the church are openly opposed to any member of this church that visits other churches as they believe those members would start introducing styles from other churches which are unholy in their opinion. The fact of the matter is that some of the young members that visit other churches do not come back, and those that come back would generally try to introduce new styles as feared by older members. This then becomes a point of conflict as the older and younger members start competing for the future state of the church.

4.2.1.3 Style of Worship and Music

Music is a core of worship and it turned out that it is the most sensitive subject in this church study. As stated in Barnes (2008), a black church faces a bigger challenge of providing varieties in worship and religious experience as it is often faced with diversities of backgrounds, exposures, ages and classes. I find this challenge equally applicable in the church in question as we have members of different ages, backgrounds, classes and even expectations from the church members.

I have observed gross differences between the members of the same church in many aspects of worship in this case study, this is even regardless of their age. I have observed that we have young and old members who are satisfied with the worship music repertoire in the church, and we also have two extreme groups that would rather change the repertoire. One group, typically older members are against the introduction of instruments citing spiritual reasons as well as health issues as they often complain about the noise levels. There are also younger members who believe that music is still unprofessional and would rather introduce a full band at the church, as the older members are just complaining about one keyboard that is currently playing in the church.

Older members who are traditionalists mostly complain that as the youth is introducing new styles they are slowly making the church less spiritual. On the other hand, the youth sees resistance by older members to accommodate other styles of worship as a means of making the church less welcoming. One older member was quoted as saying *“Yes, I permanently have to fight against introduction of styles which are worldly”* when asked about her opinion on the new styles of worship. This has been coupled by the responses from mostly older members that they believe that visitors, new converts and youth should be observed for longer periods until they are given any level of responsibility citing that they would need more time to adapt to the church and would also need more time to learn the doctrine of the church. The youth and younger members responded by saying that the church needs the youth, visitors and new converts in order for the church to grow.

4.2.1.4 Power Allocation Questions.

On the questionnaires, there were questions of power allocation between older members and younger members of the church. The majority of the youth answered these questions by

highlighting that older church members have too much power and this power needed to be reduced and it was time for them to make way for younger leadership. On the other hand older members' answers were mostly conservative, where they generally said that the youth also was gaining too much power, and that new converts and visitors should not be given power or positions of power until they have proved themselves in the church. The youth interpreted this as lack of trust as one responded as saying: *“The main thing is that older people don't trust the youth and they don't want the youth to participate on programmes that the church have, If the youth tries to improve or implement new programmes unto the system of the church, they are always pushed aside and are told that this African GOSPEL Church wasn't like this. That is why there is no growth in this church of ours.”*

Chapter 2 highlighted that power allocation was one of the biggest items that threatened the growth of the church as well as relationships. Judging from this study, this church has resulted in formation of cliques that are categorised into four. These cliques are the leadership structures that emerge in addition to the formal leadership in the church. The first clique being the most powerful older traditionalist members, the second being the radical youth, *contemporarists*, who believe that they have to introduce change in the church. The third group is the *conformists*, this is a typical youth that conform to the traditionalists and they appear to be the protégés and loyalists of the older traditionalist members, this group has a small number of youth. The conformists tend to empower the traditionalists even more and they would disempower the *contemporarists* as they tend to be the proof that the status quo is acceptable. The fourth group are the passive members who have no voice and would rather not be part of the power struggles, they generally tend to keep their opinions to themselves.

4.2.2 Interview Questions

I had approached this research with an understanding that I would find that the problem was based on worldview differences between older and younger members, but the discovery was a bit more deeply rooted than my hypothesis. I had distributed questionnaires and interview questions to all members who were available and keen on participating and they were to return all paperwork when completed. I found it more fulfilling to do one on one interviews with people as I could also ask clarification questions where I needed answers and I would be able to attach emotions to the responses. I approached the interviews as normal conversations where I acted as if I did not know what was going on and I was solely dependent on the interviewee to give me

answers. I regarded the interview as a conversation of daily life as described in Kvale (1996) to ensure that the interviewee remained at ease with the process.

I have included sample responses to questionnaires and interview questions in APPENDIX 1 where I represented a typical youth response and a typical older member response. I will report on the points that I felt were the themes of the responses from oral interviews and from written submissions of interview questions. I managed, in most cases, to extract the overall feelings and worldviews of each age group and cliques as described above. I regard the formation of cliques as a form of emergent leadership in the church that displaces formal leadership at specific aspects of organisational operation.

Question 1: What do you think is the problem with active youth in the church when it comes to relationships with older people?

This question was aimed at attempting to expose the problem issues with the youth that cause them to be at conflicts with older people. This question was initially intended for older members to answer, thus I was expecting that youth would either refrain from answering this question or they would say there are no problems with them. I then discovered from the responses that there are people from the youth that were not pleased with the youth, citing that there is insubordination and disrespect from the youth. This was mostly the *conformists* group that took this stance. There was also a sizeable number that was saying that older people are misunderstanding the youth and that the youth had no power in the church, this was a *contemporarist's* point of view.

I also obtained responses from older members and I discovered that there were mixed feelings amongst the older members about youth issues. I had people, typically *traditionalists*, who were vehemently opposed to the conduct of the youth, as they argued that the youth were not grounded to the originals teachings of this church. Similar to the youth responses, there were also a few older members who felt that the youth had to be given an opportunity to express themselves in the church.

A key point that was worth noting was that the youth felt that they were not trusted enough to participate or contribute in the direction of the church, this was often due to the perception that older members felt that youth needed to get more experience in understanding the church doctrine. Some older members even highlighted the point that it was unthinkable that anyone new

in the church could be given any responsibility as they themselves took more than 10 years before they were productive in the church.

Question 2: What do you think is the problem with older people in the Church when it comes to relationships with the youth?

As I had highlighted in chapter 2 that the allocation of power is a biggest issue in the church, I have also observed that this church is no different. Youth and other older people seem to believe that some specific older members in the church had excessive power and they were able to frustrate anybody else with the amount of power they have. The qualification to this point was that older members would tend to exercise their power as they were trying hard to disempower the youth which was believed to be introducing unacceptable styles in the church.

The older members who were also complaining about this *traditionalist* group turned out to be people who were not life long members or those that turned out not to have any family predecessors in the church. These older members complained about specific *traditionalist* older members of the church as they also highlighted that they themselves feel powerless as they were not born in the church, thus they are sometimes regarded as illegitimate members. These older members, typically the passive members, appear to be at the bottom of the power chain, they would reserve their positions in the aspect of power allocation and power struggles.

Question 3: Have you personally been affected by these problems? What have you done to deal with these problems?

African Gospel Church, Umlazi branch has proved to be a turbulent environment as it turns out that every member in this church has to often protect his position and his standing in the church. Every member of the church seemed to have been exposed to or fallen victim to the age related conflicts in the church judging from the responses. I have noticed that some people would speak openly about the problems on either sides of the age divide and some would softly sweep these issues under the carpet such that even the leadership is fully aware of the environmental challenges and would tend not to face the issues.

The radical youth that are fighting for change would speak up, such that they have sent through about three volumes of complaint documents to the church leadership within one year. The *traditionalist* older members are also equally vocal about their concerns as they permanently cite the risk of the youth trying to change the church to an undesirable state. Older members have a

powerful advantage as they have more than enough access to the pulpit where they openly condemn the youth and their attempts to change the church. I could not help noticing that older members who are more contemporary in thinking would not openly support the radical youth, and these were the passive members. When I questioned their silence I realised that they had been previously accused of diluting the values of the church, thus *traditionalists* would tend to undermine them by regarding them as of “least faith”.

