

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE DYNAMISM BETWEEN CHURCH GROWTH AND A
VIBRANT SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAMME: A CASE STUDY OF NINE
PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN MANZINI, SWAZILAND**

by

NKOSENHLE ZWIDE NXUMALO

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The opinions expressed in this dissertation do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary.

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Nkosenhle Zwide Nxumalo

8th

May

2014

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SUMMARY

The author has observed that some of the Protestant churches in the Christian community in Manzini are experiencing phenomenal growth. These same Protestant churches also seem to be growing more than others in their Sunday school programmes.

This study was done based on the backdrop that the presence of a vibrant Bible-based and carefully-planned Sunday school programme will positively influence the growth of the church. Through this study the author sought to have an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of church growth among Protestant church communities in Swaziland, especially in Manzini. The author sought to understand the nature and the key elements of a successfully-run Sunday school programme and how this can influence the growth of the church.

Swaziland is commonly referred to as a Christian nation; yet a survey conducted by Swaziland Evangelism Task Force presents a different picture of the state of the church in Swaziland. The report highlights that only one out of three professing Christians is a faithful attendee of a local church. Of great concern is that while eighty percent of the populace claim to be Christians, only nineteen percent are church members.

Even though the research in this dissertation has touched on children's Sunday school, the study intentionally focuses on adult Sunday school. The study acknowledges that Sunday school can be conducted in a variety of creative ways; in some instances it might not even be called Sunday school. But the essential components of the Sunday school must be maintained despite the rebranding of the programme or the rescheduling of days and times when it takes place.

This study acknowledges that church growth is necessary for the church. There are various factors that contribute to the growth of the church. One of the significant contributors is a vibrant Sunday school programme. This study focuses primarily on that one aspect, namely the adult Sunday school programme.

The study explores three core aspects:

- The nature of a healthy Sunday school.
- How a vibrant Sunday school contributes to the enhancement and growth of a church.

- Some of the problems encountered in the implementation of Sunday school programmes along with what is being done to avoid these problems.

Throughout this research the author sought to understand the relationship that exists between a Sunday school and the local church, especially in the African context.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 1994 Swaziland celebrated her 150th anniversary of the coming of the gospel to the Swazi people. The arrival of Christianity came as a direct result of a vision from God received by a former king, His Majesty King Somhlolo, early in the 19th century (Kuper 1978:165).

King Somholo saw a vision of Europeans coming to his kingdom. These people brought with them money in the form of coins as well as a book, which was the Bible. In this vision the King was instructed to receive and treasure the book (the Bible) and not receive even one coin (money). This was before Europeans came into the kingdom. The King believed that this vision came as a direct intervention by God in order to save the Swazi nation from evils that come as a result of being wealth-centred. It was not that the King was rejecting money, but he was being warned to put God first and treasure the word of God like King Solomon. It is because of this vision that, "Swaziland has often been referred to as the pulpit of Africa" (Kuper 1978:143).

However, Mazibuko (2004:43) in his book, *Fulfilling the Vision*, contends that the Christian community has little to celebrate about. He asserts that the Christian movement in Swaziland has not fulfilled the vision seen by King Somhlolo of developing churches that will produce multitudes of high-quality followers of Christ.

The Bible describes the world as a field that is ripe and ready for harvest (Matthew 9:37-38). The more people there are, the greater the task of reaching them. Today, there are more people living who are not saved compared to any previous generation. Hence, the statement by Mazibuko brings into sharp focus the task facing the church in Swaziland.

A recent survey by the Swaziland Evangelism Task provides some insights on the state of the church in Swaziland. The name of the survey was "*From Jerusalem to the ends of the earth*" and was conducted by Urban Ministry International in 2008. The report mentions that eighty percent of the Swaziland populace claim to be Christian. However only nineteen percent of the populace are church members. This means that only one out of every four professing Christians is a church member. Furthermore, on any Sunday, twenty-seven percent of the Swaziland population

attend worship. This means that only one out of every three professing Christians is a faithful attendee of a local church (Fritzs 2009:38).

One has to wonder why the remainder of these professing Christians are not committed to a local church. The author grew up in a church in Swaziland and he is currently pastoring a church with about 300 people attending. The author has observed that churches in Swaziland seem to have few young people in most congregations. Church programmes seem to lack the ability to attract the younger generation. Sometimes there may be a few young people in attendance, but not even this handful of faithful young people will often offer themselves when a church programme needs volunteers.

The author has observed that nominalism has become a major problem of the church in Swaziland. People do not take seriously the need to faithfully worship and support a local church. Churches are failing to hold their young people. These young people reject the spiritual weakness of the church and the constant compromising of their elders. Young people might attend the regular Sunday service but they do not normally avail themselves of other church activities. Entertainment outside the church, such as soccer or a music concert, is usually more successful in registering higher attendance numbers of young people than a regular church activity.

Denominationalism hinders the unity of the church in Swaziland. Many evangelical churches have made little headway in growing and there is general stagnation in many churches. The multiplicity of small and poor congregations, coupled with a lack of desire to invest in the training of leadership has generally meant that there are a number of churches who have poorly trained and poorly paid senior pastors and associate pastors. Being poorly paid has caused some full-time ministers to leave their pastorates and go into part-time ministry. The lack of trained leadership and informed church attendees has meant that few congregations are confident to confront either traditionalists or intellectuals. This results in the church having little impact on those who do not attend church (Fritzs 2009:39).

Nevertheless, in the Christian community in Manzini, there are some churches that are experiencing phenomenal growth. These churches also seem to be growing more than others in their Sunday school programmes. It is in light of this background,

that the author seeks to gain a better understanding of the dynamic of church growth.

There are various things that help a church to grow. Sound administration, adequate finances, the character of the leader, high-quality preaching, creative outreach programmes, and the location of the church are some of the many factors that contribute to the growth of a local church (Collins 1989:146). The author believes that the equipping of the adults who are a part of a church is also an important factor in encouraging the healthy growth of a church. This study will thus focus primarily on that aspect of the church, namely the impact of the adult Sunday school programme on the vibrancy and growth of the church.

Adult Sunday school has long been an important part of many churches. Stephen Rexroat describes Sunday school as biblical education in action; the mortar that holds the bricks together and the foundation of the house. This programme carries out teaching of God's word to the people in a systematic way (2006:67).

Sunday school is basically a ministry of small groups within a local church providing religious instruction. Sunday school is not like other recognised education institutions which offer grades and transcripts. However, it does focus on learning, training and the equipping of people. Nicholson in his book, *God's Shepherds and Sheep*, elaborates that Sunday school strives to offer meaningful instruction concerning Christian doctrine (2000:78).

Sunday school for adults can and should be done in a variety of creative ways. This can include meeting in homes, although Sunday school should not primarily be understood as a home cell group. "A home cell group is a group of individuals, around 7 to 15 in number who meet regularly in homes for instruction in the word of God" (Geok 2001:34). These meetings foster a closer bond amongst the church members, thus enhancing fellowship in the church. In the New Testament we find descriptions of the early church life that show the church met regularly in their homes. These meetings were close-knit and dynamic. While meeting in people's homes they experienced intimacy that is often lacking in many modern churches (Acts 2:43-47; Ephesians 4:15-16).

Elmer Towns asserts that Sunday school usually divides people into small groups, based on their age, "stage in life", or interests and needs (2001:56). One of

the purposes of a Sunday school for adults is to reach unchurched people who might just be attending the services without planning to become members of the church. Sunday school also helps to disciple those already in the church. The foundation of Sunday school is relationships; the strength of Sunday school is ministry; the heart of Sunday school is Bible study (Towns 2001:56).

As Blomberg has suggested, a Sunday school should impart basic biblical principles that are vital to church growth today. These biblical principles prepare students to hear and understand the gospel message. Sunday school offers valuable tools designed to enhance church growth by stressing the urgency in delivering spiritual truths and knowledge that will help students develop and mature in Christ (Blomberg 2002:76).

1.2 The Problem statement

In Manzini, Swaziland, where the researcher lives, churches like Matsapha Evangelical Church, Divine Healing Ministry and Family Worship Centre have strong and seemingly organised Sunday school programmes. Divine Healing Ministry has an average attendance on Sunday morning of 100, Matsapha Evangelical Church has an attendance of 60 and Family Worship Centre has an attendance of 120.

Although there are many human methods, some of which are manipulative, that may be used to bring in a large number of people into a church building, ultimately the growth of the church, just like individual spiritual growth, is divine in its origin. No person can cause spiritual growth to occur in the Body of Christ without the working of the Sovereign God. Yet growth is not just a mystical thing that God does on His own. Growth cannot happen in the local church without a synergistic partnership between God, the church leadership, the congregation and the leader (Blomberg 2002:34). The researcher believes that the training and equipping that occurs when adults meet together to study the word of God is one of the significant activities of the church that God has chosen to use. Through the proposed study, the researcher seeks to understand what makes Sunday school programmes successful and to examine the impact of Sunday school in encouraging both numerical and healthy growth in the local church.

In this study church growth assumes communities made up of persons who have been converted from the world to follow Jesus Christ. Such persons join the fellowship of believers (a local church), receiving Christian instruction and maturing in the faith. This will result in him or her bearing fruits that bring others to Christ. It is expected that these new believers will also join the local church for fellowship, hence contributing to the numerical and spiritual growth of the local church.

As mentioned earlier, some of the churches in Swaziland that seem to be healthy and vibrant are Matsapha Evangelical Church, Divine Healing Church and Family Worship Centre. When some church leaders look at other churches that are growing more than their own churches are, they do not know what to do. Although they want their own churches to grow (although not always for the right reasons), they have no idea how to reproduce the growth other churches have in their own churches. Other leaders feel resigned to simply carry on with their own small number of believers, affirming that “wherever two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord”, He is in their presence (Matthew 18:20).¹

Some pastors, feeling that it really does not matter how many people are attending church services, seem to feel that “as long as there is any attendance (at all) we are fine.” These leaders seem to believe that growth in the church occurs only by divine arrangement. They tend to feel that there is really nothing much that the leader of a church can do to encourage church growth, since it is all in the hands of God. It is our purpose in this research to see if this is true, and to discover whether there are factors, such as a healthy Sunday school programme for adults, that contribute to a church’s growth.

Francis Bola Akin-John describes church growth as, “people coming to the saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and becoming responsible members of His Church” (2006:14). An example of church growth can be seen in Acts 2:40-42 where Peter is ministering (Warren 1995:76). In response to his ministry, people repented and joined the church. Warren observes that the church grew as the people devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (1995:76).

¹ All Scripture quotations in the dissertation are taken from the New International Version by Zondervan Corporation, 1984.

1.3 Key Questions

Key questions that will need to be addressed in this study will be:

1. What is the nature of a healthy Sunday school?
 - 1.1 Why should study of the Bible by adults be done in African churches?
 - 1.2 What should be the aims and objectives of Sunday school, especially within the African context?
 - 1.3 How should a Sunday school be structured or organised, especially within the African context?
 - 1.4 What kind of curriculum and educational practice should be used for Sunday schools for adults, especially within the African context of Swaziland?
2. How does a vibrant Sunday school contribute to the enhancement of the church and its growth?
 - 2.1 Conscious strategies and plans.
 - 2.2 The involvement of pastoral staff, lay leadership and the congregation.
3. What are some of the problems encountered in the implementation of Sunday school programmes and what is being done to avoid these pitfalls?

1.4 The objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to search for principles or causes that help to accelerate the dynamics of growth of the church due to the Sunday school programmes in the nine demarcated Protestant churches identified in this research. My primary objective in the study is to explore the correlation that exists between effective adult Sunday school programmes and the growth of the church. From practical experience and observation it appears that churches that are growing numerically and spiritually exhibit an emphasis on effective discipleship programmes for adults.

According to Wagner, "Sunday school is the best way to disciple people; as such the programme has effectiveness by teaching biblical principles and godly living

to people at every age and stage in life” (1984:134). This programme allows for interaction between the student and the teacher. More and more people want to study certain topics, and this is not possible to do during conventional preaching on Sunday mornings or evenings.

Sunday school offers a variety of topics that can be discussed and studied. Sunday school is an effective way of enhancing church growth as it re-affirms and retains the essential elements of discipleship-making (Blomberg 2002:23). It is my expectation that the use of these principles found in the Sunday school programme will result in the rapid growth of the church.

My secondary objective is to explore the theoretical and the practical principles of Sunday school. I anticipate the discovery of possible refinements on how to encourage adult learning in order to enable them to do church work better.

For this study, an effective Sunday school programme is one that brings systematic teaching, equipping and growth to the attendee. An effective Sunday school programme disciplines people as biblical principles and godly living are taught to people at every age and stage in life, thus assisting them to mature in their faith in Christ. This should result in lasting “fruits” for God, such as being able to share one’s faith with others.

The Sunday school should be an effective way of enhancing church growth, in part as people are invited to Sunday school (and church), so that they can be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. An effective Sunday school offers a variety of topics that can be discussed and studied, as it re-affirms and retains the essential elements of discipleship-making.

1.5 Significance of the study

Prior to returning to Swaziland as a pastor, the researcher served as a church-planting missionary for ten years in Malawi. Being in the mission field, as well as being a pastor, has caused the researcher to have a keen interest in the relationship between Sunday school and church growth. Some churches seem to be registering large numbers of new members while others are struggling. Leaders of churches want to succeed in the task of leading the flock of God. This task brings with it the blessings of increase. Increase can come, numerically, geographically or

spiritually. Whatever the case, it is normal for a healthy church to be a growing church (Ladd 2000:68).

If, after the research, the findings show that Sunday school does not positively affect the growth of the local church, this result will be known. Recommendations will be made to solve this. However, if the results show that Sunday school does cause the church to grow, then recommendations will be made to help all those who sincerely desire to have their churches grow, numerically, spiritually and geographically.

1.6 Methodology

In chapter 4 the author will present the findings obtained through interpreting data that was collected through evaluative research methods by means of surveys, through personal interviews and questionnaires.

The researcher will utilize a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative aspect of the method will involve the use of semi-structured interviews. This will enable the researcher to explore “attitudes, behavior and experiences” (Mouton 2001:25). These will enable the researcher to probe the perceptions, values and behaviors in Sunday school. Quantitative research will involve a survey that utilizes a self-administered questionnaire.

Interview guides will be developed to facilitate the interview process. In crafting the questionnaire, the researcher has deliberately used a mix of scaled-response questions and open-ended questions that will require the respondent to provide additional information. Dawson suggests that all research methodologies have their strengths and weaknesses. One way to combat a weakness in one research methodology is to combine it with one or more different methodologies (2002:27).

1.7 The type of research

The research done in this dissertation follows the empirical type of research. Vyhmeister describes empirical research as having a practical component that gathers new data by means of surveys, questionnaires, and workshops (2008:157). Practical Theology, under which this research falls, begins with contexts or situations

that require interpretation (Poland 2007:67). The researcher employed the following methods to gather relevant data and information:

1. Questionnaires: A series of written questions forwarded to the respondents, requesting their response. The questions were crafted in such a way that they would solicit different types of data, such as open or closed questions, or qualitative or quantitative questions. Vyhmeister comments that open-ended questions allow respondents to answer without prompting, however they wish. With closed questions, possible answers are supplied. From these the respondents must choose (Vyhmeister 2008:123). The researcher wanted to gather information from questions that allowed the respondents to answer without prompting.
2. Interviews: A series of questions a researcher addresses personally to respondents. The interview can be structured or unstructured. As with questionnaires, different questions solicit different kinds of data. The researcher used interviews as a follow up on closed questions to have more insight on what the respondents meant.
3. Observation: In fieldwork, observation occurs when the researcher observes the subject. In participant observation, a researcher systematically observes people while joining in their activities; in action research, a researcher observes without participating. This researcher used action observation. This was done in order to observe the extent to which the theories were visible in specific practices.

The type of survey utilised by this researcher can best be described as “closed qualitative” survey. It is a qualitative survey in the sense that the survey attempts to explore “attitudes, behaviour and experiences” (Dawson 2002:25). While the sample size might not be high during this research, a lot of contact was made with the participants. This particular qualitative research is classified as a “grounded theory” approach according to Thacker (2008:65). This is a common approach in educational subject matter and is based on a theory that seeks to be tested by the researcher.

Although the researcher obtained data on whether or not churches and Sunday schools were growing, the analysis is built on a theoretical foundation from relevant literature as to what healthy Sunday schools and vibrant and growing churches should look like. Much of the analysis then involved evaluating the perceptions of those interviewed along with the respondent's own perceptions as to why these churches are growing or not growing. The body of the thesis incorporates the interviews with the observations made by the researcher.

Dawson (2002:25) suggests that all research methodologies have their strengths and weaknesses. The researcher has chosen to combine methodologies so as to counteract potential weaknesses. In order to prevent the results from being too varied in opinion, the survey restricted the participants to a certain number of opinions. This is the "closed" aspect of the survey. At the same time, the survey is not strictly "closed" as there are some aspects in which the participant was able to answer in an open-ended fashion (See Appendix 2, Section 2, questions 1-7).

1.7.1 In this study the LIM format of research is used. The LIM Theological Research Model is a model where there are five chapters. Chapter 1 describes the problem and the research to be done. Chapter 2 presents a biblical and literature discussion of the role, purpose and history of the Sunday school as an essential part of what a church does and is. Chapter 3 presents a foundation for understanding what is involved to train adults effectively in a church context as is found in Swaziland. Chapter 4 presents the current reality of the churches that are being studied in Swaziland. Chapter 5 analyses this data and the research. Chapter 6 presents the summary and conclusions of the research. Chapter 7 presents practical recommendations. The author has not only included extensive graphs in the appendix to illustrate data, but has also included samples of ways in which adult Sunday classes could be structured and taught in the Swazi context.

The intended study involves nine Protestant churches or ministries that are situated in the hub of Swaziland, which is Manzini. The study focuses on three churches belonging to the League of Swaziland Churches, three churches belonging to the Conference of Swaziland Churches and three churches from the Council of Swaziland Churches.

Extensive background information will be given in chapter four on each of the nine Protestant churches. Four individuals from each one of these churches were asked to respond to the questionnaire. This was the group that was then interviewed to help understand the realities of each of the nine churches. Those requested to respond in each church were the pastor, a Sunday school teacher, a lay leader and a Sunday school attendee. These four types of people were selected with the view that they represent the church and Sunday school programme from the leadership perspective and the attendee perspective.

Name of Church	Number of interviews conducted	Number of questionnaires to be sent
1. Fairview Free Evangelical Church	1	4
2. Family Worship Centre	1	4
3 Divine Healing Church	1	4
4. Matsapha Evangelical Church	1	4
5. Manzini Lutheran Church	3	4
6. Labotsibeni	1	4

AME (African Methodist Episcopal)		
7. The Christian Apostolic Church in Zion	2	4
8. Ichibi Church in Zion	1	4
9. Ekuphileni Church in Zion	1	4

Figure 1.1 Name of churches and number of interviews conducted

This study will employ evaluative methods to interpret data that will be collected through field research. Data will be collected by means of surveys and through personal interviews and questionnaires. Attention will be paid to the theory and practice of church growth with special reference to the Sunday school movement.

1.8 Hypothesis

The presence of a vibrant Bible-based and carefully planned adult Sunday school programme will positively influence the growth of the church. It is anticipated that this detailed research into the nature and key elements of a successfully-run adult Sunday school programme will show that such an approach (or lack of it) has influenced the growth of the nine Manzini churches.

1.9 Thesis outline

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 The problem statement
- 1.3 Key questions
- 1.4 The objectives of the study
- 1.5 The significance of the study
- 1.6 Methodology
- 1.7 The type of research
- 1.8 Hypothesis
- 1.9 Thesis outline

CHAPTER 2: FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR HEALTHY ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOLS

- 2.1 The role of the Bible and the church in training and equipping
- 2.2 The reasons for adult Bible study in the church
- 2.3 The history of Sunday school
- 2.4 Sunday school in Africa
- 2.5 Sunday school organisation
- 2.6 Evaluating adult Sunday school
- 2.7 The challenges of adult Sunday school

CHAPTER 3: FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR GOOD ADULT EDUCATION IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

- 3.1 Leadership training in the African context
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CHAPTER 2 FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR HEALTHY ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOLS

2.1 The role of the Bible and the church in training and equipping

Pazmino asserts that one must understand Christian education as the deliberate, systematic, and sustained divine and human effort to share or appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviours that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith (2008:87). This definition implies that there is a fostering of change, renewal, and reformation of persons, groups, and structures. This is done through the help of the Holy Spirit helping the person concerned to conform to the revealed will of God.

One of the important responsibilities of the church is to facilitate and encourage learning. It is the work of the church, working together with the Christian home, the Christian school, and Christians in whatever societal setting they find themselves. Driscoll defines learning as a persisting change in human performance or performance potential (Driscoll 2005:17).

This means that successful learning makes learners capable of actions they could not perform before learning occurred. Groom further adds that the performance or potential must come about as a result of the learner's experience and interaction with the Word (Groom 1980:9). The Bible is the only source of information to the believer to know what to do and how to do it. Without the Bible the believer will never know his or her full potential as a child of God.

Wilhoit advises that when looking at learning in the church, the home should be viewed as the primary agency of Christian education. What happens educationally in a home is a companion to what happens in a church. Furthermore, all church programmes, structures, and ministries should flow from biblical principles (Wilhoit 1986:60). While the Bible is an educational handbook, it is far more than that. There should be an understanding that the principles contained in the Bible will always be contemporary and relevant because they are transcultural when adapted properly.

The objectives of the church in reference to learning can be viewed as both being general and specific. A general objective is to bring all people to maturity in

Jesus Christ as they learn and apply the principles of the Bible. Eavey describes the education task of the church as threefold: first, people must know the will of God, including knowing himself; second, he must be master of all things, including himself; and third, he must direct all things, including himself, to God (Eavey 1964:174). This implies that the church must develop the pupil in knowledge and understanding, in moral insight and in action with God and in true spiritual living.

Learning in the church should be Christ-centred because Christian maturity is based upon biblical truth and principles which, when related to life, cause regenerated personalities to become like the Saviour through the process of Christian nurture (Havighurst 1948:13). The pastor and Christian education director can provide careful guidelines for maturing Christians in channelling their sanctified efforts and energy effectively into society. A genuine desire to have an impact on society with the gospel should ultimately result from Christian maturity itself.

Eavey contends that the education of people in the evangelical church today should be of such a nature that it results in the student's ability to evaluate all that he encounters in the light of God's word and from what might be called the "divine viewpoint" (Eavey 1964:123). Learning in a church that is Christ-centred honours God, as revealed in 2 Timothy 2:15.

Learning in the church is not only God-centred, but it is also person-centred. The leadership of the Christian education department must seek to find proper balance between these two very important ingredients in biblical learning. The church must be careful of deviating from the path, either to the left (an emphasis on humanism to the neglect of the sovereignty of God) or to the right (a position which uses a "burden for souls" as an excuse for a lack of consideration of people's needs) (Vieth 1963:127).

Learning of all kinds requires preparation. Public school teachers, for example, receive several years of education and training before entering their own classrooms to begin teaching others. Of primary concern to Christian learning is the matter of the Bible's place in the church's curriculum. The Bible must be the focus of all teaching and learning. Another important concern is the matter of lesson planning. The teacher must prepare the content of each lesson in an organised way.

Furthermore, the teacher needs to understand the elements of the teaching/learning process.

The Bible indicates that the church has been given the responsibility of educating its members to learn more about their faith (2 Timothy 2:15). The church's educational task includes teaching people of all ages. Sadly, when the subject of learning or education is raised in the church, it is often assumed that training or learning must be confined to the children in Sunday school. The educational efforts of the church are commonly directed only towards children. Jesus certainly took notice of children during his ministry days, but most of his recorded ministry was with adults. Adults must also actively participate in learning in the church.

The church must offer learning for all classes of people in the church. They must be taught in ways that will meet their particular needs. Likewise, in teaching youth we must be aware of their unique needs and minister to them effectively. They are at the age of making several life-changing decisions. Teaching adults also requires some knowledge of the various stages of life that they go through. Therefore, we must try to teach people in each stage of life in ways that will minister to them individually.

Knowledge of the Bible is never an end in itself; it is always a means to an end (Hadaway 1991:56). The Scriptures must not be merely taught mechanically, by rote memory, or on the level of mere knowledge; instead, they must be applied to human problems and needs. The Scriptures must be taught in such a way that they make God known to people and enable students to grow spiritually. What the student becomes as a result of what he or she studies is far more important than his or her knowledge of the Bible alone. Therefore the church needs to teach both knowledge of the Word and its relevance to human need and spiritual growth and maturity.

2.2 The reasons for adult Bible study in the church

Both believers and their leaders are commanded to study the word of God. Paul instructs Timothy to be diligent that "he may be approved by God", a workman that rightly "divides the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul was aware that it takes diligent study to understand, interpret and apply God's word correctly.

Believers are encouraged to “desire the sincere milk of the word of God” in order to grow (1 Peter 2:2). Older Christians are reprimanded because they should have studied and learned more in order to be able to teach others (Hebrews 5:12-14).

The problems of life demand Bible study. Since the Bible applies to every area of life, only understanding of God’s word can enable one to see God’s answers to his or her problems. God has established local churches as institutions for accomplishing his purposes. Churches are able to do this through Bible study. The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily to be sure that what they were being taught was from God (Acts 17:11).

Believers who desire to be obedient to God and be right in their relationships must make Bible study a regular part of their lives. An adult Sunday school department, meeting simultaneously with classes for all family members, furnishes an excellent opportunity for involving adults in a study of the Scriptures.

Jansen asserts that Sunday school is the teaching arm of the church (2006:33). For people to become Christians, the word of God must be planted in their hearts. Peter in his epistle says that one is not born again with corruptible seed, but with incorruptible seed, which is the word of God that lives and abides forever (1 Peter 1:23). It is therefore imperative that Sunday school not be only for believers, but that Sunday school classes should be structured for those who do not yet believe.

Through reaching out to the lost, the Sunday school fulfils a biblical mandate. The lost are those who are regular attendees of the classes, but who have not committed their lives to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Nduka observes that Sunday school can reach people of all classes and ages through organised visitations, attendance, campaigns, newsletters, or simply sharing Jesus Christ with friends (2004:17). These church activities are activities that people can be trained to do by having participated in a Sunday school class. Reaching out to the lost is evangelism in action. By reaching out, the church is making contact with the lost and motivating them to give an honest hearing to the gospel (Edgerly 2006:65).

Sunday school is one important soul-winning aspect of the church, according to observations made by Nduka. The purpose of reaching and teaching is to win

people into the kingdom of God. Deuteronomy 31:12 affirms that the Bible should be read aloud to all people. That included “men, women, and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns” so that everyone could learn “the fear of the Lord”. This phrase has the same connotation as the New Testament words *salvation*, *believe*, *become a new man* and *trust* (2004:29).

It would thus seem clear that adult Sunday school should be an important aspect of a healthy church. However, before we define what we mean by an “effective” or “vibrant” church, we need to explain what we mean by “church”. Many people think the church is a particular building in a certain place. Others think a church refers to a certain denomination, such as Assemblies of God or Baptist (O’Donovan 1997:273). The New Testament speaks of the church in a global or universal sense (Colossians 1:24-25). At the same time, it also speaks about local churches in certain places, such as Antioch (Acts 13:1) and the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2). In both the worldwide and local senses, the church refers to a group of people who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, regardless of their race, nationality, denomination or position in life (Galatians 3:26-28).

Although the Scripture describes the church in many different ways, it is always a community of believers. Three of the most powerful analogies in Scripture are to see the church as a building, a body, and a bride. The gathered community of these people becomes vibrant and effective to the extent that they are committed to carrying out the objectives of their master Jesus Christ and to please him through their lives while they live on earth. Pate states that the church is not about buildings, or equipment, but about people. When Jesus said, “I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18), he was not referring to physical buildings, but people (Pate 1987:185). The strength and effectiveness of the church therefore is not primarily measured by physical structures, but by the quality of the people in the church.

Adelaja argues that first and foremost the church must be indigenous. By “indigenous” he means that there is a unique blending of the cultural-human with the supra cultural-divine (2008:112). The word “indigenous”, when connected with the word “church,” refers to the human-cultural component of the church. It indicates that the church is of the “soil” in that it reflects the cultural milieu in which it is planted

(Adelaja 2008). The word “church” focuses on the divine nature of the Christian community; it speaks of its divine character, unity and life source.

According to Pate, “an effective church should be self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting” (1987:73). As local believers mature, a church that is self-governing will encourage them to take up active leadership roles in the church. The goal of the missionary or the church-planter is to assist the church in its culture to become autonomous. The idea of self-support finds its biblical basis in the stewardship of what God has given to the members of a church. A healthy local church is one which is dependent on God to meet all its needs, rather than on resources from elsewhere. The concept of self-propagation implies that every church is to cultivate a culture of being God’s instrument in evangelism.

The author believes that a definition of a healthy church in the context of this study on Sunday school is one that comes from Acts 2:41-47. An effective church is thus one that is characterised by the following qualities: (1) preaching and teaching of the inerrant word of God, (2) fellowship which encourages participation and sharing of things together and where believers seek to partner with one another, (3) the breaking of bread together (which could be Holy Communion or just having a meal together), (4) prayer, which provides power for believers and through which they receive their orders from God, and (5) evangelism/mission, to enable believers who have been taught the Word to share the good news with those who are still lost so that others can also come to Christ. A healthy church is one that is founded upon the person and work of Jesus Christ and His infallible Word, the Bible, and one that is empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

There is a great need in the gathered community, which we refer to as a “church”, to understand and experience the biblical truth that God calls every Christian to minister. Most people are not prepared to be everyday ministers of the gospel. This is where Sunday school comes in as it becomes a place where every Christian can be trained and equipped for his own personal ministry.

The Sunday school programme aids the church in its function of teaching its followers. It is one of the important tasks of the church to teach. From the Great Commission and its earliest confession and catechism, the church has viewed teaching as an integral part of its life and ministry. Teaching is one of the essential

tasks of the church; developing healthy instructional systems like the Sunday school is one of its great challenges (Anthony 2001:181).

For more than seventy years, prophets of doom (in places like North America) have been writing the obituary of the Sunday school. Such prophets believe that it is a vestige of the past and a dead institution. Yet in many places Sunday schools are stronger than ever and are experiencing tremendous growth. What has died are the outmoded programmes and irrelevant emphases (Mnisi 2007:91).

The Sunday school is important because of its role in affecting the lives of its members. Through its teachings and programmes, it has helped to build up renowned men and women in Christendom and society at large. It is the Sunday school that shapes attitudes and creates spiritual balance in the members of the body of Christ (Nduka 2004:18).

As a department, the Sunday school spearheads other departments in the local church, for in many churches before one becomes a member of the local church one must first become a Sunday school member. The Sunday school determines the destiny of Christian homes, the church and society in general. The term “destiny” is used here to convey the conviction that the teaching of the word of God and obedience to it will probably result in one being found doing the will of God and maturing in pleasing God (Jackson 2000:34). Johnston adds that Sunday school is the best place to train and utilise Christian men and women. Creating and maintaining a healthy Sunday school may be the greatest educational challenge facing Christian churches today, both for evangelicals and Pentecostals (Johnston 1995:45).

According to the Bible, every Christian needs to develop his or her gifts and ministry (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:7). Sunday school gives believers this opportunity. Through the Sunday school programme the members can help one another learn the truth of God’s word. Through the Sunday school they can experience truly caring fellowship as they minister to one another. Through the Sunday school believers can join together to reach out to unbelievers and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Benson reflects the teaching of Acts 2:42-27 when he suggests three major objectives which have been tested and proven workable in many churches for equipping members to do personal ministry through Sunday school (Benson 1985:67). These objectives are outreach (evangelism), fellowship and education.

The Sunday school can organise social events which become channels for outreach and evangelism. The aim of gathering together is to present the gospel to friends who are invited to attend. Sunday school becomes an excellent place for Christians to learn how to share their faith with unbelievers. This can be taught and practised in class with the teacher allowing students to build up confidence in presenting the gospel.

Fellowship happens most often in small groups. That is why Sunday school is an excellent place for real fellowship. This is where personal relationships can be built with one another in the class. People are usually shy about sharing in this way at first, so it takes time to lead them to master this. We must distance ourselves from superficial fellowship. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Learning is a fundamental purpose of the Sunday school. This is where the believer's knowledge of the word of God is increased. This knowledge must produce spiritual fruit and change the lifestyle of the learner. We know that learners are really learning when they begin to evidence definite behavioural changes as a result of their study of the Bible. This is true of all Christian education (Association 1992:43).

Adult Sunday school is one of the effective ways to help the church equip itself for growth. Stevens suggests that Sunday school performs a vital role in the church as it helps men, women, boys and girls study God's word, the Bible, and apply its life-guiding principles. He further states that Sunday school helps people discover how to grow as Christians by leading them to examine God's word and apply it to their lives. This results in making them take seriously Christ's command to go and make disciples (Stevens 2008:47).

Mnisi concurs with Stevens when he observes that Sunday school is the setting in which a deeper level of community and learning can be achieved through personal interchange of thoughts and ideas (2007:91). The learning process has always been most effective in small group settings: from the Garden of Eden, where

God personally tutored Adam and Eve; to Abraham and the Israelites, who were instructed to teach God's truth in the home; to the present-day Sunday school.

Sunday school is the personal ministering arm of the church. It extends that arm to assist the pastor and other church leaders. Committed, caring teachers become undershepherds who reach, teach, care for and nurture each believer. Therefore Sunday school is one of the most effective means of reaching and assimilating new people into the church (Nduka 2004:123).

Towns comments that by using friendship evangelism through Sunday school the church will reach people for Christ (2001:174). Friendship evangelism views each Sunday school member as a key to reaching others in his or her sphere of influence.

To support his argument, Towns cites an example of a church that began to use this approach through its Sunday school. The result was that this church grew from 120 members to over 450 within eighteen months. He recommends that the Sunday school teacher continually motivates his students to identify those in their personal sphere of influence who do not know Christ as Saviour; then motivate them to pray for and reach out to those friends (Towns 2001:175).

Nduka observes that many churches today have resolved to build their spiritual cadre on emotions and borrowed tongues (glossolalia) utterances without the full knowledge of the Scriptures. There is little or no Bible-based teaching in these churches. The Sunday school work is being neglected (Nduka 2004:3).

Some are building on the dynamism of their ministers who are eloquent speakers, with good command of English, Greek and Hebrew languages. However the preaching of God's word apparently has no effect in the lives of the preachers or of those who listen to them (Gangel 1981:104). Probably this is because little time is given to thorough biblical instruction; instead, prosperity and casting out of demons messages seem to fill the air - especially in Africa.

A church that knows the Bible is better placed to obey God than a church that is ignorant of the Bible. The Sunday school leader must seek to empower the local church with Bible knowledge. The Sunday school must be set up in a way that it provides a forum where the students can be gathered to be taught those things that Christ commanded. The teachers are expected to disciple the students so that they

can be like their master, Jesus Christ, and become candidates for heaven who are equipped through the inspired and infallible word of God.

Sunday school should offer the students time to ask questions on truth taught during the class or church service. Those who teach in the Sunday school must be cautious in that their classes should not be allowed to turn into another mini-church service where only one person is the speaker and where the rest are just listening. Adequate answers to questions posed by Sunday school members will assist all the members to become rooted in their beliefs.

Sunday school provides a forum where Scripture taught can be reflected upon and assimilated. Phiri comments that the teacher and the student alike take a trip to the realm of the Spirit; they all should hear God speak and reveal his eternal plan for mankind through the Holy Spirit (Phiri 2005:13).

In recognition of the importance of Biblical teaching Bennett comments:

The way in which Christ's command was obeyed by the apostolic church is best illustrated in the life of Paul. He was appointed a preacher, and apostle and a teacher. He is frequently seen engaged in the teaching ministry throughout the book of Acts and in his epistles. He knew that a bishop should be apt to teach and he wrote to Timothy exhorting him to commit to faithful men things he had taught so that they may be able to teach others also (Bennett 1995:212).

Christ, the master teacher, taught the crowd. The New Testament repeatedly records that "He opened his mouth and taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29). Various classes of people attended Jesus' teaching sessions: the educated, the literate, the nobles, the poor, the young and the old. Jesus was able to teach all these classes of people according to their level of understanding and their needs. This is a true picture of one of the aims of the Sunday school programme.

From this, it is evident that the personality of the student should be considered during lesson preparation. The Sunday school teacher must be aware of all of the following factors: spiritual, physical, mental and emotional characteristics; - together with the student's environmental influences. We will consider how this should be done later in this thesis. But what is important to note is that for a teacher to effectively reach his or her students and for students to receive and understand what is being taught, all those areas of personality are important to remember.

2.2.1 A clear understanding as to why Sunday school exists

It would be very hard to continue a programme when its purpose is not clearly known or communicated to the participants. This author believes that in order to improve the Sunday school the church leadership and those in charge of the Sunday school programme must know and believe in the purpose of the Sunday school. Toler and Talmage write, "Sunday schools usually grow on purpose.... Growth is a by-product of God's blessings and our cooperative (and purposeful) efforts" (2000:78).

The primary purpose of Sunday school must be the support of the Great Commission. This should be made the driving force behind every work the Sunday school does. This is in line with the mission of the church which is the Great Commission. Sunday school then complements the mission of the local church. Taylor writes:

God's blessing can be realised in at least four ways as you lead your church to make Sunday school your strategy for focusing more intentionally on the Great Commission. 1. Spiritually lost people will come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized into the fellowship of the church. 2. Christians will grow in their understanding of and obedience to Christ as they study the Bible individually and with others. 3. The ministries of the church will expand as God's people discover their gifts and abilities, identify opportunities to minister to others, and respond to the call to serve the people in Jesus' name. 4. The mission of the Lord will advance as God's people go into the world in his power with his good news (2003:10).

To sharpen the purpose of the Sunday school programme, it would be good if the Sunday school department came up with a purpose statement. Inasmuch as church members might understand the purpose of the Sunday school, by putting it on paper makes it clear even to visitors what the programme is all about. The purpose statement does not have to be very complicated, but it must be well-crafted so that it is clear to those who read it what the ministry is about (Appendix S2).

2.2.2 Principles of Sunday school growth

Healthy adult Sunday schools contribute to vibrant and growing churches. Attempts have been made to identify principles whereby Sunday schools or

churches grow. Conclusions have been made that Sunday school growth depends on how dynamic, oratorical, and influential the minister in charge of the local church is in his teaching and preaching ministry. Some even accuse the Sunday school leaders in charge of the Sunday school department of the local church for not working hard enough to make their Sunday school grow. The author suggests that the problem might be in the answer to the question that apparently is difficult to answer: "Who is responsible for the Sunday school's growth?"

The author believes that the answer to the above question is that God has a part to play and that man has a part to play in the growth of the Sunday school. "For (we) are God's fellow workers..." (1 Corinthians 3:9). Pointing accusing figures at one another comes as a result of people's ignorance. In the time past, certain Sunday schools may have gone through several cycles. There may have been times of rapid growth, while at other times there was a reversal in attendance. After many human attempts and endeavours were made there may have been no improvement recorded. It may be seen that the techniques used to produce growth in Sunday school in one generation do not succeed in another generation. As people have done research on the Sunday school, a variety of principles of growth have been discovered.

One of those principles is that there should be prayer for the growth of the Sunday school programme. There are various reasons why we must pray for Sunday school growth. These might include:

1. It is God's will that a Sunday school should grow. Growth demonstrates that God - the owner of the church - is a dynamic being, not a dead god. We note several examples of God's command for expansion and increase in the book of Genesis: "And God blessed them; and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it..." (Genesis 1:28); "And God blessed Noah and his sons...be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth;" "And as for you, be fruitful and multiply, populate the earth abundantly and multiply it" (Genesis 9:1,7).

2. The Great Commission, which is the watchword of the Sunday school, implies growth. When people are converted into the faith of Jesus Christ and are brought into the Sunday school to be taught and enriched with God's word, there will be numerical growth. Growth is an evidence of life. Things that are not growing die

and cannot reproduce. If every member of the Sunday school will work properly and cooperatively, there will be natural and supernatural growth. This is a characteristic of any living organism.

3. Sunday school growth is called for because of the world population explosion. As the population grows globally, an increased number of people will be searching for the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Africa is a continent that is made up of nations, cities with various tribes and ethnic groups of different cultures. Reaching each neighbouring ethnic group for Christ requires organised outreach. Sunday schools should be that organised arm to help the church grow as the church responds to needs for evangelisation at a global level.

4. Sunday school growth will produce more labourers for the vineyard. As an increasing number of people are converted to Christ, the church is challenged to train men and women who will take up the task of teaching and building up the faith of the members. As the teaching arm of the church, the Sunday school should be made to grow in order to properly prepare people for the tasks of ministry.

5. Another reason why we pray for Sunday school growth is that the owner of the church (God) expects growth in the knowledge and application of Scripture. It is for reasons of ignorance that some long-term members of the church continue to come late for services, to dress improperly, to relate poorly to others or to live their daily lives badly. The Bible advises us to study so that we can show ourselves approved unto God, workers that needed not to be ashamed, but who can stand boldly and openly declare the whole council of God.

There are four ways in which the Sunday school should grow:

1. Internal growth

This is growth in spiritual quality and not quantitative quality. This occurs when members of the Sunday school grow and mature spiritually resulting in them being able to give themselves to holding fervent prayer meetings as often as possible, devoting their time to reading the Bible, having and showing agape love to one another in their fellowship, being sensitive and obedient to the will of God in every endeavour, being punctual in attending every local church fellowship, Bible class, Sunday school meeting and being liberal in financing the Sunday school.

2. Expansion growth

This occurs when the local church expands by bringing new members into its four walls: a. biologically, as children are born into the local church and are brought into the Sunday school; b. through transfer, as Sunday school members from another local church join a new local church Sunday school, perhaps as the result of changing jobs; and c. through conversion, as unbelievers come to the Lord in the local church through the Sunday school outreach programmes.

3. Extension growth

This takes place when a local church opens churches beyond the boundary of its jurisdiction because of geographical or cultural distance and Sunday schools are established in the churches opened. These newly-opened churches could be outside the country or district of the mother church.

4. Bridging growth

This happens when the local church moves into a different cross-cultural environment, opens a church and establishes a Sunday school for significantly different cultures or tongues. This kind of church plant focuses on reaching people of a different culture; for example, a Swazi church planting a church within the Zulu community who are of a different culture than the Swazis.

2.3 The history of Sunday school

According to Marvin J. Taylor, “The purpose of historical Sunday school was moral and social reform” (1966:170). It was the objective of the Sunday school to offer an education to those that may otherwise have had little access to formal or moral educational training. The very nature of what its founders were hoping for was spiritual transformation as well as secular education in reading and writing.

The Sunday school originated with a strong educational purpose. Boylan comments, “Sunday school founders were less concerned about the recipients’ religious indoctrination than about the growing number of working children who were slipping through the cracks in the education system” (1988:6).

In 1783, Robert Raikes, publisher of the *Gloucester Journal*, went public with his Sunday school project. It was denounced by some and supported by others. In

describing Robert Raikes, Towns comments that Raikes did not wait for his pupils to come to the meeting place; instead he went to their homes and brought them. If they did not have clothing to wear, he bought it for them (Towns 2001:35). During the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth-century, Raikes saw the plight of the city's poor - especially that of children. During the week, the children worked long hours in factories. They spent Sundays playing, quarrelling, and making mischief. Concerned about their lack of education, Raikes taught them the basic essentials of reading, using the Bible as their textbook for their lessons (Tan 2002:20).

John Wesley saw the Sunday school as a means of reaching the underprivileged and gave his full endorsement to the movement. By the time that Raikes died in 1811, Sunday schools in England were well established (Towns 1976:22). Wesley's support of the Sunday school was the major force in successfully transplanting it to America. In fact, the Methodist churches in the United States of America were among the first formally to adopt the Sunday school as a regular part of their church work (Towns 1976:56).

By the beginning of the twentieth-century, the Sunday school movement had expanded to include adult classes. The growth of the Sunday school ministry led to the usage of the term "Christian education" to denote the Church's total educational ministries (Charles, McGavran and Arn 1980:43).

The chief concern amongst the founders of Sunday school was to try to solve the social problems that were arising as a result of the unruly behaviour being displayed by the undisciplined children when they had free time away from work, which was on Sundays.

It was expected that the Sunday school programme would prepare the children to know more about God and make society better in the future. The founders of Sunday school placed more value on the proactive training of the children to learn correct behaviour, rather than the reactive training of adults to unlearn wrong behaviour (White 1926:43). If the child could learn morals and be established on good ethical foundations at this early age, then society as a whole would be better (Barnette 1951:21).

It was the intention of the founders of Sunday school to place the Bible in the hands of the children. As they learned to read and write, the words they were learning would lead to life transformation.