I have obtained a copy of a grievance document which was drafted by the radical youth or *contemporarist* youth as they were trying to drive change in the church. It was easily observable that as much as most youth members appreciated the content of the document, they would disassociate themselves with it. This was due to the fact that the document was labelled by other church members and leadership as if it was from rebellious, disobedient and insubordinate youth. This document represented the church as a typical Zimbabwe or Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the leaders being too overly obsessed with nursing their legacies. This ended up becoming a turning point for some youth members as they eventually exited the church as they refused to accept a “*fit in*” route and opted for the “*ship out*” route as would be openly suggested by the *traditionalists*.

Insubordination and disobedience is highly unacceptable in the church, this is due to the teachings of (The Holy Bible) as well as the teaching of values in a Zulu culture. I have had the opportunity to interview a few people who have left the church and they mentioned that they left the church once they were labelled as insubordinate as they tried to introduce new ideas in the church. This was key to them as they regarded a church as a place of blessings, and it was not acceptable for any member of the church to be labelled rebellious as it amounted to a curse.

I observed from interviews that most people were frustrated, even the most powerful *traditionalist* members as they frequently had to work hard to maintain their position of power. This had put tremendous pressure on the leadership as they also had to frequently exhibit different positions and characteristics to ensure that they pleased all groups while they themselves were not seen by the *traditionalists* as if they are loosening the yoke. The leadership typically believes that they owe their positions to the older members who hold a traditionalist agenda. It also transpired from the responses that this church denomination has a history of purging pastors as and when the powerful members of the church see fit.

Many church members including older members and leadership are aware of the reality that the church will change somehow, the main issue is whether they are for change or not. *Traditionalist* older members would tend to reflect about the olden days which were better and more spiritual than the present days and these reflections also create tremendous pressure on leadership and *contemporarists* as they generally imply that the church has taken a wrong turn.

Question 4: Do you think there is clear and logical split of age groups and their responsibilities in the church? Why? Is it necessary to have this split?

There was ambiguity in this question as interviewees interpreted this question in two different ways. Some people interpreted the splits of age groups as literally meaning the separation of people due to conflicts. My intention with this question was to ascertain the classification and stratification of people in terms of their age as I was referring to the age brackets that differentiates people based on age structures.

I initially highlighted abnormalities with the boundaries for the definition of youth at the church in question. Currently, there is no age bracket for youth structure membership and leadership, youth is currently any “saved” and baptised church member who would like to participate in youth activities regardless of their age. This was proved by the fact that the youth organiser for the branch was 40 years of age and his leadership committee had members ranging from 24 years to 52 years of age. The district youth organiser was also over 40 years of age and his committee being from 30 years of age to over 60 years of age. At national level, the national youth organiser was over 75 years of age with his committee ranging from 40 years of age and it included more pensioners.

The responses from older *traditionalist* members about this scenario was that they found it difficult to understand the concept that the youngsters could function in church structures without supervision from older members as they believe that the youngsters still needed to learn the church tradition. There was agreement in this situation as the youth also felt that they were not trusted enough to handle anything within the church, thus the church leadership had put older people in the youth leadership structures that were sure to protect the legacy of the church and promote *traditionalists* agenda.

Question 5: Do you think age related conflicts have done harm or can do harm in the growth of the church? How?

The entire church fraternity was in agreement with the statement that age related conflicts are harmful and have resulted in hostilities around members as well as other members exiting the church. The root of these conflicts were not entirely defined as age related by interviewees, but were mainly defined as the failure of the church to change as defined by the *contemporarists*. The *traditionalists* regarded the root of these conflicts as based on the idea that the youth were not willing to take direction from the elders.

The *traditionalist* older members interpreted the growth in spiritual terms, such that they believed that the church was slowly dying in spirituality because it was losing its roots. The *traditionalists* were often quoted in pulpits as saying that if any member was unwilling to conform to the doctrine, that member was free to exit the church. The *contemporarist* youth were much worried about the growth of church membership numbers as they also blamed *traditionalist* older members for their open stance on the “*fit in or ship out*” policy as they felt that the church had lost many members and it was becoming more difficult for them to invite new members to the church, citing possibilities of alienation of visitors by traditionalist agendas.

The *contemporarist* youth felt offended by the *traditionalists* as they would openly label the youth as unbelievers if they chased after prosperity, material things as well as how they dressed. The *traditionalists* had prescribed the dress code, the worship and religious styles, the life style and other items that are similar to the times of the founders as they believed these were the foundation of the church. This has harmed the growth of the church and the relationships in the church more than any other issues according to the *contemporarists*.

Question 6: What do you think has been done to solve the problem and what has been leaderships’ role in this regard?

The problem is that all sectors of the church are blaming the leadership for the emergence of conflicts. The *contemporarist* youth believe that leadership had not done anything to ensure that they are accommodated in the church and that their views are not taken into consideration. The youth also believe that leadership has given *traditionalist* older members too much power such that the older members dictate on how the church is run. The radical youth had approached leadership on several occasions where they voiced their dissatisfaction as they seemed to believe that they were left out of the loop in the church. The youth admit to having received warm welcome by leaders when they tabled their concerns in most instances, but they believe that it all ended at that meeting without any way forward from the leadership.

Traditionalist older members also blamed leadership as they believe that leadership listens to the youth and they allowed the youth to dilute the teachings of the founders by introducing new styles from other churches, this was the same stance that was taken by the *conformist* youth. The passive youth and passive old members believed that they were not receiving enough protection from leadership as they were often labelled as lukewarm in their style of worship and participation. All respondent members of the church believed that nothing had ever been done by the leadership to address the age related conflicts in the church.

Question 7: What do you think needs to be done to solve this problem? If so, what?

This was the one question that raised emotions from the interviewees as the responses would range from doing nothing, changing the leadership and to the ultimate option of exiting the church. There was an element of consensus about the need for change, but there was no agreement of what change and when. Every school of thought had a different vision of the desired change and would seem incompatible with the other schools' vision of the future.

The traditionalist older members were of the opinion that the youngsters needed to be taught how church was supposed to be as they believed that the youth lacked the very foundation of the church. The older members would then exploit every opportunity they get, including the pulpit, to instil the traditionalist theology in the church. The manner of approach by older members for such teachings was generally perceived as offensive to the contemporarist youth as they would first be labelled as either rebellious or disrespectful.

Most contemporarist youth had come to a point where they said there was no change possible in the church and some contemplating on exiting the church and some were trying to adapt to the reality. There were mixed feelings about calling for an open debate as some felt debate would not yield results and others were convinced it would make a difference.

4.2.3 Focus Groups

I encountered challenges with this approach as I was not entirely welcome by a broader church community and this left people with doubt on whether to participate in such focus groups. One challenge I would have been faced with was the fact that I would have been participating in focus groups of people much older than I am and there may be some elements of discomfort amongst

elders to be free. I would have had a hard time trying to think of some creative way of breaking the ice and crossing the generational divide. Krause (2000) suggested that each focus group had to have a practitioner of same age and gender to make them more comfortable, I did not have capacity to employ practitioners for each focus group and I intend getting the research information first hand.

The intention of the focus group discussions was to discuss with people of similar classification and ensure that group opened up more on the subject, so as to understand the extent of the situation. I had intended to have two focus group discussions such that I would have had a contemporary youth group as well as traditionalist older members. I managed to convene one focus group of contemporary youth as it was difficult to get older members together as they tended to avoid group discussions. I did however, seek similar responses from older members during one-on-one interviews. I found that older members were warmer than I had anticipated during one-on-one interviews, they however, did not sound very keen on focus group discussions that was the main reason I ended up calling off a focus group meeting with traditionalist older members.