The earliest goal of Sunday school workers was simply to bring religious knowledge, and the behaviour associated with it, to lower-class youth. By teaching children to read the Bible, these workers believed they would do more than impart “the truth of the gospel” to these youngsters. They would also provide a foundation upon which their charges could construct moral lives. True morality, in their view, emanated from the knowledge of the individuals’ ultimate accountability to God of his/her actions. Without that knowledge, individuals had no incentive to behave correctly (Boylan 1988:133-134).

Webb asserts that the roots of the Sunday school idea are imbedded in the divine command (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42) and in early Jewish practice, although the Sunday school as we know it today is of comparatively recent origin (Webb 2005:1). Johnston comments that the Sunday school idea started as a “germ” thought, like a seed planted on fertile ground, which grew into a big tree (1995:93).

This teaching idea has indeed grown until it now influences the whole world. Development of this programme has come from various people. History has proved “that just in proportion as the church Bible school, the Sunday school has been accorded the place which our Lord assigned it in the plan of his church” (Schmauk 2000:34). The Sunday school is like a church-based Bible school, serving as a way to train people to be involved in ministry, with the main focus of the teaching being on understanding and applying the Bible.

Schmauk commends the Sunday school for having the practical impact of extending the membership of the church, edifying the body of Christian believers in the knowledge of God’s word and in the practice of its precepts (2000:56).

Dresselhaus observes that the modern Pentecostal movement can attribute much of its rapid growth and strong biblical orientation to Sunday school. He feels that the motto, “As goes the Sunday school—so goes the church”, has been proven by the church’s growth both within the United States and on the foreign mission field. Dresselhaus believes that as we see history from a biblical perspective, we will note the significant role of Christian education and how it relates to the church’s evangelisation programme (Dresselhaus 1998:21).

During the first 110 years of its history, Sunday school limited itself to the instruction of children and youth. However, this began to change in 1890 and 1893 respectively as the Baraca and Philathea Bible class organisations promoted the establishment of men's and women's Bible classes in Syracuse, New York, and then more broadly in other locations (Hudson 1914:11).

Classes for adults generally met in churches during the Sunday school hour organised for children. Members of these classes were aggressive in seeking out other men and women to become participants. Persons of any age or spiritual level were welcomed (Association 1992:23). Adult Bible study became popular as they crossed denominational lines and promoted the establishment of classes in many different denominations (Nduka 2004:76).

Max Cadwell points out that if the Sunday school ministry is really on target, the church will see the equipping of individuals to serve Christ and his church as one of its ultimate obligations. However, he cautions that if Sunday school fails to reach people, it will fall short of being a success, even though it may have adequate accommodation, be properly arranged, have a sufficient number of classes, use excellent teaching methods, have competent personnel, and include meaningful worship sessions (Cadwell 1982:72).

Over the past two hundred years, the Sunday school, when correctly organised and administered with properly trained staff, has built the church more effectively than any other agency known in Protestantism (Kirschke 1963:14). Obeng-Amoako adds that the Sunday school has advanced Christianity in general (2003:67).

Historically, the path of the Sunday school glows as a shining light through the years. In the early days of Christianity in America, between seventy-five and eighty percent of the churches first existed only as Sunday schools. Sunday schools became known for the churches they built, not the other way around. Congregations emerged from believers who loved their Bibles and who sought to walk in the way of the Lord as he illuminated it to them through his Word (Oti 2007:186).

Dr Paul Frimpong-Manso agrees with Oti and states that the Sunday school has increased the effectiveness of missionary work throughout the world. He

believes that Sunday schools in America contributed significantly to the increase of the number of missionaries sent out from America (2001:16).

Frimpong-Manso notes that out of every 100 ministers of the gospel and missionaries serving Christ in the foreign fields of the world, ninety to ninety-three of the personnel have come through the classic halls of the Sunday school. Out of 100 part-time workers in the church, approximately eighty-three percent have received their start (converted to Christ) for Christ in the Sunday school. Out of 100 members, approximately eighty percent were attracted to the church by the Sunday school (2001:17).

Oti suggests that spiritually, the Sunday school is an indispensable builder of the local church because it touches the life of the scholar in his early years. He comments, "It trains the tender tendrils of the heart's affections around the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, and it takes the student through successive years through the Scriptures to the Saviour and into stalwart Christian character" (Oti 2007:261).

Kirschke suggests that a Sunday school leader who is genuinely called of God and conscientious about his work for God will keep the entire programme keyed to the progress of the church. He will seek to channel every scholar trained in the Sunday school into the church (Kirschke 1963:18).

Towns believes that if the Sunday school is properly organised, it will help churches reach the lost; it will boost Bible knowledge as it discipless and meets the needs of people of all ages, and It will train up leaders for the church (2001:25). An effective Sunday school should have a positive impact on the growth of the church.

When churches grow because of their Sunday school programme, it is because they have strongly encouraged new members to become involved in the Sunday school class. They know that it is in the atmosphere of the small group that people develop genuine relationships. Healthy relationships are developed through personal interaction and group sharing. People have an opportunity to get to know one another and thus they build lasting relationships within the church that will keep them connected to the church (Frimpong-Manso 2001).

Oti points out that one of the core purposes of the Sunday school is "to prepare God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:12). This is done by

teaching about ministry and spiritual gifts and then providing opportunities for Sunday school members to be involved in ministry. In an effective Sunday school, most of its adults will be involved in a ministry where they are spiritually gifted to serve. Ministry opportunities within the adult Sunday school might include serving as a teacher, prayer leader or as part of an evangelism team (Oti 2007:231).

2.4 Sunday school in Africa

Nduka suggests that tribute must be paid to the efforts and sacrifices of those in the West for the immense contribution of organising and popularising Sunday school. It would have been hard for Africa to benefit if these people had not sacrificially pursued this calling (Nduka 2004:52).

Jackson suggests that in Southern Africa the first recorded evidence of Sunday school was in the late eighteenth-century in Cape Town. This programme came with missionaries who had arrived in South Africa through the Cape of Good Hope seaport (2000:24). Sunday schools in the early years had no standard curriculum. Most of them followed the catechism style used in European schools, stressing Christian work and rote learning. As in Europe, these classes were primarily for children.

In regard to Sunday school curricula in Africa, Johnston observes that emphasis has always been on the Bible, but that teachers were given a wide choice over which biblical content to teach, which Scripture passages to memorise and what classroom techniques to use (1995:72). Nduka states that during the early 1900s the Sunday school material was more standardised. This was a result of efforts made by John H. Vincent and B.F. Jacobs of the American Sunday School Union (Nduka 2004:78).

Towns describes some basic functions of the Sunday school programme in Africa; one of which is providing systematic teachings to different ages groups in the church. He mentions that Sunday school functioned as a tool to reach people through evangelism and to equip them for specific ministry (Towns 1976:121).

One of the primary objectives of the church should be reaching people (Association 1992:7). There is a rich harvest field for outreach to visitors who attend church services, as well as to people in the community who have no church affiliation

and /or little training in the word of God, and to the parents of children attending the church (Edgerly 2006:32). A well-planned and carefully-executed programme of evangelism governs successful growth. The Sunday school programme, therefore, reaches out to people through the leaders of the programmes that people attend (Association 1992:8).

In contemporary Sunday school within Africa, outreach is accomplished in a variety of ways. In most communities, especially urban African cities as they adopt Western customs, house-to-house canvassing seems no longer an effective way to reach people. Instead, Sunday school leaders have to use mail canvassing, telephone invitations, emails and other new methods supported by the latest technologies (Association 1992:9).

Much of Africa still struggles with the basic necessities needed to run a good Sunday school programme. Very few Sunday schools have good facilities, adequate teachers or excellent teaching methods. In fact, it is difficult for churches to be able to put up a church structure for worship on Sundays, let alone build Sunday school classrooms for adults.

Christian growth in Christ-likeness includes stewardship and dedication to service. A total equipping ministry will incorporate teaching the word of God, developing and practising godly living, and emphasising the principles of service (Dresselhaus 1998:34).

Nduka contends that in Africa in the last half of the twentieth-century, defining the purposes of church education has been studied extensively; yet there has been a failure to recognise the place of Sunday school (and especially Sunday school for adults) in meeting these noble purposes (2004:253). He proposes that leaders charged with teaching the word of God must recognise the direction in which the church's total education programme needs to be moving (Nduka 2004:253).

The church in Africa, through its Sunday school ministry, has striven to impart a personal knowledge of God, develop a vibrant Christian life, and help attendees to gain understanding of God's word. Doing this will give Sunday school students of all ages an appreciation of their Christian heritage, and promote loyalty that will stress the responsibility that they should have for their communities. When Sunday school

is done well it should encourage Christians to view themselves as global Christians (Aransiola 2007:39).

Phiri affirms that church education in Africa should seek to help the individual see God, the Father, as sovereign, infinite, eternal, and unchanging in his being. Jesus Christ must be rightly seen and served as Master and Lord. The Sunday school students must be taught that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, possessing the attributes of God (Phiri 2005:43).

When Sunday school is allowed to play its part, it encourages the development of vibrant Christian life. Living daily for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and according to God's word necessitates a growing spiritual life characterised by daily devotion (Association 1992:9). This requires a social life which conforms to the standards of Christian conduct presented in the word of God. It means biblical instruction which will result in seeking the Lord's will in all important life decisions (Wagner 1984:32). All of these things occur when African churches have healthy adult Sunday schools.

Aransiola states that Sunday school in Africa has helped the church to be taught the word of God. There is a need for people to experience the word of God which supplies them with truth for their daily living (Aransiola 2007:41). The Bible offers comfort in all of life's experiences and ultimately enriches our lives in Christ, thus transforming us into his image. This is essential for African believers in view of what many of them go through in a continent ravaged by war, famine, corruption and diseases (Oden 2007:140).

2.5 Sunday school organisation

Good organisation is vital for the effectiveness of the Sunday school ministry (Towns 1976:163). In a broad sense, Sunday school organisation is a combination of the necessary individuals, equipment, facilities, materials, and tools. When all these components are assembled together in a systematic way, the Sunday school can accomplish the objectives laid before it.

All staff members (including unpaid volunteers) need to recognise their responsibilities in the organisation as well as the ultimate objective which the organisation is designed to achieve. They will also recognise the need to cooperate

with other individuals or groups of individuals to whom they are answerable (Association 1992:12).

Such a concept of Sunday school organisation will raise the standards and quality of leadership and will, in the eyes of the total membership of the local church, elevate the entire teaching task. Reed states that understanding the benefits of effective organisation is essential to the developing and implementation of a vibrant Sunday school programme (2008:36).

Campbell encourages the leaders of Sunday school to be organised. He observes that good organisation is vital to effectiveness (Campbell 2003:12). In a broad sense, Sunday school organisation is a combination of the necessary individuals, equipment, facilities, materials, and tools. When all these components are assembled together in a systematic way, the Sunday school may accomplish the objectives laid before it (Association 1992:12).

Hurst suggests that when all staff members recognise their responsibilities in the organisation, the ultimate objectives of the Sunday school will be achieved. Staff should recognise the need to cooperate with the other individuals or groups to which they are answerable (Hurst 2005:54). Lawrence comments that if the Sunday school is to be effective in communicating the gospel, its staff must go about their task “decently and in order” (1924:98).

Bower lists and explains the benefits of organisation in a Sunday school as developing team work, identifying responsibilities, providing for effective teaching, clarifying God’s overall purpose, focusing aims of teaching and learning, and encouraging community outreach (1964:72).

Akin-John contends that Sunday school has principles that it pursues for its success and growth. These principles complement one another. It should be by well-defined principles that a Sunday school determines its own standards, identifies its needs, researches the solution for the need, determines the strengths, studies the records, evaluates the school by observation and determines the strategy for improvement (Akin-John 2005:57).

In reference to the importance of organisation, Akin-John believes that sometimes people confuse organisation with bureaucracy. Organisation is more properly equated with words such as “order” and “efficiency” (2005:41). If Sunday

school is to be effective in communicating the gospel, it must go about its task in an organised fashion to benefit the church of God (Association 1992:12).

The Sunday school is normally organised into divisions. The two most common are departments and grades. This is an organisational pattern which has been thoroughly tested and generally accepted (Association 1992:15). Grouping is a natural procedure by which students of like ages, interest, or school grade are put together in classes (Benson 1985:67).

The Evangelical Training Association observes that there are four main divisions which can be used (1992:15). These four main divisions of Sunday school are determined by periods of life: Preschool - birth through five years of age; Elementary - first through sixth grade; Youth - seventh grade through high school; and adults - university age and older (Association 1992:16). More will be said about this in chapter 3 as the author discusses special interest groups and age-groupings.

Hurst observes that when different classes are provided for each school grade, this is called grading. When several grades are grouped together into a department, the logical term to describe this is departmental grading (Hurst 2005:76). There is an advantage in maintaining separate classes, according to Benson (1985:47). He believes that well-organised departments, with challenging curriculum materials taught by good teachers, are essential for teaching teenagers during the impressionable years between thirteen and sixteen years of age (Benson 1985:47).

French advises that constant attention must be given to organisation. Even a well-organised Sunday school can fall into a chaotic and disorganised condition if not given the necessary attention (French 1934:89). He suggests that to conserve good organisation, regular reports must be required. Staff meetings must also be frequent (French 1934:89).

Francis Bola Akin-John agrees with French and suggests that no assignments or tasks should be undertaken without provision for a report. He believes staff members must know the definite times, places, and types of reports they will be required to compile (Akin-John 2005:65). He believes that nothing dignifies a task and quickens its execution more than a deadline for completing the reports. To

assign a task and then ignore it creates the impression that it is of little consequence (Akin-John 2005:66).

Effective organisation is not possible without regular praying and planning. There must be prayer for spiritual power and wisdom, and intelligent, effective effort should be planned. Sunday school superintendents have a right to expect members of the staff to contribute in monthly meetings arranged for inspiration, information, and instruction (Association 1992:20).

2.6 Evaluating adult Sunday school

Just because goals have been set and progress made towards achieving them does not mean that these goals will automatically be reached. Most Sunday schools normally make some progress for a while, but then they stop. Conscious evaluation of Sunday school is important if it is to stay healthy. It is common that even though the Sunday school might be off to a good start, major problems will arise. Before one specific problem gets resolved, another turns up in a different area, then something else goes wrong, and soon all the progress comes to a halt, buried in unresolved problems.

Those involved in the Sunday school need to be vigilant in identifying problems before they halt or hinder progress. Sunday school administrators will do well to avoid the mistake of relaxing when there is progress (Thaba 1997:119). Even when there is growth, one must continually anticipate problem areas and resolve them before they grow to overwhelming proportions.

Sunday school programmes should be evaluated periodically to ensure their ongoing effectiveness. It is important to assess if the Sunday school is still reaching the objectives set for it, and to see if it is meeting its objectives in good and uncomplicated ways, while still maintaining a high level of effectiveness (Nduka 2004:154).

Areas which need immediate attention will constantly be changing. Accordingly, the evaluation of the entire Sunday school programme should be a continuing process. It will be important to set new goals as areas of need are identified and to make plans to see how those needs can be met (Nduka 2004:154).

Short-term goals should constantly be set. Then as goals are met, new ones should be set.

Evaluation should extend to every part of the Sunday school programme and to every level of responsibility. The success of the evaluation will be determined by how specific the evaluation is. Some of the details that must be included in an evaluation are: facilities, communication, staffing ratios, the leaders and teachers, the Sunday school sessions, the curriculum, the planning meetings, the training of teachers, student attendance and interests, and the Sunday school objectives. There are several devices that can be used for evaluation. Three effective methods are: check the statistics, solicit feedback from the staff and the learners and set specific measurable short-term goals.

If a problem arises, the cause must be evaluated and possible solutions sought; but, it is not good leadership to only fix problems. All major items in the Sunday school programme need periodic evaluation; for example, one should evaluate the use of space, teaching assignments and the curriculum once every year, at least just prior to the beginning of a new year.

Adult Sunday school must implement a culture of perpetual evaluation. This evaluation could be done formally and intentionally with the intention of keeping records of progress and plans. This author believes that the work that God has given the church, including Sunday school, is too important to do poorly or half-heartedly.

One serving as an adult Sunday school teacher is more than a deliverer of content. The example of the teacher speaks louder than his or her words. To ensure maximum effectiveness of the adult Sunday school, evaluation must be carried out at four levels: general evaluation, teacher evaluation, class evaluation and pastoral/director evaluation.

General evaluation would encompass assessment of all the components of the Sunday school to ascertain if they are working systematically to accomplish their objectives. Teacher evaluation would include attitude, competence in pedagogy, adequate understanding of content and ability to interact meaningfully with the students. Class evaluation would include assessing the ability of students to grasp content, evaluating learning morale and accessing if integration of learning and practice is taking place. Pastoral/director evaluation involves accessing the overall

ability of the Sunday school director in introducing, implementing and sustaining effective programmes in the Sunday school department.

In order to give God their best, Sunday school teachers and leaders must be open to evaluation and feedback from God, other leaders, and their class members. Some people are not comfortable with evaluation, but if approached with the right attitude, evaluation can be humbling and encouraging at the same time. Our greatest desire must be to please God with the quality of our work, even if it means being corrected and redirected. Evaluation of adult Sunday school will strengthen effectiveness through making needed changes and adjustments.

2.7 The challenges of adult Sunday school

There are a number of challenges that make having a healthy adult Sunday school within the African context difficult. To name a few, Africa is struggling with spiritual challenges, conceptual challenges, physical challenges, organisational challenges, relational challenges and financial challenges.

2.7.1. Spiritual challenges

We acknowledge that we live in a spiritual world with an enemy who opposes the good things of God's church. The spiritual battle can be complicated by the strong sense of fatalism in Africa. Some Sunday school leaders believe that growth or the lack of growth is entirely in God's hands or that it is entirely related to what our spiritual enemy is doing. In either case, some people feel that there really is nothing that anyone can do to change it.

All churches go through phases or patterns of infancy, youth and, adulthood, along with periods of warm memories. Churches can become senile, and a church can die. A Sunday school director might believe that growth only belongs to other churches and not to his. He might accept that certain denominations will inevitably grow no matter what, in contrast to his own church or denomination.

Humanism is another spiritual challenge. The Bible's authority and reliability are questioned when it is seen as only a human book. Evangelism and helping people to be born again is perceived by humanists to be of lesser importance than to change society through human efforts and social programmes.

It can be a spiritual challenge when people do not see that they are gifted by God for ministry and that only those who have to be saved should be allowed to serve. People in local churches may feel that God cannot use them. Church members and their leadership can feel defeated spiritually and thus incapable of doing anything that might cause the church to grow.

Sometimes this spiritual challenge is compounded by traditionalism. Many do not want to change since things have always been done in certain ways. It has sometimes been said, “Churches attract tradition as ships attract barnacles”. Perpetuation of programmes may actually be an excuse that some congregations accept to justify their lack of growth.

2.7.2 Conceptual challenges

Conceptual challenges are concerned with how we envision the idea of Sunday school. Most people, including many elders and pastors, have not realised what the Sunday school is or should be. Phiri observes that there is a tendency of “following the rut of the past instead of allowing the Spirit to help one’s imagination so that we might leap out of preconceived ideas and limits of human experience” (2005:45).

Nduka comments that the world we are living in is not static, but dynamic. Living things should be expected to make changes (2004:125). While some leaders might be afraid to embrace change, the reality is that change creates hope and stabilises growth.

Extreme conservatism can block the road to change, even when there is need for it (Aransiola 2007:256). Conservatism can bury God-given talents and gifts because it focuses on the “church”, while ignoring the needs of the members who are themselves the church (Frimpong-Manso 2001:57).

In the realm of the mind, Akin-John mentions the challenge that comes from a tendency toward conservatism in which there is opposition to change. When the most important value is to preserve the status quo, there is a lack of creativity in how Sunday school is done. The growth of the Sunday school is hampered by a commitment to retain all of the traditional things that have always been (Akin-John 2005:19).

Nduka points out that in Sunday schools in Africa there is failure to see a need to train people within the church, and a general failure of the church to mobilise its people for ministry (2004:19). The essence of Sunday school training should be to equip the staff to help the students learn (Kanis 2005:15). Too many Sunday schools are not founded on biblical principles (Woodie 2010:28).

Those with authority to make changes may be afraid to do so lest they lose what they feel are the attractions of the past. A Sunday school remains in a redundant position among its contemporaries in the society, if its workers have no vision of progress, nor creative ability. The leaders of a stagnant Sunday school become unmarketable to other churches (Akin-John 2005:56).

Akin-John explains that if growth is understood only as numbers on a list, there may be a problem when one speaks of Sunday school or church growth. Other factors must also be considered, such as actual attendance, the offering, and the spirituality of the members. If we take these factors into account, a Sunday school might not actually be growing, even though its attendance has increased (Akin-John 2005:43).

Some Sunday schools have grown, and the complexity of size necessitates change in order to better teach larger numbers of people. To implement a new teaching/learning philosophy with emphasis on learner participation will require many changes in the traditional Sunday school.

If Sunday school does not embrace change it risks dying like any other living organism which rejects change. To help Sunday school grow, there must be an identification and understanding of some of the obstacles to growth. In Sunday school these obstacles might take the form of people's fear of change in any form; it may be resources; it may be space; it may be a shortage of leaders: it may be a lack of equipment, or it may be due to financial problems.

If a Sunday school is to grow it needs to be constantly changing in order to be able to respond effectively to the changing environment in which it is located. Some Sunday schools need to change because their ministry is no longer effective in meeting the needs of the people. Other Sunday schools need to change because their teaching procedures cause the learners to be bored.

2.7.3 Organisational challenges

There is a lack of organisation in many African Sunday schools. Poor organisation causes these schools to become weak and static in their growth (Nduka 2004:39). Oti adds that proper organisation in African Sunday schools will help the schools to function efficiently and effectively (2007:56).

Schein observes that “more churches are strangled by inadequate organisational patterns than are stymied by overcrowded facilities” (2004:367). It is important to keep in mind that organisational patterns must be constantly reexamined as the church grows.

Wagner concurs with Schein. He states that he used to believe that the pastor alone is the most essential person in church growth until research led him to conclude the opposite. Growing churches are led by leaders who train their people to be active, rather than trying to do everything themselves. It is when the people actively share their faith, witnessing to what Christ has done in their lives, that God makes things happen (Wagner 1976:45).

The African church has a tendency to adopt and copy models developed for England or for America – and it really is not surprising when these models do not work so well in Africa. The African church should design models that are culturally relevant to ensure that they yield the required results.

In Africa, as elsewhere, the primary reason why some Sunday schools do not grow is the lack of implementation of principles. Hemphis adds that principles cannot be implemented unless there are people who have been selected, empowered and trained and who are ready and willing to take up the challenge of implementing these principles (Hemphis 1989:54).

2.7.4 Administrative challenges

Administrative challenges are very much tied to the effectiveness of the leadership of the local church. The local church pastor is the overseer of the church and the Sunday school. On the one hand, a pastor should not delay in making necessary decisions for Sunday school because he is required to consult endless committees. This does not suggest that the pastor should ignore the committees. At

the same time, a pastor must also be careful not to undermine or take over the work of the Sunday school minister- in-charge (Edgerly 2006:67).

Weak policy-making and poor Sunday school staff are obstacles to its success. Johnston comments that poor staff contribute to poor performance for Sunday schools. This is especially true when the Sunday school superintendent and other staff members are novices in Sunday school work. Should any “enlightened one” who actually knows how a Sunday school should function, come into such a church and discover their problems and deficiencies, the current leadership and staff will simply leave (Johnston 1995:45).

2.7.5 Relational challenges

Relational challenges usually come from jealousy: pastors may be jealous of the leadership of the Sunday school, and there may be rivalries between churches or with other denominations. Thaba states that everyone wants to see the big oga (boss) as the only one with power and authority. However, it is hard to maintain organisational structure with this type of thinking (Thaba 1997:74).

Such an attitude is dangerous as it seeks to promote one person in the organisation. There is a risk of pride being developed in the life of the one person being seen as the centre of the organisation. He/she might feel that s/he wants everybody and everything to pass through his/her desk. In one way it is protecting the prestige and the position being occupied. It must be noted that a leader cannot solve all the problems himself; he must learn to share or delegate responsibility. By so doing he is placing trust in his subordinates.

2.7.6 Physical challenges

Physical challenges can present themselves in different forms. Various factors hinder people from participating in Sunday programmes. Some of these could be the appearance of buildings or grounds, or the size of the community. A church building or any structure used for Sunday school in a way represents the worshippers. The passers-by do not know the numerical, financial and spiritual strength of the church. They weigh the people and their programmes against what they observe. Church buildings say something about whether the congregants are poor or wealthy - or

whether they respect beauty or neatness. Many Sunday schools do not possess proper structures where they have adequate space for learning. It is not uncommon to find two groups sharing the same class, each occupying a corner of the room.

2.7.7 Financial challenges

Financial exuberance is a scenario where churches and their members are progressing financially while going backwards in spirituality. A Sunday school may have sound doctrine, sound teaching and dynamic ministers, but if the members of the Sunday school are living immoral lives, the Sunday school cannot grow (Akin-John 2005:53).

Furthermore, inadequate finances can hinder the progress or compromise the health of the Sunday school. The lack of funds prevents the acquisition of good teaching materials or being able to build adequate structures. Adequate finances inevitably play a major role in running any successful programme. This is a challenge in the African context where the church budget might not reflect that the Sunday school is a programme to which priority is being given.

Every institution of learning, be it sacred or secular, cannot function efficiently without money. The achievement of Sunday school educational goals depends on adequate financial support. The Sunday school can be an expensive commodity. If it has only limited financial resources, developing and expanding the Sunday school cannot be achieved. Consequently, Sunday school administrators have to find alternative ways of raising funds to make the programme more viable (Nduka 2004:236).

Erwin contends that every worthy enterprise must be adequately financed. Since the Sunday school promotes the Christian education work of the local church, it is worthy of financial support. In order for the Sunday school to carry out its work there must be equipment, materials, supplies, and a training programme – all of which require money (Benson 1973:43).

CHAPTER 3 FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

Introduction

The pressure of our times makes studying God's word imperative. Today, against a background of terrorism, crime, and an uncertain future, the Sunday school must continue to disseminate the basic truths found in Scripture in order to bring people to a true understanding of the gospel. This chapter will highlight some of the issues of education and leadership in the African context.

Every well-organised Sunday school depends upon competent, dedicated and spiritually-fit leadership. Unfortunately, the African church has been known to be in short supply of competent leadership. Sunday school administration usually is carried out by three key individuals - the pastor, the minister or director of Christian education, and the Sunday school teacher.

The challenges of leadership and leadership training are as far-reaching as the number of possibilities for Sunday school. As Sunday school ministries change, so will leadership training. Whenever the structures and roles of Sunday school classes change, more leaders and teachers with new or different skills and techniques will be needed. The acquisition of these skills must take into consideration the unique elements of the African student and seek to empower the student to be able to serve God amidst challenges prevalent in the African context. This calls for the educator to reconsider his philosophy of education so as to determine how training can be done effectively in the African context.

A Sunday school cannot function properly if it does not have leaders who are adequately trained to run the programme. Individual Christian growth is one of the great objectives of the teaching ministry. This growth process can only be possible when there are leaders who are committed to upholding and promoting the aims and objectives of the Sunday school.

Bower states that there is probably no greater administrative responsibility than that of providing competent leadership for a church's educational programme (1964:96). To a large extent the success of the Sunday school depends on the abilities of the leaders - the Sunday school director, the teachers and the volunteer staff.

If Sunday school leaders are untrained in areas of communication, the use of educational methods and materials, and even the best equipment and curriculum, will prove to be ineffective. Hendrix states that the best-planned programmes might fail miserably without the necessary leadership to administer it (2000:17).

If a church is extending its programme, it becomes all the more important that capable leaders be placed in the positions of great responsibility. Since the pastor will be busy, it will be necessary to delegate to other individuals the administration of certain areas over which he may have previously had close supervision.

Yemi cautions that those responsible for recruiting leaders must do their job with extreme care. He points out that the matter of leadership selection and development should not be neglected nor left to chance (Yemi 1999:18). It is not easy to remove or transfer a person from an office to which he may have been appointed.

Though there might be many things that we do not understand about the nature and development of leadership, we must nevertheless employ knowledge which is available and constantly seek to improve the programmes that have been started.

The Sunday school programme can be the breeding ground for potential leaders for the church. It is within the nurturing environment of an adult Sunday school that a person who may have appeared an unlikely candidate for leadership roles can develop innate skills and capitalise on any aptitude he or she may have for leading others. One of the functions of the Sunday school is the training of leaders who will serve in the various positions in the Sunday school. A local Sunday school must therefore have a plan for the training of her workers. Oti observes that a study of the objectives of the Sunday school reveals that they include the development of the personnel who carry forward the work of God (2007:182).

A well-organised Sunday school's effectiveness depends largely upon those who lead the programme (Anderson 1999:39). Failure frequently results from the spiritual unfitness of the Sunday school staff or the lack of leadership preparation. That is why Sunday school leaders and teachers must be chosen carefully and thoroughly trained for their task. Whichever method is employed in selecting leadership of the Sunday school by the local church, there is need for care when

selecting leaders as these are people who will influence the Sunday school students positively or negatively.

3.1 Emphasis on adult training in order to have healthy churches that grow

It is our purpose in this study to see the extent to which healthy Sunday schools contribute to the growth of the church. Sunday school can be a beneficial church growth tool if the leadership of the church makes it a priority within the church. There is a need for pastors to keep the purpose of Sunday school in mind as they organise their Sunday schools and its classes. Sunday school offers the church a tool to fulfil the Great Commission. As the Great Commission is being fulfilled, disciples are made and this results in the church growing.

Taylor observes: “How we view Sunday school has everything to do with what we do with it. I believe we need a new vision of what Sunday school is and what it can do. Sunday school is not just a programme; it is a ministry. Sunday school is not just a weekly event; it is a strategy of winning the lost and discipling them” (Taylor 2003:3). Johnston and Brown agree. They write, “Sunday school is the foundational strategy in a local church for leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for building Great Commission Christians through Bible study groups that engage people in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry and worship (Johnston and Brown 2000:51).

If Christians are involved in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry and worship through the forum of Sunday school, these activities will bring new people into the church. Once they are in the church they will be engaged through fellowship and worship resulting in them not feeling neglected but ministered to. Ministry opportunities will be created which will encourage them to practise their newly-found faith resulting in more people being reached by the church and hence causing the church to grow.

Ross notes that healthy Sunday schools might contribute to the growth of the church when the Sunday school programme is treated as an effective strategy for reaching people for Christ, teaching them the word of God and ministering to their needs (2001:62). He further adds that this demands that the leadership of the church not view Sunday school as one more programme amongst many that are already

crowding the church schedule (2001:63). Sunday school should be seen as a way of doing the Great Commission. Sunday school offers the church a strategy that will not only work once a week, but seven days a week where members will be making disciples, baptising them and teaching them everything that Jesus commanded.

The primary purpose of the Sunday school is to obey the Great Commission. The Sunday school becomes the driving force behind doing the work of God. Taylor says, "What then is the mission of the Sunday school? Its number one purpose is to fulfil the Great Commission. The Sunday school is the church organised to do the work of the Great Commission" (Taylor 2003:6). He further asserts that God's blessing can be realised in at least four ways as the church makes the Sunday school ministry priority strategy for focusing intentionally on the Great Commission:

- 1) Spiritually-lost people will come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptised into the fellowship of the church.
- 2) Christians will grow in their understanding and obedience to Christ as they study the Bible individually and with others.
- 3) The ministries of the church will expand as God's people discover their gifts and abilities, identify opportunities to serve others and respond to the call to serve people in Jesus' name.
- 4) The mission of the Lord will advance as God's people go into the world in his power and with his good news (Taylor 2003:7).

In his book *The 21st Century Sunday School*, Haystead writes, "Sunday school must pursue four highly worthy goals in order to make an indelible mark on people's lives. All four goals are necessary in order to have a balanced healthful church that will grow, that does not become ingrown or cater only to a narrow segment of people (Haystead 1995:14). Haystead lists these four goals as:

- 1) Win people to Christ
- 2) Teach God's word
- 3) Build supportive relationships
- 4) Encourage Christian service (Haystead 1995: 25)

Any Sunday school that strives to implement the four points mentioned by Haystead will inevitably grow. This shows that Sunday school has the capabilities of helping to win people to Christ and to offer supportive relationship within the church.

The Sunday school structure will enable the new converts to remain in church, grow and mature in their faith and be engaged in winning others.

A healthy Sunday school will contribute to the growth of the church as it provides the following six services to the members of the church. These in turn will empower the local church that the members attend:

1) Sunday school improves the Bible knowledge of those who attend. When adults know and understand God's word for themselves, they are more likely to obey the Lord. The Bible knowledge gained in Sunday school also helps members become more proficient in using God's word, the Bible.

2) Sunday school assists in spiritual growth. One can think of Sunday school teachers and class members who have modelled the Christian life. One learns much from observing living examples of how to live for Jesus. Most importantly, spiritual growth occurs best in the context of small group Bible study-that is what Sunday school is.

3) Sunday school provides a place to belong. In Sunday school classes everyone knows one another. Sunday school members can share needs and concerns from their lives. As they participate in class discussions; they become part of the group.

4) Sunday school helps one to build meaningful relationships. In the Sunday school programme one can meet people, learn their names, hear stories and meet their families. There is an opportunity to share fellowship time with class members. One ministers alongside others.

5) Sunday school gives each one an opportunity to serve and minister. Contact with unchurched members gives people the privilege of sharing their faith. Members can show the love of Jesus by ministering to class members who have needs.

6) Sunday school has a place for the whole family. By going to church, the entire family can participate in Bible study, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism.

Healthy Sunday schools are alert to opportunities to influence people for Christ, both inside the church building and in locations across the community. This

influencing of people for Christ is not limited by the time of the day or day of the week.

When members of a healthy Sunday school are committed to upholding the purpose of the Sunday school ministry there will be a commitment to reaching new people. Sunday school members will be excited about inviting others. Everywhere members go they will talk positively about their church, their staff, their adult Bible study programme, and their fellow members and leaders.

The Sunday school should be a strong and effective tool for sustaining church growth. If pastors and church leaders do not take the required time and energy to organise and train leaders in their adult Sunday school classes, the results of the programme will be greatly undermined. When the Sunday school is well organised, with highly efficient well-trained teachers, it becomes a church-growing tool.

Church growth through Sunday school has a strong theological basis. The biblical base stems from an understanding of church growth as it is seen in the Bible. The book of Acts shows how the church grew. The Apostle Paul teaches that it is the nature of the church to grow (1 Corinthians 3:7). Jesus spoke of the growth of the church in Matthew 16:18 when he declared, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it". Gates have been seen as a means of providing defensive protection. Jesus is saying that not even Hades can resist the church's advance or growth. These were encouraging words for the disciples of Jesus. There are many things that can inhibit growth. Jesus' words indicate that despite attacks on the church in any given place or time, the church should continue to grow as not even the Gates of Hell can prevail against His church.

When people are in Sunday school they discover that growth and maturity in the faith must result in bringing others to Christ. Evangelisation of the lost becomes non-negotiable as they understand that God is not willing that people perish without the saving knowledge of Christ. Just like the original disciples of Christ, their mission is to bring more and more people to Christ and into membership of his body. This understanding of the mission of God through his church will result in the local church growing.

Leadership has been viewed as an integral element in the progress of any institution. A healthy Sunday school that trains leaders will produce leaders who will

be influential in the church and community in the way they live their lives and in the way they motivate their followers to be loyal and promote the objectives of the Sunday school. The leaders in the Sunday school are in the forefront of reaching out to the people. Piland and Adams write, "If the Sunday school is to be the church reaching, teaching, witnessing, and ministering, it must be a going Sunday school" (1981:87). Hadaway reports a significant find from his study of growing churches. He found that seventy-seven percent of growing churches had a regular time for Sunday school visitation (Hadaway 1991:80).

3.2 Leadership training in the African context

Africa has been described as a "dark" continent. This may stem out of the many problems that the continent has seen. Ngambi notes several huge problems facing Africa: poverty, high rate of unemployment, poor health care, HIV/AIDS, abuse of power, lack of accountability, high illiteracy rates, inadequate education, high crime rate, natural diseases, and apathy (2004:107). A sad commentary on too much of Africa is seen in the saying that if you want to hide something from an African, put it in a book. This statement underscores the lack of literacy and sometimes even a lack of interest in education in many African communities.

The solution to these very large problems is not simple and certainly will not come from a "quick fix" from the analytical perspective of the West. Solutions must be found in developing relevant, holistic, and cultural training systems that speak a language and use an approach that fits the African people and enables spiritual growth within their context (Ngambi 2004:107).

For centuries information has been passed on through oral tradition. One church leader in East Africa described traditional African learning by saying that:

In the village it is the responsibility of the community to train boys to be men and girls to be women. Much of their time is spent with some elders. That is how they learn. They learn about the affairs of the the village and the affairs of life. The elders watch the boys and the ones they see being active and doing more they decide to teach them more. As the boys are doing errands the elders will give them small doses of knowledge that they want the boys to learn (McCulley 2008:47).

Janvier and Thaba contends that "any biblical training in the African context must take into consideration the culture and world view of the African mind"

(2001:36). To teach or train effectively requires an understanding of the culture of those being trained. Hofstede defines culture as “the collective mental programming of people in an environment” (1980:42). In other words, culture reflects the sum total of the habitual activities (repetitive, learned behaviour) that define a specific people in a specific setting.

Farley contends that if the goal of training is to prepare an individual to be productive within a specific society, one must conclude that education is culturally bound (1980:36). The way we train, the reason we train, and the context in which we train must be understood in terms of the culture. Wilson laments that too often our education systems are modelled after those in the West. African educators must ask: Will our people be prepared to be productive citizens in our society through an approach to training that is imported from the West or should a new approach be sought that will take into consideration the unique factors of our culture and our students? (Wilson 2010:15)

Niemeyer describes worldview as a framework or model that describes who we are, where we are going, what is good and what is evil, how we should act, what is true, and what is false (2004:155). For Africans, knowledge acquisition is by observation and experience; it did not have to depend on “understanding and interpretation of the social and physical/spiritual worlds” (Dei 2002:72).

Good leadership is one of the primary factors in church growth. Leaders also are a key factor in determining whether or not adult Sunday school training in their churches will contribute to church growth. The type of style employed in leading people has an effect on their participation and motivation to work (Hofstede 1980: 41). People cannot be forced to do something they do not want to do. The leader must ensure that he creates an environment where the followers will be motivated to work towards a common goal of which they all feel they will be beneficiaries. At the same time leaders must have an understanding that they need to empower others to help them with the work. There is a need to delegate authority and work to ensure that there is progress. The church and Sunday school ministry is no different. The kind of leadership displayed by the senior pastor can either hinder or promote the work of the church.

Leadership can be described as working with individual people, being responsible for them, and being accountable to them. But a leader is also responsible for the programmes of an institution, church or organisation. Goals and objectives must be pursued.

Different cultures define leadership differently. Leadership remains in a state of constantly moving goalposts, and continues to represent contextual applications of implicit knowledge. Part of that continuous shift in definitions and understanding is rooted in new ways of doing business, changes in culture, and our desire to grapple with the ideals of our societies. Leadership is always adjusted, re-interpreted or indigenised to fit with the cultural and socio-political milieu of a particular society (Yemi 1999:76). This then implies that leadership is closely bound-up with the cultural and socio-political life in which it is found. Leadership is both an art and a science. As a science it is involved with goals, structures, policies, times, boards, and committees. As an art it refers to personality, beliefs, convictions and people skills. African leadership tends to be less defined, more relaxed about time, more holistic and more sensitive towards people, while western leadership tends to be “logical, analytic, technical, controlled, conservative, and administrative” (Bennis 1989:102).

Osei-Mensah laments that there is an acute shortage of trained leadership at all levels in the church in Africa today, especially given the current phenomenal rate of growth of the Christian community across the continent (1990:8). African leadership has been influenced by African traditions, religious influences (Christianity or Islam) and colonial rule (British, French etc.). These three influences have become the foundational stones that form the leadership structures that exist today in Africa (Thaba 1997:12).

When we are talking of African traditional leadership we mean a style which has existed long before the coming of outside influences. Unlike other countries in Africa, Swaziland can speak of one single culture for the whole country. The model of leadership used in the country is that of a monarchy. The king's word is the final word. He rules from the top down. The geographic area that he rules is considered his kingdom. The path to leadership is only by inheritance, not election. The king is king for life. The king is regarded as the father of the nation; the king is the executive head, above the legislator, the supreme judge, the commander-in-chief. The king

cannot be questioned. It is thus unSwazi to question his authority or decision or to be against him.

African traditional leadership patterns have had a lingering effect on the church today. This is true also for Swaziland. Most of our church leaders follow the monarchy style of leadership in their churches. Democratic leadership is shunned as something that is only good for the West but not for them. There are few leaders who have tried to go beyond cultural leadership in order to implement the type of leadership the Bible encourages for those in the church.

Means observes that most definitions, no matter how well-crafted, will always fall short in some respect in their definitions of leadership. He offers the following as a definition of spiritual leadership:

Spiritual leadership is the development or relationships with the people of a Christian Institution or body in such a way that individuals and the group are enabled to formulate and achieve biblically compatible goals that meet real needs. By their ethical influence, spiritual leaders serve to motivate and enable others to achieve what otherwise would never be achieved (Means 1989:58).

This is one of the best definitions of leadership. In the above definition we notice an emphasis upon the goals of “others” (both the group and of individuals), not the personal goals of the leader. In other words, spiritual leadership does not unilaterally decide what others should do and then try to get the followers to do it; rather, leaders stimulate and aid the members to identify and achieve their own goals.

One concludes that the African church is in dire need of good leaders. This shortage of good leadership is in both the secular and religious world. Leaders need to be “servant leaders” as this is the pattern promoted in the Bible.

Leadership has been given many different definitions as leadership means different things to different people. For the purpose of this study we will limit what leadership entails to managing, goal-setting, serving people, organizing, delegation and development.

Sunday school is more than an organisation that teaches people in classes; it also involves giving leadership in a training programme. Without leadership over the Sunday school, or when the leadership of the senior pastor (or others) is unhelpful to

the Sunday school, effective training programmes in the church cannot function well. So what are the leadership characteristics needed both by a pastor so as to cause adult training to flourish, and by those involved in teaching and leading adult Sunday school training?

The leaders of the church who will have the greatest ability to support the Sunday school will be the ones who possess knowledge and understanding of what Sunday school is and how Sunday school complements the work of the local church. The often-quoted statement "we do not need to know the answers to every question, but where to find the answers" is an appropriate statement for leaders in the church. The leaders who will encourage Sunday schools do not need to be experts in the field, but they should be leaders who are well versed in the resources that help the church to achieve its purposes as a Sunday school and as a church.

There are a great variety of resources and articles available for leaders. Not only should leaders have a good knowledge of resources, but they should also have a good understanding of where to find those resources and how they can be used to accomplish the tasks of the Sunday school.

Church leaders who will help the Sunday school grow understand that the support of the Sunday school is strategic in developing a growing church. Through Sunday school ministry people will be reached with the good news of Jesus Christ. Through effectively managing our time, building teamwork, improving planning, organising for growth, facilitating teaching, encouraging training, delegating, and having knowledge of the resources available for getting the job accomplished, there will be a creation of the foundations for an outstanding ministry and a growing Sunday school.

Javier and Thaba argue that the kind of church leaders who will encourage their Sunday schools are those with a strong commitment to training others into leadership (2001:21). Training present and future leaders is essential to a growing Sunday school. One can find classroom space, provide resources, and offer training; but without persons who are willing to become leaders, Sunday school growth will be hampered.

D'Souza believes that it takes leadership to create an organisation that works (2000:61). Potential leader training gives prospective leaders the opportunity to learn

about the duties and responsibilities of leading the Sunday school. The Sunday school gives people the opportunity to “test the waters” of leadership, discover their giftedness, and explore their abilities to lead. Potential worker training needs to be occurring all year, not just once in a while.

Just as the training of potential new leaders is essential to the development of healthy Sunday schools, so is basic leader training essential in keeping the leaders who are already serving. Sunday school leaders cannot be left to “lone ranger” leadership. They must understand that they are an important part of a team, and that the team is there for mutual encouragement, support, and help. On-going basic leadership training encourages leaders to persevere as it provides inspiration and encouragement, as it strengthens continued commitment, and as it offers affirmation. When leaders become “islands” in themselves, they often begin to burn out, become negative, and as they slowly begin to feel that they are ineffective, they become ineffective.