The focus group was a triangulation technique that I had opted to use in order to ascertain and verify the interview and questionnaire process. It turned out that the focus group with the youth was able to highlight similar structures of conflicts and classification of people in the church. In this section I will highlight specific issues, only focusing different and additional issues to the ones mentioned in the previous sections of questionnaires and interviews.

The contemporary youth in the focus group remained loyal to the church, such that all seven youth members in the focus group were born in this church and the church being their parents' church for all of them. They were musical in their background and they expressed their dissatisfaction on how they felt the church undermined music, such that they admitted that they enjoyed participating in musical items with other churches than their home church.

The focus group of contemporary youth highlighted that the church had lost people who would have been able to drive the required change in the church, this was a serious concern for them as they felt they are exposed and they themselves were helpless in the situation. The church had also lost high quality musicians to other ministries and to contemporary churches as their desires for

musical expression were never appreciated internally. These musicians had since become highly sought after artists and some have been seen on big stages in the international arenas.

The challenge with this church is that leadership see their main role as that of protecting the legacy of the church by maintaining the original teachings of the founders. The leadership, from responses, has done enough to ensure that they have created duplicates and replicas of themselves, that is people who would think like and be like the founders of the church. This, in their opinion was only proof that the traditionalist agenda would never die in this church. The indoctrination was seen as the legitimacy of the church, thus all other issues like the relationships and the social environment become secondary if it all important.

It also transpired that the legacy in question is the same one that has been responsible for driving the youth away from the church, including the children of the leadership. The youth has moved to more vibrant, contemporary churches which are led by youthful pastors who know how to embrace the needs of the youth of the time, whilst arguing that the older leaders of this church are behind the syllabus. The argument in question was that there was no evidence that the church leadership had the interests of the youth at heart since even their own children have left the church. The leaders have been quoted a couple of times announcing from the pulpit that anyone who is not blissful with the church proceedings, doctrine or any other aspect was free to exit the church.

The youth had highlighted the absolute lack of activities for the youth in the church such as sports, music, dance, career guidance, and life skills as these have been demonised dating back to the history of founders. Going to church has become a religious ritual which has been reduced to set of rules and regulations that define the membership. The dreams of the youth have been neglected and they have been slowly moved to a position of complacency and contentment with no achievements.

The focus group was also open to the idea that there is a lot that could be learnt from the traditionalists older members, and they further highlighted that people should realise that learning was a two way street. Currently the contemporary youth feel that they do not have the appetite of learning from older members as the older members put too much salt and vinegar on their dish. The older members also needed to learn from the youth, and the older members had to tone down on the bitterness and negativity about the youth. This point proved that the focus group was in

agreement with the hypothesis that there was a great need for mutual appreciation of worldviews in the church amongst members before any means of conflict resolution would be sought in this instance.

4.3 Reflections

It was a rewarding exercise for me to meet with all the people and engage in discussion with them on this research topic. I observed that the behavioural complexities between people of different ages were very diverse. Older members all said it was the first time for them to be exposed to such research procedures within the church and they never saw it coming in their lifetimes. The African Gospel Church is the least researched church and I have not come across such research processes on this church in the past. The older members were, however, very cautious with the process and they would avoid any participation, this was short lived for all of them as they started to open up when I had produced the letter of authorisation of research from the church leadership. The youth were easy going and were eager to participate and voice their concerns more than anything.

In this section I provide a reflection on how the responses and the collected data fit in this research as well as to contextualise the key aspects of this research, namely the worldviews and leadership dynamics based on the age related conflicts.

4.3.1 Conflicts

The empirical research revealed that the church is operating at dissonance by default such that there are sub branches within one branch and these branches are embracing different agendas. The church has been a victim of intra-denominational conflict in the last 12 years which resulted in the split of the church into two independent groups. The main reason for this congregational split was captured as the issue of the legitimacy of leadership, this split has not been resolved to date even with the intervention of legal systems and judiciaries. Even though this split has not been fully researched, it is striking to discover that this intra-denominational conflict is in line with what Barnes (2008), Becker (1993) and Starke (1996) reveals as source of conflicts.

One other striking revelation is that this main denominational conflict does not seem to be affecting the Umlazi congregation as the members have actually lost interest in following the

developments of this conflict and it is mainly pursued by the church leadership at denominational level, this conflict never came out from member interviews. Literature has also shown that denominational conflicts are not necessarily the same as congregational conflict in the same church (Becker 1993), which is clearly the case in this church of my study.

Dissatisfactions for older church members are more pronounced, yet dissatisfactions for youth are heavily attenuated even if they make their way to the leadership. I was also raised in a Zulu household and I was taught not to talk back or argue with the elders regardless of whether I agreed with them or not, this posed serious critical approach problems as there was no dialogue. The new school of secular thinking encourages students to question the status quo, and unfortunately in Zulu culture this could be misinterpreted as disrespect and the youth especially in church would tend to avoid such questioning as the church is also at odds with secular views. The most common approach for enlightened youth would generally be to exit the church and look for a church that embraces their critical type of thinking.

There is permanent confrontation in the pulpit, “home cells” and even at social gatherings. The older members would confront the youth at these platforms and rebuke them in terms of presentation, conduct and trying to change the church. The youth would blame the older members for running the church like an old school and also blame older members for the members that exit the church. The major difference is that younger members would not blame older members publicly or directly due to cultural and religious teachings which emphasise that the young ones must have respect for the elders.

It is of late that there are now radical youth who are bold enough to take a step and approach the church leadership about the lack of support for the youth agenda. These radical youth are mostly new converts, as in less than 5 years converted, who are professionals, financially sound and come from secular backgrounds or they would fellowship with other churches from time to time. Fellowshiping with other churches means that they are well aware of how other churches are progressing as tend to visit various churches. These youth are operating at the edge of frustration as they feel that church leadership, including the pastor, do not take them seriously. The older members have openly voiced out that these youth are not good for the progress of the church, they would rather the youth exit the church or at least spend a few more years learning the doctrine of the church.

4.3.2 Worldviews

Wortmann (2007) states that biggest issue is that even though the church needs change as an integral part of growth, the issue is how change is introduced as this will have direct long term effect on the membership and church relations. Wortmann (2007) also mentions critical issues affecting the church as communication and the process as the main concerns, much more important than change itself. This was evident in interview exercises as proper communication proved possible with older members, which was seemingly impossible to imagine.

Wortmann (2007) states that even though older members would not likely speak in one voice, they would form a very good basis of a focus group for any church that requires change as they have a sentimental attachment to the church. The older members have invested a lot in the church in terms of their time, mentoring, finances, spiritual and physical service to the church. The traditionalists were literally protecting their lifelong investments that they had made in the church, that is why they acted in authority in the church. The older members showed that they treated any discussion about the church with great convictions as well as with compassion. Older members regarded the church as their only home, thus many members who had been church members for over 15 years highlighted that they stand by the legacy of the church founders.

The research process also revealed that not all members of the organisation share a common worldview that improvement is needed, which is one of the main commitments of critical systems approach. The lack of debate and consensus on the issues of improvement informs the research that fairness and human emancipation cannot exist. The research has unveiled that with many older members, the legitimacy of the church is deeply rooted on the legacy of its foundations that were laid by its founders. This proves contrary to the assumption that I made in chapter 2 that the legitimacy of the church lies in the idea that they worship the Supreme Being, God.

Traditionalist older members were generally not open to the ideas of having a split in worship styles as they were of the opinion that younger members needed to be taught on the original ways of worship. These traditionalist old members were of the idea that the youth did not fully appreciate the old tradition as it seemed a perfect way in their eyes. The youth were also puzzled by the idea of older members holding on to the ancestral ways. The method of differentiating youth and older member did not seem feasible in this instance as the members of the church regarded it as a split of the church, this meant having a contemporary and a traditional service respectively would be very risky. Thus a contemporary and a traditional service would be a

destructive means as others thought, youth were of the opinion that the older members would not let go even on the contemporary service as they would always show up and reign. My church of study has only one service, an integrated solution might be probable.

Looking at Critical Systems Heuristics, emancipation would be the issue that needs to be addressed as there were gross power imbalances that needed to be addressed. The focus would be to promote dialogue as well as train the traditionalist older members to be competent citizens in the church when it comes to change issues as well as separately train the contemporarist youth on understanding the needs and the worldviews of traditionalist old members.

4.3.3 Church and Leadership Dynamics

The church branch in question appeared to exhibit characteristics of a Pentecostal church. This was evident from the style of worship, the submission to the Holy Spirit and also its distancing and denouncement of ancestral worship. The church also has a very charismatic leader as the experience of the church was mostly centred on the character of the pastor. The church structure resembles that of an Episcopal church since it has a Moderator (an equivalent of the Bishop) and the church is divided into districts which are an equivalent of provinces in an Episcopal setup at a denominational level.

There is no isolation between the congregation or the church branch in question and the wider denomination. This is because the pastor of this church branch also happened to be the presiding moderator of the entire church, thus this church branch literally reflects the vision of the entire denomination as it is also regarded as the church headquarters. The church branch has formal leadership structures, which are the church committee comprising of the pastor, preachers and evangelists, women's league, youth league and the Sunday school league. All leagues subsequently report to the district and national structures.

The architecture of the leadership structure of the wider church denomination is such that the Moderator and his national executive committee would assign or recall a pastor to or from a church branch as and when they deem it necessary. The church committee has little or no control as to whom, when and why a pastor is assigned or recalled to the branch. The powerful members of many church branches including this branch have a history of executing a *coup d'état* when they feel a pastor has overstayed his welcome in their branch. The church committee seems very

passive and reserved in this instance with the pastor being a dominating person, this could be attributed to the fact that the pastor of this church branch is also a presiding moderator of the entire denomination.

The leadership of the church has been observed to exhibit support stances for both the traditionalists and contemporarists worlds where the contemporarist support in being oppressed. The leadership believe that it is in their interest to openly support traditionalists doctrine as it is associated with strict church values, since the stricter you are, the better you are perceived to lead in this church. This is a worldview where traditionalist is sacred and the contemporarist is treated as secular, thus conflicts abound. *Traditionalism* is highly practiced such that there are some traditions in the church which have been grossly confused with the Holy Bible as the *sola scriptum*.

Leadership has not been able to obtain resonance between the dichotomy of worldviews, the traditionalist and the contemporarist worlds which is the main reason that one church operates in different worlds. Leaders need to ensure that there is competence in the two worldviews, and each is able to see the world in the eyes of another. Currently the focus is on enforcing the traditionalist worldview on the church without properly educating the youth on these values, but people are only taught to comply.

The leadership of this church is of old age, such that pastors are only ordained after about twenty years of being a baptised member of this church as they believe that a person has to prove himself as fully saved before being ordained. That is why the pastors and leadership support the older members agenda of *traditionalism* as they are also of old age. The pastors of this church would be ordained at an average age of 50 years.

The age split ratio does not seem point to the direction of growth, since the demographics showed that the older members constitute more than 70% of the church, which is completely opposite of the 25% that was observed from case studies of contemporary churches. I can only interpret this as a church on a downward spiral in terms of growth and change seems far fetched in this church because of these statistics.

This then describes the church's ecclesiastical features as based on a fixed doctrine that has been stagnant since inception. The church does not believe that a doctrine can be re-enacted, renewed

or even contextualised to fit modern times. This church still preaches the message that women will go to hell if they wear pants, earrings and hairstyles and males will also go to hell if they don't wear a tie and a coat when going to church. This is taught as the basics and the founding principles of the church, and this message has not changed since the inception of the church.

The complexity of the system has resulted from the fact that the church environment is not simple since the church is based on strong cultural and religious roots which need to be taken into account. Youth would tend to comply with the elders as it is culturally and religiously correct for them to do so, regardless of whether or not there is consensus. There are now newer churches in the area that are very contemporary and that fit the profile of a model church that the youth are seeking after. One would be tempted to assume that the youth would have long exited this church for other contemporary churches, in actual fact the youth is persistent in hoping for change. One factor that contributed to the radical youth not leaving the church is that most of them were born in this church branch and for most of them, their parents are still in the same church. The current youth in the church is either second or third generation members of the church, thus they themselves have legacy and sentimental value issues to deal with.

The leadership of this church has led this church in a manner typical to a cult group as the style of leadership may include elements of brainwashing the members. Johnson (1979) states that people who are from lower social status, deprived, lacking in purpose and vision are the most likely candidates for sect or cult organisations. The church leadership and the church doctrine motivate people to lose it all and then join the church and they are vehemently opposed to the prosperity gospel as they tend to preach a poverty gospel. This then makes people to psychologically think that they are entirely dependent on the church, the youth have fallen victim to this leadership style as they are often told that things of secular world should be denounced.

The dominant leadership styles that were observed in this church were the charismatic and the transformational leadership styles, these styles have idealised influences that have a potential of being used purely for the benefit of the leader and the church and no benefit to the members. Servant leadership and transactional leadership styles are not visible, which I believe would be the key and primary leadership styles in such a setup, since (The Holy Bible) is based on the teachings of servant leadership. The leadership has not demonstrated enough interest on the needs of the people apart from protecting the legacy and their own powers as was observed in the research. This was also demonstrated by the lack of behavioural complexity as the leadership

could not exhibit any of the leadership roles as depicted by Quinn's model of leadership roles, the roles were not balanced as they were more rigid and not flexible.

The youth have attempted to introduce newer styles in the church, thereby attempting to convert the church into a hi-tech organisation. The leadership would most likely need to do a thorough research on the church trends and also find creative means of dealing with the age related conflicts. Interplay between members and leadership should be sought to ensure that there is constant change and stability in the church thus eliminating the hostile conflicts.

The activity of radical youth has resulted in the emergence of informal power and leadership structures in the church as they managed to organise themselves into committees that would drive change. The youth power centres have started to emerge as they believe their needs are not recognised. The youth started to engage leadership and older members, thereby pushing church leadership into transactional leadership mode which primarily promotes debates. The formation of this youth power centre is in response to the most powerful traditionalist clique which seems to be more powerful than the formal leadership of this branch.

There are other smaller cliques that exist in the church and these are operational at all level of the church. The church has appeared to have sub groups that exist within each group, these would typical be the opposition parties in each structure.

4.3.4 Change Management

“If it is not broken, do not try to fix it”, this is how older members feel about their church as they claim that the youth or the leadership would be committing a grave mistake if they attempted to alter the original doctrine of their church. The stakes are high for the older members for allowing change as they have invested all their lives, time, money and service to this church, thus allowing change or exiting the church seemed an impossible compromise for them. This church is home for them and some are frank enough to offer the youth an option of exiting the church as they would not even support a youth service for the contemporary worship styles. The older members do not trust the youth and they do not believe that the young ones can run a service on their own as they would want proper protocol to be observed on all church services, whether youth, Sunday School or Women's league.

The African Gospel Church is a conservative church and holds very little room for change, serious conflicts are mostly observed at structural levels rather than at grass roots. An element of oppression and control is only manifested at lower levels, rather than pronounced conflicts. It is very difficult to see such conflicts manifest as the church is set up in a Zulu community which upholds a culture that does not compromise the language of respect for elders.