When workers have an opportunity to continue to grow by being exposed to new methods of leading and relating, they are much more likely to teach and lead over a long period of time than when they are left to fend for themselves. Basic on-going training improves leaders’ teaching skills, interpretation skills, relationship skills, and organisational skills.

The kind of church leaders who will encourage Sunday school growth are leaders who will be intentional about advancing the training of the Sunday school staff. Advanced leader training brings creativity and excellence to the work of the Sunday school. Advanced leader training is essential for a growing Sunday school. Those veteran leaders of the Sunday school need new and advanced opportunities for growth and development as leaders. If they do not have this type of training, they seldom continue to lead with consistent motivation and excellence. All of us from time to time need to be exposed to outstanding leaders. These outstanding leaders help us to become outstanding leaders. Advanced leader training gives us the opportunity to expose the Sunday school leadership to the very best leaders in our circle.

There is need to train those responsible for Sunday schools. The person responsible for Sunday school must be properly informed of his duties and

qualifications. Every adult Sunday school leader has the right to know what expectations and responsibilities come with the job. Clinton notes that when leaders understand expectations and their role as part of a leadership team, they are more likely to respond positively to the call to lead or serve and to be effective in their jobs (1993:17).

Depending on the size of the Sunday school and the church, the person responsible for the Sunday school programme might be employed as a full-time staff member or just a volunteer. If the person will be an additional paid staff member it would be better that the congregation be prepared for this.

Training of the person responsible for the Sunday school could be done in cooperation with neighbouring churches that have their own Sunday schools. It would be wise to invite someone who has been doing this task to explain to those who are new what the duties entail.

Those responsible for Sunday school must be aware of their relationship with the pastor to avoid potential conflicts. These leaders are serving under the leadership of the pastor and must be willing to receive direction from the pastor. Graham observes that the pastor is ultimately responsible for the educational programme of the church, but he delegates this duty to the person or persons responsible for the Sunday school programme of the church (2011:18).

Those responsible for the Sunday school might be given different titles. For some churches they might be called general leader, Sunday school minister, Sunday school director or Sunday school principal. Whatever their title, these people all have the same task of leading the Sunday school programme. They need to have an understanding of the Sunday school and how to convey the purpose of the programme to leaders and members of the church.

One of the considerations to be given while training these leaders is to ensure that the person is trained to be able to influence and rally other Sunday school workers who are part of the team. The ability of the leader to rally other Sunday school workers and members around a central purpose and vision for the Sunday school is the foundation to everything else he or she will do.

Every leader must be trained and encouraged to pursue personal growth. The most important competency for those leading Sunday school is the demonstration of

the trait of being a believer. The true strength and power of leaders of Sunday schools comes through the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the lives of the leaders and members of the Sunday school. While it is important that leaders of Sunday school have strong administrative skills and other traits, it is even more important that they work under the power and strength of the Holy Spirit—otherwise their work will be powerless.

We concur with Jackson that Sunday school should be seen as having immeasurable value to the church (2000:17). Those involved in it must understand that it seeks to impart systematic Bible teaching, providing an opportunity for the people of God to gather together for instruction of the Word as well as for worship and fellowship (Association 1992:4). As was noted in the introductory remarks to this thesis: the foundation of Sunday school is healthy relationships; the strength of Sunday school is ministry; the heart of Sunday school is Bible study (Association 1992:56).

Rex Jackson contends that one of the aims of Sunday school is to teach the word of God. Sunday school is especially helpful because it offers a planned course of study. Well-prepared food is necessary for good health, just as well-planned teaching lessons are essential for spiritual growth and learning. Good teaching is well-focused on its intended target (Jackson 2000:11).

The pastor and his selected committee (elders or overseers) are responsible for the development of local goals and objectives for the Sunday school. These goals are developed to respond to the unique needs stemming from the church's context. This will avoid the imposition of foreign structures that are not helpful to the church.

The teacher must be one who has the respect of the class for his Bible knowledge, use of teaching methods, and personal life. Some adults continue attending classes when some of these qualities are lacking in a teacher, but those adults seldom invite others and are not enthusiastic about class.

The Sunday school teacher has the same responsibility to his or her class as the pastor to his flock. A Sunday school teacher is best defined as the extension of the pastoral ministry into the life of the class. To better understand the duty of the Sunday school teacher one must understand the role of the pastor (Towns 1976:177).

Ephesians 4:11-16 indicates that the principal task of the pastor is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. This equipping involves pastoring, or shepherding the sheep. It is plausible that the chief equipping duty of the pastor to his people should be the equipping of the saints to care for one another's needs; the fostering of a caring, loving, fellowship of believers.

The pastor is entrusted with the responsibility of leading, preaching, teaching, correcting, evangelising, nurturing and protecting the sheep under his care. The teaching aspect of a pastor is supplemented by the Sunday school ministry rather than the pastor trying to do everything single-handedly. In addressing Titus, whom the apostle Paul called his "true child in a common faith" (Titus 1:9), he set forth as one of Titus' pastoral tasks the "holding fast" to "the faithful Word which is in accordance with the teaching", that Titus would be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict it (Titus 1:9).

A Sunday school teacher must not only be a born-again believer but must also have experienced a spiritual change in her life. To be qualified to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unsaved, the teacher must have the assurance of her own salvation. The teacher's spiritual life must be established on a good foundation. The teacher must be wholly separated from the lust of the world (Nduka 2004:45).

Currie adds that the teacher must be a regular and faithful attender of church and Sunday school classes. As a member of the church she must participate in the activities of the church as well as the activities of the class (Currie 1972:83). A teacher is a builder; each pupil is a temple. The teacher's construction work is most important, consisting of leading each student to accept Christ and then building upon that foundation a life that bears fruit for Christ (Campbell 2003:89).

Griggs comments that each teacher must recognise the high privilege that he or she has been given to serve the Lord through the Sunday school ministry, and trust in the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit (1974:91). Heward-Mills adds that teachers must live what they teach, manifesting a deep spiritual concern for the members of their classes (2008:124). This commitment must be manifested in teaching sound doctrine, in efforts put into lesson preparation and in whole-hearted support for, and promotion of, the Sunday school ministry (Jones 1987:65).

The adults who attend class even once ought to go home with certain favourable impressions, for example, that they were welcomed and their presence appreciated; that they met people who wanted to be their friends if they continued to attend; and that if they continue they will understand the Bible better and will come to know the Lord (Campbell 2003:89).

For adults to learn, they must be involved in the Sunday school class that they attend. This involvement can take place in several ways: discussions, oral reviews, written quizzes, note-taking, home study, research in reference books, presentation of reports and asking questions (Campbell 2003:89).

3.3 Teaching in ways that adults will learn

The word “pedagogy” is defined as the art, science, or profession of teaching (Sheehy 1976:45). The word literally means “child-leading” and comes from the ancient Greek name given to a slave responsible for escorting his master’s children to and from school and assisting them with their education. Until recently the word was used of teaching in general (Bower 1964:31). Today educators distinguish between child and adult learning. Pedagogy refers especially to helping children learn; andragogy is used for the art and science of helping adults learn (Sheehy 1976:45).

Sunday school leaders must realise that adults do not approach learning in the same way as children. If one is teaching adults, he needs to be trained how to teach adults. The apostle Paul expressed this very idea when he wrote: “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me” (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Knowles states that advocates of andragogy offer four assumptions about adults that distinguish them from children. These are:

1. As an individual matures, their self-concept moves from being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed human being.
2. As individuals mature, they accumulate a reservoir of experiences that become a growing resource for learning.
3. As individuals mature, their readiness to learn becomes oriented more to the developmental tasks of their social roles.

4. As individuals mature, their time perspective changes from one of postponed to immediate application of knowledge (Knowles 1980:44-45)

These observations make adult learning experiences and motivation very different from that of children. For children, the teacher decides what, when and how the child will learn, but adults see themselves as self-directed and expect others to view them that way also. This implies that a Sunday school teacher must see his or her role as a facilitator when conducting Bible lessons. Adults want to decide for themselves what they will learn, when they will learn it, and how they will go about it. The teacher and adult student see each other as equals in a mutually helpful relationship.

Learning goals for adults are specific and more immediate than for children. Children go to school to gain a broad understanding of subjects that hopefully will help them later in life. In general, their studies are one of postponed application. Children are routinely told, “some day you will need to know this”. Adults have a much different time perspective compared to children. They read a book or enrol in a course looking for answers to specific problems, and they want to make an immediate application.

The greater life experience of adults is an important aid in learning. For children, the teacher’s experience is the primary source for learning. A child’s experience is considered of relatively little value. This makes the child very dependent on the teacher. The learning situation is largely characterised by one-way communication. Yet for adults, everyone’s experience and knowledge are valued as a resource. As adults share their knowledge, everyone’s learning is enriched. The teacher is not the sole contributor of knowledge. Adult learners are interdependent than in their learning, and they have multidirectional communication.

Adults group themselves for learning more on the basis of interest than on the basis of age-level. For children, decisions about grouping and curriculum are based strictly on age. Certain subjects are deemed appropriate for a certain age. Adults are not concerned about age; they gravitate towards those with similar concerns and interest.

Adults learn by their own initiatives. Their learning is, in effect, self-directed. Children and young people perceive themselves as being dependent persons who

constantly expect adults to make their decisions both at home and at school. This changes, particularly in the senior high school years, but we can assume it is a fair generalisation of how learning takes place in childhood and early teen years. Children and youth need to be constantly motivated to learn and this motivation is often external. With adults, this approach will simply not work. Adults often motivate themselves to learn. Their motivation is internal.

Adults want to know the importance of learning any given subject. Since learning for adults serves as a means rather than an end, adults tend to resent learning situations which treat them like children. This relates to the aspect of life experience mentioned earlier on as well as their difference in self-concept in comparison with children. McCulley suggests that sometimes in educating adults one needs to relearn how to learn since formal schooling has often conditioned them to a dependent mindset procedure (2008:144). A better learning process for adults occurs when they cooperate with each other in groups (Trester 1982:71).

3.3.1 Teaching methodologies for adult learning

Many educators who are interested in adult biblical learning realise that for optimum learning to take place, they themselves need to acquire skills in facilitating the basic processes of adult learning. Educators have known for a long time that learning, not teaching, is the heart of education. Many of them are only now beginning to practise this ancient insight. Novice teachers often need years of classroom experience before they can shift the focus away from themselves as the teacher in order to attend to the needs of the learners. An increasing number of adult biblical educators are becoming convinced they need preparation, a certain amount of unlearning, good knowledge of the theory and a rich experience of life in order to facilitate adult interdependent learning (Trester 1982:293).

Stories are an important part of life in Africa. In lectures and in story-telling the illustration or story must be interesting, dramatic, full of action, and adapted to the particular group to whom the story is being told. The story must contribute to the aim of the lesson for the day and it must serve a moral and religious purpose. The lecture method has value, especially to those students who would not come to Sunday school if they thought they would be called on to say anything, answer a question, or

contribute to class discussion. These students are greatly helped by a good lecture delivered by a well-prepared teacher (White 1926:62). White indicated that various methods, besides story-telling, lectures and discussion, could also be used in teaching Sunday school, such as asking questions, using illustrations, hand work and dramatisation (1926:42).

Kolo suggests a symposium as another method of teaching. A symposium is where two or more people give a mini-lecture about five minutes long on topics related to the lesson (2008:96). A moderator introduces the topic and speakers, each of whom presents a different aspect of the subject. Kolo firmly believes that the adult students can use this method effectively if given time and instruction to prepare adequately. This method is most effective when the class needs concise information or when there is need for different speakers to add variety to the material (2008:98).

Phiri comments on using questions in teaching, noting that one has to be very skillful in asking leading questions to one's students. These questions must be clear and definite. The teacher must avoid using complicated words. Phiri argues that one test of a teacher's work is in the questions that students ask. A class that is interested in the lesson will ask questions. The teacher must welcome and encourage questions from the students (Phiri 2005:85).

Reed observes that "Illustrations are a great aid to teaching, teachers need to cultivate skill in this art" (2008:35). According to Reed, illustrations are divided into five groups: first-hand experience, pictures, models, diagrammes and maps. Illustrations must be used with the purpose of bringing clarity to the lesson.

Dramatisation enhances memory retention in students. People forget what they hear but what they both see and hear is not easily forgotten. That is especially so when what they hear and see is a story that has emotions attached to it. Dramatisation as a method in Sunday school does not concern itself primarily with the effects made on the audience; instead, the aim is the expression of biblical truth in a way that the adult learner is able to relate to life situations (Edgerly 1983:78).

Towns presents the dramatisation method as a kind of role play. Students assume a situation and then act it out, hopefully reaching a constructive conclusion (Towns 1976:297). Role play is not artistic performance based on a literary text, but

an extemporaneous activity in which participants “feel their way through” the situation (Association 1992:45).

Kolo further adds that role play must be followed by a discussion, where the players can express how they felt in the roles they were acting. Did the experience give them new insights that could be applied to life? How could Scriptural principles have been applied to prevent or to alleviate the problem? The teacher then summarises the results of the exercise (2008:103).

The research method is one that is very participative for the student. The teacher assigns the students something to research, either in groups or as individuals. The research might be into any topic determined by the teacher. The teacher does bear in mind that the adult student does not have much free time, or access to many books or resources. This is especially true for the African woman who has to be available to serve her immediate family and community (Kolo 2008:98).

In teaching, one must be mindful of the impact of the environment and culture on the student. The influence of environment begins at the time of the conception of the child in the womb of the mother. The foetus in the womb is influenced by the mother's mental, physical and emotional conditions (Schunk 2004:64). The external environment starts from the time of birth of the child. The external environment refers to the surroundings which prevail in home, school and locality. At these places the student interacts with other members of the family, teachers, classmates or peers and neighbours (Schunk 2004:70). He establishes relationships with them. Some of the environmental factors are his natural surroundings and his social surroundings.

At times, social environmental factors have been neglected, not only in individual lesson preparation and delivery by teachers, but also in the global way in which training programmes and their curriculum are designed. This subject is increasingly being studied and it seems that leaders and teachers need an awareness of these factors (Berger and Luckman 1966:56).

The child's natural surroundings cover the climatic and atmospheric conditions. For a limited time, humidity and high temperature can be tolerated, but prolonged humidity and high temperature become unbearable and they decrease mental efficiency. The intellectual productivity and creativeness of people living in hot

regions are much lower than those in cooler regions (Wiredu 1980:71). From this it follows that mornings are better for mastering difficult tasks than warmer afternoons. Long observes that, "Studies on the academic progress of evening school students show losses of efficiency varying from one to six percent" (2011:51).

Social surroundings include especially the environment of home, school and neighbourhood. Learning is affected by physical conditions at home such as large family, small family, insufficient ventilation, improper lighting, uncomfortable temperature, and noisy home environment due to such things as the use of the radio and television (Berger and Luckman 1966:63). Socio-emotional factors have a definite influence on learning. These include such things as child-rearing practices, reward and punishment, scope for freedom in activities, decision-making, play and study facilities, disorganisation and discord as a result of birth positions such as being the eldest or youngest child (Berger and Luckman 1966:63).

A deep understanding of both culture and learning style is important for all educators, though the subject must be addressed carefully. The relationship of the values of the culture in which a student is currently living, and from which a student has roots, and the learning expectations and experiences in the classroom are directly related to the student's success academically, socially, and emotionally. Educators must endeavour to understand and appreciate the cultural differences of students in order to make the appropriate instructional decisions that will enhance their learning.

Kolo observes that the individual adult learner has a self-concept that is moving from being a dependent personality towards being a self-directed human being. As people mature they accumulate an intellectual reservoir that becomes a growing resource for learning. As individuals grow, their readiness to learn becomes oriented more towards developmental tasks within their roles. Their time perspective changes from one of postponing action to immediate application of knowledge (Kolo 2008:34).

Phiri affirms this by adding that adults have different motivations to learn than do children. He suggests that adults are more self-directed in their learning, that their learning goals are specific and more immediate, that greater life-experience is an

important aid in learning and that adults tend to group themselves for learning more on the basis of interest than on the basis of age-level (Phiri 2005:142).

3.3.2 Curriculum for adult learning

The word “curriculum” comes from the Latin word *curro*, meaning “to run”. In defining a religious curriculum, Webb sees the overall objective as the education of the student in the great truths of the gospel (2005:75). This is achieved in different ways according to the various age levels. Theodore Schmauk elaborates that while impartation of content is important, the overarching objective in a curriculum must be the life change of adult students. The chief concern is not just getting information on the Bible, but using the Bible as a living force, as God’s word, as the word of life (Schmauk 2000:227).

The training given in the Sunday schools is of major importance. French comments, “Only the thoughtless can lightly esteem the part the present day Sunday school plays in the life of the church” (1934:42). French recommends a curriculum that follows a catechism style that emphasises rote memory. He states some of the positive effects of this kind of curricular approach. He notes that it was not unusual for Sunday school students to quote a lot of Scripture portions from memory. and that these students consequently had a good grasp of the overview of the whole Bible. He laments that it seems like there is a shift away from an emphasis on memorisation of the Bible for adults. He cites the Psalmist, “Thy Word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against thee” (French 1934:10).

Nduka suggests that Sunday school, in its quest to deliver education, should include the use of Christian literature, music and art. This must not be confused with simply adopting a western cultural lifestyle. He contends that a confused world needs the stabilizing effects of Christians and their philosophy with its biblical interpretation of life in order to help stem the tide of death and destruction which is so common in Africa (Nduka 2004:125).

Benson also laments that while principles of curriculum-making are fully appreciated and applied in secular schools, the church has been slow to adopt them in its religious instruction. He outlines the brief history of the development of the religious curriculum in the United States of America. The first stage was the

catechism period, where the main purpose was to ground the student in the essentials of Christian doctrine and impart biblical knowledge (1985:128). The second stage was memory. The Bible is not arranged systematically and it was not the purpose of the biblical writers to prepare its material for immediate teaching use. Memorisation, which was a commonly-accepted method of learning in schools, helped learners to begin to understand the teachings of the Scripture (Benson 1985:140). The third stage was a “Babel period” in the USA. During this time there was a lack of standards and unity in what was taught, so that much of the material itself was open to criticism. There was competition between denominational boards and interdenominational unions. The final stage was uniform lessons. It was felt that uniform lessons were best for the adult learner since the students are so widely separated by various pursuits of life. The fact that uniform lessons do not provide consecutive material for learning made little difference in adult classes, as at least some individuals were very irregular in their attendance on account of business and household duties (Benson 1985:155).

3.3.3 Teaching models for adult learning

There are different ways to teach adults. The author will discuss five teaching models adapted from Gunter, Estes and Hasbrouck’s work (1990:76). These will be: (1) The model of Teaching Approach, (2) The Direct Instructional Model, (3) The Concept Attainment Model, (4) The Concept Development Model, and (5) The Classroom Discussion Model.

(1) The Model of Teaching Approach

This model emphasises the need for variety in the classroom by developing a teacher’s repertoire of instructional approaches to meet a range of objectives. Learners have different needs and learn in different ways. Some students learn better in a highly structured environment; some in a more open and student-centred atmosphere. Some students prefer to solve problems by themselves, while others feel more comfortable if solutions are presented to them (Gunter, Estes and Hasbrouck 1990:68).

If a teacher creates a single environment in the classroom or utilises the same instructional approach over and over, only those who learn well from that approach

will succeed (Joyce 1986:76). This model seeks to reach all students in the classroom by utilising a variety of approaches.

This model is in conflict with those who assert that one approach is markedly more desirable than the other. For example, some of those who believe in behavioural psychology scoff at those who insist on learning by problem-solving and enquiry-based learning (Taiwo 1980:163). Taiwo states that, "There is no one correct manner in which to instruct all of the students all of the time (1980:163).

Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter note that some people assume that generally non-western people are global learners and westerners are analytical. In reality, not all Africans are more analytic than relational in the way that they learn. These two learning styles are simply ways that students sort out information. People who are relational or global learners tend to see the whole first. People who are analytical or dichotomous learners tend to see the parts first; then they relate them to the whole. Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter argue that a learning style is an individual circumstance, not a cultural one (2003:61). A teacher cannot conclude that since she is teaching a group of African students she will just use one approach of teaching because the reality is that not all Africans think in the same way.

(2) The Direct Instruction Model

A highly structured model is used most effectively in teaching basic skills such as reading and mathematics as the task to be learned can be broken into small discrete segments. This model is also effective in teaching cognitive objectives related to recall and recognition of facts and data (Hunter 1927:76). Psychomotor skills, such as holding a pencil and playing a violin, are also effectively taught through this model (Hunter 1927:76). This has application to adult Sunday school training as there are many foundational biblical truths which can be taught in incremental pieces. There are many ministry skills, such as evangelism, counselling, teaching or preaching that can be learned.

The direct instruction model can follow the following steps:

- (1) An anticipatory set, which causes the learner to focus on what they are about to learn.
- (2) A description of objectives and purpose, in which the teacher makes clear what is to be learned.

- (3) An input stage, in which a new knowledge, process, or skill is presented to the students.
- (4) Modelling, in which what has been learned is demonstrated.
- (5) Checking for understanding, to determine if students have grasped the new material.
- (6) Guided practice, under the careful supervision of the teacher.
- (7) Independent practice that encourages the learners to perform or utilise the new learning on their own (Gunter, Estes and Hasbrouck 1990:88).

Similarly, Rosenshine has identified six steps in direct instruction. These are a review of previously-learned material, statement of objectives for the lesson, presentation of new material, guided practice with corrective feedback, independent practice with corrective feedback and periodic review with corrective feedback if necessary (Rosenshine 1983:340).

(3) The Concept Attainment Model

By teaching the thinking skills of categorizing, students comprehend and analyse the meaning of a particular concept. Through a series of positive and negative examples, students define the concept and determine its essential attributes. This model is particularly effective in meeting objectives related to comprehension, comparison, discrimination, and recall (Gunter, Estes and Hasbrouck 1990:92).

This model also has value for teaching adults in a church setting as there are many deep theological truths worthy of analysis and reflection. This model builds on what students already know in order to lead them into deeper understanding. It involves the process of defining concepts by attending to those attributes that are essential to the meaning and disregarding those that are not; it also involves learning to distinguish between what is and is not an example of the concept.

(4) The Concept Development Model

When a concept is understood, a new word takes on meaning because it is useful in communicating that concept. The concept and its label become a permanent part of the individual's mental framework (Taba 1971:43). On the other hand, when a new tag is given and then a definition follows before conceptualisation has occurred, the tag seldom becomes part of the individual's mental framework for

more than a few days (Taba 1971:43). In this model the word “concept” refers not only to the object in itself, which many think is unknowable since one can never step out of one’s understanding, but also to those attributes that make up one’s notion of the object (Taba 1971:43).

This model teaches students to group data on the basis of perceived similarities, and then forms a category and label for that data, effectively producing a conceptual system. In the process, students learn to think about their own thinking and to understand how concepts originate. This model is also useful in adult education within the church as learners are exposed to biblical and theological language. The model is effective with objectives related to contrasting, applying, categorising, and analysing data.

(5) The Classroom Discussion Model

This model is based on the “great books” approach, and guides the planning and selection of questions to be used in the classroom for discussion. The great books approach focuses exclusively on the original texts of the greatest writings in history. After reading these works, students and tutors engage in discussions to bring out the rich meaning found in these books. Both students and teacher learn to identify different levels and types of questions. This model helps the teacher direct the process of classroom interactions for effective classroom discussion. For Christians, what book is better than the revealed word of God? This model is effective as it helps adults learn how to ask appropriate questions of the Scriptures in order to gain knowledge (cognitive objectives) coming from synthesis and evaluation of the text, alongside a deeper relationship with God (affective objectives), which come from receiving and responding to the great truths that one is learning.

Smith points out that “there has been a vibrant discussion on what might unify and integrate the Sunday school in reference to the unity of the school and the curriculum” (2011:9). Smith further observes that “many have believed that the solution is to train pastors” (2011:13). He believes that many things are lost when “theological formation is reduced to training for ministry only” (Smith 2011:13).

Smith affirms that “something deeper and broader needs to anchor the curriculum and the mission of the church” (2011:13). He believes that biblical training for formation in wisdom proposes that theological training be viewed as

fundamentally formation in wisdom. Skills and capacity for adult ministry certainly matter and students do need to be competent in the essential practices of pastoral ministry. Yet skills mean very little and can actually be destructive if they are not anchored in biblical wisdom. Teaching biblical wisdom while helping all believers to gain skills and capacity for ministry should be the core of what adult Sunday schools do. A vision for formation in wisdom would include an affirmation that what defines our understanding of wisdom is the Triune God - for all truth and understanding comes from God, is embodied in the person of Christ and is formed in our lives through the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit (Smith 2011:13).

In adult education generally, the debate on formation focuses around the integration of the three main aims: preparation for work, development of analytical thinking and critical reflection, and induction into a culture of on-going and creative learning (Azizi 2010:26).

A study on intentionality in spiritual formation in Christian education in South Africa was carried out in 2010. It was discovered that theological institutions in South Africa were committed to the spiritual development of students during their training for church leadership (Naidoo 2011:118-146). In a similar way, a commitment to spiritual development makes the teacher of the adult Sunday school aim to bring the student to a place of experiencing a divine encounter. The educational efforts are not only concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, but are also aimed at students experiencing internal change that comes through surrendering oneself to Christ.

The Sunday school teacher aims for behavioural change in the lives of the students: whereby each student will be able to reproduce in his own way that which has been taught to him. Nduka suggests that as each student learns, there must be a process of growth, an adjustment to environment, a modification of experience and behaviour to support the formation that is taking place (2004:196).

In a face-to-face setting it is possible for formation to take place. Formation may take place through a variety of ways i.e. through the curriculum with particular courses in spirituality, through ministerial reflection groups, through the use of mentors or spiritual directors or through engagement in the local church (Marshall 2009:56). Learning community programmes are on the increase as institutions have recognised learning communities as effective structures for promoting curricular

coherence, deeper learning, and community among students and teachers (Laufagraben and Shapiro 2004:8).

In the pre-colonial days of Africa's past, forms of higher education existed primarily for training rulers and priests. Ade Ajayi and Ampah observe that the "selection of candidates was complex. Training was through attachment and apprenticeship. Acolytes were initiated into orders of priesthood" (Ade Ajayi and Ampah 1996:8). The system of education remained predominately oral, eclectic and even esoteric. The epistemology used placed great emphasis not so much on rationality as on the deeper meaning and the power of words, particularly the names of things (Laufagraben and Shapiro 2004:12).

In Ethiopia, formal education was the exclusive preserve of the Orthodox Church which organised and supported a wide range of educational establishments which dominated the cultural, religious, literary, and artistic and even the scientific life of the Ethiopians.

The Islamic education system had three types of education that were made available to the Muslim community, especially in urban areas. These were the *Nebab Bet* (School of Reading) at the elementary level; at the secondary level were the *Quedasse Bet* (School of Holy Masses) and the *Quine Bet* (School of Poetry); and a variety of institutions of higher education referred to collectively as the *Metshafit Bet* (School of the Holy Books or Scriptures) (Ade Ajayi and Ampah 1996:15).

Setsabi notes that the man of knowledge in the African community often had to earn his living within the household from the occupation prevalent in the community such as farming, hunting or fishing. Those knowledgeable in history, literature and philosophy often made their reputation from "performing" during festivals, sometimes on a competitive basis. This act promoted the search for titles and various privileges including gifts of land and farming estates to noted men of knowledge (Setsabi 2000:263).

We observe that education should be a life-long process. While people are educated as children and youth, learning must continue even into adulthood. This is as true of society as it is of the church. Zuck and Getz observe that, "The massive problems confronting adults today, demands that Christian education of men and women be continuous and lifelong" (1970:14).

The church can no longer justify the neglect of adults by proclaiming that children are the church of tomorrow. The adults are the future of today, meaning if adults do not have a positive impact on the youth today then the youth will not be able to lead well tomorrow. We cannot deny that the current moral, social decay in our society is also partially because of the failure to meaningfully reach adults for Christ and adequately involve them in impacting the younger generation.

Azizi observes that education is a process that requires a philosophical strategy (2010:54). If the church is to achieve its mission, it must have leadership, resources and influence that adults alone can provide. In any strategy of the church, adults must be put ahead of the line to lead the way. Because of their need and importance to the church, all adult church members must be encouraged to actively participate in the church's activities.

In summary, an instructional model outlines the steps necessary to bring about a desired outcome in training. Through the instructional model the student is given an opportunity to be an active participant in the learning process. Like patterns or blueprints, an instructional model presents the steps necessary to bring about a desired outcome (Gunter, Estes and Hasbrouck 1990:65). This is a step-by-step procedure that leads to specific learning outcomes. An instructional model will allow the students to become active participants in the learning process. It will take the students through specific sequential steps.

3.3.4 Effective adult learning

Smith observes that, "A man who is educated is a man who has learned how to learn...how to adapt and transfer what he has learned to life situations" (1982:15). Training must aim for praxis and not mere accumulation of knowledge. Bloom's taxonomy encourages and places praxis on top of the list to show its importance in the whole process of learning. Praxis involves the three highest levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Sousa 2001:251). According to Groome, praxis can be defined as a "purposeful, intentional, and reflectively chosen ethical action" (1980:152).

Teachers or trainers in Sunday school can affect the student's behaviour in many ways. One powerful way of ensuring effective learning is the choice of words a teacher uses. The aim of any theological training, including what is done in adult

Sunday schools, should be transformation of character more than accumulation of cognitive knowledge (Kasile 2011:78).

Brookfield describes transferable learning as acquiring knowledge or skills in one context that enhances a person's performance in another context. This is known as positive transfer (Brookfield 2006:187). He contends that educators should try to ensure that training is designed and developed in such a way that it is transferable from the learning setting to authentic life situations (Brookfield 2006:187). According to educational researchers, a person must sufficiently engage in a learning experience in order to correct, modify and refine his or her existing knowledge structures to promote transfer of learning (Robinson 2002:68).

Plant observes that, "Cognitive research is revealing that even with what is taken to be good instruction, many students, including academically talented ones, understand less than what is expected" (1994:15). With determination, students taking an examination are commonly able to identify what they have been told or what they have read; careful probing, however, often shows that their understanding is limited or distorted, if not altogether wrong (Plant and Ryan 1994:15).

A good teacher should determine what the best approach is for particular learners as a means of motivating them without manipulating them. Teachers must be intentional in the classroom, helping students realise how all the subjects taught are connected and how they can use what is taught in their everyday lives. For purposes of enhancing effective learning, a teacher can guide the students in making appropriate connections. McCulley suggests that the important thing is for the teacher to create specific classroom activities that allow students the opportunity to think about their classroom experience and to reflect how the lesson being taught is relevant in their own personal lives (2008:17).

A study that Chang conducted suggests that an important factor in processing new data is whether learners think the new material they are learning is going to be useful to them or not. The key determiner of how successfully learners respond will be in proportion to their expectation about the information's relative utility (2001:65). One must realise that students will not automatically transfer what they have learned to real life situations. Educational institutions must be intentional in their efforts to provide curricula and teaching that are more praxis-oriented (McCulley 2008:14).

Sousa emphasises that “teachers are instruments of transfer for students” (2001:140).

The more students practise learning, the more they learn. As the neurons form pathways from experience and knowledge, new information seeks appropriate ones to become stored information for future use. Because the pathways depend on previous experiences and knowledge, memory storage problems can occur when sufficient previous knowledge does not exist (Schunk 2004:81). Students must be encouraged to apply what they are taught and they must learn to solve problems using the newly-acquired knowledge or skill. This means that students must be encouraged to transfer the knowledge and be able to use it in different settings and contexts in which they might find themselves.

Robinson points out that effective learning is also influenced greatly by pre-existing ideas in the mind of the student. People have to construct their own meaning regardless of how clearly teachers or books tell them things. A person does this mainly by connecting new information and concepts to what he or she already believes (Robinson 2002:73).

Concepts—the essential units of human thought—that do not have multiple links with how a student thinks about the world are not likely to be remembered or to be useful. If they do remain in memory, they may be tucked away in a mental drawer and will not be available to affect thoughts about any other aspect of the world (Robinson 2002:73). Concepts are learned best when they are encountered in a variety of contexts and expressed in a variety of ways, for that ensures that there are more opportunities for them to become imbedded in a student's knowledge system.

Effective learning often requires more than just making multiple connections of new ideas to old ones; it sometimes requires that people restructure their thinking radically. That is, to incorporate some new idea, learners must change the connections among the things they already know, or even discard some long-held beliefs about the world. The alternatives to the necessary restructuring are to distort the new information to fit their old ideas or to reject the new information entirely. (Pershing 2009:17). Students come to school with their own ideas, some correct and others not, about almost every topic they are likely to encounter. If their intuition and misconceptions are ignored or dismissed out of hand, their original beliefs are likely

to win out in the long run, even though they may give the answers their teachers want in assessment tests. Mere contradiction of faulty conceptions is not sufficient; students must be encouraged to develop new views by seeing how such views help them make better sense of the world.

According to Jensen, “The trainer or teacher can positively influence the learner’s expectations regarding class or the subject being taught by consciously embedding positive suggestions into the materials, the presentation, and the learning environment” (Jensen 2008:102). Walvoord and Anderson contend that, how much learners get may be affected profoundly by how much motivated they become, how much relevance the material is for them and how much they think they will learn (2010:82).

Some suggestions for generating positive expectancy in the student include sending home positive notes about the course, asking students to describe their hopes, expectations, and desires for the class or subject; encouraging excitement and celebration over new learning and providing learners with a time for “showing off to peers” (Tan 2002:67).

Effective learning demands that the facilitator or educator make bold plans for her class (Tan 2002:89). A person is more likely to succeed in whatever he attempts to do if he has a goal and keeps it in mind. The goal of the Sunday school teacher is to see students transformed by the word of God, resulting in them bearing fruits that will glorify God. The goal gives direction and purpose to his or her efforts. Goals are motivating and strengthening forces in the work a person chooses. Determination to reach the goal spurs the teacher on to do his best, to achieve beyond what he thought was possible. Setting goals helps the teacher to keep his priorities in order and directs every action toward reaching them.

For effective learning to occur, the teacher must realise the vital role he or she plays in helping the students to bridge the gap between what is taught in the classroom and what is practised outside. For example, before a new topic is covered in the Sunday school, the teacher must seek to find out what the students’ prior knowledge is regarding that topic.

It has been previously mentioned that none of the instructional methods or lesson plans fully addresses every aspect of every possible teaching method. Sousa

proposes a method that encourages effective learning. This method evolved from Madeline Hunter's work in the 1970s. This format, according to Sousa, is based on sound principles of brain-based compatible learning while being flexible enough to use with a variety of instructional methods (2001:275). This format has nine components:

1. Anticipatory Set: The student's attention is captured here. The teacher must vary the attention-getters to provide novelty.
2. Learning Objective: This is a clear statement of what the students are expected to accomplish during the learning episodes, including the level of difficulty and complexity, and should include a specific statement of learning and the overt behaviour that demonstrates whether the learning has occurred, and whether the appropriate level of complexity has been attained.
3. Purpose: This states why the student should accomplish the learning objective. Whenever possible, it should refer to how the new learning is related to the student's prior and future learning to facilitate positive transfer and meaning.
4. Input: This is the information and the procedure skills that the students will need to acquire in order to achieve the learning objective. It can take many forms, including lecture, cooperative learning groups, audio-visual presentations, Internet research, and so on.
5. Modelling: Clear and correct models help students make sense of the new learning and establish meaning. Models must be given first by the teacher and they must be accurate, unambiguous, and non-controversial.
6. Check for understanding: The teacher must employ various strategies that will be used during the lesson episode to verify that the students are accomplishing the learning objective.
7. Guided practice: During this time students are applying the new learning in the presence of the teacher who provides immediate and specific feedback on the accuracy of the learner's practice.
8. Closure: At this point the mind of the learner can summarise for itself its perception of what has been learned. The teacher gives specific directions

for what the learner should mentally process and provides adequate time to accomplish it. This is usually the last opportunity the learner has to attach sense and meaning to the new learning, both of which are critical requirements for retention.

9. Independent practice: After the teacher believes that the learner has accomplished the objective at the correct level of difficulty and complexity, students try the new learning on their own to enhance retention and develop fluency.

To encourage those trained to transfer what they have learned to real-life situations, Helsdingen recommends that educators follow the following four principles:

1. There must be a period of reflection and self-evaluation

Reflection strategies encourage people to expand on what they are learning and to identify where they have deficiencies in order to correct them. Metacognitive strategies like these encourage people to be aware of their own thinking as they are learning. To implement this approach, learners must be instructed to study in a meaningful way so that they monitor their comprehension of the content. Prompts can be provided where learners must give reasons for their decisions or use a reflection questionnaire.

2. Vary modalities

Adding voice narration to complex simulations—rather than using textual explanations--can improve learning transfer. According to Helsdingen, balancing the presentation of material across both visual and verbal channels prevents a learner's cognitive resources from being overloaded (2011:383-398).

3. Use relevant visuals rather than text alone

Many studies demonstrate that learning is enhanced by explanatory pictures. Visuals can decrease cognitive load and improve retention and transfer. To benefit from this effect, opportunities for learners to attend to the pictures and to integrate visual information with the narration or text must be provided. Often, explicit instructions to examine the visuals are helpful (Helsdingen 2011:383). In one study, learners who took an e-learning course that included relevant visuals achieved higher retention and learning transfer scores than those whose course did not

include pictures. In addition, those who saw visuals perceived the content as less difficult (Helsdingen 2011:403).

4. Enhance social learning at work

In many careers, the work itself is a learning experience. Learning transfer and work become one process as the individual continuously acquires knowledge and applies it. For these individuals, learning transfer is enhanced and improved through social learning. As workers discuss and solve problem, they apply their knowledge to new situations (Helsdingen 2011:383). Apparent changes in performance during training are not necessarily indicative of improved performance on the job. Learning transfer is defined as the ability to apply what has been learned to novel situations and tasks.

3.3.5 Special need groups among adults

Pastors and Sunday school teachers in the church must seek to influence their students for God. An effective teaching or message is one that will provoke the listener to respond. When adults are considered it is clear that there are special need groups amongst adults in almost any church.

a. Singles

There are four types of singles: those who have never been married (either by choice or circumstance); those who have been married and whose spouses still live (representing either divorce or separation); those who have been widowed; and those who might be called “spiritual singles” - Christians whose partners do not know the Lord.

While great diversity marks these four groups of people, the ministry of the Sunday school must strive to focus on their similarities, particularly the similarity of need. Singles are in need of acceptance. In the African context, the stigma attached to being single (and especially those who have reached marriageable age and are still not married) can be unbearable for some. The Sunday school must minister to their need of acceptance, self-worth and belonging.

Singles also need a strong sense of self-worth. Peterson writes:

Many Christian singles seem to struggle to find a positive identity. It is paradoxical that Christians, who believe that they are made in the image of God and that Jesus Christ loved them, have a poor self-image. Instead of

developing their sense of wealth as children of God, they feel inferior because they have not married...the church, the place for Christian fellowship and encouragement sometimes seems to alienate the single person because of its emphasis on marriage and the Christian family (1981:6).

Singles also need a sense of belonging. Loneliness and insecurity are dispelled not only by a feeling of belonging but also by the genuine reality of belonging both in attitude and in act. Integration into the Sunday school should not only provide an antidote to the problem of feeling that one does not belong. This is the biblical pattern of the New Testament church.

b. Single Parents

There is an increasing number of adults who are single parents. The church can assist this group feel part of the greater fellowship of believers. There is a major need for freedom from stress. Most of the things mentioned in relation to singles can become elements of psychological and emotional stress of much greater dimension to single parents.

c. Divorced

Obviously many single parents can be classified as singles and many divorced adults as single parents. But not all, so divorce becomes a separate problem on its own. Wilbert suggests that divorce presents one of the most serious and complex mental health crises facing children (1984:13).

Without arguing different views on or about rightness and wrongness of divorce, the researcher will confine the recommendations to how to minister to adults who find themselves in this situation. Certainly forgiveness figures prominently. Assuming repentance and a willingness to follow the will of God, the body of Christ dare not be judgemental or condemning. Divorced people must be restored to fellowship in the body, though churches might have different restrictions with respect to certain offices.

The pastor should make himself available to divorced people, representing the symbolic response of the body in a somewhat official way (Galatians 6:1-5). Finally a care group could be established that can help offer support.

Of crucial importance is the attitude of the church and its members. Lambert, who is a single parent, asks, "Where is the church in all this? Single parents hear themselves talked about a lot in sermons. Pastors are actually talking a lot about this

issue. It is one of the cutting edge ministries. But for many single parents that is just a tease” (Lambert 1987:17). Lambert argues that awareness of need offers only the beginning of a programme of help. Attitude and response in everything from financial assistance to loving acceptance become essential in ministering to divorced people in the local congregation (Lambert 1987:17).

d. Families

One of the major goals of adult education strives to strengthen and build families, thereby reproducing the cycle of Christian education from the earliest instructional efforts in the preschool departments to senior adult classes that deal with grand parenting. Sunday school classes and other church educational experiences must focus on the real issues parents and children face.

The obligation of children to parents and the obligation of parents to children have been obscured in modern-day society and need to be biblically reaffirmed by the church. The Sunday school ministry can assist in this reaffirmation. This suggests that pulpit preaching, special Sunday school classes, weekend seminars, and every possible means should be enlisted to develop an effective ministry of family life education in the church. We must teach our parents to be effective in modelling, in ministry, and in multiplication.

Vogel suggests that those who work professionally in Christian education often speak of teaching as “a ministry of multiplication”. Since every parent is a teacher, parenting is also (indeed, more so) a ministry of multiplication (Vogel 1984:1-19). Obviously parenting includes physical reproduction, but it also ought to feature spiritual reproduction. Christian parents need to raise their children to possess Christian values and general commitment to Jesus Christ and his church.

3.3.6 Adult age-grouping

As we noted earlier, adults are different. They are different not only from each other but also from other age groups we commonly teach in the church. They are different in their view of self, much more aware of personal needs and the immediacy of learning. This means the Sunday school department should use methods which emphasise informality, opportunities for participation, and an immediate dynamic relevance to content.

Adults are also different from children and youth in life experiences, having stored up a wealth of background which they bring to every learning situation (Miller 1995:76). This enables one to draw on them as resources; they are not just students to be informed. This means they should have opportunities to diagnose their own learning needs rather than always having content imposed on them.

Downs points out that the difference in adults demonstrates itself in what he calls readiness to learn (1984:11). Adults bring to the learning task much self-direction and willingness to “option” on issues. Motivation for adult education relates inseparably to ownership -- adults must clearly understand that learning experiences relate to their needs and were not contrived just to keep educational machinery functioning (Wilbert 1984:78).

Adults also differ in their perspective of time. They are often focused on “the now”. Perhaps that is why Paul wrote that Titus ought to demonstrate in his own life and teach others to “live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age” (Titus 2:12). Adults (particularly younger and middle adults) seem more “present-age” oriented than any other age group.

This area (adult grouping) brings out the most arbitrary analysis of how adults should be taught. Some Sunday schools do not concern themselves with age-grouping classes for men and classes for women. Others argue that the age-grouping must have a definite ten-year span with classes for those in their 20s, 30s, 40s, etc. (Haystead 1995:14).

One must keep in mind that the goal is not only focusing on how adults should be divided in Sunday school, but rather on how we understand them with respect to their needs within a certain generalised age bracket. One also needs to keep in mind that age groupings in America may be quite different from what is found in places like Africa. Within much of the literature, the choices appear arbitrary. For the purpose of this study young adults will be classified as those being eighteen to thirty-five; middle adults being thirty-five to sixty; and senior adults as being over sixty.

1. Young adults

In church, it is common to find college adults, and high school students who are over eighteen and have had no experience of marriage- and might not have for many years. There might also be other young couples in church, newly-

married people, who are most likely still involved in formal education or beginning a career, but separate from that first group because they are married.

One group that might be found in church consists of new parents. These might still be in college, or graduate school. Probably at least one member of such couples might be involved with a career. But the members of such groups differ from the first two groups because they might have one or more children. Another group consists of parents. This group would actually overlap into the middle adulthood area, but many people under the age of thirty-five find themselves as parents of teens so the category must be included here. The last group consists of singles.

2. Middle adults

Levinson in his work on adulthood talks about one's late thirties as being a "settling-down time", followed by the mid-life transition ("crisis") in one's early forties (1978: 83).

With the rosy optimism of youth behind and the harsh realities of the final years not yet on them, middle adults generally tend to find life quite satisfying. Erickson observes that "since chronological age does not guarantee increased emotional maturity, the danger exists that crisis will bring disillusionment and bitterness" (1963:15). Financial security becomes the key concern and middle adult males tend to be very career-oriented, which can sometimes cause problems at home. Mothers busily care for their children who have become teenagers. These teenagers are about to enter adulthood, so both parents must prepare for the transition from parenthood to grand-parenthood.