Many youth have accepted that change would not come anytime sooner as most are contemplating on exiting the church to follow others who have left. This comes from the radical youth who are no longer expecting any positive news from the leadership as this follows a series of engagements with the leadership which bear no fruits. The relationships are very coercive at this stage, as the leadership are for the *traditionalists*, thus the older members are very powerful in the church. Change would come in this church if the leadership would support it and also take radical step to drive intentional change.

4.4 Summary

The use of Soft Systems Methodology has assisted us in ensuring that the worldviews that exist in the church are exposed. SSM as an intervention model has been very instrumental in also ensuring that the underpinning structures of these conflicts are also understood especially in the context of the church branch of our particular interest.

There is evidence that there are hostile conflicts in the church, this is proved by the formation of cliques or emergent leadership. These conflicts are underpinned by the fact that the multiple worldviews that exist in the church are not well presented within the church thus making it difficult for members to appreciate these worldviews. The competition between the traditionalists and the contemporarists is purely based on threat about the future state of the church and the future position of its members.

These findings are in no way in a position of suggesting a compromise solution to this situation as the research did not seek to return to the informants to discuss the findings as the main objective of this research was to expose the information in order to sensitise people on the underpinning structures of age related conflicts in the church and the emergent leadership dynamics. The research revealed that there are serious complexities in the church setup that yielded very sensitive information which would need careful and long term processes to address.

Leaders need to act boldly in this organisation in ensuring that as much as the future state of the church is unknowable, there is a need to drive a church to a better future. The leadership would also need to de-stigmatise the traditionalists or the contemporarist worlds as either sacred or secular and find a better way of merging two distinct futures. The next chapter will attempt to contextualise the recommended leadership intervention for this particular environment.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study has been a learning journey into an understanding that is much deeper than anticipated at the inception of this research. A church, like any other organisation, is a complex system. The major difference is that a church is very rich in interactions and that there are behavioural complexities that need to be given special attention. As I searched for a template that best describes the organisational theory of the church, I came to realising that there are no specific rules of association like in corporate firms except that the assumed goals of association are up to the imagination of an individual. The complexities of this Pentecostal church branch of research were completely unique in structures and architecture.

My quest of unveiling the underpinning structures of age related conflicts in a church context has revealed that the hypothesis about the existence of such conflicts holds as valid. These underpinning structures were found deeply entrenched in the ecclesiastical position and discourse of this specific church branch. This ecclesiastical discourse had everything to do with critically evaluating the church's interpretation of its doctrine, tradition, traditions and the future position it hopes to hold or the vision of the church. This church branch appeared to dwell on the past as its focus and emphasis had been on protecting its identity with respect to the doctrine and traditions, with no attention being given to the future. The harm of this position is that the church is operating at a level where there is no room for change, which is ironical to the theological connotation of Christianity as it is defined as a faith based organisation. "*Faith is a substance of things hoped for and evidence of things not seen*" as quoted in (The Holy Bible) in the book of Hebrews 11 verses 1 and 2. The dictionary translation is that faith is a belief that is not based on proof, unfortunately this faith based organisation would rather stick on what it can prove than on what is not seen.

As much as I attempted to produce a general picture of the "mess" relative to age groups, I do acknowledge that the picture is sampled and may also change at any given time as the uncertainty principle dictates. The uncertainty principle implies that as much as I have produced a rich picture of where the church supposedly stands, I cannot guarantee how long it will stay there or if it was not shifting in that position to begin with. In this research I had to freeze many variables, reduce some complexities as well as make principled assumptions in order to reach a conclusion. This

was achieved by fixing a paradigm and also reducing the existing conflicts only to the age related conflicts.

5.2 Worldviews

Toth Jr (1999) states that the identity of a modern black church is mainly based on the needs and the experiences of its members thus forming an organisation with a unique culture. The members continue to shape their church according to the ever-changing needs in an ideal situation. The church branch in question was also formed following the definition of a modern black church, but there was no evidence to prove that it was advancing as one. It is clearly articulated that this church was founded on the basis that the people at the time felt that the existing churches at the time did not account for their experiences and also could not meet their needs. In this instance I am talking about the needs of the people of the 1940s, where the founders did the plausible by starting their own church.

The church is at an uncanny paradox of having to embrace the founding principle and the advancement of the church as these seem incompatible to most members of the church. The empirical research has demonstrated that the most powerful group is the one that embraces the legacy or the founding principles of the church, namely the traditionalists. This implies that older people are more powerful than the youth and that the legitimacy of this church is deeply rooted in its legacy rather than in the contemporary needs and experiences of its members.

The underpinning structures of the age related conflicts are deeply rooted on the organisational paradox that exists, not only on the church branch, but on the legitimacy of the entire church denomination. There are overlaps in the worldviews across the age lines and these are influenced by the backgrounds, exposures and mentorship structures that exist at formal and informal levels. These overlaps also account for a portion of the complexities that exist in the church.

Age related conflicts in one sector of an organisation could be looked at in isolation as there are three levels that were taken into account in an attempt to provide effective intervention. The three levels that were looked at were individual motivation, organisational objectives and characteristics at a societal context. This research has managed to expose the underpinning structures of these conflicts at all three levels. However, I could not generalise from the research as to why people would admit to being in hostile conflict for years and years and do not take a decision to move on. This is due to the fact that people have different scales in weighing positives

and negatives and that people's thresholds and endurance levels are not the same, nonetheless, the assumption that what holds people together is generally stronger than the one that separates them holds.

I am also not in a position to present a perfect worldview for this church or even to suggest a negotiation into achieving a compromised worldview due to the limitations of this study. This research managed to produce the intended objective of exposing the worldviews that are responsible for age related conflicts and also highlighted that people need to be sensitive to these positions. It will be naïve to suggest that there could be a common worldview in this church.

5.3 Leadership and Age Dynamics

The leadership of this church appear to support older members by default, simply because about 90% of the youth leaders and entire church denominational leaders are above 50 years of age. The logic that I could argue is that the older the leaders, the more insulated by tradition and legacy they get. Their legacy, achievements and experience tends to be their insulator from the world, thus they tend to be unapproachable and eventually become isolated from the real and current world. This means that older leaders are not in touch with reality, this is the root cause that makes them resistant to change, because it is not easy to embrace what you are not exposed to or what you do not know.

Capacity of leadership involves both physical strength and the wisdom, there needs to be a balance of both resources. Horowitz (2005) *et al* state that an older leader is more likely to think short term than a younger leader as he has a shorter time horizon than a younger leader. This is generally related to the issues of physical strength as the older leaders are at risk of health issues, thus they tend to ponder more about death than life. Older leaders are more worried about their achievements than their contributions, thus they tend to service their legacy at the expense of proper long term planning and future of the organisation.

The older members may have all the wisdom, but they tend to lack on the energy of pursuit. That could be one reason why older members embrace *traditionalism* as it is a scapegoat for non-action. *Traditionalism* is a position of contentment with the status quo and your achievements, thus to move away from this position would require a lot of energy from you. The insulation that the older members have does not only protect them from dangers, but it also protects their

personal legacies and statues that they have built over the years. The stakes are really high for them as it would most likely take one boy to overshadow them with one simple innovation. Thus the best option would be to block anyone who tampers with their statues and pyramids so as to avoid the repeat of David and Goliath episode from (The Holy Bible). *Traditionalism* states that nothing should be done for the first time, thus it has assumed a supreme position to the Holy Bible as the *Sola Scriptum*.

This situation has resulted in a scenario that the current leaders would tend to ignore the future of the church as it would not affect them as their children are not part of the church. I have observed in this study that the children of the leaders are not part of the church as they have moved to fellowship with other churches or are not Christians at all. This means that the family knows best about the conviction of a person than the church, thus you can fool the church but you cannot fool your family.