Moberg refers to middle adults as "belongers" who affiliate with numerous fraternal, political, social and religious organisations, spending time and resources to further their causes (1981:33). The latter years of the period have often been designated as a "dangerous age" or "the second storm in stress". During this time physical vigour begins gradual decline and each adult must consider philosophical adjustment to a lighter programme of living in order to avoid what may become a disconcerting emotional state (Knox 1985: 63).

Levinson sees five major transitions occurring during about ages twenty-five, thirty, forty, fifty, and sixty. The "mid-life transition" of the early forties brings middle

adults (particularly men) face to face with mid-life crisis, forcing appraisal of the past and preparation for a seemingly uncertain future (Levinson 1978: 90).

Some of the development tasks of middle adulthood are: (1) learning advanced job skills, (2) changing careers, (3) planning for retirement, (4) returning to career (women), (5) adjusting to aging parents, (6) relating to one's spouse as a person, (7) finding new interests, (8) keeping out of a rut, (9) compensating for physiological changes, (10) developing a realistic time perspective on life (Erickson 1963:17).

3. Senior adults

In this stage of life there is an increasing awareness of mortality, bringing with it a "mellowing", but not much flexibility in theology and lifestyle (Sell 1985:32). At this stage there seems to be awareness that parents or spouses are not the cause of problems (Sell 1985:32). Erickson observes that there is a need for the church to affirm its senior citizenry because we live in a society that puts a premium on youth. We tend to look at retired people in light of what they have been or have accomplished rather than what they are or perhaps will accomplish. The result to the older person is a feeling of having been shelved, and the body of Christ should provide them with a balanced view of themselves (Erickson 1963:62).

DeBoy adds, "the wise church educator avoids any implicitly negative names or terms for senior groups" (1970:37). He advises that the church can respond to senior adult ministry by developing both their intellectual and interpersonal relationships (1970:37). It is not wise to believe that just because a person is a senior adult they can no longer learn; learning ability does not wear out. It is true the rate of learning might decline, but the capacity remains constant (Knowles 1980:47).

When one reads the Bible we realise that there is recognition and respect for older people. Both within families and the wider society, God permits no scoffing or demeaning of "old people". It is therefore advisable that the church adopts such an approach. There must be an elevation and celebration of the significance of people who are old. As Moberg notes, "Spiritual nurture is the number one task of the church in its work with the aging. But other ministries, rightly conducted, will aid in performing that task and increase effectiveness of the church" (Moberg 1981:33).

Knowles lists the following developmental tasks for senior adults: (1) adjusting to retirement, (2) finding new ways to be useful, (3) understanding social security and other retirement programmes, (4) adjusting to reduced income, (5) learning to live alone, (6) relating to grandchildren, (7) understanding the aging process, (8) keeping morale high (9) keeping up personal appearances, and (10) preparing for death (1973:44).

Rather than ignoring our senior citizens or in some ways belittling their contribution to the church's task, they must be helped to still feel significant in the church and community. We must cultivate a culture that will honour them and not undermine the seniors and celebrate the youth.

When students are divided into study groups according to their ages, it allows them to be able to receive education that is relevant to their age group. Age grading will allow for easy assimilation of new members. They will not be intimidated as they are amongst their peers. It would be difficult for a young person to feel comfortable in a Sunday school class of matured adults; for one thing, certain topics might not be relevant to the young person. This would result in teaching challenges for the teacher.

3.4 A philosophy of education for adults

Freire is one of the most significant adult educators in the second half of the twentieth century. He is famous for critiquing a method of adult education he calls the "banking method" (Campbell 1999:71). This is the form of adult education where a teacher has all the knowledge and where the goal of education is to pour out all that knowledge into the empty cups of the students. This method is still widely employed in higher education, including theological education.

Freire proposed a method of 'conscientisation'; of developing a critical awareness of the conditions of life leading to an ability to transform those conditions. He sought to encourage students to develop critical awareness, rather than simply acquire knowledge via the banking concept (Campbell 1999:71).

As we have already noted, adults approach education very differently from children. Knowles identifies six principles related to adult education: 1. Adult learners want to know why they must learn something; 2. They learn best through self-

directed learning; 3. Their prior experience must be considered and valued; 4. Adults are ready to learn if they see the relevance of the material; 5. Adults are life-oriented and problem-solving oriented, rather than subject-oriented; and 6. Adults require internal rather than external motivators (Knowles 2012:9).

Philosophy and education are closely related fields. Both are vitally concerned with humankind, the nature of humankind, knowledge, relationship and behaviour. But whereas philosophy seeks to understand the fundamental theoretical basis of existence, education seeks to understand the more practical answers (Reed and Bergemann 1995:217). Where philosophy might ask, "Where are we going and why are we going there?", education would ask, "How can we get there?" The word *philosophy* comes from the Greek *Philos*, which means "love" and *sophos*, which means "wisdom". Hence philosophy means love of wisdom. Philosophy is, therefore, the inquiry into the principles of knowledge, reality and values that constitute wisdom (Reed and Bergemann 1995:217). According to Scripture, and especially Proverbs, wisdom can be learned; it stands as the ultimate goal of education. But learning without praxis (according to James 1:22) is no learning at all. Christians must be doers of the Word, and not simply hearers. Good learning will therefore involve knowing where we are going, why we want to get there, and knowing how we are going to get there.

There are four basic schools of philosophical thought:

A. Idealism

According to the Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 B.C)—the originator of idealism—because ideas alone transcend the physical, they are genuinely real (Reed and Bergemann 1995:217). The idealist contends, "I think, therefore I am." Plato assumed that the world was made up of eternal verities, which consisted of the true, the good and the beautiful, and that the universe, which is an expression of will and intelligence, is ordered by this eternal, spiritual reality (Bruner 1996:64).

B. Realism

Realism seeks knowledge about the nature of reality and humankind and attempts to interpret people's destiny based on that nature (Woolfolk 1980:250). It is believed that reason is the ability to know the unchanging form of objects through sense experience and then to deduce from these forms the characteristics of the

objects themselves. According to Meyer, realism asserts that “we live in a world in which things, including people and objects, take their form independently of human reason or imagination” (1998:432). These things exist in their own right and we experience them through our senses. Our most reliable guide to human behaviour is knowledge of the objects, the laws that govern them, and their relationship, since all things behave according to rational, natural laws (Bruner 1996: 64).

C. Pragmatism

Coming from the Greek word *pragma*, meaning “work”, pragmatism encourages processes that allow individuals to do those things that lead to desired ends. It is primarily a twentieth-century American philosophy that examines traditional ways of thinking and doing and reconstructs them to fit modern life (Reed and Bergemann 1995:231). Pragmatism agrees with realists that a physical world exists in its own right, not as merely a projection of the mind. However, unlike the realist, they neither believe that this world is permanent nor that it exists independent of humans. Instead, the pragmatist contends that humans and their environment interact and that both are equally responsible for that which is real (Woolfolk 1980: 21).

D. Existentialism

This group believes that reality is lived in existence, and final reality resides within the individual. Reality begins with being aware of one’s own existence; it is therefore human-made. It is not a state of being, but a process of becoming (Woolfolk 1980: 83). The existentialist believes that people live on earth for a short time, are born by chance in a chance place, and are affected by situations beyond their control. According to existentialist philosopher Jean–Paul Sartre (1905-1980), existence precedes essence (Reed and Bergemann 1995:210). By this he means that things exist before we may give any definition to them. Thus, knowledge, like all things, exists only in light of human consciousness. This view is very different from scripture which clearly states that people do not exist by chance. God had a purpose and timing in the creation of each person. A person exists according to the number of days designed by God (Jeremiah 1:5).

The believer has a different philosophy of life from the existentialist. His view is one that does not take away the Creator from existence. The Christian believes

that one cannot take away God because he is the only possible source of life. The Christian believes that what is seen is real, yet it is not the only existing realm. There is another realm which is referred to as the realm of the spirit. Things in this realm of the spirit exist and are just as real as the physical realm.

A person's philosophy of education will inevitably affect the way one approaches and appreciates education in their life. This is because a philosophy of education defines the purpose and focus of education in one's life. Everyone has a philosophy of education, and thus one should discover what it is. For the Christian there is a need to adopt a coherent (Christian) philosophy of education, and this must be taught to all those who teach. In addition to philosophies of education there are also different models and approaches to education that grow out of the context of culture.

3.5 Culture and learning in adult education

All teaching and learning happens within a cultural context. Educators need to learn something about the culture of their students if they desire their education to be effective. One needs to appreciate that people learn differently, therefore there must be an effort to understand their ways of learning.

Culture and learning are connected in important ways (Hiebert and Hiebert 1995:55). Early life experiences and the values of a person's culture affect both the expectations and the processes of learning (Pazmino 2008:169). Cultural demands and social expectations influence learning deeply; the spirit of culture is reflected in its social and educational institutions (Pazmino 2008:169). For instance, in an industrialised culture, the emphasis mostly centres on mechanical science and preparing children for highly mechanised vocations.

Likewise, in an agriculture-based community, the educational process focuses on preparing its members for those skills which are suited to the needs of an agrarian community. Etta describes culture as "a powerful influence, but it is such an invisible, integral part of life that unless confronted with a different culture it is difficult for one to recognize the uniqueness of his or her own culture" (Etta 1996:19).

There are various ways to regard culture in relation to education. G.H. Bantock, for example, sees culture as sharply divided into two kinds: high and low

culture. Both of these are relative to social-class designations. High culture is associated with the sophisticated elite class, while low culture is associated with the working class (Bantock 1980:170). From Bantock's perspective, education for different classes would be distinct in that each class has a distinct culture (1980:170).

For Christian education this distinction might imply a different educational agenda depending on the social class of participants. In contrast to Bantock, a second perspective is advocated by P. H. Hirst, who ignores historical and social differences in cultures and subcultures. Hirst sees education in terms of "culture-free" knowledge, which implies sharing knowledge interculturally and transculturally. From Hirst's perspective, "the task of Christian education would be consistent for all participants regardless of historical class, or social differences" (1998:62).

A third perspective comes from Raymond Williams who holds that the task of an educator is to make their teaching contextually as updated and as relevant as possible in order to impact the lives of the students within emerging cultures. For Christian educators this would require the use of the most updated approaches and technologies in light of recent research development and trends (Williams 1983:51).

It requires a critical and careful analysis of every cultural context before an educational agenda can be proposed (Pazmino 2008:160). Culture is a system of meaning that includes traditions, norms, values, and beliefs. The system is learned through the shared history and life-experiences of a community of people and it acts as the framework through which one communicates with and perceives the world around them (Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter 2003:42).

Shweder and Levine observe that, "culture is collective and not individual even though individuals may differ in the extent to which they embrace the culture of their group" (1984:330). Human development is a cultural process that happens within a community. In order to understand a person's development, one must first understand that person's cultural practices and the community of which he or she is a member. Clifford Geertz defines culture as a historically-transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols. It is a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which persons communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge and attitude toward life (Geertz 1973:67).

Using the above conception of culture, educators should consider the ethos and worldview of the people they intend to teach. This definition enables Christian educators to view the Christian faith in its particular expression as one cultural system (Hiebert and Hiebert 1995:41). The Christian world and life-view is a historically-transmitted pattern of meaning that is embodied in symbols. It is much more than a system, given the Christian claim to supernatural realities, but for the purposes of considering the educational task of transmitting Christian truth it is at least this (Hesselgrave 1991:320).

How does culture operate in the lives of Christians and in their efforts to teach? Beverslus suggests that culture for Christians can become piety expressing itself in honesty, fairness and righteousness. It can become participation in the world's work, making things or changing things, and doing this as an image bearer of Christ in conformity with what is understood to be God's will and particular call (Beverslus 1985:41).

The cultures in which people are born provide them with windows on the world. But these cultures can also erect walls, walls that can isolate and separate people. Each person's culture serves as a lens through which he or she sees and understands things and other people (Beverslus 1985:41). All information is filtered through those lens-beliefs about the world, people, life, God and ultimately reality. Each person's lens can be viewed as liberating and/or oppressive to the extent to which it provides knowledge (Beverslus 1985:41).

Teaching the Bible must touch at least three levels of biblical understanding: biblical information, biblical principles, and biblical worldview (Fink 2003:158). While biblical principles are universal in scope, they come from the cultural environment of the Bible to our own cultural worlds. At this level believers are taught to put their faith to work in daily life. And as the church teaches a biblical worldview that encompasses all things, our understanding of life and reality is shaped accordingly.

Learning is linked to memory and one's ability to accurately store and retrieve information. Memory is created when groups of neurons are connected within a circuit-like configuration and activated together (Sousa 2001:45). In other words, students learn better when new information is related to previous knowledge. Storage problems can also occur if there is a difference in the way information is

culturally processed, such as in episodic versus analytic memory systems (Sternberg 1988:34). Sousa observes that “in processing information, the brain creates categories. If there is no previous experience related to the issue, it will be difficult to add it to memory” (2001:38).

For the teaching of adults in churches in Swaziland, this means basic tenets of faith should be taught and mastered before moving into more advanced theological or historical teachings on the Christian faith. Those overseeing the curriculum have a task to ensure that each subject taught is interconnected and is built upon a previously-taught subject. It is possible to assume that since we are dealing with adult learners, they (the learners) have accumulated knowledge of the Bible. However, this might be a dangerous assumption because the end results might be poor, if our students fail to process this new information offered to them in the class.

Although culture is an important factor in learning and development, it may be a barrier as well as a facilitator (Pazmino 2008:43). Sternberg describes learning as a process that occurs through experience, which is the interaction between one’s external world and one’s internal world. The external world consists of not only the physical environment, but it also includes all the other factors -- political, social, technological, climatic and geographical -- that have the potential to influence that person’s development. The internal world, on the other hand, can be considered to be the emotional, mental, and psychological aspects as well as the very will of a person. When a person’s internal world interacts with the external world, experiences take place. Those experiences then create changes within one’s internal world as learning takes place (Sternberg 1988:25).

Culture provides meaning for experiences, and gives people their identity, morals, and values. Thought-process variations occur with cultural variations, which also lead to differences in the formation of perceptions. Sternberg’s triadic theory of intelligence gives a framework to view culture and its influences on learning. The triad is: metacomponent - how one plans and forms strategies for interaction with situations; performance - the actual execution of the plans; and knowledge acquisition - how one gathers information (Sternberg 1988:25). According to Sousa, experiences form perceptions and those perceptions are responsible for the mental

maps one creates that give meaning to what is experienced in the environment (2001:53).

The students' culture influences each of these components: parent-child relationships, sleeping arrangements, societal structure, individualistic or community orientation, political convictions, anarchy, and technological expertise. All these cultural patterns have the potential to create wide differences in learning strategies utilised in African schools (Sternberg and Grigorenko 2004:369).

In cross-cultural situations where teacher and students do not share a common culture, it is of vital importance for the teacher to understand the students' culture and teach accordingly. Culturally-sensitive teachers can be a great resource for transformative learning by creating learning conditions appropriate to the culture (Ade Ajayi and Ampah 1996:18). By understanding the culture of the students, teachers can relate new information to previous knowledge and organise lessons around what the students know, but may not yet link with the present (Schunk 2004:64).

Whether or not information is perceived as meaningful is another key factor in facilitating its storage in the memory. Teachers who take the initiative to know the culture of their students can use that "cultural knowledge to make learning events more meaningful" (Schunk 2004:64).

People in Africa are usually community people; they are not individualists. An individualist is someone who makes his or her own decisions and who does what he or she wants to do without thinking about others. Africans usually live and work together as a community. Decisions are made as a group and not as individuals. Therefore, children learn at an early age to do as they were told. When this is carried over into school, students are predisposed to just accept what the teacher gives them and memorise it in order to pass the examination. Learning to think on their own and make decisions by themselves is not seen as important.

Stenhouse observes that a sociology of knowledge is represented (manifested) in culture (1975:32). This implies that knowledge can be determined by the needs of both the group and the individual. Stenhouse points out that the determinations of groups and individuals may be deliberate departures from the truth, though not necessarily intentional departures (1975:32).

It is sad to note that many African believers fail to honour Christ when their culture seems to clash with their belief. For even many sincere believers, their way of mixing their culture and their Christian belief results in syncretism.

African believers need to be taught to stand firm in the midst of adversity. There is a need for a total transformation of their worldview so that they do not revert back to their old habits when they are faced with challenges. It is common to hear of believers consulting witch doctors when they are faced with an incurable disease. In Swaziland the saying “God helps those who help themselves” has been used to justify consulting evil powers when one has been prayed for but has not seen any positive change in their condition.

Rick Love encourages pastors and church leaders to unmask Satan. He states that believers must be taught that they should not fear the enemy, nor be overly impressed with the enemy (Love 2000:93). Satan’s authority is conditional because even though Satan has immense power, he is still a created being (Colossians 1:16). Satan exists and has power in this age only because of, and as long as, God allows him to do so (Luke 22:31-33).

The book of Ephesians strikes a good balance between God’s sovereignty and Satan’s temporal rule. The realisation of God’s sovereignty must bring the believer great comfort. Love observes that this comfort greatly lessens the distress and struggles of spiritual battle with the powers of darkness (2000:93).

Warner observes that Satan’s chief tactic is deception and this deception operates in the realm of spiritual powers. Christian education must, therefore, have a proper balance of proclamation of Christian truth and demonstration of Christ’s power (Warner 1991:41).

The Swazi people are known for being a very culturally-orientated people. They are amongst the last few groups of people in the Southern region of Africa who still uphold their traditional cultural beliefs. Most Swazis still value their cultural heritage and would practise their cultural practices whenever an opportunity arises, even when they are living in an urban setting up. It is important that educators in the Sunday school understand that culture is not just an interesting, but non-essential, issue to the people. Culture is more than just distinctive features or details of how

one lives; instead, it touches the inner self of a person and the inner person is what must be touched by the gospel.

Since culture can form invisible bonds between members of the community, this can hold people with the same cultural background together, and facilitate the passing on of their values to those who succeed them. This propagation of values not only transmits cultural knowledge and strengthens the relationship among people, but it also builds up long-term traditions as the years pass. Culture is strengthened as it gives background and a means of reference to later generations due to its ability to transmit these long-term traditions, encouraging a sense of belonging in the people of a particular country to their own culture. One cannot therefore expect to be successful in reaching a particular group with the gospel while ignoring the cultural barriers that might exist.

Cultural tendencies impact the way students participate in education. Teachers who lack knowledge about culture might interpret the behaviour of a student inaccurately. These differences may cause educators to inaccurately judge students from some cultures as poorly behaved or disrespectful. In addition, because cultural differences are hard to perceive, students may find themselves reprimanded by teachers, but fail to understand what it was they did that caused concern. For example, in the Swazi culture, when an older person is talking to you, it is expected that you should not look at them straight in the eye, but look down. That can create conflict with a Western teacher as in most Western cultures looking down or looking away when someone is speaking to you might be interpreted as being rude.

The influence of culture on beliefs about education, about the value of education, and about education participation styles cannot be overestimated. Many African and Asian students, for example, tend to be quiet in class, and making eye contact with teachers is considered inappropriate. In contrast, most Europeans or Americans are taught from childhood to value active classroom discussion and to look teachers directly in the eye to show respect. Their teachers view students' participation as a sign of engagement and competence.

Another contrast involves the role of African parents in education. Parents from some African cultures tend to regard teachers as experts and will often defer educational decision-making to them. In contrast, European or American parents are

often more actively involved in their children's classrooms, are visible in the classrooms or volunteer and assist teachers.

These cultural differences in value and belief may cause educators to make inaccurate judgments regarding the value that non-European American families place on education. While it is important to keep in mind that different cultural groups tend to follow particular language and interaction styles, there is tremendous variability within cultural groups (Etta 1996:56). Thus, educators need to understand individual histories and ideologies regarding education and learning as well as the cultural patterns and beliefs of groups.

3.6 Summary

A healthy and vibrant Sunday school in Africa is involved in the development of its members. A Sunday school develops new converts by helping them to become productive members of the church. The work of the Sunday schools is to help the local church produce its own workers who through their efforts will then cause the church to grow (Mnisi 2007:38).

Nduka comments that a healthy Sunday school in the African context is an indigenous Sunday school (2004:270). A vibrant and healthy Sunday school might have several characteristics. One of these is that it will develop the personalities of the people. Kanis adds that the marks of a healthy and vibrant Sunday school are numerical, spiritual, discipleship, and leadership growth (Kanis 2005:24).

Healthy Sunday schools do not just happen automatically. There is a need for quality control. A Sunday school teacher needs to be open and accountable to his/her pastor, to the Sunday school director, and to the education minister (if there is one) (Oti 2007:148). Teachers who become protective of their class and who refuse to be accountable to their leaders are being rebellious. The Sunday school teacher must submit himself or herself to the church leadership (Phiri 2005:76).

The leaders in a healthy Sunday school need to know how to operate the Sunday school according to the purposes and objectives of a Sunday school. A vibrant and healthy Sunday school enhances transformational learning in the lives of the students and the teacher. A good teacher will be aware of the mental

development of his students, especially that of adult learners, and will determine what methods are most appropriate to use (Association 1992:73).

Teachers of vibrant and healthy Sunday schools are aware of the huge responsibility they carry, of caring for their students and the surrounding network of friendships emanating from the class. A teacher must endeavour to use a system and approach that works best for them and for the group they are leading. The “bottom line” is that every member in the Sunday school needs consistent contact and ministry with one another and with the teacher (Malphurs 2003:93).

Adult education faces an promising future, but only if educational leaders are willing to make it an area of significant concentration in their ministries. The author agrees with Westing who argues, “Your church can...have a growing adult Sunday school if its leaders are willing to adjust to our changing society and focus on adults” (1987:26).

Loyalty to the church necessitates adequate instruction about the church as the body of Christ and about each believer’s responsibility to Christ as the head of the church (Blomberg 2002:36). Effective Sunday school emphasises the local church as the hub of the Christian community and encourages participation in its ministries (McIntosh and Rima1997:10).

Mains summarises the impact of Sunday school by noting that from its humble beginnings in England and America, it has fulfilled a vital need. Today it is one of the most powerful educational ministries in churches in many parts of Africa. This role of Sunday school is carried out through reaching, teaching and discipling (Mains 1986:241).

Though many forces have sought to uproot the Sunday school, it has endured and grown in strength (McIntyre 1988:11). The Sunday school has remained true to its purpose of bringing men, women, and children to a personal knowledge of a triune God (Benson 1985:36). Edgerly adds that it has persisted in stressing a vibrant Christian life based on the precepts of God’s word, in encouraging the appreciation of our rich Christian heritage and in strengthening our responsibility to our church, community and the entire world (1983:32).

CHAPTER 4 COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 Opening remarks

In research, data collection is crucial. Mouton distinguishes two types of data gathering (2001:57). However, this depends on the type of research one is doing. Data could be acquired through literary or empirical research. In this section, the most important findings revealed by the survey are recorded, and presented. This research is empirical. Respondents were drawn from the following positions: pastor, Sunday school teacher, lay leader and a Sunday school attendee. In each church, one person from each of these categories responded to the survey.

Of the thirty-six individuals who responded, the data tabulation is as follows:

Number of respondents by positions

Senior Pastor	9
Sunday School Teacher	9
Lay Leader	9
Sunday School Attendee	9

Figure 4.1 Respondents by Position

Gender

Twenty-one males (58.3%) and fifteen females (41.6%) completed the survey

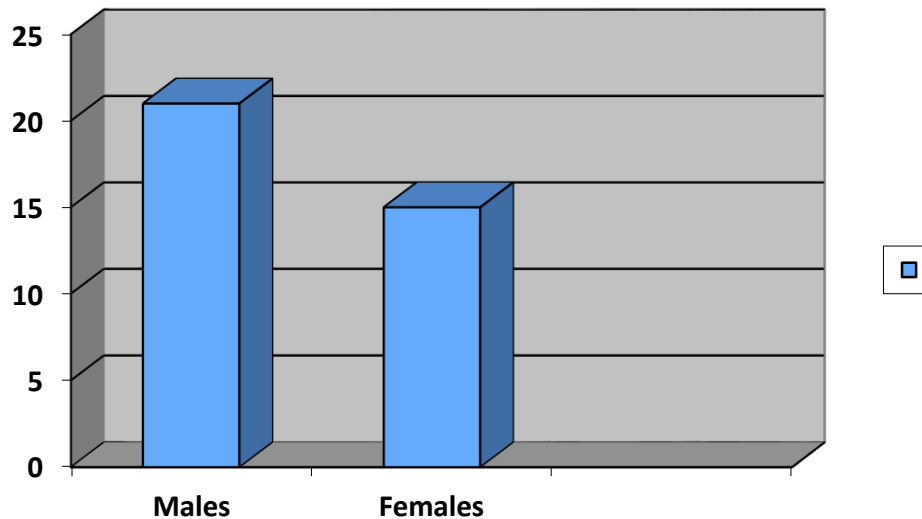


Figure 4.2 Respondents by gender

Denomination

The number of members of each denomination/ church who completed the survey is as follows:

Denomination	Number of Respondents
1. Divine Healing Church	4
2. Ekuphileni Church in Zion	4
3. Family Worship Centre	4
4. Ichibi Church in Zion	4
5. Labotsibeni AME	4
6. Fairview Free Evangelical Church	4
7. Manzini Lutheran Church	4
8. Matsapha Evangelical Church	4
9. The Christian Church in Zion	4

Figure 4.3 Respondents by denomination

4.2 Presentation of data

The nine Protestant churches that are being researched are representative of the churches in Manzini, Swaziland. The church fraternity in the country of Swaziland comprises three bodies. These bodies represent the evangelicals, the Pentecostal/Charismatics and the Zionist churches. In this research, the researcher is treating the Zionist churches as Protestants. These three church bodies are the Council of Churches, the Conference of Churches, and the League of Churches. Among the major "churches" in the country are the Zionists (about forty percent of the population), Roman Catholics (twenty percent), the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches (Fritzs 2009:32).

As the factors involving the growth and health of the Roman Catholic Church are somewhat different than those affecting the growth of Protestant churches, the researcher has chosen in this study to limit the research to nine representative churches from the Protestant community of Manzini.

The nine Protestant churches have been selected from these three bodies of churches, three from each group. The churches that were selected were randomly selected through the help of the secretaries at their denominational offices. The guiding principle was that the church had to offer a Sunday school programme. In terms of church attendance, the churches selected comprise both big and small churches. Every church that was requested to participate in this study has positively responded with the data.

The city of Manzini has a number of places of worship cutting across a variety of religions. Most of them are from the Christian faith owing to the fact that for many years the country has had its religious beliefs rooted in Christianity. Manzini has a cathedral, situated at the corner of Tenbergen and Sandlane Streets. The Methodist church is situated in Fairview, north-west of the city. Within the city centre there is also an Anglican church. The Kingdom's new constitution allows other religions as well. Thus in the recent past the city witnessed construction of a mosque along Tenbergen Street (Swaziland Manzini Municipality 2011:23).

Almost every private school building in the city is occupied by one or two churches on a Sunday morning, largely by those who are just starting off their churches and who have found it hard to get their own accommodation or buy land for

their church within the city. These churches come in different sizes and their influence varies. There are a lot of Pentecostal independent churches in comparison to traditional churches like the Anglicans, Roman Catholics and the Baptists. The leadership of all these churches also varies, although recently there has been a rise of young pastors (twenty-five to thirty-five years old) leading or establishing their own churches.

During the 1980s, Swaziland has had an average annual growth rate in its population of 5.76 percent and a decadal growth rate of seventy-four percent. This is the growth of the church in Swaziland which includes Catholics and Protestant churches. By global church growth assessment standards, that is good growth. This growth pattern in Swaziland is more pronounced after 1982, possibly due in part to a leadership change (a governmental change) that year (Fritzs 2009:32). Since 1982 the government of Swaziland has supported the efforts of the church in promoting the spread of the gospel.

What follows is a description of each of the nine Protestant churches included in the survey.

4.3 Divine Healing Church

This church is centrally situated in the city of Manzini. It has a very big modern sanctuary that has been recently built. The centre attracts many people who rent it for various purposes because of its size and beauty. The church is led by a very charismatic pastor who is considered to be one of the fathers of the Christian faith within the country because of his age, vast experience and influence on the work of God inside and outside Swaziland.

According to the pastor during the interview, the role of the Sunday school in this church is that it brings the church members together to learn the Scriptures. Since it is a city church, the leadership of this church encourages academic excellence in knowing, applying and living according to the Bible.

Five years ago the church's attendance was 120 people. At present the church has an attendance of 480 adults. Five years ago there were only twenty-eight children attending at church. Currently there are 175 children. The Sunday school (children the ages of two to eighteen at Divine Healing Church) have also

experienced tremendous growth. Thirty children attended Sunday school five years ago compared to ninety-eight children at present. There were ten adults in Sunday school five years ago. Currently there are 135 adults in Sunday school.

Sunday school for adults has always been available at the church. The church uses the adult Sunday school as a breeding ground for its leadership. Members are equipped and encouraged to live lives that would challenge unbelievers to come to Christ. Through the Sunday school, potential teachers in both adult Sunday school and children's Sunday school are identified and later trained to serve in the church.

The church has organised their Sunday school in such a way that children have their own sessions in different venues. These children are then divided according to their age groups. All have their own premises. One of the pastoral staff members is always available to ensure that classes run correctly and to give immediate support to the Sunday school teachers if the need arises. The adults are grouped together for their lessons.

The church has its own good and modern facilities for the Sunday school. One of the lay leaders pointed out that this works to their favour. Most of those interviewed felt that the teachers in their Sunday school were well trained. However, there was concern that the curriculum was weak and not well designed. Classes for the adult Sunday school are lacking in good organisation. Praying for each other seems to be lacking at present, possibly because the Sunday school group has grown numerically. Knowing one another personally is becoming a challenge.

According to the Sunday school teacher interviewed, the material that is used in Sunday school is solicited from other churches that have Christian education departments and which have been designing Sunday school curricula for years. The senior pastor is the one who determines what will be taught with the help of other church elders.

The Sunday school is considered to be vibrant as both the Sunday school and the regular church attendance has increased. It is believed by the leadership of the church that many believers have been helped to mature in their faith as a result of the Sunday school ministry.

At this church it is not just anyone who is permitted to teach in the Sunday school. Those members who show potential and are interested in the ministry are

shortlisted and then taken for training. The biggest problem mentioned for the Sunday school was that most of the teachers mostly lecture in their class session, without including much discussion. Adults would like to be engaged in what is being taught and not just sit and listen. It was felt that perhaps the pressure of finishing on time and trying to complete the assigned lesson for the day might be a contributing factor to the method of teaching utilised by the teachers.

The lay leadership and those who attend the Sunday school programme feel that the church is healthy and has good facilities. The church is not lacking in leadership. People are being equipped for ministry, which has resulted in good efforts in evangelism. However, two areas of concern were mentioned. As the church has reached a membership of more than 300, true fellowship is becoming a challenge. Secondly, it is becoming difficult to judge whether the people like worship and preaching or if they are just attracted by the huge numbers who attend.

4.4 Ekuphileni Church in Zion

Compared to the other eight churches, this church is not very big. The church is situated forty-five kilometers out of the city of Manzini. Seventy adults attend this church, while five years ago the attendance was only twenty. Twelve children attended the church five years ago. Currently there are thirty-seven children attending church. Twelve adults attended Sunday school five years ago. Currently there are forty-one adults in Sunday school. Interestingly, the current number of children (thirty) who attend Sunday school is the same as it was five years ago. This church seems to have a majority of adults and a significantly low number of children.

Respondents felt that the church is healthy but that it does not have good facilities. The evangelism and fellowship are excellent. During the interview it was mentioned that one of the challenges they face is that the church is situated in an area that is not highly populated. However, considering the small number of homesteads in the locality, the church is doing well. The lay leader believes the church is growing, but that it needs more leaders. He also believes that they need a more planned and organised Sunday school programme, not only for females, but also for reaching out to the men, so that it can be suitable for all those in the church.

Those interviewed felt that the lack of significant growth in the church and Sunday school could be attributed to reasons such as not having qualified teachers, teachers not having relevant teaching materials to use and the lack of facilities. Despite these shortcomings the church is engaged in home visitations every fortnight with the intention of encouraging members and outsiders who might be interested in joining the church.

The role of Sunday school in this church was described as one of training the believers to walk in holiness. The Sunday school has not always been in operation. However, when it was conducted, it has been only for women and not for men. It is hoped that by continuing the Sunday school every Sunday the church will enhance the growth of the believers evidenced by the fruit of the Holy Spirit. There is anticipation that once believers are involved in the Sunday school, they will be capable of reaching those who are not members of the church.

The adult women are trained by one person who is in charge of the Sunday school programme. The lessons are selected on the basis of perceived needs of the group or the church at large. There is no written material that is used other than just the Bible which is the only textbook. At the moment there is one main teacher in the Sunday school. If she happens not to be available on that particular Sunday, she invites another spiritually-mature person to continue on her behalf.

Those interviewed felt that because of the nature of the church, which is Zionist, most of the adults do not understand the importance and need for adult Sunday school. The teachers have not been exposed to other churches practising Sunday school. This hampers efforts to have a vibrant Sunday school because they have limited internal training. This is also reflected in the way they deliver their teaching as there is minimal creativity.

The youth Sunday school divides the youth into three groups; those over twelve years of age, those between nine and twelve, and children under the age of nine. The youth Sunday school has one main trainer who is responsible for training the other leaders in this department. The leaders of the three departments will further train their own personnel. To be a teacher in the Sunday school, one must show signs of being born again and be an active member of the church.

The youth Sunday school has a well-written curriculum that was designed by an American missionary who has served in Swaziland for over thirty years. The material is well organised in terms of sequence and age groups. The person who determines what is taught will be the person in charge for the women's Sunday school together with the youth leader in charge of the youth and children.

The pastor of this church believes that the Sunday school in his church is vibrant because he can see maturity in some of its members. He states that some of the members have even gone to the extent of establishing a welfare group in the church. In addition to this, home visitations continue every Thursday. The activities of the church are supported because of the Sunday school.

The Sunday school groups have worked together to enhance the spiritual lives of the believers. Home-based care has been initiated, HIV/AIDS courses have been introduced in the church and gifts of members in the church are now easy to recognise because of the Sunday school.

The lay leader expressed concern that their Sunday school suffers tremendously because of shortage of good facilities. There is also a perception that Sunday school is not suitable for the Zionist movement, but for other denominations like Evangelicals and Pentecostals. This has caused some people not to attend Sunday school since they do not want to be labelled as rebels by their fellow Zionists. This feeling has also intensified fears that the Sunday school programme aims at removing the culture and traditions of Zionists. To counteract this false perception the church is planning to host a Sunday school camp for the denomination and intends to explain the aims and objectives of the Sunday school ministry to the members of the Zionist movement.

4.5 Family Worship Centre

This church is pastored by a young dynamic man who is originally from Zimbabwe and who is married to a Tanzanian woman. He came to study theology in one of the theological colleges in Swaziland. After his graduation he has been involved in pastoring and church planting. The church is fairly new and has attracted a lot of young adults. According to the pastor, during his first service at the launch the new church, the attendance was 250 people.

During one of the interviews with the pastor, he described the primary role of Sunday school as that of introducing potential members to the membership procedures of the church. The Sunday school is utilised to teach topics such as the church's statement of faith, training in spiritual maturity, discipleship training and initiating the believers to a life of evangelism.

About five years ago the church had an average attendance of ninety adults. Presently the attendance stands at 280. There were sixty children five years ago attending church. Currently there are 100 children attending church. The Sunday school five years ago had sixty-five adults and thirty-five children. Currently the attendance of adults in the Sunday school is seventy-five while the attendance of children in Sunday school is forty.

The pastor attributes this growth to emphasizing knowing the Bible and living according to the Bible. From the inception of this church, Sunday school has always been an integral part of the life of the church. The leadership of the church has tried to encourage the members to attend Sunday school by pointing out that Sunday sermons are not enough to cover all that a Christian needs to know to live an effective Christian life. It is hoped that by having regular training programmes for adults the church members will be spiritually matured and that leaders will be available from the group that has been trained.

One Sunday school teacher interviewed commented that the Sunday school's preferred strategy would be to divide the adults into two groups consisting of the young adults and senior adults, but due to the limitation of facilities they cannot divide the adults. Instead all of the adults sit together in one room to receive their lesson for the day. The children will normally have their Sunday school running concurrently with the main service.

The respondents from this church felt that their programme was doing exceptionally well and that there were no major shortcomings in the programme. Because the church targets urban middle-class and upper-class communities, the professional calibre of members is very high. They felt that the teachers involved are highly qualified in the field of education, both secular and religious, and they employ the latest and most effective pedagogy.

In this church the person who is in charge of the Sunday school is given the title “Principal”. The principal is an active member of the church, who is qualified in the field of education. The curriculum that is being used is one that is adapted from many sources. The senior pastor will normally liaise with the principal in terms of what is to be taught to the believers. Indicators like the perceived needs of the members or the yearly vision of the church are often used to determine the subjects to be taught.

Currently the church is renting a facility in the middle of the industrial area of the city. This structure does not cater very well for all the programmes that the church is offering or would like to offer to its congregants. The availability of space and time management are factors that work against the endeavours of the leadership in providing an effective programme. The Sunday school programme is believed to have contributed in building the people up and helping breed Christians willing to serve in the local church. In a year the Sunday school will normally run four main themes.

A lay leader within the church observed that time management is not very good. The church does not yet have its own premises, thus, time management is a problem because of a need to share the facilities with other groups within the church. People often do not arrive on time. This is viewed sometimes as indicative of an attitude that such people do not take the programme seriously. There are others who will only attend the main service which comes after the Sunday school.

4.6 Ichibi Church in Zion

Five years ago, this church had an average attendance of thirty-five adults. Attendance has been steadily growing since then. Currently the church records an attendance of eighty-two people. Fifteen children attended church five years ago. Currently the number of children is forty-eight. The attendance of adults in Sunday school was nine people five years ago and at present it stands at forty-seven. Attendance of Sunday school by children was also fifteen children five years ago but now is thirty-six. One lay leader at this church expressed confidence that the church is growing. He believes that evidence of this is seen in that while the church is situated in a remote area and not in the city, it is steadily growing numerically.

The pastor of this church believes that it is important to encourage congregants to study the word of God through Sunday school. He believes that preaching the word of God to them inspires them, but that teaching them systematically grounds believers in their faith. According to the pastor, for a church to be healthy there must be a balance between preaching and teaching the congregants. One ministry must not thrive at the expense of the other.

During an interview with the pastor, he highlighted that he believes that if the Sunday school teachers were well trained the programme would do even better. A shortage of funds affects the church as it is unable to fund its teachers to further their training. Because the church is situated in a remote area, the income from members is very low. One Sunday school teacher observed that sometimes the general leadership seems not to be very supportive of the Sunday school programme. Absenteeism of leaders (teachers) who fail to show up regularly has been cited as one indicator of not taking the Sunday school seriously.

This church has not always had an adults' Sunday school programme, but it has always had a Sunday school programme for children. According to the leaders, the Sunday school programme is important as it grounds the believers and equips them to serve God and the body of Christ through their various gifts. This makes them true ambassadors of Christ in this world.

In terms of organisation of the Sunday school, the adults are grouped together and have their lesson in one room because of shortage of space. For curriculum, only the Bible is used. The senior pastor and the presiding Bishop determine what will be taught in the Sunday school.

The Sunday school has been viewed as vibrant by those interviewed; they attribute the increase in church membership and worship attendance to the Sunday school programme. One Sunday school teacher cited development of strong Christian character in those who are frequent in the Sunday school programme as one benefit that they have experienced in their programme.

The Sunday school has helped the church to be strong. The few that attend the programme enjoy one another's company and there is strong fellowship. Although facilities are not the best and space is limited, the programme is equipping those who attend. Through attending classes, strong fellowship bonds are being

formed amongst the believers. This increased trust between members is encouraging them to seek ways to foster more growth in their lives as a group. The frequent sharing of personal testimonies during the Sunday school programme is encouraged and this allows for more bonding of the believers.

This programme is faced with shortage of facilities to accomodate the growing number of students. Other hindrances that were mentioned were the lack of a good curriculum that would address a wide sphere of issues that are not specifically covered in the Bible and the problem of coming late to the Sunday school programme.

4.7 Labotsibeni AME

This church is an old-established church in Swaziland and in the Manzini region. The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was among the pioneer denominations planted by the first missionaries in Swaziland. This church has not experienced any significant growth in attendance in recent years.

Five years ago the number of adults attending the church was ninety-five people. The current number of adults attending this church remains the same. The number of children between two to eighteen years of age who were attending the church five years ago totalled thirty. At present the number of children attending remains the same. However, the Sunday school programme has grown to forty-five adults from nine adults five years ago. The number of children attending Sunday school five years ago was five. Currently there are twenty-three children attending Sunday school.

The church is pastored by a pastor who is part-time in ministry. He is mostly available to serve the congregants during weekends. Pastors who belong to this church denomination are rotated amongst various branches (churches) in Swaziland. Their stay in each location is between two and five years. The pastor believes the role of the Sunday school in the church is to teach the believers the word of God and introduce them to the basic doctrinal beliefs of the church.

According to the lay leader who was interviewed, this church has always had a Sunday school programme and in the past years it was very vibrant, unlike at present. He feels that training for adults is important to the church since it gives them

answers to many questions that might not be answered through the preaching sessions. It is assumed that once they attend, the adults will be able to critically assess what they believe and have answers to defend their faith.

The Sunday school programme includes both men and women and they jointly receive their instruction for the day. The pastor is the one in charge of the programme. Teachers are trained by the denominational leaders and then sent to local assemblies to work with their pastors in running the department.

The pastor believes the Sunday school has not really helped the church to grow strong. Those interviewed believe that there are spiritual battles that are going on in the church that hinder the growth of the programme. However, the teachers do try to utilise various methods of teaching to encourage participation of the students.

Fellowship and evangelism are seriously lacking in the church. The pastor believes that people are more interested in identifying with the denomination's historical traditions than living for Christ. By this he means the motivation for coming to church is not the love of God, but more of keeping a tradition. He believes the Sunday school has done its part; the facilities are good, the Word has been taught and so the onus is on the people to live as they have been instructed through the Word.

According to the interviews, people have been taught the Word but their lives do not seem to be impacted by the teachings they have received. Some of the challenges they have faced involve the regular changing of pastors who are posted to other local churches. This seems to unsettle the people. Every new pastor comes with his new way of doing things and by the time the congregants begin to understand him, he might be transferred to another local church. Another challenge is that the church is losing a lot of young people since it is considered a traditional church and therefore does not appeal to the young people. Currently there are no plans to solve these problems.

The pastor believes that the Sunday school is vibrant in the sense that people attending it have remained in the programme. However, the stable attendance has not contributed to any form of evangelism that would bring others to Christ, to Sunday school or to the church. Those attending are seemingly content with hearing

the teachings and doing nothing about practically demonstrating what they have learned.

The curriculum that is used is designed by the international office in America and then the pastor determines how it will be taught. One problem with the curriculum is that many of the lessons do not seem to be relevant to the African believer. There is need to adapt some of these lessons to address issues that the African believer is facing.

4.8 Fairview Free Evangelical Church

This church is situated less than two kilometres from the city centre. The church has purchased a large piece of land. On the land there is a big marquee that is visible from afar. Next to the marquee is a foundation that is being constructed for the permanent church. The pastor of this church is a young person who is a recent graduate from one of the theological colleges in Swaziland.

Five years ago this church had an average church attendance of seventy adults. At present there are 470 adults attending the service. The average attendance of children has grown to 320 children from sixty children. This church has experienced a drastic increase in growth, recording high attendance both in the regular church services and Sunday school services. Five years ago there were only twelve adults attending Sunday school. Today there are 200 adults attending. Today there are 145 children attending Sunday school compared to only seventy children who attended Sunday school five years ago.

The pastor of this church is convinced that support of Sunday school should be given by both the pastoral staff and laity. This will enhance the spiritual growth of the church members. He believes that members who are rooted and grounded in the Word are in a better position to know how to behave and to be able to identify teachings that might end up contaminating their Christian lives.

The church was planted almost ten years ago. From its inception it held its services in a small rented classroom in one of the private schools close to where the church is situated. This church has always had Sunday school training for adults and children.

Despite the lack of proper infrastructure, the church did not delay launching the Sunday school for adults as the leadership felt that the growth of the church was closely linked to the thorough training of members in matters of faith. This is evidently so, for the current records show that the church attendance now is well over the 300 mark. Those who attend Sunday school are approximately half of the usual church attendance of 150.

During the interview, the Sunday school teacher indicated that by implementing the Sunday school programme they hoped to build a church that is well balanced through preaching and the teaching ministry. This will ensure that members grow spiritually, and that they identify their individual spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. The result of this process will be the edification of the saints, resulting in winning more souls for Christ, who will also be taught the Word through preaching and teaching.