The needs of the youth are disregarded in this case, which hypothetically means that the future of the church is equally disregarded. The youth is energetic and courageous and is also in touch with the reality and times and they tend to be living in post-tradition or post-religious era. This was proved by the research as the youth highlighted that they spend most of their time on the internet, *facebook*™ and libraries, compared to the older members who highlighted that their lives were literally church bound. Older members and leaders are blinded from this fact such that they cannot read the environment outside their door steps as there are too many new ministries around the Durban area that are led by younger pastors who are of an average age of 30 years. These churches are growing phenomenally and they tend to attract more youth from mainline and Pentecostal churches. The older members and leadership of this church maintain their position that the youth should not be trusted with any responsibility.

One critical observation was that the youth would exit a big church with a rich history for a smaller church with no track record. Why? Smaller churches are generally very particular about embracing relationships such that they are attracting all age groups. It is easier to embrace change because the younger pastors in these churches are in touch with the times and that smaller churches are flexible with little bureaucracy, traditions and legacy issues. I have also observed and also confirmed while interviewing these dynamic young pastors that they embrace the youth and empower them to serve in the church. The youth are passive in this church because of

circumstances that they are not trusted with responsibility, but they possess so much potential energy that they explode when given an opportunity outside.

It may seem strange to realise that a “useless” member in this church may become asset at a church next door and that there are still young members who seem immune to this situation within this branch. This is due to the idea that, in my observation, the theology of this church branch has taught people to be entirely dependent on the church and not to imagine themselves as Christians if they exit this church and that they are always told that they have to wait at least seven years before they move to the next level of the gospel ladder. Thus this church would normally ordain pastors at an average age of 50 years when they are weary and worn out. A 29 year old male would take seven years to be a preacher, another seven years to be an evangelist and another seven years to be a pastor, thus at 50 years of age you’d be a pastor.

It is also fair to highlight that the African Gospel Church is operating within the guidelines of (The Holy Bible) of the qualities of a church leader as stated in the first book of Timothy chapter 3 verses 1 to 10 and this passage is quoted in section 2.7 of this dissertation. Verse 10 states that a person has to be tested in order to prove that he possesses the qualities of a church leader before being ordained. The argument could be based on whether 21 years that is allowed for by this church is a fair period to prove worthiness of character. It has also been evident in recent history of this church that in spite of all this grooming and waiting, there are also pastors who have been reprimanded for wrong doing, “sinning” or breaching code of conduct of the church.

Many members would not be in a position to realise that the situation is not healthy, this is mainly due to the fact that a leader of this church and many others around him are charismatic leaders. This situation supports the statement by Conger (1987) that follower of a charismatic leader would perceive their leader as a person with supernatural powers and they would follow the leader’s direction unconditionally even to their detriment. This probably relates to the idea that church members are at a high risk of false indoctrination and brainwashing as they are exposed to charismatic characters than critical learning associations.

5.4 Change and Paradigm Shift

I do not subscribe to the idea that change would come from a decision written down by leaders in a memo that is circulated across all church branches in this instance. I believe that an

ecclesiastical discourse would seem to be a more probable attempt to assist in dictating the next paradigm for this church. This is due to the findings that the indoctrination emerged as the key aspect of multiple worldviews that exist in the church. It became evident from the study that the youth is living in a post-religious era, thus they accuse the church of being stereotyped and traditionalists as was observable from the research.

The church has confused the tradition, traditions and doctrine and there would need to be proper engagement on redefining the connotation of each of these terms in relation to the church. A few questions would need to be asked in order to carefully review the current status of the church in terms of understanding its ecclesiastical position. These questions would need to be asked in a strategic session where all key stakeholders decide on whether the church understands the implications of the status quo on the future of the church. This would be the starting point from the conceptual model that was generated from chapter 4 of this research, where measurements and analysis of the status quo would be done. The actual gaps would imply that the church and leadership would have to re-educate where needed so as to foster a thriving environment in the church.

The need for change is not evident in the older members as they seem to believe that there is nothing wrong with the status quo. I am of the opinion that they are hindered by the idea that African Gospel Church is an old and a big church that has a huge following and that the numbers that exit the church are insignificant to the ones that remain behind. And also that there is no one who has done research on why people have exited the church already. The ratio of older members to youth is worrying on its own, as it demonstrates a church on a downward spiral.

5.5 Recommendations

My enrolment into this masters programme has been truly a life changing experience in terms of my knowledge, my approach and my understanding of the subject matter. Systems thinking and complexity theory tell us that no two systems are alike and I do believe that the dynamics of this church branch of my research could never be replicated elsewhere in the universe. I demonstrated that the learning points from this case study will form a solid theoretical framework for future studies in similar or related fields. The age related conflicts of this church branch seemed to emanate from a denominational level, thus the recommendations of this research have a huge impact at denominational level to solve the congregational issues.

These recommendations would amount to the *SSM Stage 7* as I propose actions which would most likely turn the conceptual models of *SSM Stage 5* into reality. These recommendations are purely theoretical and there is no guarantee that they will be implemented and if they will work when implemented and they have not been discussed with the informants of the research in order to spark a debate on plausible solutions. As I highlighted in chapter 4, the research methodology was followed for the purposes of unearthing the underpinning of structures of age related conflicts and looking at the emergent leadership dynamics in order to sensitise the church on the realities and implications of such.

Church organisations need to carefully define their anticipated future positions. The starting point would be to first acknowledge that the future position of any organisation is in its people, for example if there are no people in the church then there would be no church. The church undoubtedly owes its existence to the past and the present members, but that should not necessarily mean that the future position of the church should be held at ransom because of this sacred debt. The churches need to acknowledge that all people in the current generations will die and will be replaced by the next generations, shouldn't our future position be nested in the next generations? Isn't that sustainable development? From a strategic point of view, I would recommend that churches take time to develop a road map to their future and make intentional change where necessary.

This study could not be complete without reference to the theological and ecclesiastical framework as these form the basis of the legitimacy of the Christian church, thus the understanding and interpretation of these frameworks are largely responsible for the church splits, conflicts and the formation of thousands of denominations worldwide as also highlighted in Becker (1993). The literature I reviewed on the ecclesiastical discourse has departed from the stance that (The Holy Bible) is the *Sola Scriptum*, meaning that (The Holy Bible) is the supreme constitution of a Christian church. There is one *tradition* referenced in (The Holy Bible) as was laid down as God inspired since the beginning of time as it is stated in literature and as it is my basic assumption on this research. It is my argument that there is credible evidence to suggest that the answers to the problems of *contemporarism* and *traditionalism* could be well managed by seeking the original church tradition as the true legitimacy and doctrine of the church and regard everything else as having no substantial bearing on the association.

The book of Ecclesiastes chapter 7 verse 10 in the Old Testament of (The Holy Bible) states:

“¹⁰. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.”

This verse clearly condemns the mentality that people should live in the past and curse the present days. This is because God interprets this mindset as if that person is a failure if he cannot make something of the present days. It is a foolish stance in biblical standards to hold on to your legacy and demonise the present and the future. Apostle Paul emphasises the same stance in the New Testament in the book to the Philippians chapter 3 verses 12 to 14 where he states that:

¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

There is a clear direction from (The Holy Bible) that there has to be an advancement in the church as both the Old Testament and the New Testament books encourage people to forget what is behind and press on to the highest calling which is the new revelation of Jesus Christ.