The Sunday school programme is divided into age groups (pre-scholars, primary students, and high school), while the adults are divided by gender. The adults are taught the same topic despite the fact that they are divided into two groups.

In this church the lay ministers are in charge of the administration of the Sunday school. Leaders are selected and trained to teach in the Sunday school. Despite the selection of these leaders, the number of those who are trained and actually discharge their duties well is very few. This poses a challenge to the staffing of the Sunday school.

The church leadership has regular training sessions for Sunday school teachers to equip them in how to utilise different methods in delivering their lessons and how to connect with their students. Teachers are encouraged to be on the lookout for those who have been recently saved and others who might be potential members of the church.

The teachers are creative in their methodology and the spiritual atmosphere is good. The Bible is given major preference and other books are consulted if need be. The leadership of the church is supportive of the programme, including the senior pastor.

The curriculum the Sunday school employs is one that is designed by the senior pastor in consultation with his pastoral staff. This team looks at specific needs that might need to be addressed in the short term or the long term through the Sunday school department. These needs might be spiritual, financial, social or political. The senior pastor believes that consulting other well-written and structured curricula from other denominations is helpful, but he also believes that as the needs of each church or denomination vary from time to time, being able to adjust their curriculum to changing circumstances is of utmost importance. His view is that following a well-laid out—but out-dated—curriculum might not ultimately prove to be beneficial in certain respects.

The pastor believes their Sunday school programme is doing well, but admits it is not as vibrant as they would like it to be. The pastor believes that there is still room to improve and so he lobbies for more support from the congregants. Almost half of their congregation attend Sunday school now, but they are hoping to reach at least seventy percent attendance from their congregants. They are constantly looking for ways to stimulate their believers to participate in the programme. Inasmuch as they desire a higher level of participation, they are also careful not to seek only for numbers, but also for people who will be transformed by these teachings and who will implement them in their lives.

There seems to be a unanimous agreement that the moving of the church from a rented classroom to their own premises has helped boost the church in membership and growth in other areas. While the church does not have enough classrooms in terms of space at the new church site, all available classes have recorded high numbers in the past five years. The attendance has actually surprised the church leadership as more people came to Sunday school at the new facility than they had imagined. It seems the Sunday school has helped this church to have members who are being constantly exposed to learning the word of God and being encouraged to apply it in their daily lives. The Sunday school has also been a tool that has helped to develop leaders amongst those who attend it.

Some challenges that the church has faced in Sunday school are the lack of maximum attendance of church members (comparing the number of those who attend the services to those who attend the Sunday school), constant absenteeism

and not having enough space. There seem to be some people who are just not interested in learning about God. It seems as if all they want is only to attend the Sunday service.

Sometimes the morale of the teachers is not very high. This also seems to affect the people who attend Sunday school. Some suggested that perhaps the teachers feel as if they are overworked, since they have to be teaching almost every Sunday. To try and reduce this problem, the senior pastor has tried to help teach at least one Sunday a month as a way of showing the teachers that he understands the challenges they are going through and also to help them learn from him.

The Sunday school programme seems to be of great help to those who are attending it. The church is considered healthy by almost all those interviewed. Even though present facilities are much better than before, there is still a need to improve the facilities. There seems to be active evangelism and fellowship taking place in the Sunday school programme; those people who avail themselves of it are being equipped for ministry.

The church is having exceptional responses in areas such as the abundance of good leaders, people liking the worship, preaching, and fellowship. In addition, people are being equipped for ministry. Even though the church moved from rented premises to one owned by the church, there is still construction taking place. The pastor feels the church is growing.

4.9 Manzini Lutheran Church

This church is one of the old-established traditional churches in Manzini. Five years ago it had forty adults and fifteen children attending church. The number of children attending church has now grown to sixty. The current attendance of adults has grown to ninety.

The Sunday school programme was not always operational until the last six years at this church. In the past, the attendance of adults in Sunday school was seven. Only five children attended Sunday school. However, over the years the numbers have increased for both the children and adults. Currently the Sunday school attendance stands at forty-five adults and thirty children.

The children's Sunday school programme is designed for those who are not beyond the age of twelve years. They are divided into two levels. The third level is the adult Sunday school. The church does not offer anything for teenagers. The diocese has no plans yet for training teenagers. The adult Sunday school has been taking place over the years, but it was not until recently that the programme was formalised. The Christian education department of the diocese has been tasked with developing an effective curriculum for all three levels in the church's Sunday school. However, this task has not been fully completed, so the church utilises its own curriculum.

The choice of topics to be taught comes from the senior pastor and members of the congregation. There is an effort to address not only doctrinal issues affecting the church, but also real-life issues. The adults' Sunday school does not seem to be vibrant, especially when compared with the children's Sunday school. There is still lack of participation within the adult Sunday school.

Half of those interviewed from this church felt that the Sunday school programme was not well organised and needs to be improved. They also pointed out that most of those attending are not living out in practice what they are taught. Evangelism is slow because the believers are not sharing their faith. They added that, in view of curriculum they are using, their evangelistic efforts should be more productive.

According to the pastor, some of the challenges faced include that the congregation still needs to appreciate the importance of Sunday school. However, the Sunday school teachers consider the time when they meet to be the biggest challenge. Finding a suitable time that will be respected by all is a big challenge. If Sunday school is scheduled in the morning, people arrive late. If it is scheduled after the service, as in other parishes, the people leave immediately, complaining that they are in a hurry to leave.

The lay leader and Sunday school teacher both felt that there is no significant growth in numbers that has taken place. People are not zealous in evangelism. The Sunday school has not brought any significant change in people's lives. Teachers in the adult education division are hard to find and train. The result of this is that the pastor has to do much of the teaching because there are few people available to

teach. The final challenge is that the church wants to formalise the curriculum so that all the congregations follow the same lesson plan.

4.10 Matsapha Evangelical Church

This church has always had a Sunday school programme. It has focused a lot on training and developing the children. There is a strong belief that the children of today are the church of tomorrow. Due to this belief the church has invested a lot in the training of children in religious issues. The church has implemented an educational pre-school to help educate the children in the community as well as the children belonging to the church. This pre-school is being run using Christian values. Through the pre-school the church is not just providing secular education; it is also instilling Christian values into these children.

The senior pastor believes it is best to introduce the Christian faith and its doctrines to people while they are young. Well-trained children can become the hope and future of the church. He believes that teachers are to be trained for Sunday school even if they are not currently teaching a class. The more teachers the programme has the better. The teachers help to demonstrate the living Word to the students. According to the pastor, the availability of teachers will also help curb the shortage of staff and reduce fatigue since none of the teachers will be overworked. This will create a healthy environment in the church.

According to the pastor, while this church seems to have a vibrant Sunday school programme, there seems to have been less growth compared to the growth in church attendance that has taken place. At present the average church attendance for adults is more than 450. Five years ago the average attendance of adults was eighty and attendance of children of two to eighteen years of age was sixty. At present the number of those attending from two to eighteen years of age is 125.

The number of adults attending Sunday school five years ago was forty-two. There were thirty-five children attending Sunday school five years ago. Currently the church has 180 adults attending Sunday school. One hundred and forty-eight children are currently attending the Sunday school.

The Sunday school has been effective in years past but it seems it has grown at a slower pace over the past few years. One of the main factors contributing to this

was the label “Sunday school”. This term seems to have been a “turn off” to many church members who were educated as they assumed that it consisted merely of classes for children. The leadership of the church has taken action by changing the name and calling it Adult Bible Study. By including the term “adult” it is hoped that the adult members will realise that this programme is for them. This is a Bible study programme that will explore topics relating to adults in a biblical way.

This church has tried to diversify the teaching of Sunday school and not make it only a Sunday event. The Sunday school programme is organised according to ages. There is a ministry of Christian education in the church that is being led by a Director. There are classes for children, college students and adults. There is also a holiday club which offers Bible study for university and college students. These classes are all run under the Sunday school programme.

The pastor believes that the Sunday school programme is vibrant even though not many new people are being won for Christ. There is a tremendous change in the spiritual lives of those who are being taught. What is lacking is the evangelistic thrust to bring the lost to Christ. Other than that, the pastor believes this programme is excellent.

Since this church is part of the Evangelical denomination, it has the privilege of having their teachers trained by the district office. The local pastor also adds in a course here and there to ensure that the Sunday school teachers are fine-tuned to the vision of the local church. It is a challenge, however, to get maximum support from the lay leadership. There is still room for lobbying for more participation from the leaders. However, the Sunday school programme is appealing to the members as teachers employ creative techniques in teaching and encouraging the congregants to build strong relationships with one another.

According to the lay leader interviewed in the church, the Sunday school is well organised with classes for all ages. The teachers are well trained. The church has good facilities, and members know and pray for one another. Ranked top was the ability of the programme to equip the participants for practical ministry.

The curriculum is formulated for the church at the national level of the denomination. This comes through the denomination’s ministry of Christian education. The resident pastor oversees the curriculum and has the opportunity of

changing it here and there if need be. The church believes it is an advantage to have a curriculum that has already been developed and evaluated by people who are specialists in Christian education. This also relieves the Sunday school teacher from the stress of developing topics to teach in class for each Sunday session.

The pastor believes that the Sunday school has helped the church to grow spiritually. Through this programme home cells were established that enjoyed much support from members, including a willingness to invite outsiders to the meetings. The pastor believes this has led to an increase in numbers in the church services.

The pastor laments, however, the seeming lack of serious commitment from some church members. He believes the attendance is good but it lacks in serious commitment. By lack of commitment the pastor is referring to people who do not want to participate in any church programme but just want to attend. This lack of serious commitment slows down the expansion of the programme as a few people have to do all the work.

According to the Sunday school teacher interviewed, finding new teachers is another challenge. One cannot rely on people simply attending Sunday school to identify potential teachers. There is a need to look deeper into issues such as: Do they arrive on time? Have they ever invited someone to the programme? Have they ever supported the Sunday school programme financially? Since teachers are meant to be exemplary, their identification and appointment should be done after a careful investigation of their involvement in the Sunday school.

The church leadership made a mistake in the past of selecting teachers who were not exemplary in the way they conducted themselves, hence compromising the gospel. Some teachers would often be absent from class without prior notice to the person in charge. At other times, teachers were not adequately prepared for their classes.

Another challenge that the programme has faced in the past was that church members wanted to turn the Sunday school into another church service. There were constant subtle indications that the members came to the programme to be preached to and not to be taught. Their interest was preaching rather than being instructed on matters of the faith.

This challenge was, however, overcome by constantly explaining the objectives of the Sunday school programme and explaining how it complements the preaching ministry. Teachers were also asked to affirm the teaching ministry in their Sunday school classes and church leaders were also encouraged to speak positively about the necessity of the Sunday school programme.

The last challenge was time management. The Sunday school is conducted before the main service. There has been a tendency for some people to arrive a few minutes before the end of class and then attending the main service. Sometimes the Sunday school teachers would try to prolong class time to accommodate the latecomers, hence affecting the starting time of the main church service. This problem has been overcome by explaining to the congregants that Sunday school and the preaching ministry go hand in hand. There is no reason for members to fail to attend one programme because they feel it is less important than the other.

Sunday school teachers were asked to stick to starting and ending lessons at the agreed time so as not to delay the starting of the main service. This also ensures that those who come on time are respected as the programme will continue as expected. If the lesson is prolonged to accommodate the latecomers, then it means that the next time even those who made an effort to be on time might decide to come late since they know the teacher will accommodate their late coming.

The pastor in this church is very satisfied about the facilities that they have. The people like the worship and preaching. Fellowship is very strong and although growth in the Sunday school is slow, he is satisfied with its progress. He believes the Sunday school needs to intensify the training of leaders and equip them for service. There is also a need to evangelise more.

4.11 The Christian Apostolic Church in Zion

This church is part of the Zionist denomination. It is amongst the few churches that are growing and have influence in Manzini, according to the lay leader that the researcher interviewed. Currently the church attendance of adults is ninety-five people while five years ago the attendance was forty adults. The attendance of children five years ago was twenty, but currently it is sixty children.

Five years ago the church had fifteen adults attending the Sunday school. Currently there are fifty-one adults attending Sunday school. Twenty-five children attended Sunday school five years ago. Currently forty-six children attend Sunday school. The pastor of this church believes the role of Sunday school is to build the faith of the church members, and teach God's principles and godly morals.

This church has not always had an adult Sunday school. The leadership hopes that by having Sunday school training, this will help build up the faith of the believers and educate believers in matters of their faith. The Sunday school teacher believes that this training will be an opportunity to foster unity amongst those who attend.

Sunday school for children is divided into three groups. Adults meet together as one group. The Sunday school department is headed by a director. This director is in charge of identifying potential teachers and the organising of training and placement for these teachers.

During the interview the pastor pointed out that the weakest link of the Sunday school programme was the lack of adequate training of the Sunday school teachers. However, he felt the programme was well organised and that those who attended (the "saints") are receiving practical equipping for ministry.

By this regular training the church hopes to enhance the growth of Christian life and the desire to practise what is taught in class. The teachers of the various groups are responsible to determine what is taught to the different groups. The Sunday school teacher stressed that the adult Sunday school is not vibrant while the children's Sunday school is vibrant.

The Sunday school teacher stated that their progress was hindered by the lack of proper training and poor service delivery by the teachers. The pastor explained that it would be difficult to assess the impact of Sunday school as the church has never studied its impact.

The Sunday school programme has faced challenges, like the lack of proper infrastructure. The current structure is not adequate. There is a shortage of qualified teachers in the programme, especially in the adult Sunday school. The pastor believes, God willing, they will combat some of these problems. There is a need to

build more classrooms, market the adult Sunday school, and organise proper training sessions for teachers.

According to the pastor, the church is not growing fast enough. There is a lot that needs to be addressed. He believes that there needs to be a change in mentality of his congregants before programmes like Sunday school are accepted. The only thing that is working in the favour of the church, according to the lay leader, is the strong fellowship. Other than this the church needs to improve in equipping people for ministry.

CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will analyse the research results from the data collected in the field. Creswell explains that the steps for analysing qualitative research include:

1. Listing and preliminary grouping of relevant experience.
2. Reduction and elimination of extraneous data to capture essential constituents of the phenomenon.
3. Clustering and thematising the invariant constituents to identify core themes of the experience.
4. Construct for each participant a textural-structural description of the meaning and essence of the experience.

Creswell comments, "Each individual textural-structural description would be used to develop a composite description of meaning and essence of the experience representing the whole group" (1994:56).

5.2 Are the churches and their Sunday schools growing?

Most of the churches in this study have shown significant growth in both their Sunday school and church attendance. Some churches like Labotsibeni AME have not grown much in either their Sunday school or church attendance.

5.2.1 The adult church attendance

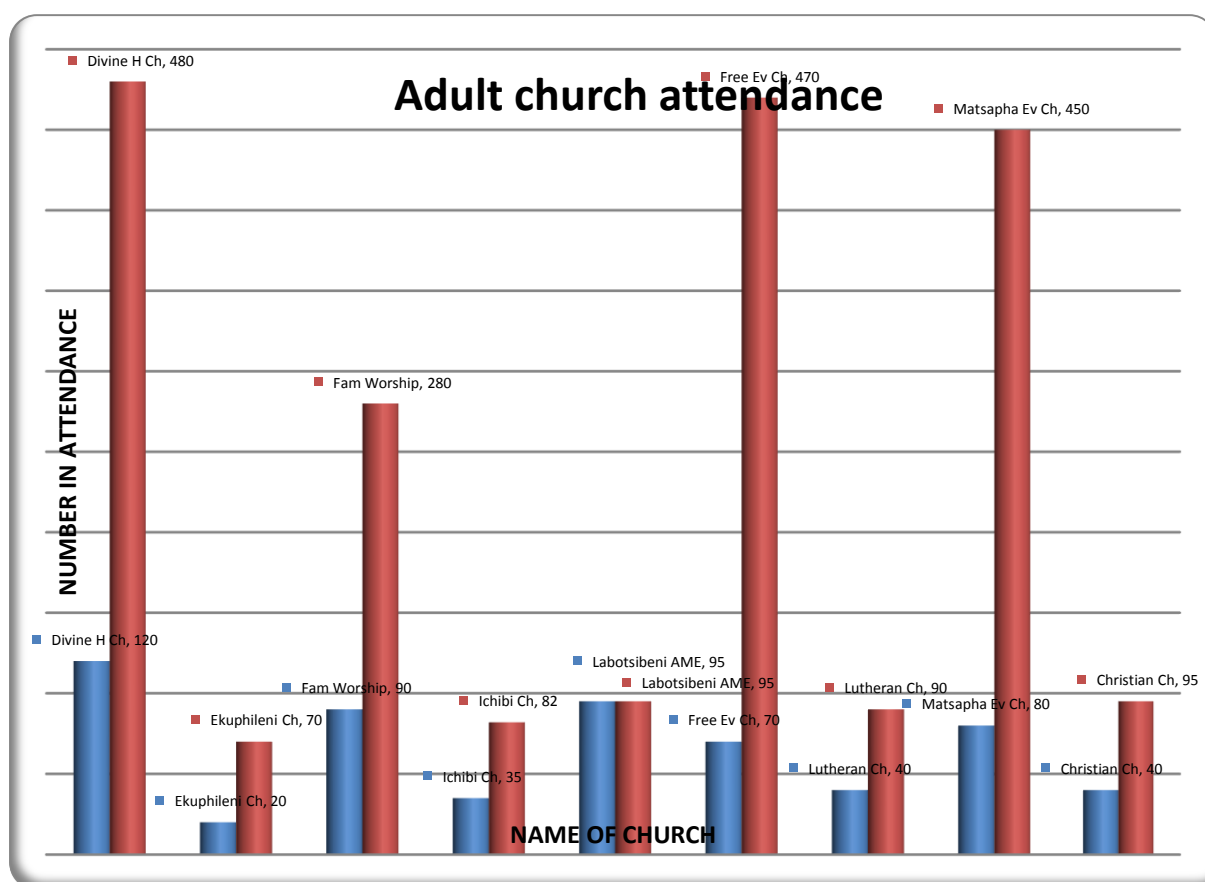


Figure 5.1

However, the data is not clear as to whether a large growth, or the lack of growth, in Sunday school attendance (by either adults or children) has had an impact on the growth of attendance at worship services. While the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion has grown much in their Sunday school, this growth has not impacted the church attendance (Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.4). The opposite is true of Family Worship Centre. Family Worship Centre has seen significant growth in church attendance when compared to the Sunday school growth in the last five years. In five years the church has grown by over 210 percent, while their adult Sunday school has only grown by a mere fourteen percent.

Compared to the other eight churches, the attendance of adults in Ekuphileni Church in Zion has grown from twenty to seventy. This represents a 250 percent growth. However the children's Sunday school has not grown. Five years ago there were thirty children attending and currently the church still has thirty children (Figure

5.3). According to the researcher's observations, this church has significantly more adults than children. This might be due to the fact that the church is a considerable distance away from residential area, thus making it harder for children to walk for a long distance.

5.2.2 The percentage growth of adult church attendance

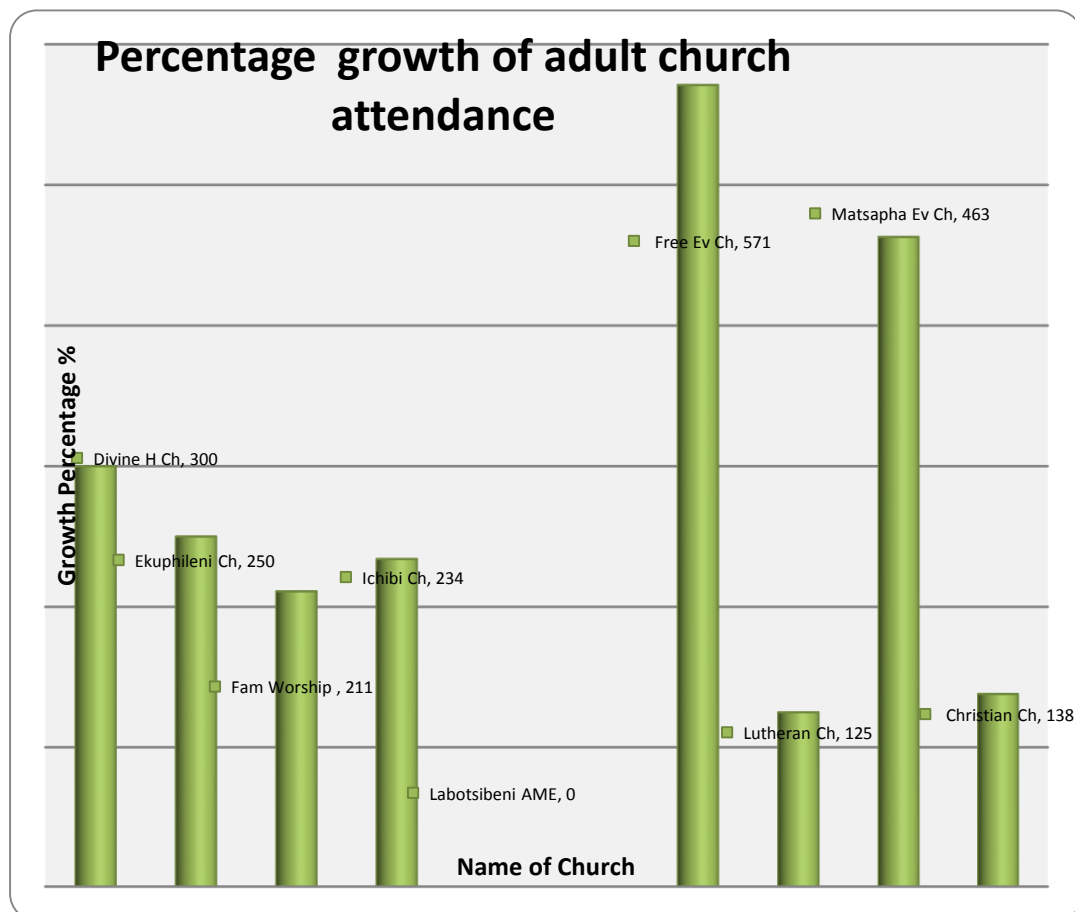


Figure 5.2

All of the church leaders interviewed believe that Sunday school is an integral part of their ministries. All of them also assume that an effective Sunday school will positively impact church attendance. The data does indicate that church attendance has increased drastically in the churches that seem to have had a well-organised Sunday school programme (i.e. Divine Healing Church, 300 percent growth; Ekuphileni Church in Zion, 250 percent growth; Matsapha Evangelical Church, 463 percent growth; Fairview Free Evangelical Church, 571 percent growth). Each of

these churches had over 200 percent increase in their Sunday school and over 250 percent increase in their church attendance (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). The percentage growth rate indisputably indicates that both these churches and their Sunday schools are growing.

5.2.3 The percentage growth of Sunday school children

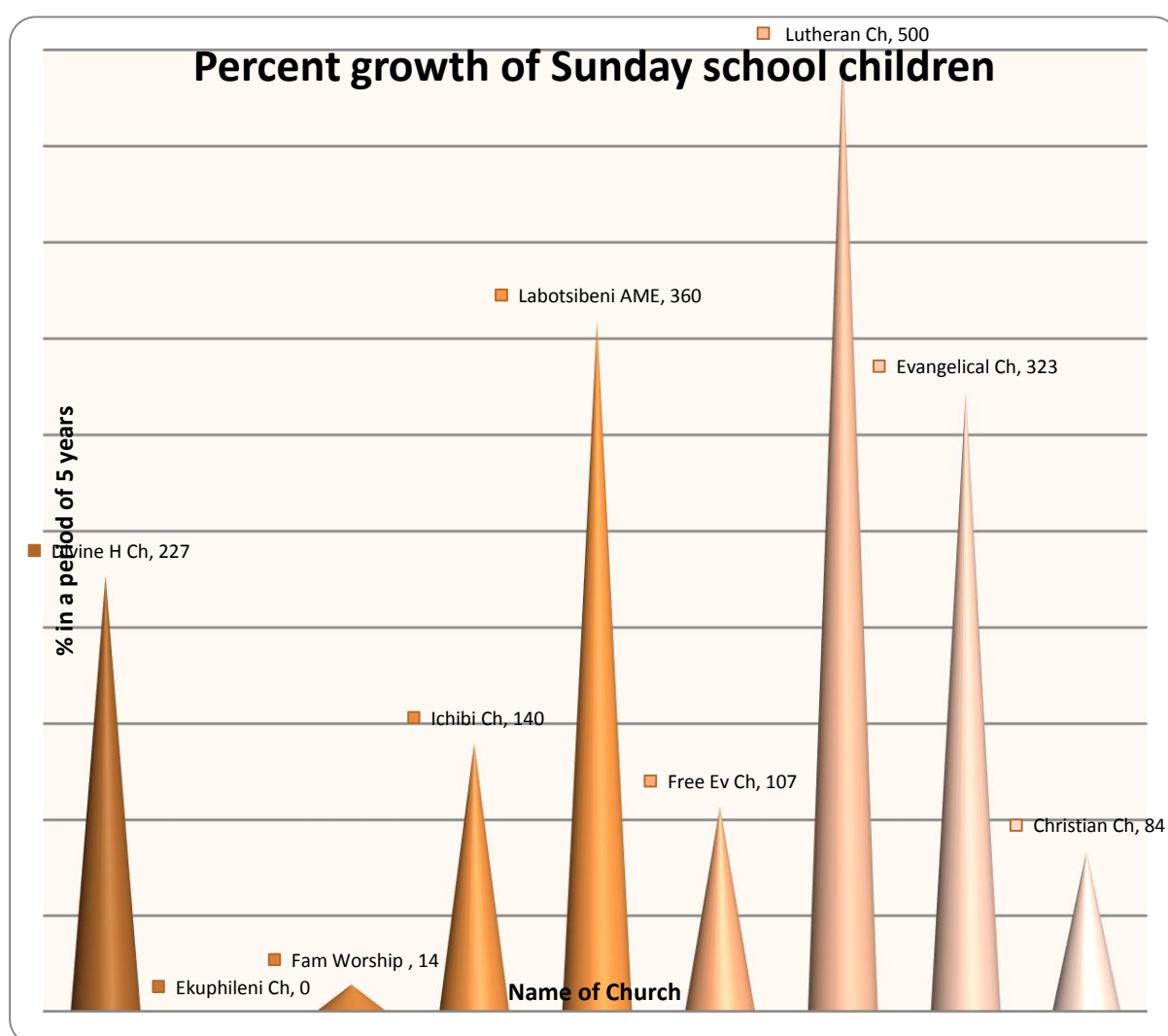


Figure 5.3

Family Worship Centre has a well-organised Sunday school programme that is directed by a qualified educationist. This church has not grown significantly in its Sunday school programme, only recording a fourteen percent growth. However, the church has recorded an impressive 211 percent growth in church attendance (Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

There may be reasons that explain this. The church meets in one venue for all the Sunday school programmes, including the children's Sunday school. The church structure is not suitable for teaching as it echoes a lot. The church building also does not have partitions that might allow each class to meet in private without constant interruptions and noise from other classes.

5.2.4 The percentage growth of adult Sunday school

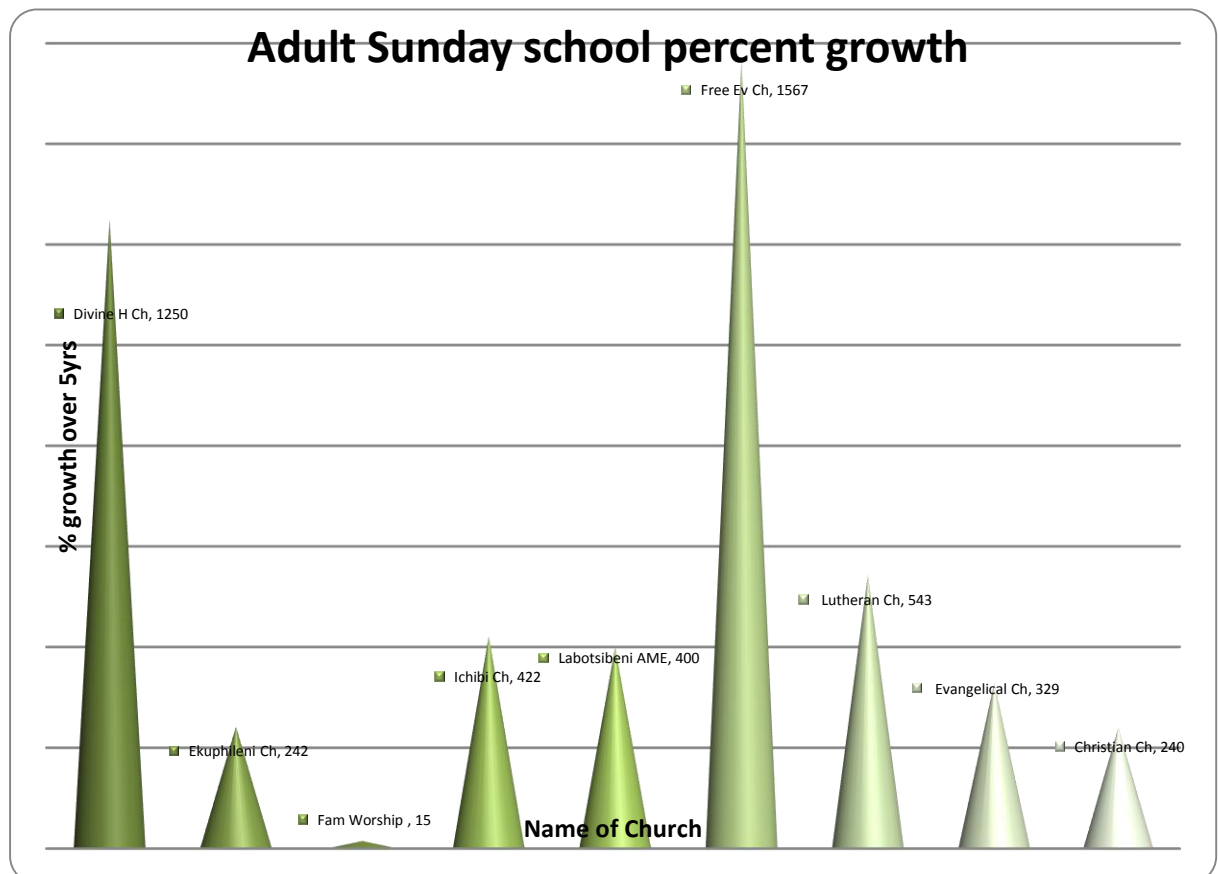


Figure 5.4

Despite a modest growth in the numbers of both adults and children at Labotsibeni AME (Figures 5.3 and 5.4), the church has not grown in church attendance (children of two to eighteen years of age) in the past five years. Five years ago Labotsibeni AME had thirty children. Currently there are still only thirty children. Their adult church attendance five years ago was ninety-five adults and currently there are still ninety-five adults. This represents zero growth for both

children's and adult church attendance. The church has maintained the members it has had for the past five years without losing any (Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

What the researcher noticed at Labotsibeni was that there is a secular school on the church campus. The church does not seem to focus on evangelising the children who attend the school. The church is situated in an area that is surrounded by residences. There are many young people who come to the school, but not to the church or Sunday school.

All the churches that considered their Sunday school vibrant have shown significant growth in their church attendance (Figures 5.5 and 5.6). During the interviews it transpired that this comes from the conviction of the leaders that most members of the Sunday school are being equipped and nurtured in their faith and are involved in practical ministry.

5.2.5 The children's Sunday school and church attendance

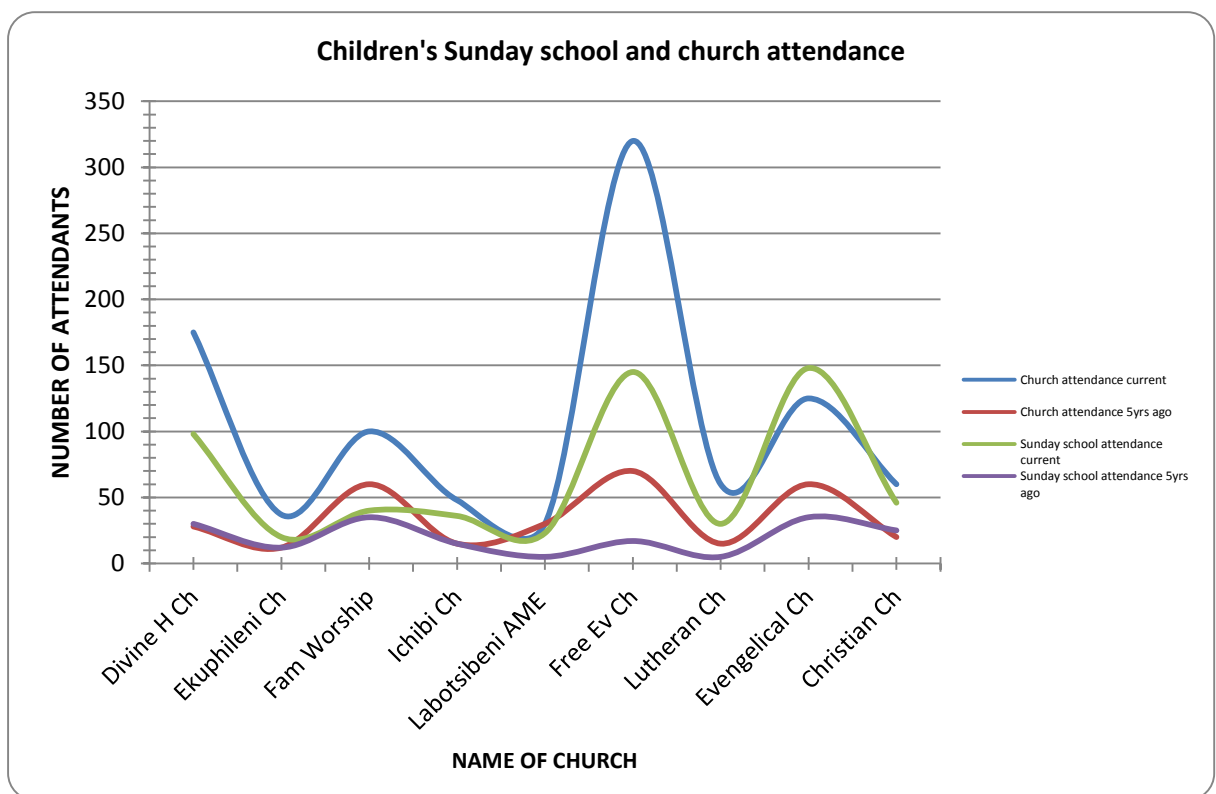


Figure 5.5

5.2.6 The comparative growth of adult Sunday school and church attendance

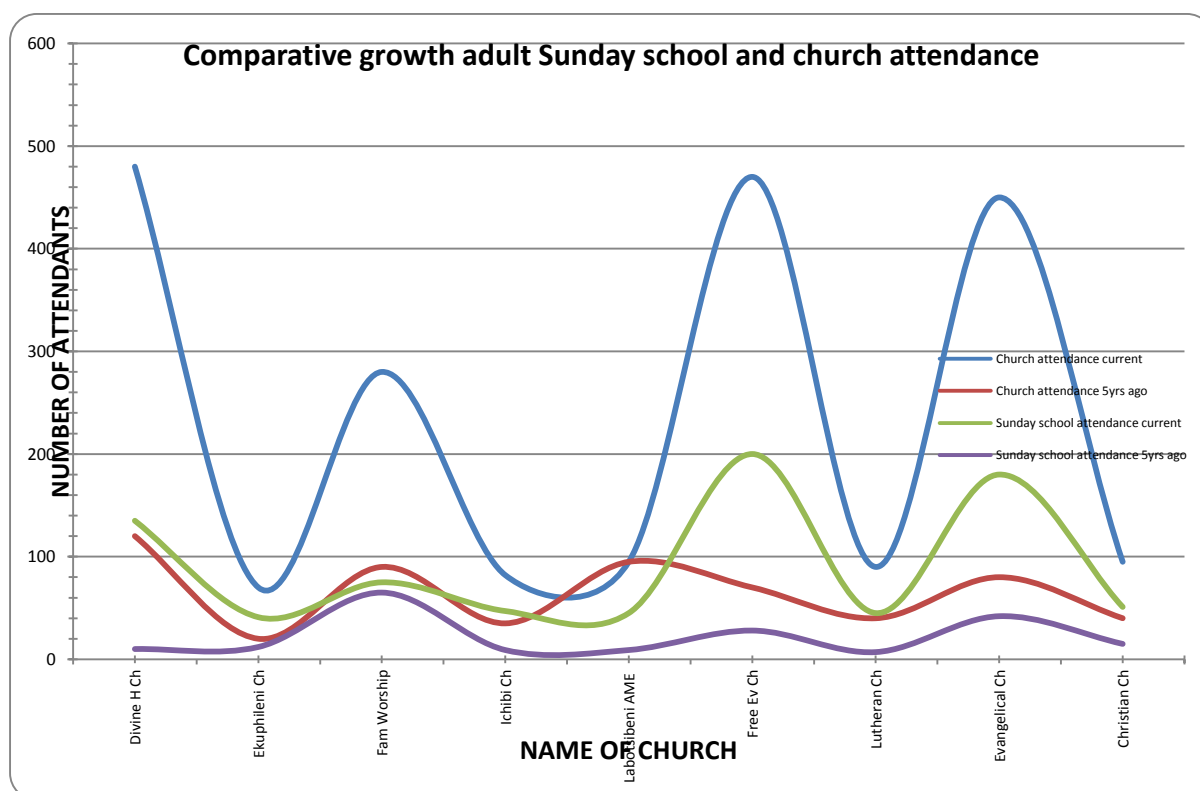


Figure 5.6

5.2.7 Churches that are growing

From the research interviews, it appears that the leaders of the growing churches exhibit a strong commitment to church growth and evangelism. Those churches which are growing have a strong conviction that the Sunday school plays a vital part in the growth of the church. Data received from the nine Protestant churches surveyed revealed a correlation between the increase in attendance in the Sunday school and church attendance.

Six out of nine churches surveyed showed significant growth. These churches are Divine Healing Church, Family Worship Centre, Ichibi Church in Zion, Fairview Free Evangelical Church, Matsapha Evangelical Church and the Christian Church in Zion. The researcher noted that all the six growing churches have striven to achieve all four goals that are mentioned by Haystead for making a positive impact on people's lives. These four are to win people, to teach them the Word of God, to build supportive relationships, and to encourage them to serve Christ (Haystead 1995:14).

These are evident in the six Sunday schools, though not always explicitly stated in their responses.

Those pupils who attend Sunday school frequently visit the homes of newcomers to the Sunday school. New members are assimilated and integrated into the life of the church. Those who are members of the Sunday school group are encouraged not to stagnate as a clique in one circle of friends, but to welcome newcomers and to make them part of the group.

Growing churches emphasise to the class members that Sunday school exists as one part of the church to reach people for Christ and to teach them the Bible. The leaders of these churches believe that the Sunday school has a role in building the whole body of Christ and that it promotes congregational unity. The active participation of Sunday school members helps to bring the lost to Christ.

This researcher noted that in most of the growing churches their teachers are adequately trained and the curriculum that is used is well-organised; for example, Matsapha Evangelical Church and Family Worship Centre have employed the services of a qualified educationist to head the Sunday school department. The researcher observed that there are few teachers or curriculum plans that are so engaging that they can hold members' attention indefinitely. When teachers are well trained and employ good teaching strategies, this seems to prevent Sunday school students from losing interest in what is taught or to view it as irrelevant.

These growing churches take evangelism through the Sunday school's ministry seriously. Their evangelistic nature is helping these churches reach more people as they fulfil Jesus' Great Commission to "make disciples of all nations, baptising them...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). In other words, the Sunday school is pursuing reaching, teaching, and caring for people in order to make disciples.

The Sunday school plays an essential role in bringing believers to maturity as they study the word of God. For example, Family Worship Centre engages the believers in Sunday school. During the sessions doctrinal topics such as what the church believes are covered and systematically taught in the Sunday school.

The Sunday school is perceived as an important arm of the church. Sunday school has a role of bringing growth and development in a local church. The Sunday

school in these growing churches has helped establish Christians in their faith, beginning from the cradle and extending to adulthood, as pointed out by one of the leaders at Divine Healing Church. Most of those who attend adult Sunday school have been part of children's Sunday school. The Sunday school ministry benefits both the educated and uneducated (non-literate).

The Sunday school provides the church with a teaching ministry that is rich, detailed and systematic. A pupil who attends regularly is led through the Bible and taught subjects that are essential for effective Christian living. One of the objectives of Sunday school, according to a teacher at Ichibi Church in Zion, is to produce Christians who are dependable and who live the Christian life practically outside of the church corridors. In these growing churches the students who attend Sunday school are encouraged and trained to become practising Christians. This is seen, for example, where in some of these churches their Sunday school members have been involved in compassionate ministries like ministering to those with HIV/AIDS.

One leader at Divine Healing Church pointed out during the interview that the Sunday school ministry helps to train believers in the faith. Sunday school also helps in the training of workers and leaders in the church. He stated that most of the committed leaders in their church trace their roots back to the Sunday school ministry.

The Sunday school contributes to the growth of the church through providing instruction and training in various avenues of Christian service. Such instruction and training should include, for example, such things as involvement in private and public prayer, visitation of the sick and prospective church members, and ministry to the bereaved.

The growing churches feel that while the Sunday school cannot do all of the outreach for the church, the Sunday school does encourage an active role in outreach in cooperation with the other programmes of the church. Every agency of the church benefits from the results of such outreach efforts. This outreach is both educational to its members and evangelistic to the community.

The pastor at Family Worship Centre pointed out that the Sunday school has been instrumental in helping to integrate non-church members who attend the Sunday school into the church body. This is done in several ways in their church,

such as, inviting those Sunday school members who are not church members to attend church and worship sessions; coordinating the topic of a Sunday school session so that the topic becomes part of the worship service and so that the sermon on that Sunday morning relies heavily on what was taught in the Sunday school; and leading new people or young converts to join the church's new converts class. This class is the first and crucial step towards incorporating new people as church members.

There is a firm belief by all those interviewed that Sunday school is the principal educational agency of the local church. It is important that the pupils know about the Bible and that their knowledge of Bible truths should lead them to an intelligent exercise of worship and a practical expression of their faith in their lives. If the Sunday school is to be engaged in training the entire church, it must assume the obligation of training in worship and religious expression.

The growing churches seem to emphasise the empowering of their believers so as to encourage maximum participation in Sunday school and other church activities. The author discovered that the techniques used to produce growth in these churches not only depend on human endeavours, but also on seeking and expecting divine intervention.

The leaders at Fairview Free Evangelical Church are convinced that if people are transformed internally by the word of God and if they are committed to obeying Christ, they will produce godly fruits which will glorify God, as stated in John 15:8. This should be viewed as spiritual growth and is something that occurs when members of the Sunday school grow and mature spiritually.

As noted earlier, when spiritual growth happens members will be able to: (a) give themselves to fervent prayer; (b) devote their time to reading the Bible; (c) have and show *agape* love to one another in their fellowship; and (d) be sensitive and obedient to the will of God in everyday life. Spiritually mature people will demonstrate godly character wherever they go.

The leaders in the growing churches firmly support the idea that the Sunday school contributes to the building of the church when the workers in a Sunday school are informed and enthusiastic about God's work within the church. Church membership is not enough. Sunday school workers must know what the church

believes, stands for, and is trying to do. They must not only know these things, but they must practise them.

At Matsapha Evangelical Church and Divine Healing Church, the Sunday school teachers are encouraged to be in their classrooms at least ten minutes before the start of class. They are convinced that regardless of how early a worker begins his preparation and how thorough he is in it, there are always things to be done in the class or department on Sunday morning before the session begins. For example, some materials cannot be set up ahead of time, and chairs that were arranged on Wednesday may have been moved by Sunday.

By encouraging the staff to be early, the teachers will have a sense of gratification about a job well done. There is also an underlying assumption that any indifference by pupils will be eliminated as they arrive if they find a teacher waiting and ready for them. Especially for children's Sunday school, this strategy of being there early ensures that many disciplinary problems disappear simply because the teacher is there and ready.

The role of the pastor in the growth of the Sunday school and church cannot be overstated. The pastor in charge must be the leading supporter of Sunday school. As the spiritual leader of the congregation, the pastor will influence the congregation by showing his support (or lack of support) for the Sunday school ministry.

Pastors are busy people. Their schedules are full and their priorities are hard to balance. Pastors are pulled in many different directions by so many people in the church and community. They have family and personal needs which demand attention. But the pastors of these growing churches are playing an active role in their Sunday schools. One of the pastors (Fairview Free Evangelical Church) even sets aside time to teach in the Sunday school as a way of motivating the other Sunday school teachers and the pupils of the Sunday school.