From an organisational point of view, I recommend that a church becomes a learning organisation with means of accountability for the growth, thus I suggest a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) model as a reference point for studying a learning organisation as the church and the NGO have a lot in common. The church depends on member contributions, whereas an NGO depends on donations and both these organisations have their key goals as to have a positive impact on human life and its customers without the intention of making a profit. An NGO would be more professional and more contemporary as it lobbies for funding from more professional institutions, countries and governments. I believe a church can learn more from the NGO on how to adapt to the socio-economic and political changes in the environment, this will ensure that a church would move away from complacency when it comes to growth issues. As I observed newer ministries I realised that they have put accountability and development at the forefront of their agenda as the NGOs would do.

This approach is in line with my proposal of re-enactment and renewal of the doctrine in order to eradicate the *traditionalism* that has emerged as the doctrine of the church. The epistemological and ontological approaches to doctrine have been based on the argument that doctrine should not change, there needs to be consensus on whether doctrine is fixed or not before any re-enactment approaches are sought. This could not be tested fully until a definition and the application of doctrine is defined for this specific user group. A rationale for this definition and application should be based on how the church was founded, where it is and where it is going in line with the recommendation of Chan (2004) that the doctrine needs to control church practices. Thus the perception that doctrine is based only on stone age encounters and is fixed with no significance on present day may or may not hold. The doctrine needs to be re-enacted and renewed to ensure that it can regulate the church in the current time, context and current socio-economic dispensation. This will ensure inclusion of all people of the church, as the doctrine currently appears to be a white elephant in the modern contemporary days. This could seem like a plausible recommendation from a theoretical and theological point of view, but it may not be practical as this would be dependent entirely on the church's decision.

Steering a church to this direction would require the leadership of the church to be more than just charismatic and transformational, the leaders would need to be very strategic in approach. The current leadership strategy is very detrimental to the members of the church as it appears to only benefit church leaders and older members as people are only trained to become loyal without being rational. In this research I observed that the church branch conflict issues also needed to be solved at denominational level or the solutions would be unsustainable. Church branch and denominational leadership need to acknowledge the flaws of the system and make intentional change decision that would see them critiquing the status quo. The learning agenda for the entire church cannot be fixed and thus change cannot be embraced if the leadership is not willing to migrate upward.

I strongly believe there are a few leadership training seminars that could be organised for the leadership of this church which could be continuously rolled out across the entire denomination. The church should take a position of whether to support the learning agenda. It would be very naïve to expect that change would emerge in this church without radical changes, there would be a need for the church and the leadership to be educated theologically and ecclesiastically as a basis before leadership training is sought. This process would not materialise if the national executive committee of the church does not subscribe to it.

I recommend that the church should consider introducing some intergenerational activities that would bond the young and the old members of the church, this would be a starting point for getting members to appreciate another's worldview. Typically activities would include music, sports and charity events that would require all ages to participate. This is also not an easy road as this church is traditionally known for being an introvert, such that most social activities have been demonised in the name of the doctrine.

The paper by Anderson (2005) has demonstrated that most powerful preachers and founder of mega churches in South Africa are the people who left their Mainline, Episcopal and Pentecostal home churches, I have observed this in the Durban vicinity with the mega churches by black pastors were mainly founded by ex-members of Pentecostal churches. In the interviews with a few of these pastors I picked up that all of them were very frustrated by the lack of change at their home churches and they opted out. Literature highlighted that churches would either split or members would exit the church, rather than support change. The most likely and feasible solution would be for the members who feel that their future vision of the church is not aligned with the direction of the church to exit the church to either join other churches or start their own. Waiting for change could take more than a lifetime in a church context.

I now appreciate the findings from Starke (1996) after extensive research on church splits and member exits that there is phenomenal growth that is experienced by both halves of the split church and also by members who exit the church. This could be attributed to the fact that when members are at loggerheads they spend too much energy fighting each other than on advancing the church or themselves. Thus once they are out of a conflict zone, they would work hard in moving forward and also try to prove that they are progressive. Member exit and church split is the hardest of all options to be recommended, but what could be done if people stand more chances of being happy separately than being miserable together?

Some organisations cease to exist naturally as they tend to become obsolete and irrelevant to the societies they serve. This extinction starts with small symptoms which would be regarded as small events, then patterns follow. These patterns eventually expose some structures that will lead an organisation to a "free fall" scenario. If you do not serve the interests of the future, then the future would not be there to serve you in return. Are we already seeing patterns of an organisation that is on a downward spiral to extinction?

5.6 Conclusion

Age related conflicts in a church context cannot be managed in isolation, a complex view of the conflicts need to be adopted before any plausible recommendation can be tabled. In this case study it transpired that there are salient age related conflicts and confrontations that are deeply rooted in the foundations of this structure. These structural foundations have everything to do with the indoctrination of the people as well as the ecclesiastical position of the church at denominational level, not only at the branch or congregational level. This study managed to expose the unique characteristics of this church such that it was evident that there are no ready made solutions for this church.

The age characteristics of this church revealed that older members of this church block and demonise every suggestion and attempt that has the name “*change*” written on it as they believe that the future position of the church should never deviate from the foundation basis of this church. The leadership structure and architecture of this church is such that leadership is reserved for older members by default, this then categorises the leadership as the same characteristics of older members that reject change. This scenario leaves the youth as the highly oppressed group as they would like to see the church becoming more accommodating than just a cultural group.

The issues of power allocations also play a pivotal role in ensuring that there is an open debate and direction in what ever strategy endorsement for this church. At this point I conclude that this church has chosen to stay stagnant such that there are serious damages that have been done to the organs within the church, this is literally like saying that the heart took a decision to stop pumping blood to the body. This decision of the heart is suicidal to the body such that the body organs are literally fighting for survival, which manifest as conflict. The member conflicts and member exits are simply symptoms of the problem which will be analogous to the organ failures. I do not believe that the organs, church members in this case, can act on this situation, only the heart, which is the church leadership, must pump life, which is the learning culture so as to allow growth to occur naturally.

Again, it would be very naïve of me to conclude that the church needs to follow a theoretical model as it could well be that this church does not regard itself as in a crisis as it is still possible that it is deliberately purging out nonconforming agents. To prove this would have required me to

go back to the church in order to discuss the findings and carefully analyse the legitimacy and the future plans of this church. This was out of bound for this study as this could lead to severe consequences judging from the sensitivity of the finding of this study. Closing off of this loop would be a call for further studies in this church branch.

According to (The Holy Bible) in Genesis chapter 1 verse 28, God created man with the purpose to rule on all the earth and all species. It was never the original God's plan that man should be oppressed by another man, thus the church needs to move people back to God's plan of man being emancipated. The word of God says we should love one another, thus if we truly love each we would have each other's interests at heart and we would deliberately make moves to see the world in the eyes of another. Love could be a useful tool in bridging tolerance between generations.

There is a Zulu saying "*Inkunzi ilele ematholeni*" which is translated as "*The bull comes from calves*", thus any organisation or nation that does not understand that its future rests in its young is doomed for extinction.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

A. SAMPLED YOUTH RESPONSES

Research Title: Leadership Dynamics, age differences and conflict in a church context Questionnaires

SELECTED YOUTH SAMPLE RESPONSE

Please select Age	16 – 23 years	24 – 39 years	40 – 49 years	50 – 60 years	61 + years
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Please select one Answer (A, B, C or D) that best describes you or your feeling / answer.

1. Where did you grow up?

A - Rural

B - Mkhumbane

C - Township

D - Suburbs / City

2. I have been part of this church for:

A - Less than 5 years

B - Between 6 - 15 years

C - More than 15 years.

D - All my life. Explain.....My father is a pastor/elder here and I was born here...

3. This statement best Explains my participation in the church:

A - Active member in church structures

B - I strictly attend in this church only as a member

C - I attend in this church but I visit other churches and fellowship from time to time

D - I am a casual in this church.