If members and visitors see that the pastor believes Sunday school is important enough for him to attend, they will be more likely to consider attending Sunday school as well. Attending will also give the pastor illustrations or testimonies to share from the pulpit, when making visits, and when encouraging people needing care or growth.

5.2.8 Churches that are not growing

Three churches out of the nine recorded very low growth or no growth at all. These churches are Manzini Lutheran Church, Labotsibeni AME and Ekuphileni Church in Zion, as indicated in figures 5.6 and 5.8.

Two of the leaders of the churches that are not growing (Manzini Lutheran Church and Labotsibeni AME) mentioned that the church membership seems not to appreciate the value of Sunday school lessons. This is a serious setback that affects the productivity of the programme. Sunday school is meant to empower the members of the local church by providing a safe setting in which people can share their joys and sorrows, their concerns and perhaps questions about life and the answers they discover. If the recipients of Sunday school are not interested in the programme, the Sunday school will not achieve its intended purpose in the lives of the believers and the local church.

When Robert Raikes began the Sunday school movement, it was out of evangelistic concern. It seems as if the churches that are growing have a more aggressive evangelistic approach than these churches that are struggling to grow. If the people are not encouraged and do not participate in aggressive evangelism, this will negatively impact the growth of both the church and the Sunday school.

Finding a suitable time for conducting the Sunday school lessons has been another factor that has affected the Sunday school effectiveness. The pastor of Manzini Lutheran Church asserts that their biggest challenge is finding a suitable time that will be respected by all. In the morning people come late and then they are in a hurry to leave after the service.

The location of these three churches that have not grown has contributed to their lack of growth. Two of these churches are situated in the urban area, while the third one is in the rural area. It is expected that people in cities would be time conscious. Therefore if the church members feel that the time for the programme is not suitable for them, it will hinder their ability to attend the programme, as they might be pressed by other commitments.

Lack of infrastructure is another factor that has contributed to the lack of growth in these churches. Two of these churches have good physical structures for worship even though the buildings are old. However, the Sunday schools in these

churches do not have their own buildings where they can present their programmes. Two of the three churches have resorted to using the worship building for the Sunday school programmes. Their premises are small and they get very crowded easily. This is not a good thing since the children's programme takes place not very far away. This results in interruptions from noise coming from the other groups who are meeting close by at the same time.

These three churches do not have any curriculum in place. A Sunday school teacher at Labotsibeni AME observed that:

The church does not have a curriculum that the congregation can follow. Teachings are done randomly. There is no sequence or coherence in the way the teachings are done. This is further aggravated by the fact that our Sunday school lacks educated teachers who will not get tired along the way. The ones who have volunteered are not highly educated. This hampers even efforts to train them since the teachers are not intellectually sharp.

This researcher believes that no school teacher or college lecturer should face his students without a pre-planned lesson outline for his lesson. The above quotation shows the injustice that is being done to those who attend the Sunday school and how the efforts to empower the church educationally are being thwarted. Educating the adult learner is different from educating children. Adults desire to give their time to something that is going to be meaningful in their lives. Most of them come to church already highly qualified in their secular professions. The church should therefore not cheapen the gospel by presenting a programme that might not encourage the believer to excel in the things of God.

A system is necessary a logical sequenced system that will help the students learn the proper material in the proper order. McCulley contends that:

Students in Africa, especially in Bible school, fail to be productive in their education, mainly because even though they might have studied many subjects they fail to see the big picture. Lessons must build upon the previous lesson to give the students full knowledge and complete education. This should be no different in Christian education, a definite plan gives the best chance to impact the spiritual development of the students (McCulley: 2008:10).

Spiritual growth will be hard to achieve if the students are being taught subjects that are not relevant to them. A student must be able to see progression in

what is being learned. If the student does not understand or does not see the end result of the training, he or she will fail to implement what was taught.

The lack of facilities is a serious problem for these churches that are not growing. In a climate such as Manzini has, one cannot run an effective programme under a tree. Being exposed to harsh weather conditions can make learning almost impossible for the students and this will inevitably affect learning outcomes.

Because some of the churches in Manzini have been there for a long time, their physical location is no longer suitable. For example, Manzini Lutheran Church is situated in the city centre, but is now in a deserted place because businesses have moved to the other side of town. The people who attend the Sunday school and worship service are the loyal existing church members. Several churches like this are struggling to attract new members because of their poor location. This has affected the growth of these churches.

Labotsibeni AME is another old-established traditional church in Manzini. This church is the only one out of nine Protestant churches that did not record any growth in its church attendance. Since this is an old-established traditional church, the younger generation fails to fit in. The researcher also noticed that during the worship service this church had very few young people and children in attendance. Finally, the researcher believes that the constant changing or rotation of pastors within the space of two years, disrupts any efforts to sustain a long-term strategy in reference to Sunday school programmes in Labotsibeni AME. Even if one pastor puts in place excellent strategies for improving the Sunday school and church attendance, implementation might not happen due to the pastor being transferred elsewhere.

The following causes were identified in these churches that are not growing, bearing in mind that one cannot pinpoint a single factor as the only contributing factor for decline or lack of growth. Complex reasons might cause a lack of growth. These observations grew out of the author's study of the nine churches in Manzini. In summary, the causes identified are:

- a) Evangelistic zeal is neglected
- b) Facilities are inadequate
- c) Time constraints
- d) Poor curriculum

5.3 The health of the Sunday school

5.3.1 The adult Sunday school and church attendance

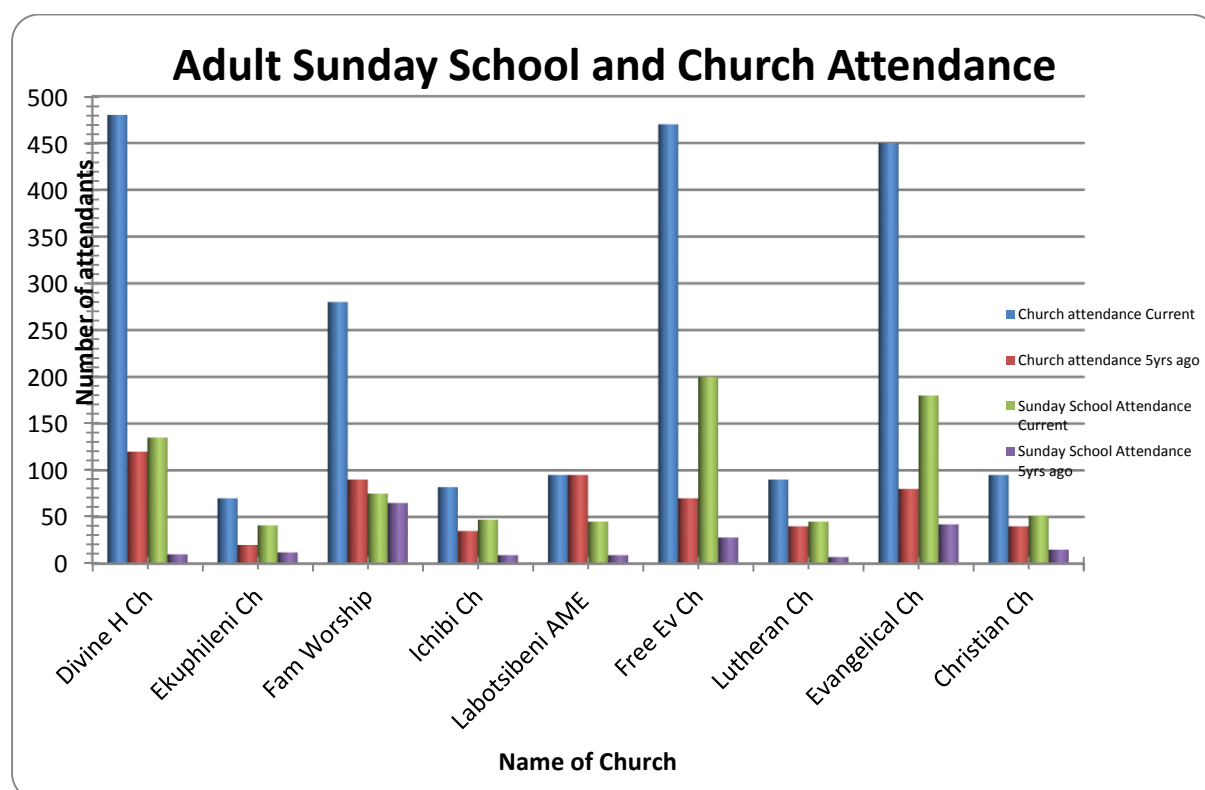


Figure 5.7

When comparing the percentage growth of the Sunday school and the church, there is correlation between growth in Sunday school and growth in the church. All the churches that had a significant growth in their Sunday school attendance also had growth in their church, with the exception of one church: Family Worship Centre.

Divine Healing Church had 125 percent Sunday school growth while the church had an increase of 300 percent. Ekuphileni Church in Zion had an increase of 250 percent in church attendance, and Fairview Free Evangelical had an increase in church attendance of 571 percent. For some churches, the percentage increase of those attending worship was almost the same as their increase in those attending Sunday school. For example, Ekuphileni Church in Zion, while their Sunday school increased by 242 percent, their church attendance increase was 250 percent. While the Matsapha Evangelical Church had an increase of 329 percent in Sunday school attendance, the church attendance increased by 463 percent, a number only significantly higher than the percentage growth of Sunday school.

As the literature review suggested, vibrancy of a Sunday school is a result of several factors. A healthy Sunday school in Africa strives to impart a personal knowledge of God, develop a vibrant Christian life, and have an understanding of God's word (Aransiola 2007:56). A vibrant Sunday school will develop consistent contact with students and foster practical ministry which will enhance fellowship (Association 1992:93). Mnisi notes that "vibrancy in Sunday school entails evangelistic intensity" (2007:46) Nduka states that a vibrant and healthy Sunday school will govern itself, support itself and propagate itself (2004:270,273).

Being vibrant is more than mere numerical growth. Kanis observes that criteria for determining vibrancy also include elements like spiritual growth, ability to disciple new believers and leadership growth (2005:24). This author believes that six out of the nine Sunday school are vibrant and healthy. These churches are: Divine Healing Church, Family Worship Centre, Ichibi Church in Zion, Fairview Free Evangelical Church, Matsapha Evangelical Church and the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion. Several of these churches had over 200 percent increase in their Sunday school and over 250 percent increase in their church attendance (Figures 5.3 and 5.4) (Divine Healing Church, Matsapha Evangelical Church, and Fairview Free Evangelical Church).

This does not mean there is no room for improvement. There is always room to do things better, especially when we are involved in God's mission. One should never think they have reached their destination, but should strive for excellence at all times.

It must be pointed out that even the three churches that are considered not so vibrant (Labotsibeni AME, Manzini Lutheran Church and Ekuphileni Church in Zion), that each of them has shown some improvement in one area or the other. For example, while Manzini Lutheran Church did not have a significant growth in adult Sunday school, when we consider children's Sunday school, we note that the church recorded the highest growth attendance out of all the nine churches. There was a percentage growth of 500.

The author does not consider these three churches to be vibrant as they have not been able to yield significant results on the equipping of their leadership. When considering their effectiveness in evangelism (something that is essential in boosting

the church attendance), these three churches have been lacking. Nevertheless, it is noted that all the leaders of all nine Protestant churches considered their churches to be vibrant. There is no one who claimed their church was not vibrant.

We have seen that those in charge of Sunday school see this ministry as having immeasurable value to the church. Those involved in it understand that it seeks to impart systematic Bible teaching, providing an opportunity for the people of God to gather together for instruction in the word of God, as well as for worship, fellowship and evangelism.

An analysis of the data collected indicates that there is an increase in church attendance when the Sunday school attendance increases. Six of the churches are growing, while three are not. Among the multiple elements that promote or discourage growth in these nine churches, the lack of facilities has been a significant factor in hampering growth and progress in some of them. While some churches have found creative ways of addressing this problem, others are struggling to address it due to limited financial resources. The data indicates that programmes like Sunday school that empower members to be evangelistic by sharing their faith and helping them grow into maturity in their faith have been highlighted as essential in fostering church growth.

5.3.2 The perceptions of the health of the local church

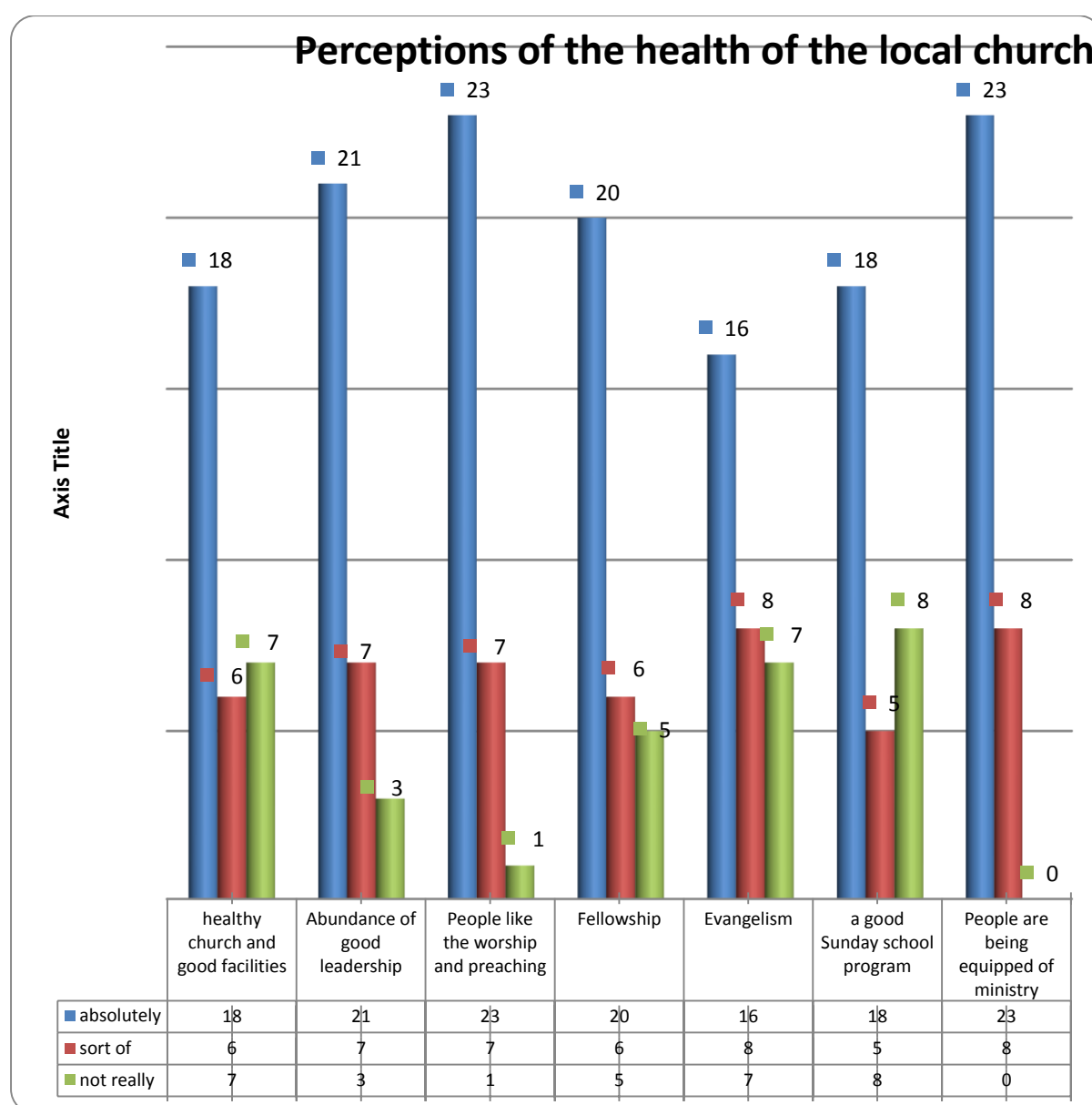


Figure 5.8

5.3.3 Healthy with good facilities and fellowship

Eighteen out of thirty-one respondents (fifty-eight percent) felt that their churches were healthy and that they had good facilities. Most of the respondents who affirmed that their churches had good facilities were from the churches in town, i.e. Matsapha Evangelical Church, Divine Healing Church and Manzini Lutheran Church.

The leadership at Divine Healing Church believes that the church is growing because it has effective leaders who are capable of doing the job well. These leaders are products of the Sunday school ministry. The church emphasises excellence as it is in the city and desires to attract influential members through their good programmes. This is evident in the various activities the church does during the worship service. The service starts and ends on time. There are no unnecessary delays. There are a lot of people around the church who help to usher people, especially visitors, directing them where to go so that they do not feel out of place.

The researcher believes that there are other factors that might have contributed to the growth of this church. Firstly, the leader is one of the most respected pastors in the country. He has been appointed by the King to hold several influential political positions in the country. Secondly, the ministry gift of healing that the pastor possesses attracts a lot of people who come in search of healing and who end up joining the church. Thirdly, the location of the church in the city and its modern structure seems to give it an advantage over other more secluded churches. People like to identify themselves with something that is beautiful. The church's beauty and the desirability of the location are evidenced by the number of bookings to use the church premises as a venue where other churches or organisations can hold their functions.

There are some exceptions, but generally the growing churches have good facilities. Their facilities were planned with multiple uses in mind. Classrooms are large to accommodate classes with multiple teachers and workers.

The reason for growth at Family Worship Centre and Ichibi Church in Zion seems to be a result of emphasizing knowing the Bible and living according to the Bible. As new members join the church they are taught the Word of God and are encouraged to practically live it out in their homes. This encourages them to be "doing the Word", a practical application of teaching which will result in bearing godly "fruits" in their lives.

The leaders of Fairview Free Evangelical Church mentioned the moving of their worship services from a rented classroom to their own church plot as being the single biggest contributing factor to their growth in attendance. The Sunday school was in operation even when the church was in the old premises. Those interviewed

believed that the Sunday school ministry ensures that those who attend are edified. This spiritual growth would then lead to them winning more souls for Christ.

At Matsapha Evangelical Church, their strong belief and financial investment in the Sunday school programme is one of the main reasons for the growth of the church. The church also has a state-of-the-art sanctuary and very spacious classrooms that are used for the Sunday school ministry during worship. These classes are also used as pre-school classes during the week.

The researcher believes that this church is also growing due to its strategic location. It is situated in the industrial zone of Manzini just towards the international airport. The opening of new industries around the church is bringing in an influx of people, some of whom are already evangelised and are members of a church fellowship elsewhere, but who are seeking for a church to fellowship in while they are in the city at work.

The data reveals that close to half of the churches (forty-one percent) struggle with adequate facilities for their Sunday school programmes. All the Sunday school programmes in the nine Protestant churches use the church buildings and the facilities of the church in order to function. Out of the nine churches that were studied, only two churches (Matsapha Evangelical Church and Divine Healing Church) did not have any problems with facilities. This represents twenty-two percent of the nine churches.

It is common in the other seven churches to find that their classroom/church building is being shared with the Sunday school children. Most of the time, as in the case of churches like Family Worship Centre, Fairview Free Evangelical Church, Ekuphileni Church in Zion, and The Christian Church in Zion, they all use one facility for worship service and for Sunday school.

Family Worship Centre struggles with poor acoustics in the building. This has made it hard for the congregants to hear what is being said, especially when a public address system is being used. Family Worship Centre seems to be well balanced, despite areas of perceived weakness. Those interviewed felt that the Sunday school was balanced as they are able to train people and get them involved in the practical application of the Word of God. The responses show that although the church does not have the best of facilities, nevertheless the leaders consider it healthy.

Divine Healing Church and Matsapha Evangelical Church have enough room for all their adult Sunday school needs, including the children. These churches have also established pre-schools in the church buildings. At Divine Healing Church they would like to add one or two classes that will act as overflow classrooms since the church attendance is increasing.

One must remember that people do not attend worship services only because of the quality of the service or programme. Some people will attend a church because they are impressed with the outward appearance of the church or if there is an impression of being successful. It is common for people to identify themselves with something that is successful.

Churches like Labotsibeni AME, Fairview Free Evangelical Church, Family Worship Centre and Ichibi Church in Zion have enough space to accommodate their congregants for worship service, but not enough room for Sunday school. Churches like Ekuphileni Church in Zion and The Christian Church in Zion struggle with facilities for both worship service and Sunday school.

The shortage of facilities is a major concern for these churches. It must be noted that even churches like Divine Healing Church and Matsapha Evangelical Church are considering extending their facilities to be able to accommodate more people in the future. The researcher believes that the churches that are not struggling with inadequate facilities are those that own their own church premises. Their churches seem to have sufficient funds to run their various ministries. In addition these churches are situated in town, meaning that the majority of congregants have resources as they are part of the working class.

In spite of the deficiencies in facilities, the leaders of four of the churches in the city (Fairview Free Evangelical Church, Ichibi Church in Zion, Manzini Lutheran Church and Family Worship Centre) are determined not to let the lack of facilities prevent them from offering the best programme they can possibly put together for their congregants. For other churches, such as Ekuphileni Church in Zion and The Christian Church in Zion, the location outside of town, coupled with a severe lack of finances, suggests that finding better solutions is a problem that is not going to be solved soon.

5.3.4. Abundance of good leadership

The abundance of good leadership seems to be common in most of the churches. This item was ranked second in the list of good things happening in the Sunday school programme after “people liking the preaching and teaching” and “people being equipped for ministry” (these two items were ranked the same by the respondents).

Twenty-one of thirty-one respondents (sixty-eight percent) felt that their church has an abundance of good leadership. Seven of the respondents (twenty-three percent) were uncertain about whether their church has an abundance of leadership while three of the respondents (ten percent) felt their church does not have an abundance of leadership.

This seems to be an answer to the observations made by Osei-Mensah who stated that there is an acute shortage of trained leadership at all levels in the church in Africa today, especially given the current phenomenal rate of growth of the Christian community on the continent (1990:8). There is a relationship between the effective functioning of an adult Sunday school programme and the availability of good leaders. When leaders are available the programme will not suffer and people will be equipped for service. This will increase the number of people who are actively serving God in their local churches.

Divine Healing Church is not lacking in leadership. People are being equipped for ministry and this has resulted in good efforts in evangelism. Family Worship Centre is also not suffering a shortage of good leaders. However, according to one of the lay leaders interviewed, Ekuphileni Church in Zion needs many more leaders.

Twenty out of the thirty-one respondents (sixty-five percent) believe fellowship is being achieved. Six respondents believe it is “sort of” happening and five respondents believe fellowship is not happening. The researcher noted that the churches that have grown beyond the two hundred mark in attendance seem to be struggling most with issues of fellowship. The pastors of Divine Healing Church and Fairview Free Evangelical Church affirmed that their churches were struggling with fostering genuine fellowship due to the large numbers of believers in membership.

5.3.5 People like the worship and preaching

Twenty-three out of thirty-one 31 respondents (seventy-four percent) like the worship and preaching they experience. Seven respondents “sort of” like worship and preaching and one respondent does “not really” like worship in his church. The researcher interprets “sort of” to mean ambivalence and “not really” to mean “no”. Worship and preaching were jointly ranked the highest (together with people being equipped for ministry) of all that is working towards the growth of the church. At Family Worship Centre fellowship and evangelism are taking place, but there is room for improvement.

It is not surprising that most people enjoy the worship and preaching in these churches. Africans love the music and are fond of expressing their emotions through music. Those who attend seem to have a realisation that praise and worship are an important aspect of the Christian walk. It is through praise and worship that Christians draw near to God. Psalm 100:4 says that we “enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise”.

5.3.6 Evangelism

In evaluating factors that indicate a healthy, vibrant church, evangelism was ranked lowest of the items by the respondents. Sixteen out of thirty-one respondents (fifty-two percent) believe that evangelism is taking place, eight respondents (twenty-six percent) believe evangelism is happening, with seven respondents (twenty-five percent) indicating that they believe evangelism is not happening.

It is noteworthy that the churches that indicated that evangelism was low in their Sunday school are the ones with a relatively low number of people attending church. These churches are Labotsibeni AME Church, Manzini Lutheran Church, the Christian Church in Zion and Ichibi Church in Zion. This is an indication that evangelism does positively affect the growth of the church.

For those churches that are involved in evangelism, new people are being brought into the church. Some like Divine Healing Church and Fairview Free Evangelical Church are bringing in so many people that they are struggling to maintain genuine fellowship within the larger group of members who attend.

These Sunday school groups that are not evangelistic are very much inward-focused. The researcher believes that part of this problem is linked to the issue of vision and purpose of the Sunday school ministry. The work of the Sunday school is to help the local church produce its own workers who through their efforts will then cause the work of the church to grow (Mnisi 2007:38). Every leader must be aware of the vision and purpose of the Sunday school and should assess all activities performed in the church to ensure that they align and support that vision and the purposes that flow from it.

5.3.7 A good Sunday school programme

Eighteen of the thirty-one respondents (fifty-eight percent) felt their Sunday school was absolutely good. Five of the thirty-one respondents (sixteen percent) felt the Sunday school programme was good, while eight of the thirty-one respondents (twenty-six percent) felt the Sunday school programme was not good. The researcher noted that most of the Sunday school teachers felt there is always room to improve the programme, although it was further noted that those who attend Sunday school seem not to be aware of a need to improve the programme. Among the others, though, even when the Sunday school was doing well (i.e. Divine Healing Church, Fairview Free Evangelical Church, Manzini Lutheran Church and Matsapha Evangelical Church) there was a sense that there always is a need to improve their programme, either by upgrading facilities or by offering more training for their teachers.

5.3.8 People are being equipped for ministry

In theory, the Sunday school programme is expected to include in its programme an element of equipping its members for ministry. Several people who were interviewed acknowledged that practical equipping for ministry seems to be lacking. Twenty-three respondents (seventy-four percent) believe people are being equipped for ministry. Eight respondents (twenty-six percent) say equipping is happening. Looking at the data reveals that most of the churches are indeed equipping their people for ministry.

At Divine Healing Church their congregants are being equipped and they are involved in evangelism. At the Ekuphileni Church in Zion, even though the Sunday school is only for women, all of them are involved practically in ministry. An HIV/AIDS support group providing home-based care has been initiated by the members of the church through the Sunday school programme.

5.3.9 Well-organised with classes for all ages.

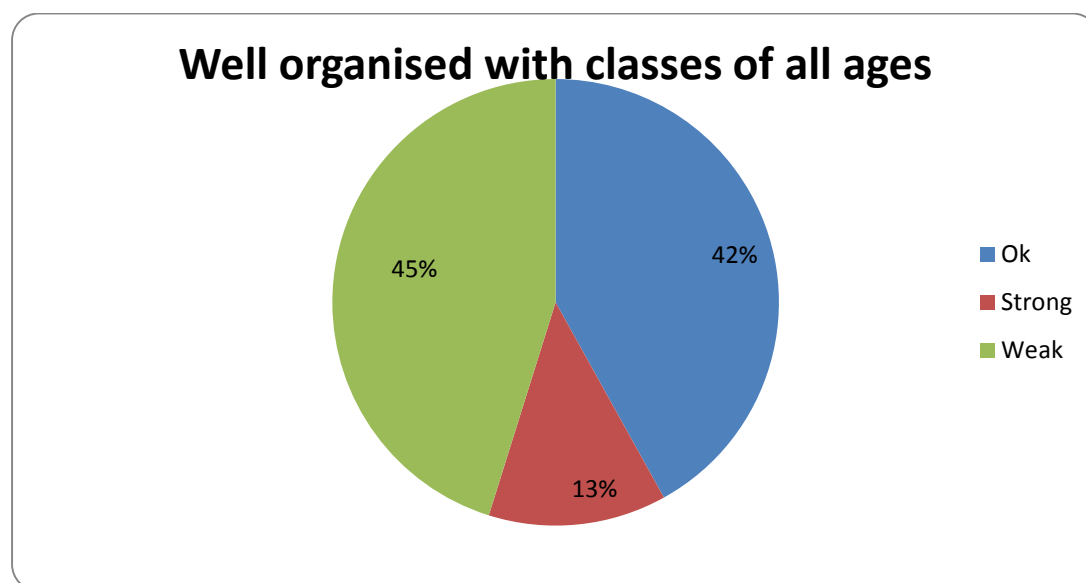


Figure 5.9

During the study it transpired that some of the Sunday schools are grouped according to gender, while some are grouped according to interest in the subjects being offered at that time. None of the churches grouped their adult classes by special needs or whether the students were married or single. Most of the churches pointed out that they struggle with teacher training and development. A vibrant and healthy Sunday school enhances transformational learning in the lives of the students and the teacher. In churches that are not vibrant it seems that teachers do teach, but without awareness of the mental and spiritual development of their students, especially as adult learners. When a teacher knows the mental development of his students, it helps determine the appropriate methods to use.

Mnisi observes that a vibrant and healthy Sunday school has an evangelistic intensity. Sunday school classes do not become evangelistic by accident (Mnisi

2007:87). Most of the Sunday schools in the research that was done are struggling with the evangelistic element. The practical result is that their Sunday schools are not able to reach out to the lost. The teachings that are being received seem to benefit only the students. Many of the teachers seem not to know of the huge responsibility they carry of caring for their students and seeking to see their students transformed and applying the lessons learned in their lives outside the classroom.

Aransiola asserts that a healthy Sunday school in Africa strives to impart a personal knowledge of God, develop a vibrant Christian life and an understanding of God's word (2007:41). Sunday school should instil an appreciation for one's Christian heritage, foster a loyalty to the church, stress the responsibility of members to serve the community and encourage the Christians to view themselves as global Christians.

The Sunday schools under study have fallen short of this ideal. As stated earlier concerning the inward focusing of the church, there is still need to turn the attention of the students of Sunday school to the dire needs of their communities. There is still the requirement for Sunday school to transform the minds of their students to be aware of the global responsibilities to African Christians and the wider community.

Like the church itself, Nduka suggests that an effective and vibrant Sunday school should be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating (2004:273). Only three of the nine churches could be seen as self-supporting, meaning they are not dependent on foreign support in order to meet their operational expenses. While the other six churches are not directly receiving financial support from foreigners, the researcher observed that they are struggling financially. This compromises their efforts to present an attractive and effective Sunday school programme. However, it would be true that all nine Sunday schools are self-governing. They are being run by men and women who are raised from within the church. The churches are growing spiritually and in the number of people who attend.

5.3.10 A well-designed curriculum

A challenging area for all of the nine Protestant churches is the designing and implementation of a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the churches. Some of the churches use a foreign curriculum, while others combine a foreign curriculum with their own. Only one church does not have a curriculum.

5.3.10.1 A well-designed curriculum

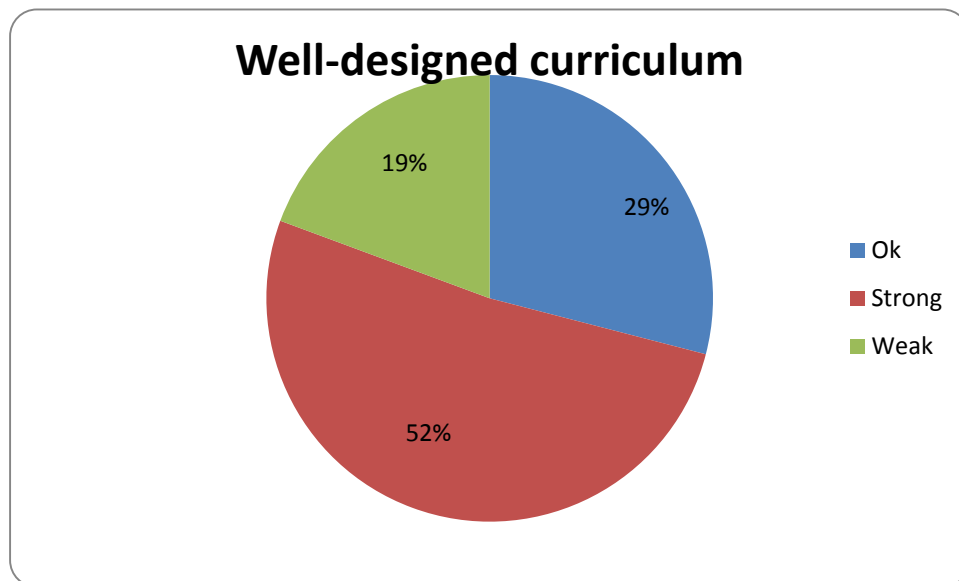


Figure 5.10

The researcher noted a concern that when an imported curriculum is used it might fall short of addressing specific needs that are relevant to the church context since it was designed from and for another context. It is therefore commendable that the pastor of Divine Healing Church has employed elders who are skilled in areas of education and who can adjust the curriculum to ensure that it is tailored for their local church. It should be acknowledged that inasmuch as many pastors have been trained only in theology, they might be lacking in their knowledge of the theory and practice of education. Hence, there is a need to use the expertise of people who are knowledgeable in educational matters.

One out of nine churches (eleven percent) does not have a curriculum for its Sunday school programme. The churches that are growing use a curriculum that is locally designed or they utilise one that is well-designed by another denomination and then adapt it to their needs. Ichibi Church in Zion and Manzini Lutheran Church

are the only churches that do not have any specific curriculum. Just above half (fifty-two percent) of the respondents felt that their curriculum was well written. Twenty-nine percent indicated that it was acceptable and nineteen percent said it was weak.

Ekuphileni Church in Zion youth department has a well-written curriculum for their Sunday school. The material they are using was developed by an American missionary who has been serving in Swaziland for over thirty years. The youth leadership felt that their curriculum was good as it is well organised in terms of sequence and age groups. The youth leader decides which topic will be taught. It is unfortunate, however, that the adult Sunday school in this church has overlooked the importance of a good curriculum.

Ichibi Church in Zion only uses the Bible in the Sunday school programmes. Labotsibeni AME Church uses a curriculum that is designed by their international office in America. This has not helped the church as the teachers felt that most of the lessons in the curriculum were not helpful to the African student.

The curriculum at Divine Healing Church was viewed as weak and not well designed. Church leaders interviewed at Ekuphileni Church in Zion expressed their sentiments that the teachers did not have relevant teaching material and this affects those who are coming to learn in the Sunday school. Lessons to be taught to the group (only women) are determined by their perceived needs according to the view of their leader.

The churches that are growing have a well-organised curriculum for their Sunday school. Churches like Divine Healing Church use a curriculum that is solicited from other churches that have Christian education departments and have been designing Sunday school curricula for years. The senior pastor determines what will be taught. He utilises the skills of qualified church leaders.

The researcher strongly believes that the Bible must remain the main textbook of the Sunday school. However, the aid of other books must be sought to enhance the contents of the lessons given. There are some topics that are not specifically dealt with in the Bible that might need to be taught in a Sunday school i.e. birth control, smoking, pornography, dating and HIV-AIDS. These topics and many more are affecting the life of the 21st century Christian. The Sunday school should offer a forum in which such issues can be addressed.

5.3.11 Other issues affecting the health of adult Sunday schools

Lack of adequate training of teachers (methodologies of teaching) is affecting all of the nine Protestant churches under study. The problem of lack of adequate training is a serious issue and addressing it certainly will not come from temporary solutions. There is a need to explore solutions from within the church context. A suitable training programme that will be continuous must be found and developed. This training must be relevant, holistic, and consider its cultural effects on the students. Without proper training of the staff the Sunday school efforts of the nine churches will be greatly compromised. Effectiveness of service delivery is inevitable tied to adequate preparation of staff.

Those most severely affected are the three Zionist churches: The Christian Apostolic Church in Zion, Ichibi Church in Zion and Ekuphileni Church in Zion. The author assumes that perhaps this is due to the fact that many Zionist churches are situated in the rural areas and most adherents are not very educated. Until recently, education has been seen as a threat that seeks to devalue the importance of Swazi culture and the Zionist tradition.

It seems as if there is lack of understanding of the principles of how adult students learn. The teachers in these nine Protestant churches have not been trained specifically to teach in ways that suit adult learning. It seems as if most of the training was based on principles of teaching in general without an emphasis on how the adult student learns. None of the nine churches indicated that they adapt their presentations to adult learners.

Most of the churches do not seem to have training for teachers, whether short term or long term. The growth of the Sunday school is directly linked to the training of staff. Teachers must continuously update their knowledge and methods of teaching. There is a need for the churches whose teachers are affected by lack of training, especially in the rural areas, to see what measures can be put in place to combat this problem. The reality is that the Sunday school will not grow if the teachers are not adequately prepared to do their work.

The previous section has shown that growth in Sunday school attendance has a positive impact in church attendance. From the interviews carried out, respondents

considered that their Sunday schools were healthy and successful in adding new members to their churches.

The researcher believes that in general the Sunday schools are healthy since they are able to operate efficiently and fulfil their objectives. However, some hindrances to vibrancy and some instances of apparent failure were mentioned by those involved in the Sunday schools.

Many of these are being addressed or at least there are inquiries happening to ensure that lasting solutions can be found to make the Sunday school more effective. The researcher believes that the Sunday school does not need to be perfect to be classified as healthy. But one must consider its alignment with the vision of the local church and then assess whether or not it is delivering according to its objectives. If these areas are being addressed, the researcher believes a Sunday school can be classified as healthy.

The philosophy of education that seems to be prevalent in the churches being studied is that Christian education must be for all people from children to adults. There are several schools of educational philosophy, as pointed out in chapter three. The Christian must adopt an educational philosophy that does not take away the existence of God and glorify human efforts. It is essential that one adopt a philosophy of education that is consistent with Christian principles because a person's philosophy of education will inevitably affect the way one approaches and what one believes about education. The process of Christian education involves God working through committed teachers, the use of biblical methods and teaching materials that are faithful to Scripture and that will assist in equipping disciples with a biblical viewpoint and the character and skills necessary to fulfil God's calling and to live to his glory.

In chapter three, several teaching models were discussed which included the direct instructional model, the concept attainment model, the concept development model, the classroom discussion model and the theological training as formation-in-wisdom model--to mention a few. It seems as if most of the teachers in the nine Sunday schools prefer to use the classroom discussion model, in which the students are encouraged to discuss issues. Probably this is so because the learners are adults and learn better when they are fully engaged in the process of learning. This

is unlike the teaching of young students where most teachers would employ the lecturing model. The classroom discussion model helps the teacher direct the process of classroom interaction for effective classroom discussion.

It seems as if none of the nine churches have a strategy in place for addressing issues of worldview. Worldview is crucial in the transformation of the total person. It is important to ensure that the change of beliefs that the newly-converted student embraces are manifested in the way he or she views the world and the way that he or she behaves. On the other hand, there seems to be a greater awareness in the Sunday schools of issues of methodologies of adult learning. Those involved in the teaching of Sunday schools in the nine churches are employing different methods of teaching to ensure that they deliver what the adult learner expects. Churches like Family Worship Centre and Matsapha Evangelical Church have even employed the services of a person qualified in education to enhance the quality of the service rendered to the adult Sunday school learner.

This philosophy of education is different from secular philosophies of education. Education in the Sunday schools does not leave the God of the scriptures out; it recognises God's purpose for man and the universe, the absolute nature of God's physical and moral laws, and God's authority as the only legitimate basis for man's authority.

5.4 The Challenges of Sunday school

5.4.1 The creativity of teachers in their use of methodology

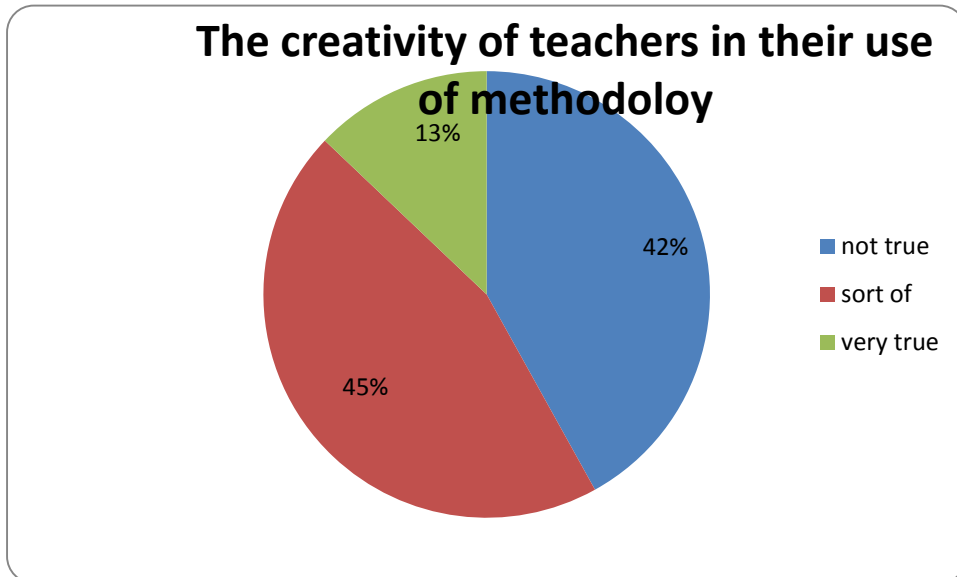


Figure 5.11

The study shows that forty-five percent of the teachers are creative in their methodology. Forty-two percent of the teachers lack creative skills in teaching as they are not well trained. Because most of the teachers are not trained in how to run the Sunday school, the methodologies employed in teaching do not yield the best results.

5.4.2 Strong personality clashes in the classes

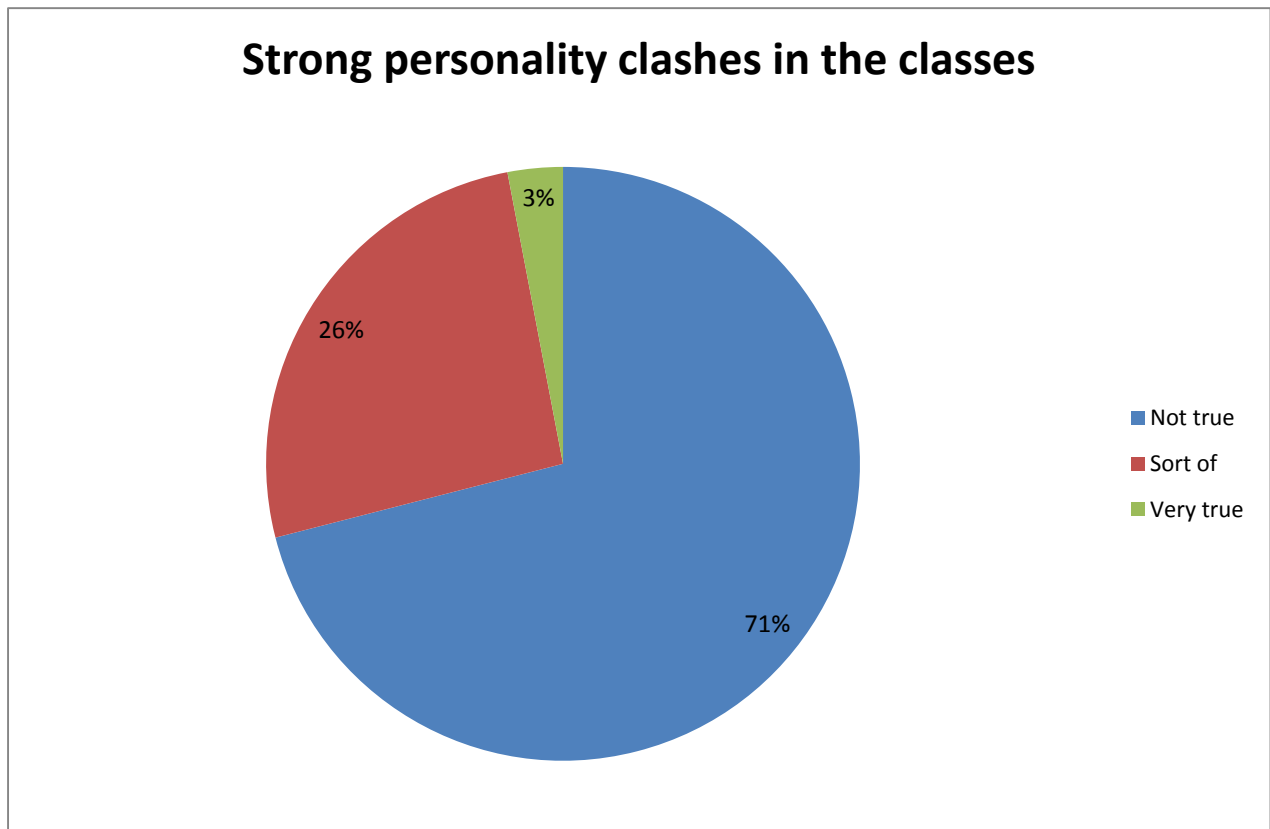


Figure 5.12

It is noted that seventy-one percent of the Sunday schools were not experiencing personality clashes in the programme. There seems to be a strong sense of fellowship amongst those who attend. Fellowship is important if the Sunday school members are to work together. Strong personality clashes can hinder growth while good relationships can encourage working together. Members of the Sunday school at Ekuphileni Church in Zion have established a welfare group, doing home visitation and establishing home-based care as a result of being able to work together. All these activities cannot thrive if there are strong personality clashes in the Sunday school.

5.4.3 The spiritual battles going on

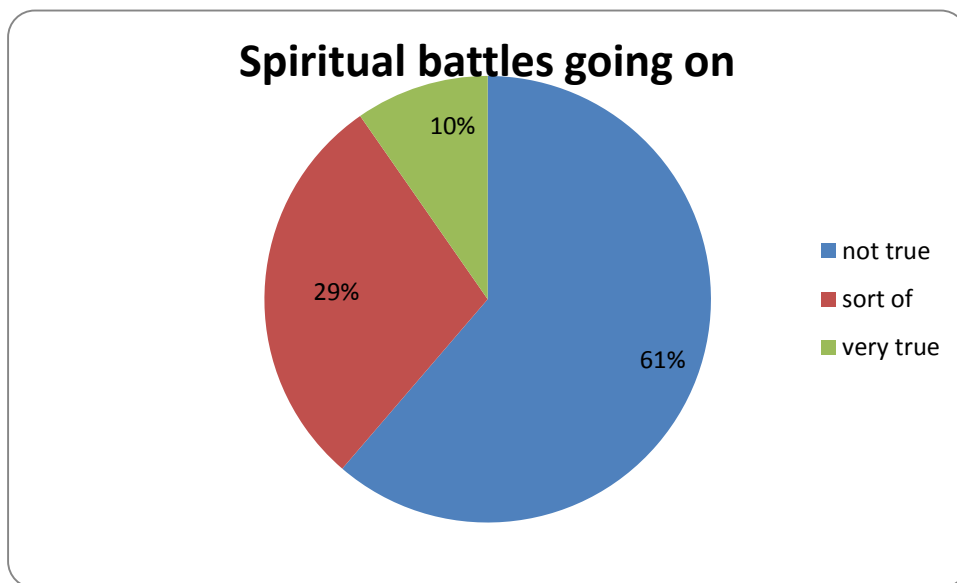


Figure 5.13

Sixty-one percent of the respondents felt there are no spiritual battles going on in the Sunday school, twenty-nine percent responded that they have spiritual battles. Ten percent felt that there are spiritual battles going on in their Sunday school. The absence of spiritual battles in Sunday school programmes is a good thing, since vitality and growth will increase. The Sunday schools that are growing are producing believers who are maturing in the faith as they study the Bible, pray and maintain regular fellowship.

5.4.4 There is little discussion as the teacher only lectures

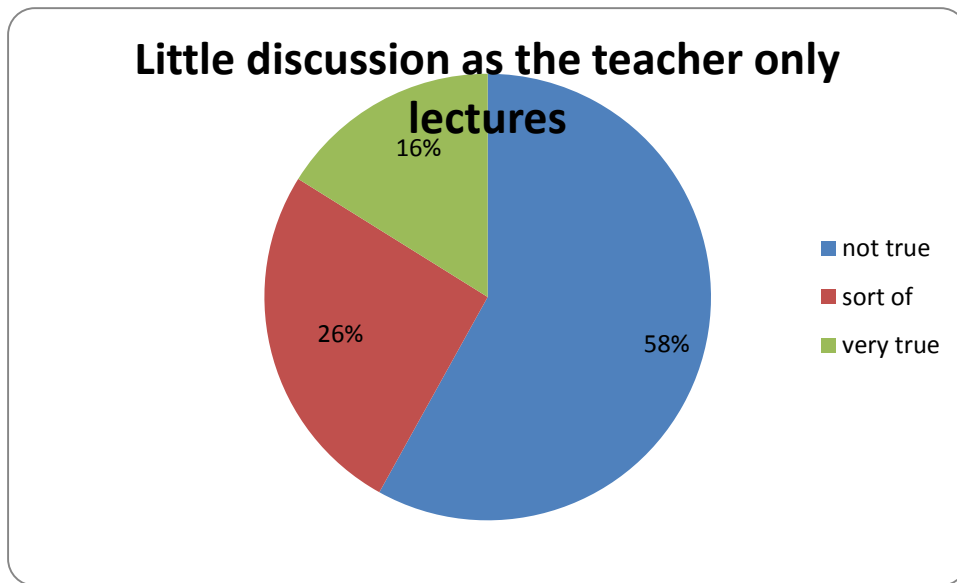


Figure 5.14

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents disagreed that their teachers only use the lecturing method. Sixteen percent affirmed that their teachers use more lecturing and less discussion while twenty-six percent indicated there is little discussion as the teacher only lecturers. This indicates that most of the teachers realise that adults desire to be involved in the way they are being taught. Lecturing is one of the mostly widely-used methods of teaching. The fact that over half the teachers are combining the lecture method with other ways of teaching shows progress in their use of methodologies.

As one educationist pointed out, "We tend to not only teach in the way that we were taught, but to teach exactly what it was that we were taught" (Hardy: 2006:150). The lecture method does not enhance retention of information, yet it is widely used. Therefore there is great need for teachers to employ a variety of teaching methods to increase the retention level of the students. It is encouraging that there is a shift towards a combined methodology of teaching that might yield better results.

Currie observes that in communicating the Christian message effectively one must understand the basic process of communication in general. There must be an understanding that Christian communications are similar to secular communications

in process, but that there are differences in the message and purpose of secular communication. The message of Christian communication is distinctive because its focal point is Jesus Christ (Currie 1972:15).

Ekuphileni Church in Zion is the only church that offers Sunday school for women and not for men. The researcher believes that the apparent lack of significant progress in this church is connected to the lack of active participation of the men. If men are considered leaders in their homes, then they should be involved in the programmes and in the leadership of the church. This author feels the church should involve the men in Sunday school.

Matsapha Evangelical Church has done a better job when compared to Labotsibeni AME Church in their Sunday school organisation, especially in reference to children. The leadership of Matsapha Evangelical Church have used the Sunday school to reach out to the children in the community with the gospel. They have used their pre-school to promote the gospel.

While Labotsibeni AME Church operates a fully-fledged school (primary level to high school level) the church has not been intentional in its programmes to reach out to the students who come to their school. Labotsibeni AME Church focuses on their Christian school, but has neglected their Christian Sunday school.

Some of those interviewed felt that this is also caused by the lack of a constant vision in the church since the pastors are rotated at least once every two years. The school is viewed as a viable source of income that sustains the church. Churches which have well-organised Sunday schools, such as Divine Healing Church, seem to be able to have progress. In such churches, there will be staff members available to ensure that all scheduled classes are running smoothly.

The location of the church also seems to affect the growth of the Sunday school and the church. Most of the churches that are out of town or situated in deserted places have difficulty in growing. An example of this is the Manzini Lutheran Church which is situated in the city, but in an a little-used section. The church has good facilities and people like the worship and preaching there. However, even though it is in the middle of the city, this author felt that the church is situated in an outlying place. This part of the city is no longer as busy or populated as it was ten years ago. Businesses have moved to the other side of town, which has left the

church in a secluded place. In spite of this, there are still some faithful members who gather during the worship service, but the church has not grown.

Those churches which are growing receive strong support from their pastor for their Sunday schools. The pastors in the growing churches believe that the Sunday school is critical to the outreach, assimilation of new members, spiritual growth and ministry in their churches. The pastor may or may not be directly involved in the administration of the Sunday school, but he is the key communicator of the value and importance of the Sunday school in his church.

These growing churches have someone who takes responsibility for the leadership of the Sunday school ministry. The pastor is involved in providing direct leadership or key support for the person assigned this responsibility. His support is viewed as critical to the success of the Sunday school in these growing churches.

According to the author's observations, the churches that are growing are not doing just one single thing well. There seem to be several factors, including successful Sunday schools, that are contributing to their growth. None of the factors stands alone; even their Sunday schools are growing because they are doing many things well.

As indicated in the literature review, one must keep in mind that the Sunday school and the church are a spiritual entity. The Sunday school and the church are first and foremost a work of God. The church is His body. Growth cannot be subscribed simply to people doing the right things well. A word of caution must also be given that we should not conclude that simply because there is growth that a church is not struggling in one or more other areas. From the interviews, people humbly admitted that they are struggling with the application or implementation of their ministries in one area or the other. The churches in this research are not perfect churches, but it was clear that they are all passionate about reaching their communities and about teaching the Scriptures.

Those churches that are growing have an unshaken commitment to the Scriptures as the main textbook in their Sunday school. Even though other books might be used, Scripture is viewed as the most important book as it has the ability to transform a person.

The churches that are not growing seem to be deficient in Sunday school staffing and training. The workers are not able to perform as expected. The absence of a visionary pastor who can oversee both the church and the Sunday school are elements that were clearly missing in Labotsibeni AME Church.

Due to reasons of church policy, the pastor of this church will be transferred every two years to a different church. This means that he does not have enough time to be fully aware of and involved in the various ministries of the church. This hinders the pastor's chances of being effective in his work. If a pastor lacks the knowledge of what is being taught in the Sunday school and how it is organised and administered, it is unlikely that he will be able to support it effectively.

Just as there are several factors that contribute to the growth of the Sunday schools and the churches being-researched there are also several factors that contribute to the lack of growth in some of the churches being investigated. These include Labotsibeni AME Church which has had no growth at all; Manzini Lutheran Church with a growth rate in church attendance of 125 percent; and the Christian Church in Zion, which experienced a 138 percent growth in church attendance during the last five years.

The researcher observed that in two of the three churches that recorded the least growth there has been a sense of self-complacency. Possibly the past achievements of the Sunday school have made them feel satisfied, or perhaps the lack of growth caused them to stop attempting to work harder. One of the pastors in these churches commented that he has not actually seen any benefits coming out of the Sunday school ministry.

Lack of creativity also affects these churches that are not growing. The Sunday school ministry seems to be struggling in their vision for progress. This has resulted in the Sunday school not being marketable to the congregants. Any organisation that has people with vision and with creative minds is likely to grow and thrive.

5.4.5 Material studied is largely non-biblical

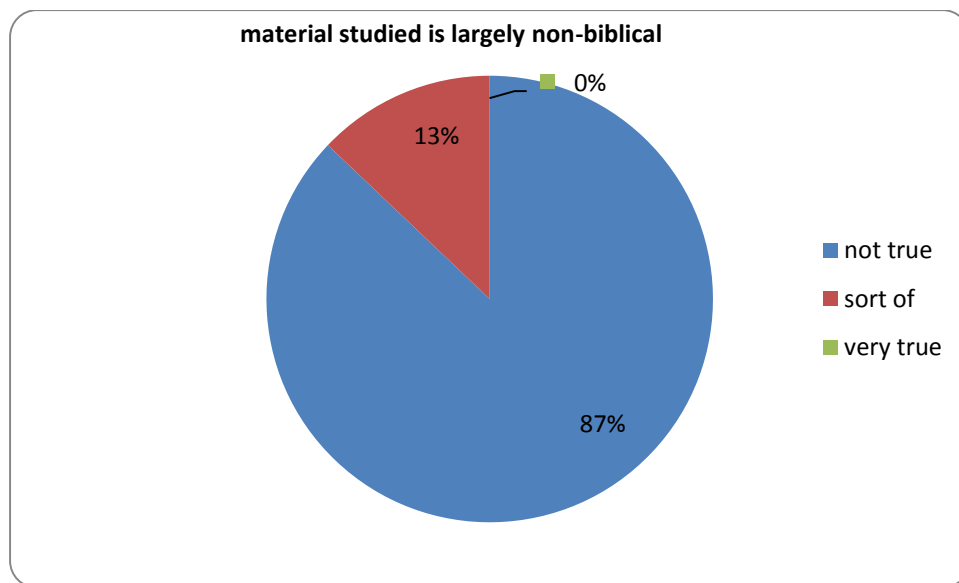


Figure 5.15

The study shows that eighty-seven percent of the respondents believe that they study more of the Bible than other material. No one responded that they study other material things at the expense of the Bible. This is very important, especially in our days where the African Church is being challenged by syncretism. The church must maintain its emphasis on the Bible.

5.5 Summary of the analysis

It is clear from the research that the adult Sunday school in this part of Africa is faced with many challenges. The development of an effective curriculum that will address the needs of the African adult learner was a major challenge mentioned during the interviews. Some Sunday schools have found creative ways of combating this problem. Even busy pastors try to support the Sunday school ministry, either by attending a class or even by teaching a class. Spiritual challenges and spiritual battles do not seem to be such a big problem. Only ten percent responded in the affirmative to the question about spiritual battles in Sunday school, while sixty-one percent responded that this was not an issue for them.

The leaders in a healthy Sunday school need to be familiar with the general organisation and operation of their Sunday school. They need to know how to operate the Sunday school according to the purposes and objectives of a Sunday

school. The Sunday schools in vibrant and healthy churches are not only viewed as a teaching ministry, but as complementing other departments in the church. Teaching is not done as an end to itself, but as a contribution to the transformation of those being taught, along with a way to equip them so that they will be able to help others.

The Sunday school has been used to lay the foundation of Christianity and to teach topics that are not frequently addressed from the pulpit. For example, the pastor at Family Worship Centre highlighted that the Sunday school is utilised to teach topics such as the church's statement of faith, training in spiritual maturity, discipleship training and initiating the believers to a life of evangelism.

The Sunday school has also been used to help teach those who attend some basic life skills that are relevant to the needs of the church members. This is particularly true of Ekuphileni Church in Zion where the Sunday school has addressed issues of HIV/AIDS in the church. The pastor mentioned that the Sunday school groups have worked together to enhance the spiritual lives of the believers. Home-based care has been initiated and, HIV/AIDS courses have been introduced in the church.

The Sunday school has been used to equip the members to identify and use their spiritual and natural gifts. At Ichibi Church in Zion, the Sunday school programme grounds the believers in the Bible and equips them to serve God and the body of Christ through various gifts. This makes them true ambassadors of Christ in this world. As people use their gifts they are able to identify with the greater body of Christ, as well as to meet the needs of those being served.

Some have dogmatically regarded Sunday school as being only for children. In one of the churches, studied the leadership had to change the name "Sunday school" because most members of the church assumed that the adult Sunday school was meant for children only and not for adults. Others have promoted other ministries at the expense of Sunday school. They have based their ministries on music, missionary outreach, prayer-cell ministries and other church programmes, but have found little time for the study of the word of God. This approach results in a church having an unbalanced ministry.

During the interviews of the leaders of the nine Protestant churches, all of the leaders stated that their churches needed their people to be involved in and committed to ministry. Without this, the church struggles to reach the community, and to care for its members. It becomes hard to encourage their spiritual development and provide dynamic corporate worship for them. If members of the church do not serve, the body cannot function properly. This study has revealed that all the vibrant churches had their members practically involved in the evangelising of their communities.

Robinson suggests that Sunday school is important as it is grounded in biblical principles. The training of its members and the utilisation of their manpower is instrumental to its success (Robinson 2010:142). Sunday school remains an important tool in facilitating effective educational programmes in the church.

The research revealed that the Bible has been made the central textbook in teaching in all the churches (figure 5.15). According to Gangel, "Education that is Christian must totally absorb Christ as revealed in the Scriptures" (1981:3). This means there is the realisation that Christ is the only hope for lost humankind. That is why a teacher who leads a Sunday school class must have vision of lost souls, for the impact of this on his thinking will enhance his teaching.

As a teaching tool in the hands of a skilled teacher, Sunday school has the value of being able to address important topics that might not be dealt with from the pulpit. The pastor at Family Worship Centre is convinced that Sunday school is one of the best tools that can help a pastor to tackle subjects in a systematic way to enhance the life of the believer. The pastor believes that creative teaching and programmes are the solution to the many challenges believers face in current times. The Sunday school seems to have helped Family Worship Centre to achieve its objectives. It is the duty of the pastor and the Sunday school workers to constantly strive to find creative ways in which to provide Christian families with adequate biblical teaching on how to live for Christ. Such teaching should include the role of the family in encouraging moral conduct and in assisting adults and children to grow in their health.

The teacher is expected to prepare his lessons prayerfully and to be punctual in his attendance the Sunday school. Such an approach would help improve the

Sunday school, for example, at the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion where there were concerns that teachers are not punctual and that their standard of teaching needs to be improved.

It was noted earlier that on that biblical training must take into consideration issues of culture and the African worldview. The researcher believes that those in charge of the Sunday school programme are not entirely aware of the impact that culture has on their quest to provide sound biblical training to their students. The issues of cultural impact did not come up in the interviews. This may mean that the nine churches are not training their students properly. The researcher observed that there is a lack of clear direction on how to address the issues of culture and worldview.

If worldview is the framework or model that describes who we are, where we are going, what is good and what is evil, how we should act, what is true, and what is false (Niemeyer 2004:155), then Sunday school must be intentional in ensuring that the transformation it seeks to bring to the lives of the students impacts the students worldview or else their training might be compromised.

All of the nine Sunday schools examined in this research are involving their students in hands-on training. The students are expected to share their faith, and to visit others for purposes of evangelism or of deepening fellowship. The research has shown that this is happening with different levels of success. Some Sunday schools have been more successful than others in implementing hands-on training. This is good since it has been observed that for Africans, knowledge acquisition is primarily by observation and experience (Dei 2002:72).

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

Through this study the author sought to have an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of church growth in Swaziland, especially in Manzini. The author sought to understand the nature and the key elements of a successfully-run Sunday school programme and how this can influence the growth of the church.

In this research, the author set out to search for principles and causes that help to accelerate the growth of the church, specifically while looking at the health of the Sunday school in the nine demarcated Protestant churches in the city of Manzini and their impact on the churches to which they belong.

The research was guided by two objectives. The primary objective was to explore the correlation that exists between effective Sunday school programmes and the growth of the church. The research, interviews and field observation all show that churches that are growing numerically and spiritually exhibit an emphasis on effective discipleship programmes for adults in their Sunday schools.

The secondary objective was to explore the theoretical and practical principles relative to the efficient functioning of Sunday school. It was anticipated that in the course of the research, discoveries would be made that would enable churches to become more vibrant and that would help them grow. Suggestions flowing from these discoveries are presented later in the following chapter entitled “Recommendations”.

In this study, an effective Sunday school programme has been described as a programme that brings systematic teaching to the attendees and assists them to mature in their faith in Christ. The result of this process should produce lasting fruits for God, such as being able to share one’s faith with others, being able to invite someone to church or Sunday school, and having an interest in bringing them to a saving knowledge of Christ.

This study has employed evaluative methods in interpreting data that was obtained through field research. The data was collected by means of surveys and through personal interviews and questionnaires. Special attention was paid to both the theory and practice of church growth and of the Sunday school movement. Consideration was given to the African context – both in general and in a specific African city (Manzini).

In this research the author examined the evidence. The researcher is of the opinion that a healthy and vibrant Sunday school does indeed contribute to the growth of the church. The research question can thus be answered positively, bearing in mind that one must be careful in not suggesting that it is the only reason for growth of the church. An effective Sunday school is only one of the reasons for the growth of these nine churches.

Even for those who are from churches that are not growing, they do not dispute that they value Sunday school as a ministry that might help in building up the believers. The general feeling was that they are not able to have an effective programme due to factors that impede their efforts at being effective. Problems like poor financial resources, lack of qualified teachers, and lack of facilities were some of the problems mentioned.

The nine representative Protestant churches from Manzini which have been examined in this research have been growing numerically. Those who were interviewed from these nine churches gave a variety of reasons as to why their churches are growing. These reasons can be summed up as follows:

1. A focus on internal growth and fellowship

The Sunday school ministry has enhanced fellowship amongst those who attend that makes it easy for people to feel like the church is their new home. This fellowship seems to increase the loyalty of the followers to the institution. Those who attend Sunday school have developed strong bonds with other members.

2. Evangelistic thrust of the Sunday school

Some felt that focusing in the Sunday school on being the evangelistic arm of the church has encouraged people to be loyal to the Great Commission. They feel that the church can never perform effectively in the area of members' spirituality without Sunday school, because the Sunday school is not only the outreach arm of the church, but also the teaching arm of the church.

3. Good leadership

Some felt that their churches are healthy and growing because their leaders are visionaries and that they are able to motivate the followers to willingly follow Christ's call to preach the gospel.

4. Excellent church programmes

Some felt that their churches are growing because the church has a variety of programmes that target different age groups and that offer a social support system to everyone who cares to attend. They believe that if the needs of the prospective members and current members are identified and the ministries are created to address these needs, people will be taken care of, not only spiritually, but also in other areas of life. This results in the church ministering to the “total” person and not just the spiritual aspect.

5. The favour of God and hard work

This was one of the most mentioned reasons why the churches are growing. There is an acknowledgement amongst some that while efforts have been made to enhance the growth of the church, the hand of the Lord has been at work in bringing the increase.

According to this author’s analysis, all the above reasons have indeed contributed to the growth of churches that are vibrant. However, the analysis also shows that Sunday school ministry has had a significant impact on the growth of these churches. This is particularly evident when the Sunday school focused on evangelism and teaching. As participants of the Sunday school are encouraged to reach out to the lost, those who are brought in are taught the word of God, which grounds them in their newly- found faith.

Church growth cannot be tied to only one factor. There are many elements at play that seem to produce growth. As indicated in the literature review, there is an element that people play in bringing about growth, but there also is the element of our sovereign God.

No matter how attractive our church programmes might be, because they are devised by humans, they are unable in themselves to transform men and women spiritually. Only God can transform a person. Yet, as clearly expressed in Romans 10:10-17, we see that God has deliberately chosen to partner with us in bringing in the lost and in training those who have been saved.

The interviews and the researcher’s visits to the nine churches revealed that there is a general consensus that the Sunday school ministry is integral to the growth of the church. It contributes to the evangelistic outlook of the members of the church

and is instrumental in bringing the believers into maturity of the faith. Those interviewed from churches that are healthy and growing have a higher perception of the value of the Sunday school than those from churches that are not growing.

The researcher believes that to the extent that vibrant adult fellowship is fostered in adult Sunday schools, these Sunday schools will play a major role in the growth of the church. Both spontaneous and intentional fellowship are important in the assimilation of prospective members into the life of the church. The ultimate goal is to help people feel wanted, needed, and that they belong. When spiritually healthy adults fellowship by meeting together in a Sunday school, and then begin to focus on evangelism, the result will be growth in the church. The author believes that it is the members of Sunday school who are most likely to catch the vision to enthusiastically reach out to other people.

In summary, each of the Protestant churches that was analysed in this research is working towards developing healthy adult Sunday schools. All of the churches examined are taking their adult Sunday school programmes seriously. Despite the many barriers that they face in implementing an effective Sunday school, it became clear that each church was indeed striving to set up an attractive programme.

This research explored the hypothesis that the presence of a vibrant Bible-based and carefully planned Sunday school programme will positively influence the growth of the church. This dissertation has shown that the hypothesis was supported.

6.1. Conclusion from data

The data has revealed that adult Sunday school in Manzini, especially amongst the Protestant churches researched, is thriving but that there are problems. Some churches have had an adult training programme running since the inception of their churches while others have adopted their Sunday schools along the way. For all of those churches that have experienced growth, there is a correlation with having a vibrant Sunday school programme for adults.

The data revealed that most of the leadership of these churches had an understanding that the Sunday school is the outreach arm of the church. Evidence

has been found that when the Sunday school is utilised as an evangelistic tool of the church, people are brought into the kingdom and many of them join the local church.

Some of the churches examined have strengthened the educational aspect of their Sunday schools. After people are brought to the church, the Sunday school has been used to offer them systematic biblical teaching. This has deepened believers in their faith. Fellowship and reaching out to communities have also been a clear benefit of having a vibrant Sunday school programme. In these churches, the establishment of Sunday school has provided an opportunity for people to enjoy small group fellowship with others who share their concerns and values.

It has been seen through the research in this dissertation how a Sunday school can empower the church to minister to the social needs of the community. This is an effective way of presenting a holistic gospel to the community. A good example of this was Ekuphileni Church in Zion where an HIV/AIDS support group was established and where life skills are being taught to church members. One is conscious of how the HIV/AIDS pandemic has ravaged many African communities. It is encouraging to observe how a church is taking positive strides towards addressing this problem.

The Sunday school programme, like any other programme in church, has not escaped difficulties. The churches in Manzini have a serious lack of facilities. This is closely followed by lack of financial resources, inadequate curricula and untrained staff. However, it is encouraging that these nine churches are not accepting defeat. Each church through its leadership and congregants is trying to overcome all these challenges as best they can despite their limited resources.

In theory, a Sunday school programme is expected to include an element of equipping its members for ministry. Unfortunately, several people who were interviewed acknowledged that practical equipping for ministry seems to be lacking in their churches.

Those involved in the Sunday school need to be vigilant in identifying problems before they halt or hinder progress. Sunday school administrators will do well to avoid the mistake of relaxing when there is progress (Thaba 1997:119). Even when there is growth, one must continually anticipate problem areas and resolve them before these problems grow to overwhelming proportions.

6.2 Reflections on issues observed

The author's secondary objective in this dissertation was to explore the theoretical and the practical principles applicable to running an effective Sunday school. It was anticipated that the research would offer possible refinements to the way churches in Manzini generally operate.

Burkhart contends that Sunday school should be viewed like a capstone in a building. It is something that is in place to hold the pieces together and makes it possible for them to function as a single, solid structure. He further argues that most pastors view Sunday school as only a vehicle for instruction. The potential of Sunday school in other areas has been overlooked. Many pastors tend to see Sunday school as an outdated tool no longer suitable for today's church and society (Burkhart 2003:48).

Burkhart points out that this rejection of the Sunday school results in two outcomes. Some simply abandon Sunday school as a quaint anachronism, but simultaneously attempt to create structures to carry out the same function. The second response is to view Sunday school as worthwhile, but insufficient to achieve its aims. They thus develop ministries to fill the gap that Sunday school supposedly leaves (Burkhart 2003:54).

The Bible calls the church a "body". Each part draws life and vitality from the whole. Each part enables not only the proper functioning of the whole, but the proper functioning of other parts. Each contributes to what is needed. Each part finds its real value only when it is part of the whole. According to biblical passages such as Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4:11-12, as each part coordinates its functions with the other parts and submits to God, the head, the whole of the body benefits.

Like the human body, the church has systems, parts and organisations that must function properly if it is to be healthy and strong (Burkhart 2003:32). Sunday school is one of those parts that helps the church to function as it should. If our ultimate concern is the health and growth of the church, one must avoid the temptation of suggesting that one part of the church programme is more important than the other.

To emphasise one part over the others is something that Burkhart says is like suggesting that the wings of an aircraft are more important than the engines, fuselage, or tail (2003:33). The Sunday school programme is one of the pieces of the church that contributes to equipping people in the church for effective service unto the Lord.

This programme should not be put in competition with others, nor viewed in isolation from other church programmes. As this research has shown, Sunday school is a place of instruction, where believers are to be taught in ways appropriate to their physical, emotional, social and spiritual development.

This study has shown how nine specific churches have benefited and grown through using the Sunday school to empower their evangelism efforts. Sunday school can be highly effective, both in doing evangelism and as an assimilation strategy. It is an excellent place to communicate passion for the lost and to equip believers with the skills necessary to effectively communicate the gospel. As the study has illustrated, the adult Sunday school is a place where believers can pray together for unsaved loved ones and for one another.

Some of the churches in this research have commented that the Sunday school has helped them to develop and maintain spiritual vitality. Their Sunday schools have been places where people could discover more about God. During this study it was observed that Sunday school class can be an excellent place to introduce to the church those who seek to know more about God and the church. The Sunday school has the ability to effectively assimilate newcomers. It can help to provide these newcomers with ministry and care. It serves as a laboratory of the Holy Spirit where people experience the power and presence of the Holy Spirit as they pray, learn, and grow together.

If a Sunday school is properly organised, its small groups will enhance fellowship. It is a place where it is easy to build relationships, especially with those who are new. People may attend the main worship service regularly and remain anonymous faces in the crowd, never belonging. As a small group, the Sunday school class is better able to notice someone who is missing or in need, and then to do something to meet those needs.

McCulley believes that the effectiveness of the Sunday school is enhanced by having teachers who are properly trained and provided with the appropriate curricula, facilities, equipment, and other needed resources. She also believes that the Sunday school works better when appropriate teacher ratios are observed, and when learner-centred teaching methodologies are employed. In such an environment, the Sunday school is transformed into an effective learning environment (McCulley 2009:36).

Sunday school becomes an excellent place for motivating the believers for Christian action. For class members to be encouraged to apply their faith in practical ways, they need to explore biblical teachings, critically reflect on their own faith, and be challenged to grow. This encouragement to growth will be strengthened as the Sunday school takes up various topics that are not likely to be talked about in sermons. These topics should be both taught and discussed in a small group setting, rather than just be preached. This enhances not only impartation of knowledge, but the understanding and application of that knowledge.

The author concurs with Malcolm Knowles and others in that when it comes to groupings in Sunday school adults and children must be grouped separately. It would be best if the nine Protestant churches under study grouped their Sunday school students differently, children and adults apart. The main advantage of grouping adults who have the same needs together is that it simplifies the selection of appropriate teaching material. This allows for appropriate selection of teaching material that would address the need of that specific group.

Some of the churches in this research mentioned that they have used their Sunday school programmes to help train their members for ministry (e.g. Family Worship Centre). Sunday school offers a good format for ministry training. They provide valuable opportunities for mentoring and on-the-job training.

Believers gain practical ministry skills while working with those already involved in ministry. These transferable skills ultimately benefit other ministries in the church. Those who are found to be faithful in the little can be given much (Matthew 25:21). Nduka observes that “such involvement brings the believers into contact with more experienced teachers and workers who can mentor them and support their development” (2004:235).

Teaching the Bible must touch at least three levels of biblical understanding: biblical information, biblical principles, and biblical worldview (Fink 2003:158). Biblical principles are universal in scope. At this level the believer is taught to put his or her faith to work in daily life. At the deepest level the church teaches a biblical worldview that encompasses our understanding of life and reality.

The study of the growth in the churches under study has shown that Sunday school is still an effective and efficient way for the church to carry out its important disciple-making responsibilities. The author agrees with this conclusion, especially when one considers the form and function of Sunday school. The question one might ask is, what is a disciple-making ministry supposed to do? Can the Sunday school do that well?

In order to consider the role of Sunday school as part of a consideration of finding better ways to operate a church, one needs to look at all of the essential components of the church. The questions that need to be asked are:

- (1). How can the Sunday school contribute to worship?
- (2). How can the Sunday school help build a sense of community?
- (3). How can the Sunday school facilitate the healthy spiritual development of believers?
- (4). How can the Sunday school help reach the lost?

It is this author's conviction that when Sunday school is done well, it offers most of the things the church needs to help believers grow in their love for God and love for one another. Sunday school can help them to grow spiritually, and to learn how to minister to the lost. The ministry of Sunday school contributes directly to worship. The more believers learn and understand more about God, the more likely they are to worship him.

In summary, Sunday school offers, in one place and through one ministry, the essential components for healthy church development. Properly implemented and managed, Sunday school can be effective in helping the local church to grow through producing healthy believers who are grounded in the word of God and who are witnessing to their communities.

The church in Africa has commonly been described as having grown numerically so that it is one mile long, and yet the depth of its understanding and

commitment makes it only one inch deep. The situation tends to be the same from Cape Town to Cairo, or from Dakar to Accra to Lagos and to Nairobi. It is true that the church in Africa is growing with thousands of people flocking to churches every Sunday. Miracles, signs, wonders and supernatural demonstrations of God are drawing hitherto resistant people to the church and to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hunger for God and the things of God are bringing many people to church.

When a church is planted it is normal to expect it to grow. Every pastor expects to see people won to the Lord and to see Christians growing in spiritual stature. What one must remember is that for a church to be vibrant, growing in numbers and in depth, its growth must come as a result of healthy ministry.

The impact of the adult Sunday school on the church should not be underestimated. The church exists in a rapidly changing society. Some of the challenges are new (for example, technological advancement) while others are not (for example, some people still need to hear and respond to the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ and to learn how they can know God and follow him in their daily lives).

The church must therefore be clear on its purpose of teaching and avoid repeating the same thoughts to its adherents. The use of effective educational strategies must promote the knowledge of God and a growing relationship with him that is evident by its fruits. It does not matter whether we change the day of meeting in our adult Sunday schools, or whether we rebrand it and call it adult Bible class; what is important is that the church must actively promote the teaching of the Word of God to those who are Christians and those who seek to know more about God. Adult Sunday school is a necessary arm of the local church.

Much work has yet to be done in this field of adult Sunday school. It is hoped that the researcher's conclusions in this study will add to the existing body of knowledge on adult Sunday schools, especially within the African context.

The pastors and the leadership of the Sunday school must make preparing God's people for service a priority of their ministry. Sunday school is one important tool that can help the church to grow.

While the findings of this study might be relevant to these nine Protestant churches studied, the researcher believes that this study has implications for the

wider church in Swaziland. The research indicates that Sunday school adds to the spiritual growth of adult church attendees in the following ways:

1. They believe their faith deepened.
2. They believe they have grown closer to God.
3. They learn how to apply the Bible to real life issues.
4. Their praying becomes more effective.
5. The Bible becomes more meaningful.
6. They develop an increasing ability to work with each other.
7. They become more involved in the church.
8. They learn from others in the group.
9. They have a leader who will answer their questions.
10. They compare themselves with others and are spurred on to work harder.

6.3 Further study

The author believes that there are areas of study that would be appropriate, both as a specific follow-up of this research in regard to adult Sunday school in an African context, and also in regard to church-based adult education within Africa in general. Some of these areas in which further research could be conducted are:

1. Research to identify and evaluate what curricula already exist for African adult Sunday schools.
2. Research to determine factors that would constitute a vibrant church in the context of Africa, along with examples and case studies of vibrant churches.
3. A descriptive and comparative study of how adult training is currently done in Africa, with a focus on discovering what is and could be done to strengthen curricula, teachers and enrolment.
4. A project to design and evaluate research tools that could clarify how a variety of factors (and not just adult Sunday school) contribute to church growth.
5. Research to identify and evaluate the basic standards that are being used, or that could be used, to promote quality in adult Sunday school programmes.
6. Research to identify and analyse specific challenges to the 21st century Sunday school.

7. A study to identify and evaluate the structures and procedures used to provide Sunday school administration in the face of 21st century challenges.

CHAPTER 7 RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO STRENGTHEN ADULT TRAINING IN A CONTEXT LIKE SWAZILAND

Almost all the churches that were studied showed significant numerical growth. This growth correlates with the growth of the adult Sunday school. As the Sunday school was growing, so did the church. It has been mentioned during this study that church growth cannot be attributed only to Sunday school growth. There are many factors that contribute to the growth of the church. Nevertheless, the results of this research show that an effective adult Sunday school does cause the church to grow.

As a result of reading, reflection and the careful examination of nine specific churches in the Manzini area of Swaziland, in this chapter the researcher would like to conclude this thesis with a series of practical suggestions on how churches in an African context like Swaziland can improve the way they operate their Sunday schools with the end in view of stimulating growth in their churches.

There is need to develop an overall plan for the Sunday school ministry. "Begin with the end in mind," management authority Steven Covey said a few years ago in his classic best seller *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey 2004:46). It is good advice. The first thing we need to do when starting a new endeavour is to decide what our aim is. To help Sunday school teachers grow their groups both spiritually and numerically, there is need for the church to grow both in quantity and quality. Obedience to the Great Commission implies both.

Countable growth is never enough; there must also be the kind of qualitative growth one can never count. The Sunday school must produce men and women, boys and girls who are living for God. The mission of every teacher must be to produce people who are living the disciple's life - people who are consistent in prayer, obedient to the commands of God, and trusting in the promises of God. It is the job of the Sunday school leader to provide the motivation and training necessary to produce this kind of outcome.

Jesus taught us that we lead by serving (Matthew 20:28). This is also true of the work of the Sunday school. A teacher serves students when he or she helps them to develop a vision for a better future. A teacher serves students when each one of them feels comfortable in learning. Even when one is ministering prophetically

or as a visionary by sketching the possibilities of a future in which God's kingdom on earth has become a reality, one must still serve.

7.1 The author recommends that churches develop and strengthen their adult Sunday schools

Having a vibrant adult Sunday school should help the church to fulfil part of its mandate of teaching the people of God the Word so that God's people will put the Word of God into practice in their private and public lives for the glory of Christ. The Sunday school should engage believers at every level and challenge their emotional lives, behaviour, understanding, relationships, and spiritual lives.

Part of fulfilling the mandate of the church is the involvement of the members of the church in outreach and evangelism. According to the meaning of the original Greek, the word evangelism means, "The taking of the Evangel or good news (the gospel) about God's nature, purpose, power and love to the lost" (Tan 2002:41). One important purpose of Sunday school is to reach men and women for Christ. It should be noted that when a Sunday school teacher stands before her class to teach God's word, she is doing the work of personal evangelism. This is what every Sunday school should be involved in.

The task of every Sunday school teacher, and the evangelistic ministry of every Sunday school, is to teach the Word of God so that the lost and guilty sinner can understand his need of God's salvation; that Christ, the son of God, is the Saviour that he needs. She should show her students how to make Christ one's personal Saviour. She also should show them how to make Christ as the Lord of their lives and to see how that their inquiries, difficulties and objections are answered in the Word of God.

It is clear that the world we are living in is in moral confusion. Swaziland is experiencing drastic changes that are challenging long-held beliefs and cultural practices. The church needs to take a stand and clearly articulate its position on many of the ethical issues that are affecting the church, such as homosexuality, abortion, corporal punishment of children and pornography. Both the rural areas and urban cities are filled with men and women of corrupt and debased minds. As the Apostle Paul described in 2 Timothy 2:3-4, there are many whose thoughts and

imaginations are focused on how to become rich quickly. People are careless about God, his Word and his church. They are after earthly things that are temporal.

As adult Sunday school is introduced to (or strengthened) in churches, there should be a shift of mindset about the importance of Sunday school by church leaders. The result of this mindset shift should be the creation of Sunday schools for adults in all churches. Sunday school must not be seen to be just one of many other programmes that are offered by the church. Leadership must change its mindset to view the ministry of adult Sunday school as means by which a deeper level of community and learning can be achieved through the interchange of thoughts, ideas, and feelings, resulting in transformed believers who will evangelise the lost.

7.2 The author recommends that adult training in Swaziland be improved by organising Sunday school for growth

For growth to happen there must be good organisation in place to help facilitate and maintain levels of growth. The target of the Sunday school should not be just to get more people to attend, but to welcome people and retain people, causing them to reproduce spiritually and to bring others to church. When this process happens, there must be proper organisation to accommodate the growth taking place. The author would affirm the seven benefits that Hemphill lists of a well-organised Sunday school:

1. A good organisational strategy will enable a church to faithfully fulfil the Great Commission.
2. A good organisational strategy will serve as a master plan and thus help to avoid costly mistakes.
3. A good organisational strategy will enable the Sunday school to manage its resources.
4. A good organisational strategy will create a team spirit.
5. A good organisational strategy will provide for better communication.
6. A good organisational strategy will help create new units.
7. A good organisational strategy enhances the total ministry of the church (Hemphill 1996:71-73).

This research has revealed that Sunday school is one of the integral elements of the growth of the church. The author endorses the following recommendations that Hemphill has made to help those who sincerely desire to have their churches grow, numerically, spiritually and geographically. Every Sunday school should be organised according to the following criteria:

1. Simple enough for members and visitors to understand
2. Comprehensive enough to include everyone who presently attends or should be reached by the church
3. Flexible enough to grow with the church
4. Making the creation of new units natural and obvious
5. Providing for natural movement of members in the Bible study programme
6. Maximising known growth principles (Hemphill 1996:76).

The most obvious need in establishing and strengthening an adult Sunday school is that one needs to have an adequate team of people doing the work, as well as to have the right people doing what needs to be done. For example, it is better for a new teacher to take on an existing class while encouraging an experienced teacher to launch a new class. Teachers need to be encouraged, trained and admonished to be obedient to the command of God in 2 Timothy 2:2. As the church grows and introduces new classes, especially classes made up of people who are newcomers to the church, these classes need every possible support to enable them to flourish. Both new and established groups need all the equipment, support, and encouragement they can get in order to be a success.

It takes conscious effort for a Sunday school to grow. When it comes to enlisting people to attend Sunday school, our efforts should begin with those we routinely have contact with. There is a need to intensify efforts to identify prospects to be enrolled in the programme. The author defines prospects as any unsaved or unchurched person who can be reached by the church.

Prospects are everywhere. The issue is not where to find them but how to identify them and reach them for the Sunday school. Prospects can be found among the following: family members, friends, co-workers, schoolmates, fellow club members, and neighbours of the members of the church.

Sunday school needs good organisation and efficient administration to be effective and to grow. Oti observes that “the purpose of organisation is to provide a planned structure for the programme” (2007:69). Eke suggests that “administration is the process whereby the functioning of the organisation is facilitated, to the end that a fruitful and effective programme may emerge” (2011:51).

A progressive Sunday school does not happen automatically. The research results indicated that the leadership of the growing churches were very intentional about their Sunday school programmes as they constantly sought for ways to improve them. An effective Sunday school programme will be the product of careful planning, cooperative effort, efficient leadership, and total dedication of the staff.

The Sunday school must have a person who knows how to organise and supervise those involved to ensure that every person and department is performing their expected task. The administrator will need to focus on planning activities, structuring the activities and guiding people in implementing the activities to fulfil the purpose of the Sunday school.

This researcher suggests that to enhance performance in planning, the administrator must do both long-range planning and short-term planning. As the Sunday school will continue on into the future, long-range plans come first. Once these have been completed, they should be broken down into short-term plans.

The director or administrator of the Sunday school should be aware of what all relevant stakeholders think the programme should be like in five, ten or fifteen years’ time. The leadership of the Sunday school must avoid planning future programmes without the rest of the staff. The involvement of the entire staff will motivate them to make positive suggestions. The outcome of the planning process will then be a guide to what type of yearly goals and programmes should be developed that will help lead the Sunday school towards the set goal or goals. Benson states that “When plans are projected for great lengths they are usually stated in general terms and are kept flexible enough for change as time requires” (1973:34).

A long-range plan should be broken down into a series of short-term goals and programmes that together may lead to the achievement of the long-term goals. In this way annual planning will contribute to the fulfilment of the long-range plan by

focussing more sharply on the details and by clearly stating what part of the bigger plan it will fulfil in a given year.

The formulation of these plans will necessitate that one asks a few probing questions. Some of the questions that might be used are: (1). Where are we now? (2) Where are we going? (3) How will we get there? (4) When will we get there? Sincere answers to these questions will help the administrator or director in planning.

MacDonald cautions that when setting goals one must ensure that the goals are attainable and realistic (2007:163). This principle suggests that it is not advisable to make “where we want to be” to be very far from “where we are”. For example, setting an attendance goal of 300 for the current year might not easily be achievable for a Sunday school whose current attendance is only 100. Setting unrealistic goals can discourage rather than encourage the staff.

On the other hand, an attendance goal of 120 or 150 might be achievable and will spur people to action. In order for the members to be willing to work towards the set goals, it is important that the members share in determining what the goals will be, understand what the goals require of them and that they agree with the goals.

When a goal has been given a set time by which it must be completed, this serves as a motivating force for the participants. When a goal has no specific time limit in which it must be accomplished, it might end up not being accomplished at all. This might cause discouragement in the members involved. If the required time has been reached but the goal has not been attained, during the evaluation that follows, consensus should be reached on how to respond. Causes that led to lack of accomplishing the goal must be identified. A new course of action must be decided or a fresh goal set for the group. The author believes this approach will inject new life into the Sunday school as both staff and students work together to accomplish their desired goals

Organising the Sunday school for growth includes a need to improve policies. The Sunday school should have definite governing principles so that it may function efficiently and effectively. If followed, these principles will produce a standardised Sunday school that will transfer its members into the church of God. Unfortunately, many of the successful Sunday schools that were researched have not attained an

administrative level. Probably this might be due to the fact that the value of good administration has been overlooked.

The Sunday school educational system should be organised to teach biblical knowledge. It must be organised to effect change in human lives according to the Great Commission. It must be organised to constitute and promote the fellowship of believers in the local church. The Sunday school must be a forum where individual members can exercise their spiritual gifts. The training and deployment of teachers who are well-grounded in the word of God must be among its priorities.

Policies must be improved and planning of strategies for expansion must also be considered. The educational system must not neglect the church it belongs to, but should co-operate with it. Matsapha Evangelical Church and Divine Healing Church have done good work of improving their facilities and making sure that the church and the Sunday school benefit each other.