4. Which Church leader's teachings have you been exposed to more?

A - Job Chiliza's time

B - William Chiliza & Nondaba's time

C - Moses Ngubane's time

D - Zimu and other current AGC leaders

5. I was very active in my youth days when:

A - Before 1960's

B - between late 60's and late 70's

C - Between 80's and early 90's

D - From late 90's to now.

6. I spend most of my spare time:

A - Watching TV or Listening to the radio

B - Internet, Computer, friends & Cellphone

C - Library or studying

D - In church or with other church members.

7. This is my view about new converts, youth and visitors in the church:
- A – They don't affect me
 - B – The church needs them or it will eventually die without them**
 - C – They should wait for few years before they are entrusted with responsibilities in the church.
 - D – They should not be given any high status in the church which will be more than others.
8. Music in the church is currently:
- A – Perfect
 - B – Too loud and damaging
 - C – Unprofessional (lacking skill)
 - D – Does not exist**
9. I think Church Music should be:
- A – Hymnal with no instruments
 - B – Hymnal, choruses with little instruments.
 - C – All new choruses with keyboard (as in tent crusades)
 - D – Well rehearsed, with full band and musical director.**
10. Communication and relationships in the church (are) currently:
- A – Perfect
 - B – Improving
 - C – Deteriorating**
 - D – Do not affect me
11. Church is becoming:
- A - More Spiritual
 - B – Less Spiritual**
12. Church is becoming:
- A – More welcoming
 - B – Less welcoming**
13. My understanding of youth in the church is:
- A – Teenagers and up to 25 years or there about.**
 - B – Teenagers and up to 35 years or there about.
 - C – Only saved people who have worked hard in youth matters regardless of their age.
 - D – I have no clear understanding.
14. This statement best explains my view about the youth in the church:
- A – They have too much power and their power must be reduced.

B – They don't have enough power. They must be given more power.

C – They should be given more opportunities to make an impact on the church.

D – I don't think they understand the roots of the church, they should learn from their elders.

15. This is my view about over 50's in the church:

A – They are best suited to give direction to the church.

B – Their time is over; they should just take a back seat and allow youth to take over.

C – They have too much power. This power must be reduced.

D – They don't have enough power. They must be given more power.

End of Questionnaire which is filled in conjunction with the interview on the next page.

Research Title: Leadership Dynamics, age differences and conflict in a church context

Interview Questions (Please write on extra page if needed)

SELECTED YOUTH SAMPLE RESPONSE

Interview Questions

1. What do you think is the problem with active youth in the church when it comes to relationships with older people?

The main thing is that older people don't trust the youth and they don't want the youth to participate on programmes that the church have, If the youth tries to improve or implement new programmes unto the system of the church, they are always pushed aside and are told that this GOSPEL wasn't like this. That is why there is no growth in this church of ours.

2. What do you think is the problem with older people in the Church when it comes to relationships with the youth?

Older people in church do not trust and they don't allow the youth to take full responsibility with programmes that concern them, for example the Leader of the national youth committee is more than 60years old now. Why can't they put someone younger like Mr (XYZ) of which I personally think he's got a bit of an understanding of what the youth is all about and what the youth wants.

3. Have you personally been affected by these problems? What have you done to deal with these problems?

I have been affected a lot, I have tried to implement some ideas with regards to music within the church, but the lack of appreciation and knowledge of good music has been main problem.

4. Do you think there is clear and logical split of age groups and their responsibilities in the church? Why? Is it necessary to have this split?

It doesn't make any sense to have such splits and these splits can be avoided easily, if the older people can learn to trust the youth. The only way to bridge such gabs is for the older generation to appreciate the youth with their impact and the contribution that they have in order to see the growth of this church of ours.

5. Do you think age related conflicts have done harm or can do harm in the growth of the church? How?

Definitely, the youth is leaving the church; they can avoid this by simply allowing them to participate on more programmes within the church.

6. What do you think has been done to solve the problem and what has been leaderships' role in this regard?

SIMPLY NOTHING! & another thing if the leaders could stop introducing programmes that have no impact on the growth of the youth, that I can personally appreciate it.

7. What do you think needs to be done to solve this problem? If so, what?

They should do a survey to find out about what are the programmes that the young people wants in order to attract the youth from within the church and from other churches and they really, really have to stop forcing programmes that are not interesting to the youth and the youth of today. It simply! "Interesting programmes attracts the youth". If they can't entertain, listen, understand or feel what the youth wants, they should step down as leaders.

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

B. SAMPLED OLDER MEMBERS RESPONSES

Research Title: Leadership Dynamics, age differences and conflict in a church context Questionnaires

Please select Age	16 – 23 years	24 – 39 years	40 – 49 years	50 – 60 years	61 + years
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SELECTED OLD MEMBER SAMPLE RESPONSE

Please select one Answer (A, B, C or D) that best describes you or your feeling / answer.

1. Where did you grow up?

A - Rural

B - Mkhumbane

C - Township

D - Suburbs / City

2. I have been part of this church for:

A - Less than 5 years

B - Between 6 - 15 years

C - More than 15 years.

D - All my life. Explain.....

3. This statement best Explains my participation in the church:

A - Active member in church structures

B - I strictly attend in this church only as a member

C - I attend in this church but I visit other churches and fellowship from time to time

D - I am a casual in this church.

4. Which Church leader's teachings have you been exposed to more?

A - Job Chiliza's time (funder)

B - William Chiliza & Nondaba's time

C - Moses Ngubane's time

D - Zimu and other current AGC leaders

5. I was very active in my youth days when:

A - Before 1960's

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C – Library or studying

D – In church or with other church members.

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B – The church needs them or it will eventually die without them

C – They should wait for few years before they are entrusted with responsibilities in the church.

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D – Do not affect me

11. Church is becoming:

A – More Spiritual

B – Less Spiritual

12. Church is becoming:

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B – Their time is over, they should just take a back seat and allow youth to take over.

C – They have too much power. This power must be reduced.

D – They don't have enough power. They must be given more power.

End of Questionnaire which is filled in conjunction with the interview on the next page.

Research Title: Leadership Dynamics, age differences and conflict in a church context

Interview Questions (Please write on extra page if needed)

SELECTED OLD MEMBER SAMPLE RESPONSE

Translated from a discussion with an elder member in Zulu

Interview Questions

1. What do you think is the problem with active youth in the church when it comes to relationships with older people?

The youth have lost respect for the elders and they do not listen.

2. What do you think is the problem with older people in the Church when it comes to relationships with the youth?

The younger people tend to misunderstand us as if we want to make them miserable, but we only want to teach the church doctrine which has made us who we are today.

3. Have you personally been affected by these problems? What have you done to deal with these problems?

Yes, I permanently have to fight against introduction of styles which are worldly.

4. Do you think there is clear and logical split of age groups and their responsibilities in the church? Why? Is it necessary to have this split?

The youth need to spend time with us in order that we close the gaps.

5. Do you think age related conflicts have done harm or can do harm in the growth of the church? How?

Yes as we feel disrespected when young ones have to talk back to us.

6. What do you think has been done to solve the problem and what has been leaderships' role in this regard?

The leadership seems to be listening too much to the youth such that they are even allowing to youth to introduce some "styles" which are not the identity of this church.

6. What do you think something needs to be done to solve this problem? If so, what?

Leadership should not be scares of these young ones, they need to tell the youth that we as elders know best. We don't want you to take a wrong turn while we are still here to guide you.

APPENDIX II: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

20 JULY 2009

MR. CK NDLOVU (931491513)
LEADERSHIP CENTRE

Dear Mr. Ndlovu

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0469/09M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

"Leadership dynamics, age differences and conflict in a church context"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully

.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA
ADMINISTRATOR
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor (Mr. S Hardman)
cc. Mrs. C Haddon