The achievement of goals and objectives does not happen by chance. The Sunday school must have definite plans through which its aims will be achieved. These plans might include a plan to offer Christ to all unbelievers for their salvation. For this reason, every teacher should always see himself as one who is entrusted with the conversion of his students.

It is imperative that teachers and students should plan programmes for their classes together. When dealing with the adult learner, one must remember that they desire to be involved in the learning process and are motivated when participating in the action. Nduka suggests that there needs to be a session other than the Sunday morning session where the students will be encouraged to practise what they learn in class (2004:73).

The director of Sunday school must oversee the birthing of new groups. He must constantly be on the lookout for groups that are becoming large enough to be divided, potential teachers who might take on a new group and new subject material that might be interesting to a new group. One of the best ways to start a new group is to have one of the existing teachers deviate temporarily from the usual curriculum to teach a topic that is interesting to half the group, but not necessarily to the other half. For example, if there is a young couples' class, the director should have the teacher do a course on parenting. All the parents will want to participate, while the

non-parents will not. The director should consider starting a course that requires some accountability, for example, the learning of a certain number of Bible verses. Half of a group might be prepared to do this, while the other half might not. Starting new groups is difficult; so the responsibility for doing it should be placed in the hands of the best and most experienced teachers in the group. Organising the Sunday school includes making sure that time is reserved in the church's calendar for training. More will be said about this in the next section.

7.3 The author recommends that all Sunday school teachers and leaders be trained

Sunday school work in all the nine churches is done primarily by the lay people. It would be ideal to have a person that is full time and well trained to lead the Sunday school programme, but for most of the churches in Swaziland this will not be possible in the near future due to financial constraints. This makes the task of training even more imperative for the church leaders. Sunday school leaders must avoid being satisfied when they simply enlist someone who loves the Sunday school ministry, but who may not be skilled for the job. There needs to be proper training that can help volunteers have an idea of what they are getting themselves into. A simple "teacher's guide" could be developed as a "road map" for the yearly training. An example of this guide can be seen in appendix S6. This guide will describe the purpose and the work of the Sunday school, standards of excellence, a curriculum policy, and a teacher's covenant. The covenant is the promise that a teacher makes to support the Sunday school programme for the duration of the time indicated (appendix S3).

When people have been enlisted to help in the Sunday school ministry, they must be provided with training. The Sunday school will continue to improve in effectiveness when workers are offered helpful and practical training. Training may well be the single most important ingredient in building a solid, evangelistic, and growing Sunday school. The researcher is of the opinion that churches that put a premium on training their workers will experience much greater permanent growth than those that neglect this emphasis. If the church can afford it, it should invest a great deal of time and money into training their workers in the Sunday school.

Even smaller churches should consider offering training events every year. The author suggests that two sessions of training a year be offered to the Sunday school staff. This ensures that teachers are motivated and evaluated at least once in every six months.

The author recommends that the teacher should break the year into quarters. If the themes to be taught are known, the teacher must take time to familiarise himself with these themes, along with the lesson titles and objectives. The teacher must also take time to survey the Scripture passages and key verses for each lesson.

By surveying the lessons for the quarter, the teacher will be able to pace the study of the themes. Questions that might come up prematurely during the lessons can be directed to future lessons that will look closely at the answers. This also helps the teacher to prepare resource material in advance for a particular lesson which lies in the future.

At times it is helpful to know not only what is coming up in the weeks ahead, but also what is planned in the quarters ahead. This can be valuable information for long-range planning, such as for organising visual or teaching aids that might be useful to enhance understanding of a subject.

There should be a correlation between knowing and doing. Sunday school officers, workers, and teachers can do no better than they know how to do. Those who are trained know where their Sunday school is going and how it is going to get there. They are committed to improving their teaching, outreach, and overall influence in the ministry to which God has called them.

Who should do the training? It is best to get all the Sunday school staff involved, especially the long-serving leaders. Caution must be taken when selecting those who are to teach since teachers must be leaders with a positive influence. It is possible to have a person serve for a very long time in the programme without that person being particularly good at teaching others.

Training is required of all players. Most soccer players spend years in learning and practising the fundamentals of their game. Even the veteran is not exempt from preparation for a new season. Veterans can teach the younger players from experience and by example. Length of service alone does not ensure a consistently

high level of performance. Whatever the level of difficulty of the task, consistent practice (with coaching and evaluation) is necessary to achieve even greater success.

Should it be any different for God's people? Sunday school is not an exception. Good workers will see the need for spending time in training. They see the value in a weekly staff meeting and the special training sessions offered by a growing, dynamic church. A dedicated worker will desire to impact the lives of the younger, newly-enlisted workers. There is room for improvement for everyone.

Training helps forge individuals into a team. Championships won by ball teams usually take place because of a strong team spirit. Each player is a skilled professional who is not a loner, but a team player. Talent does not mean much if a cooperative team spirit is lacking. Sunday school workers have a God-given task of reaching people through Bible study. Their goal is to mould lives and to meet needs in a loving, caring way. Training helps workers become competent in their specific part of the total task of the Sunday school.

Christ believed in training others. Christ did not send forth untrained or unskilled followers. He trained them by example, by guidance, and by personal instruction. In Matthew 9 and 10, for example, we see Christ giving detailed instructions prior to sending out the Twelve on a mission.

Training means we are helping workers see the needs and then to know how to meet them (Matthew 9:35-10:1). Christ's ministry had drawn crowds. Now He wanted the disciples to understand the needs of the people. Jesus told His followers they must recognise that the harvest fields are white unto harvest, and pray for labourers. He also trained them to go into the harvest field.

By training, the workers will be enabled to understand the entire task (Matthew 10:5-15). Jesus presented a comprehensive view of what the disciples were to do as they sought to minister to the Jews at that time. They were to know their audience (10:5, 6) and the kind of ministry needed (10:7, 8). He gave them a message to proclaim and a ministry to fulfil. Their primary focus was to be upon the needs of the people rather than on their own concerns and interests. Workers ought to have a clear understanding of the time, energy, and commitment needed for such important matters as lesson preparation, visiting members and prospects, and

maintaining proper records. They will need to learn how to adjust their priorities in order to accomplish their ministry.

Christ had given his followers an enormous task. As recipients of ministry they also had great responsibility (10:11-15). The teaching-learning process was a joint venture with their Master. The same is true for us today. The ministry brings great joys and spiritual pleasures. Training means preparing workers to face the realities of their task (Matthew 10:16-23). Christ's followers lived with the hostility and persecution that Christ himself encountered. They needed to have a realistic view of the context in order to learn how to deal with the obstacles they would meet. This is also true for us today. While we may not encounter the same kind of opposition, we need training so we will be prepared for resistance and difficulties in reaching people.

Through training, workers will be encouraged to minister through the Sunday school (Matt 10:24-33). Christ encouraged the disciples about some of the trials they would face. He reminded them that although at times they might feel alone, he was with them. Although they might be rejected, their efforts would not go unnoticed by the Father. They would be rewarded for their labours. All Sunday school workers ought to be encouraged by their relationship to Christ, by the Father's constant knowledge of his children, and by the fact of eternal rewards for winning and ministering to others.

When Sunday school workers are trained they will be more easily able to exercise their ministries effectively (Matthew 10:34-39). Commitment to Christ could, and no doubt did, create divisions in families in Christ's day. He recognised that loyalty to Him could bring strife within a family (Matthew 10:35). Our dedication must be wholehearted; we must be willing to pay the price of service. As workers we must come to terms with the kind of allegiance required to become effective servants of the Saviour. Training to serve him may be costly, but this is what is expected of disciples. We may need to adjust priorities and yield our all to him. If we do not feel that is necessary, how will we impact the lost or the newly-saved?

Becoming better equipped through training brings with it a share in the present and eternal rewards of serving Christ (Matthew 10:40-42). To see people mature in Christ, and to see our witness result in someone coming to him as Saviour

and Lord, brings much encouragement to the Sunday school worker. To become an effective tool for Christ through training is well worth the effort involved. Training workers is biblical, and is reinforced by the fact that Christ trained his apostles for three years. Surely some training is needed by all of us? The Sunday school in Africa will definitely thrive under the leadership of trained staff.

It is essential that the local church invest resources in equipping teachers in the Sunday school programme. If we agree that reaching more people for Christ is important; if teaching the Bible to all ages on their own levels is significant; if growing a church through a growing Sunday school is realistic; then training workers is imperative.

Training is essential if we are to meet the organisational growth needs of a Sunday school (Kouzes 2007:31). Adapting the organisation of the Sunday school is essential if there is going to be growth overall. As the Sunday school organisation is expanded to provide for growth, qualified workers must be available to staff those new departments. Many churches, large and small, have proven the fact that numerous workers in many small adult classes will bring greater growth than a few workers in a few large classes. There must be trained workers for the growth goals. Workers must be trained prior to the need.

Training will essentially make a difference in evangelism. The lack of trained workers in today's churches probably will cause many skilled and highly-educated unsaved visitors to look elsewhere for better services rendered by other churches. But there will be stability and growth when there are workers who know what they are doing and why. They will exude confidence that class members will sense.

When teachers are trained in presenting God's Word in an interesting, challenging, and life-centred way, and when they do so in the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit, lives are changed, the lost are saved and Christians are strengthened. Training is essential for the sake of the workers themselves. Many workers are relatively new in the Lord. Certainly they need basic training in understanding the Bible, in teaching doctrine, and in working with the age group to whom they are ministering. Some have never taught before or served as a worker in the Sunday school organisation. For some it becomes a new experience, with new

relationships, new responsibilities, and new challenges. All workers need to sharpen their skills and strive constantly to improve in their tasks.

Negative circumstances should be viewed as opportunities to reach out to people. Crises, insecurity, violence and bad government can be viewed as challenges that are making people turn to God for solutions. This is especially so in Africa. However, while these challenges may bring people into churches, they have not kept these people in church. Without good teaching, commitment and transformation will be lacking.

Training must be available in Sunday school because of the nature and needs of those who attend the Sunday school or Bible study hour. Knowing how to teach, to organise, to witness, to inspire others, to lead, is not something we inherit or have innate ability to do (Louis 1925:19). Most of the enthusiasm, confidence, and competence shown by some workers have been a result of training. Training helped to produce these qualities. If we are to recognise and utilise the spiritual gifts God has given to his people, it will demand that training is also supplied for their benefit. The more workers are equipped, the better a Sunday school will become.

The values which flow out of training a group of workers are many and varied. One should not underestimate these values. Training workers produces many positive results for both the workers and the students. When Sunday school teachers are offered quality training, some of the benefits are:

1. Workers no longer have any doubts as to what their role is in the life of the church.
2. They know what God expects of them as they serve in many varied capacities.
3. They know what the church expects of them and how to fulfil those expectations.
4. Workers become more concerned about knowing their pupils and meeting their needs.
5. There is a new vitality and sense of satisfaction in serving the Lord. Many become enthusiastic about the Bible study hour.
6. Because of the enthusiasm of the trained workers, new workers come forward to serve.

7. There is a new concept of what it means to be a God-called, well-trained, and competent worker.
8. Serving the Lord takes on new meaning as people accept the need of training. Increased effective service bring with it rich blessing.

7.4 The author recommends that teachers be helped to master the components of lesson planning

A well-designed lesson will have a greater chance of impacting the students than badly-prepared ones. There are several components of lesson planning that must be included when developing a lesson plan. These components include the lesson's main idea, teaching activities to be used, resources needed, the lesson objective and assessment or evaluation.

When planning a lesson one must consider the main idea to be taught. The main idea becomes the theme of the lesson; some people prefer to indicate it in the lesson title. A good grasp of the main idea is important because it sets the boundaries for the lesson; it helps the teacher to see how the lesson relates to the overall unit theme; it also prevents slipping into "off the subject" discussions.

The Webster's dictionary defines an objective as "the aim or end of an action; a point to be hit or reached". In teaching, an objective is a statement which describes what the student will know, feel or do after they have been taught. The teacher must move in a specific, predetermined direction to reach his target.

Awareness of developmental needs is closely related to learning. Learning requires change, and change happens in three areas:

- Cognitive learning: change in knowledge
- Affective learning: change in attitudes
- Psycho-moto learning: change in conduct

Any lesson objective should address these three areas: knowing, feeling and doing. Knowles suggests that objectives in Christian education go beyond those in secular education, which are primarily concerned with what the student knows or is able to do (Knowles 1980:76). The ultimate goal for the Sunday school teacher must be to help the student mature in Christ and become a faithful and productive member

of the church. This means the teacher must be concerned about the life application of the lesson and how the student feels about what is being learnt.

Perhaps one weakness in Sunday school is teachers teaching without a clear objective. This was the case at Labotsibeni AME where Sunday school teachers were thought to be ineffective due to their inability to teach well. The researcher suggests that the leader of the Sunday school programme should ensure that he provides the teachers with suggested objectives which will accompany all the lessons provided to a teacher. An even better solution is to equip the teacher with the ability to produce an appropriate lesson objective. McCulley in *Beyond the Classroom: Teach for Life 2008*, provides basic steps one might follow if she wants to learn how to write the lesson objective (see appendix 10). Good lesson objectives are those which are brief enough to be remembered, clear enough to be written down, specific enough to be attainable (McCulley 2008:56).

Someone said, "Aim at nothing and you are sure to hit it". To aim is to target one's teaching. This is a process of trying to define a statement that clarifies the direction of one's teaching for the lesson (Knowles 1980:76).

When preparing a lesson, the teacher should remember that the beginning of class is always critical. The teacher must capture the student's attention quickly, focusing interest on the lesson's main idea and leading from there into the Bible study. The Sunday school teacher can do this by presenting a commonly-experienced problem at the beginning of the lesson, and then building anticipation that a solution will be found by the end of the lesson (Nduka 1984:16). A teacher might pose a difficult, thought-provoking question and suggest that the lesson will help the class find God's direction on this matter. To add creativity the teacher might use current events that might focus the adult's attention on the lesson.

The teacher must consider what teaching activities will be employed. From the concept of the main idea follows the objective of the lesson. At the end of lesson planning there should be some teaching activities. Sheehy defines teaching activities as "those actions of the students and teacher designed to bring better understanding of a particular idea" (1976:61).

The Sunday school teacher should keep her emphasis on activity. She should ask herself, "What am I and the student going to do together to better understand

this idea?" Answering this question will lead directly to thinking about activities and methods. The more a student's five senses are involved in the learning process, the more rapid and effective the learning will be. The more a student is involved, the greater the learning.

Jesus used a variety of teaching methods. A review of the Gospels shows his use of field trips, storytelling, lectures, questions and answers, demonstration and discussion, as well as visual aids. As the master teacher, Jesus knew his words would have greater impact if they were reinforced with appropriate methods and activities. Everything his disciples heard and saw, touched or encountered, intensified their learning experiences.

When Jesus healed the man born blind he used that opportunity to teach, "I am the light of the world" (John 9:7). He raised Lazarus from the dead and taught, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25). When he fed the 5,000 he proclaimed, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry" (John 6:35).

Teachers must be on the watch for new ideas to use in their teaching. Even the most creative teachers sometimes use methods learned from observing other teachers. Bocchieri suggests that a teacher should use a filing method to store his ideas. He suggests that most new ideas are likely to be forgotten before one has a chance to use them. Ideas, news clippings, interesting anecdotes, and other potentially useful items that cannot be used right away can be filed for future use (Bocchieri 2011:76).

As a Sunday school teacher considers what teaching method and activities can be employed in his or her lesson, the teacher should consider using activities that will involve as many students in an active way as possible. The goal for a teacher must be broad-based involvement. Activities that appeal only to a small group must be avoided.

Teachers must use activities that they feel they can facilitate with confidence. If one does not thoroughly understand an activity and how it works, it probably will not work well. Activities that encourage students to use their imagination and

creativity must be utilised. Students should be encouraged to help plan their own learning activities.

Students must not become bored through the over-use of the same activities. The idea of creating interest and variety is lost if one uses the same activities week after week. Students will soon tire of them and resist involvement. Students must be given time to become acquainted with new activities. If the activity does not work the first time, it may mean students need time to experiment and become comfortable with the activity. The teacher should exercise patience; in time it may become a popular and helpful activity.

Activities that contribute directly to reaching the lesson goal must be used. Activity simply for activity sake is not advisable. The teacher should use activities that lead students to seek answers, state conclusions or express creative responses. Students will be much more impressed (educationally-speaking) by conclusions they arrive at themselves than by those merely recited by the teacher.

The teacher must decide on what resources or tools will be used during the lesson. Resources are those tools and equipment used by the teacher and the student to carry out the teaching methods and activities. A resource is something that helps one demonstrate, explain, or clarify an idea, process, or fact (Akwuruoha 1992:56). The teacher must ensure that before the Sunday morning class, all the resources to be used in the class are ready and available.

7.5 The author recommends that teachers aim for effectiveness in their teaching

The Sunday schools researched showed that teachers are increasingly moving away from the lecture method in their teaching. Although the lecture method has been widely used, it is often criticised for yielding the least results. Teachers are becoming aware of the need to combine different teaching methods that will enhance reflective thinking and application of content. This is essential for the adult learner who is not only interested in a download of information, but who needs to be empowered to better his life through the information provided. The following is a template that the author considers can be used to enhance effectiveness in teaching.

A suggested course design template

Course design template

Name of course	
Step 1.	Write down the goals that have been established by the Sunday school based on the Sunday school's purpose, values and desired outcomes.
Step 2.	<p>Answer each of the following questions in sequence with a complete sentence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What knowledge, skill, and character development does this course aim to impart to students? 2. What are the theological issues that need to be understood? 3. What in this course will help the student fulfil the educational goals of the Sunday school?
Step 3.	Using the information from step 1 and 2, write 6-8 specific, clear, obtainable, and measurable objectives. Each course taught should have objectives that lead to spiritual development; knowledge acquisition; ministry development and the development of high-thinking skills with emphasis on tasks that fulfil the desired outcomes of the students.
Step 4.	<p>Using those objectives, determine the following items for each objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Content knowledge required. 2. The most appropriate pedagogy to use -- keeping in mind your students and how they learn best. 3. Activities involved -- remembering that most students prefer doing to listening; however, the greatest key to success is variety. 4. Assessment to measure level of obtainment -- ensure that the method matches what is to be measured.

Step 5.	<p>Evaluate objectives and activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do they lead the student to develop competencies as stated in the Sunday school's goals? 2. Do they include elements of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual development? • Knowledge acquisition? • Ministry development? • Development of high-thinking skills-analysis and synthesis? • Emphasis on missions?
Step 6.	Organise into class schedule

Figure 7.1

7.5.1 How the material will be organised

The objectives of this course will be integrated in such a way that one can cover all that needs to be covered within the time frame allotted for the course. For example, a class schedule for the book of John could be designed. The designed table could have several columns for the date, session, objective and presentation. The number of classes available for teaching the course will be divided into sessions. Each session will be allocated a specific date. Once this is done an objective to be covered will be matched with a session. Finally, how the material will be presented to the students will be indicated in the column for presentation in a summarised form.

7.5.2 How the material will be presented

This material will require about sixty minutes of teaching. The teaching philosophy behind this lesson is that of practical equipping -- the assimilation of basic, useful knowledge and skills. A practical assignment will be given to the students which they will work in groups. The group work aims to involve each student in practising the principles taught in the lesson.

At the end of the lesson a review will be carried out. The review will seek to make sure that students have grasped and can state the essential truths of the lesson. The teachers can use oral questions or short reflective written examination questions to do a review. In presenting this lesson the teacher will combine lecture, question-answer and discussion methods to ensure good interaction. The teacher will occupy the role of facilitator as he will be dealing with adult students. The teacher will seek to supply culturally-relevant illustrations and examples.

7.5.3 How the material will be learned

The teacher will have an outline of the lesson to be taught distributed to all the students to allow them to follow his presentation easily. The lesson presented will have been developed from this outline. It was mentioned earlier that the aim of the lesson is to transform the student's life. The teacher will combine the following methods to ensure maximum impact: lecturing, question/answer and discussion.

The students will be divided into small groups of four people. In each group they will be expected to discuss and record an issue such as the dangers of having believers in the church who still manifest the works of the flesh. One member of the group will present the findings to the rest of the Sunday school class.

The teacher will present the section on the hindrances to Christ-like character in a lecture format. Since this section has many terms that are listed in the verses in Galatians 5:19-21, to utilise the limited time available it would be best to use the lecture method, but the teacher needs to do this in such a way that the subject matter is emphasised.

Culturally-relevant illustrations will be given. The teacher will be careful not to cover too much material to allow the student's time to assimilate each point being presented. After presenting the conclusion there will be a lesson evaluation. Five minutes before the end of class each student will be required to write a three to five sentence reflection paper on what they have learned today.

7.5.4 How the teachers will be encouraged

The teaching staff needs constant motivation, for teaching is demanding. Sometimes teachers prepare a lesson and no one attends class. Sometimes they

will try to help members of their class, but be rebuffed. Teachers have problems and they need constant encouragement. Teachers, like their students, need someone who will listen to their problems and empathise with them.

This can be done practically by doing small things like remembering their birthdays or noticing them when no one attends class after they have spent all week preparing. The Sunday school leader can celebrate with them when they have a room full of people or when one of their own is baptised and joins the church. Teachers need the leader to sometimes stand outside their door as they teach and then be told in glowing terms what a good job they are doing—if this is indeed the case. Teachers need to be encouraged for the hard work they put in to make their teaching effective.

7.5.5 How the classes will be evaluated

Assessment of what the class has learned is an important part of becoming a skilful teacher. It is also good practice that the teacher learns and practises evaluating herself before she is evaluated by other people. Sheehy advises that a teacher should not only evaluate her class, but that she must also evaluate herself (1976:61).

Below are suggestions that a teacher should ask herself as she seeks to evaluate her lesson plan:

- Are the main ideas and objectives directly related?
- Have various of methods and activities been planned?
- What kind of questions will be asked during the class?
- Have I made spiritual preparations for this lesson?

Gronlud cautions that self-evaluation may not be very productive or accurate. He suggests that the opinion of a colleague or any suitably-qualified educator should be sought (Gronlud 2006:71). The author suggests that to avoid the above problem, teachers can ask their students to evaluate them. While there are few people who enjoy being evaluated—it is threatening and very often ego-deflating—but it is essential if weaknesses are to be identified and improvements made.

It is important that when thinking of the growth and health of the Sunday school, that we consider the personal circumstances of the students and the important part they can play in their own learning.

A teacher must have a genuine interest in the lives of her students. Her concern should go beyond the student doing well in the classroom. The teacher is a key person in helping a student to make a positive contribution to the community. It is true that some circumstances in the lives of the students might be beyond their control. However, there are many other things that the teacher is not only able to do, but has a responsibility to do, like getting to know her students beyond the classroom setting.

When a teacher knows her students she will be able to help those who might be struggling in the class. It is possible to attribute the failure of a particular student to grasp a topic being taught in class to a lack of interest. However it might actually be as a result of a serious problem the student is facing. A teacher can show interest in her students by:

1. Getting to know the students and the lives they live. This is especially important if students are from a different cultural or socio-economic background than the teacher. Misunderstandings between a teacher and a student can have a significant negative impact on the students' educational experience. The researcher recommends that to enhance a strong relationship between the Sunday school teacher and the students, the teacher could try to visit students' homes and spend time in their communities to develop a deep awareness of students' challenges and needs and to find strategies to help them. If the teacher has limited time, she might consider using an inventory that her students can complete. This inventory should ask the students questions that will help the teacher get to know them better without giving the impression that she is invading the privacy of the students. This would be an attempt to let the students know that their teacher cares about them.

2. Actively listening to students. A teacher who actively listens to students is listening to the deeper meaning behind what students are saying, ensuring that he or she has understood properly. This action affirms the students' dignity and helps develop a trusting relationship between teachers and students. It might be possible that a teacher does not have enough time in the class to give the kind of focused

attention that a student needs. It would be advisable to set aside time to talk when they are less distractions, such as after the church service or by arriving early before the commencement of the Sunday school class.

3. Asking students for feedback. The teacher can choose any topic - it does not have to be part of the lesson. Each student should be asked to write down in a few sentences what confuses or concerns them the most about the topic. By considering their feedback the teacher will be showing the students that she values their opinions and experiences. This will also create a “classroom culture” where students feel safe to ask questions and to expose their inner selves.

4. Reflecting on one’s own experiences. The teacher should seek to show that she is not only interested in getting her lesson across to the student, but that she also cares about their welfare as well. A teacher might often not realise how the smallest caring gesture can have a noticeable impact on the student.

7.6 The author recommends that teachers plan ahead

Successful teaching is not accidental; it comes through careful planning. Planning ahead includes the development of a successful lesson plan. This does not in any way demean the role of the Holy Spirit or a teacher’s ability to teach; but it is likely that a gifted teacher who is careless about planning will not do as well as a less-gifted teacher who utilise an effective lesson plan.

Burkharat sees planning as a part of our attempt to cooperate more intelligently with God in our teaching (2003:41). It is not a rejection of the supernatural, nor is it a hindrance to God’s Spirit. After all, if God prepared the plan of salvation before the foundation of the world was laid (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20), certainly his Spirit can guide the teacher in their preparation before the commencement of a lesson.

Planning beyond the following week’s lesson is beneficial. Some teachers might be caught having planned no further than next week’s lesson. It is true that many teachers in the Sunday school are volunteers who might already be holding full-time jobs. The work of God must not be neglected because some teachers are occupied in secular employment and can only offer God part of their time. Those who have the privilege of serving in the Sunday school must do so with all their

hearts and desire to give their best at all times. The wise teacher understands the value of planning ahead.

While every teacher eventually senses the need for impromptu teaching in response to expressed needs, the fact remains that planning is the key to success. Thaba has said, “to fail to plan is to plan to fail” (1997:58). In *First Steps for Teachers*, William lists several reasons why a teacher should use a weekly lesson plan (William 1984:23-35).

As a result of planning lessons, delivery of the lessons will flow smoothly from past to future lessons. This also prevents wasting time on secondary or nonrelated issues. Planning helps discipline the teacher. When a teacher is ill-prepared there is a temptation to take shortcuts or to ramble. Unfortunately, this usually results in shallow teaching that has little focus or insight. Planning requires the teacher to study and research issues beforehand.

Planning will make the presentation more interesting. A teacher who plans takes time to secure resources, to choose creative methods, and to find interesting stories. These are the things that make the difference between a boring lesson and an interesting one. Planning will help build the teacher’s confidence. Following a well-designed lesson plan almost always makes class sessions more interesting and productive, and results in students being more attentive and more involved in the lesson. As a result the teacher will have a sense of accomplishment and proficiency.

7.7 The author recommends that teacher selection be more stringent

Those given an opportunity to teach Sunday school must have the ability to be creative. Teachers should be creative if they want to make their lessons interesting and their class lively.

Okonkwo observes that some children pattern their lives and the professions they choose on their teachers. This is because the teacher’s attitude, her tastes, her interests, her outlook on life and her intellectual curiosity, may turn out in the long run to be far more important to the child than the mastery of the subject she teaches. It is fallacious to say that what a teacher requires is only the mastery of her subject (Okonkwo 2002:103).

A teacher is expected to be punctual always. Amongst other things a teacher is expected to provide leadership in the class, to teach the students, to lead the planning meetings and to attend workers' meetings. Other recommendations for what a teacher must be like are attached in appendix 11. The author suggests some possible qualities that Sunday school directors and leaders should expect in a teacher. Teachers should unquestionably be saved, and they must possess the gift of teaching, according to Ephesians 4:11. The Sunday school must have a definite policy concerning the spiritual and academic standards of its personnel.

The staff, teachers, and administrative helpers, are very important in any organised institution of learning. Staff are needed for the organisation and smooth running of the Sunday school. The quality of staff can enhance or hamper the productivity of the Sunday school. The services of qualified staff are essential if efficient results are to be obtained. This is evident in the Sunday school of Family Worship Centre and Matsapha Evangelical Church where the services of a qualified academician were sought to lead the Sunday school programme.

Teachers must have good knowledge of the Scriptures according to 2 Timothy 3:15-17. They must always engage themselves in daily devotions in prayer and Bible study, which are the source of spiritual growth. Every teacher must be regular in church attendance. Teachers are leaders, and for that they should have leadership qualities and the ability to spur others into action. It is expected that every teacher be able to express himself well and communicate clearly.

7.8 The author recommends that the curriculum that is to be used in Sunday school be relevant to the current needs of the African Christian

Over-dependence on foreign imported curricula must be reduced. The research has shown that many churches were struggling to implement curricula that are irrelevant to the unique African church needs. African scholars and practitioners must be encouraged to write and publish materials that will help train the African church. The researcher observed this gap while searching relevant sources for this study that were African-authored. There is need to address the lack of reading material about and for the Sunday school in Africa.

Each Sunday school must design and implement its own curriculum.

During the research it was discovered that all of the Sunday schools were struggling in this area. The purpose of a curriculum is to provide direction, and to avoid confusion and oversight. Therefore a Sunday school that does not have a curriculum might not be able to achieve its aims and objectives until it sets up a systematic course that it can follow.

There was one church that had no clearly-defined curriculum at all. Some of the Sunday schools under study were following a curriculum that was designed by their foreign head office, while yet another was using “only the Bible” as a curriculum.

While these efforts of addressing the problem of a lack of curriculum by using a foreign curriculum are commendable, there were concerns that a curriculum designed outside Swaziland might not be relevant in addressing some of the specific needs that are unique to the African context, and specifically to the context of Swaziland. Some churches were borrowing curricula from different churches and picking from them subjects they felt were needed in their Sunday schools.

This practice too seems to fall short of addressing some specific needs encountered by the Sunday school students. The curricular aspect of Sunday school is important. There is no advantage in teaching something that is not needed by the student. As stated earlier on, adult students are not just seeking for information; instead, they desire information that will better their lives.

Nduka comments that a teacher was heard to say, “We do not use curriculum; we teach the Bible only” (2004:98). This statement reveals a misunderstanding of what a curriculum is. Every teacher uses a curriculum because a curriculum is the sum total of what is taught and how it is taught, whether or not a written curriculum is used or not.

The Bible is our textbook. Curriculum is a tool for planning the lessons. Curriculum is the starting point, not the finished product. Its purpose is to ensure orderly coverage of the Bible’s truths. Its value is that it makes the teacher’s work much less stressful and time consuming.

Not using a curriculum will result in a lot of waste in resources. The Bible should not be studied haphazardly. A “hit-or-miss” approach will not provide a balanced understanding of God’s word. This author advocates a systematic and comprehensive study of what will build mature adult Sunday school saints.

One must keep in mind that no curriculum can teach, for only people can teach. The teacher is an important element in the delivery of effective teaching. A caring and knowledgeable teacher, anointed by God, determines the tone and the success of a class. A well-planned curriculum will make a teacher even more effective in their work.

The Sunday school must use a curriculum that is able to fit within the African learning culture and yet remain true to the purpose and mission of the Sunday school and local church. Once the curriculum is there it must be ensured that it includes content, objectives, pedagogy, activities and assessment in order for it to be effective.

The nine Protestant churches need to improve their curricula. There is a need for educating some of the leaders on how they can come up with a simple curriculum that will address the needs of the church. The author believes that the starting point for the Sunday school is to know the objectives of their Sunday school and then to devise a curriculum that will motivate the students towards becoming what is desired as the outcome of the Sunday school programme. This will also help those in charge of the administration of the Sunday school and the church to know when the Sunday school is straying from the purpose of the programme; this will result in saving time and much-needed resources.

7.9 The author recommends that the purpose of instruction in adult Sunday school be to help believers fulfil God's will in their lives

What is God's will for believers? In Romans, the Apostle Paul expressed the two sides of God's will. In Romans 12:2 the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God is that believers cease to conform their lives to this world and be renewed and transformed to be like Christ. In Romans 8:29 Paul makes it clear that believers are predestined to be conformed to the likeness of God's Son. God's will is that believers become like Jesus, not mere imitations, but true reproductions of his character, love, and attitude.

A church's leadership needs to recognise the importance of the priesthood of all believers. Leadership must promote the belief that they are not the only ones who are gifted to serve the body of Christ. Inasmuch as the Scriptures talk about the five-

fold ministry (the ministry of the teacher, pastor, evangelist, apostle, prophet) this concept must not be elevated at the expense of the principle of the gifting and active service of all believers (priesthood of all believers). Ephesians 4:12,13 indicates that leadership must be involved in empowering the church. The five-fold ministry is to be involved in an intentional process to help all believers discover and use their individual gifts. Burkhart suggests that according to Ephesians 4:12,13, helping believers discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts in the cause of Christ is not optional for church leaders; it is a divine mandate (2003:143).

Sunday school in Africa should educate and expose members to practical ministry. It is unfortunate that so few believers seem to find their place of ministry in the church. This is compounded by the lack of financial investment of the church into the training of believers. The African church seems to struggle to finance Sunday school programmes. It is true that many churches are struggling financially. Nevertheless, the training of believers will influence the success and longevity of the church. Pastors need to understand their roles, and the nature of the ministry.

Many church leaders are afraid of releasing important ministry to those who may fail or who may create problems instead of solving them. They are afraid of disloyalty and the devastating consequences of entrusting ministry to those who cannot be trusted. They prefer doing it alone. Unfortunately this leads to burn-out, where ministers are stretched beyond their limit because of a growing demand for them to do more. This often results in a minister not being effective and sinking into depression, rendering him a failure in his job.

There seems to be a misunderstanding sometimes where pastors feel they are primarily called to be the only ones to do the work of the ministry, and not to prepare others for ministry. This could be a symptom of an inferiority complex where one tries to be the key component in an organisation. On the other hand, there are believers who sometimes see ministry as something they hire a pastor to do, not something to which God has called them. They view service in church as something they do "for the pastor," not as an act of obedience to God and his call on their lives.

Sunday school, when done systematically, can be an effective training tool for the church. Many leaders fail to train others because they do not feel that they have the time for doing this. Failing to effectively recruit and train workers will have

inevitable and predictable results. One must remember that spiritual health and growth requires that we exercise ourselves in ministry. Untrained believers therefore never fully develop their spiritual and ministry potential. This causes the church to reach a plateau and never impact their world in the way God intended, because there is a limit to how much the pastor and a few others can do.

The low involvement of believers in ministry is not good it hinders the development of the church and is not the plan of God. When a church does not have a programme like Sunday school where members can be trained and systematically taught the Word, that congregation might become locked in a cycle of failure.

Church leaders sometimes operate under false assumptions. For example, some pastors assume their people do not want to be involved, but this is not always true. There will always be some people who want to be involved in the work and find meaningful ways to express their gifts and callings. Fritz explains that many church members do not want to feel forced to do something for which they are not gifted and have not been trained. They never want to be so weighted down with church work that their families suffer (Fritz 2009:76). People want to be treated with respect and appreciation and not feel used.

Sometimes church members want to get involved but they may be afraid to show it. When there is no mechanism like Sunday school that can help people grow in fellowship and be able to express themselves in church life, many can be lost in the crowd with their giftings and talents remaining unnoticed. Since there is no process to help them discover their giftings, they fear to be involved. Sometimes it might be fear that once they get involved in the work they might be overwhelmed, overburdened, and asked to carry an ever-increasing load.

The Sunday school is important because of its role in transforming the lives of its members. Through its teachings and programmes, the Sunday school has helped bring growth, as indicated by the responses of many of the respondents. The methods the church uses should not only effectively communicate biblical knowledge, principles, and worldview, but also help believers fulfil God's will for their lives. The scope of these needs implies that the local church cannot sufficiently address these concerns mentioned above in the worship service alone; hence the need to establish an effective Sunday school programme in every local church.

7.10 The author recommends that there be an understanding of the mindsets and worldview of students

Those who would teach in African contexts must understand the different thinking patterns of the African mind and seek to train Sunday school workers in a culturally relevant way that will enhance their community-mindedness and not encourage individualism. Students need to have culturally-constructive ways of reflecting on their daily lives. The Sunday school teacher should be trained to know the differences between the Western worldview and African worldviews.

Firstly, to the Westerner, education is primarily the transmission of information. The West focuses on a scientific worldview, where individuals process and organise information through reading; although this emphasis on reading alone is changing radically due to the visual impact of Internet and media (Kolo 2008:88). The African worldview is more religious than scientific. The African worldview has a strong belief in the supernatural, and the implication for biblical training is that Africans view spiritual formation and character development as the primary task for training (Kolo 2008:98).

The second aspect of an African worldview that affects training is “community-mindedness”; the conviction that the community is central to life. The interpretation of experiences and daily lives centre on community and not on individuals. The community is not as much a collection of individuals as it is a living entity. It is a whole, and it is a unit.

Wiredu describes the concept of *Ubuntu* (*Ubunfu* in Siswati), which means “I am a person through other human beings” (1980:54). *Ubuntu* philosophy is found throughout Africa. It is suggested that one’s community shapes one’s identity. The essence of this African concept is that respecting others and valuing the universal brotherhood of man contributes to the development of the community. The implication in training is that education is not done in isolation; rather it is a community process that operates through group activities. Africans learn most effectively through group or community-based activities. Sunday school can be a tool

to enhance these beliefs, while at the same time promoting the agenda of the Kingdom of God.

The third aspect affecting training in Africa is that Africans learn through doing. There is a common proverb: “To know is to do”. While the West focuses on intellectual growth, Africans focus on character and skill development. Africans learn by observing, then imitating, and finally participating in an activity (McCulley 2008:47). The implication for the Sunday school is that learning activities need to focus on doing and seeing, rather than on reading and listening. This is why learning activities in the Sunday school class will greatly influence the African student.

During the training of teachers it must be emphasised that teaching involves giving more of ourselves than is customarily understood, while at the same time relying less on ourselves than is often the case. Western educators working among Africans must consider creative, authentic means whereby they can move away from their focus on individualism. If the African context is based upon nurturing relationships that build a cohesive community, then the Sunday school teacher training must evaluate its strategies to determine if the African student is receiving training in a culturally- sensitive way, building community and so strengthening the mission of God.

As the church trains its Sunday school teachers, considerations must be taken in view of the culture and the worldview of the African mind. The various models used for training must seek to harness these cultural dynamics as long as they are not in contradiction of scriptural principles.

The goal of the training must be to produce students who will be productive in their respective contexts. The training models must not just be a replica of western training models; instead, they must be models that have been designed for Africa. One should take into consideration the impact of globalisation, while being intentional in training so that the African citizen can be productive in his/her context in serving of God.

7.11 The author recommends that the pastor must be the primary supporter of Sunday school

It is important that the pastor of the church be the primary supporter of the Sunday school. Church members might not be inclined to attend if they feel that their pastor does not view Sunday school ministry as an important programme. Barnette cautions, “A minister who cannot thoroughly identify himself with his Sunday school ought not to be a pastor” (1951:68).

When the pastor leads, his people will follow. By this, the author is not suggesting that the pastor should be “hands-on” all the time in the Sunday school. It is known that pastors have many other responsibilities. However, while the pastor should not be the ultimate controller of the Sunday school, he must at least be involved in providing leadership, guidance and inspiration to all those who are involved. There is need for the pastor not merely to vocalise his support for Sunday school, but to demonstrate his passion for Sunday school in practical ways. If the congregants do not see this, they might view the Sunday school as just another programme in the church.

In 1994 Dr Rainer, the president of LifeWay Christian Resources, conducted a research project involving 4000 churches in North America. In his conclusions about this research, Dr Rainer states:

Indeed, Sunday school is neither neglected nor accidental in the healthy churches we researched. The pastor made a conscious and intentional decision to utilize the Sunday school as a key area in reaching, teaching and retaining. A healthy Sunday school and church are integrally related to the pastor's attitude and vision about the Sunday school (2006:3).

The pastor can be involved in teaching a Sunday school class, especially when a rotation system amongst participating teachers is used. This system can be helpful in a variety of ways. First, the pastor probably does not have time to take on another regular activity. The saving of time brought about by a system of rotation will make participation possible for him. Second, being exposed to teaching of their colleagues will allow everyone to learn more. Teachers will learn from the content of what their fellow teachers teach, but they will also learn from the way in which their fellow teachers teach. Teachers will naturally be more interested in the class if they are doing part of the teaching.

Even though the pastor may not teach every week, it is imperative that he be present often. His presence and participation in discussion will mean the difference between success or failure in this project. If he does not think it is important, the teachers will not either.

7.12 The author recommends that the African church take strides to overcome the challenge of a lack of infrastructure

It is not easy for learning to take place in an environment that does not enhance learning. It is of vital importance for Sunday school workers to endeavour to provide a comfortable, pleasant, and cheerful learning environment. The church might not be able to afford state-of-the art classrooms for Sunday school, but whatever facilities are available should be prepared to enhance the education of the students.

Akwuruoha says “unhealthy church houses (infrastructure) make unhealthy faith” (1992:34). Every Sunday school should strive to have adequate infrastructure and equipment. The classrooms should be well ventilated and furnished so as to make for an atmosphere conducive to learning which can attract people seeking for a place of worship.

The research indicated that the lack of proper physical structures was a problem that was being experience by almost all the nine Protestant churches. The author is aware that financial constraints, or the size of the congregation might not permit rapid development, nevertheless the leadership should still strive to provide a satisfactory building.

The researcher recommends that the following should be considered by the Sunday school director or leadership:

- a. The location must be accessible by road.
- b. The building must be large enough to accommodate as many classes as the school population demands.
- c. There should be separate classrooms for each class and separate rooms for departmental activities.

- d. Each classroom or departmental office is expected to have rooms that are painted and look neat. Toilets should be available catering for adults and children, males and females.

The children's Sunday school should have equipment that is applicable to children, like small chairs or benches. A basic law of learning is that a pupil must be ready to learn before beginning to learn. We must remember that a pupil's environment has a great deal to do with his readiness. If he is physically uncomfortable, his first thought will be about how to get comfortable. A cold, dirty, damp, dark, and unattractive room will have a depressing effect and hinder learning, while a crowded or disordered room will encourage misbehaviour. Divine Healing Church has foreseen this challenge that their church growth is causing. They are already planning to extend their Sunday school classes before they become overcrowded.

It is of vital importance for Sunday school work to provide the most comfortable, pleasant, and cheerful rooms possible. By this the author does not imply that the leadership should overextend their budget unnecessarily, but rather they should use whatever they have at their disposal to ensure that it serves the needs of the students and creates an environment that is conducive to learning.

The Sunday school leader should be mindful of the following in the quest to provide a good learning environment:

1. Attractive rooms

Many classrooms can easily be brightened by repainting them. In some cases, ceiling tiles, a wallboard, or floor tiles may be needed to improve a room adequately. If pupils can help plan and participate in these improvements, this will contribute to a good learning experience.

2. Well-lit and well-ventilated rooms

Good lighting should be provided in the classrooms. This can be done by replacing light bulbs with fluorescent tubes instead of bulbs. Enough windows can be provided to ensure that lighting and ventilation are good. This can save the church money by eliminating the need to buy fans and air-conditioners.

3. Sufficient space

In the interests of learning, the Sunday school class should have sufficient space and not be overcrowded. This means that the room cannot be so crowded with pupils that the teacher must confine the class activities to one formal teaching procedure.

7.13 The author recommends that adult Sunday school strengthen its evangelism

The author noticed from the data that the churches indicated that evangelism was not at the level that they would like it to be. This would not be so if all churches took seriously their belief that the Sunday school should be the evangelistic arm of the local church. The author suggests that even before the Sunday school commences its gospel outreach, it should train its teachers. Evangelistic Sunday schools need to grow out of evangelistic Sunday school teachers.

From an analysis of the Gospels it is clear that our Lord Jesus Christ in his days of ministry on earth ministered to many people. DeBoy states that on seventy occasions Jesus gave himself to public ministry. From the Gospels' records we note that Jesus was involved in personal witnessing (DeBoy 1970:21).

The Sunday school needs to be organised and designed to carry out evangelistic activities in the community. The spiritual growth of the church workers must be its initial concern in order to accomplish effective outreach. The Sunday school must strive to be an institution where departments and classes are set in order to accommodate all age levels and all levels of understanding.

Before church members "buy" into the Sunday school as the main evangelistic tool for fulfilling the Great Commission, the pastor must "buy" into it. It does not matter whether he does it formally or not, but due to his position the pastor sets the tone for the church's attitude towards the Sunday school.

For a teacher to make his Sunday school class an evangelistic arena, she must have Christian experience because teaching is sharing with others that which has been experienced. This is why Paul asked the Jewish law experts who claimed to know the law, whether they practised what they taught others to do (Romans 2:17-24).

For a teacher to effect change in her student's lives, she must know Jesus Christ as her Saviour and Lord. She must have faith in God whom she represents. Such faith should go beyond simple belief. It must be an active, triumphant faith; the faith that gets results, thus generating miracles. And she must believe in the authenticity of God's written word, which convicts the sinner of sin.

The author suggests two methods that can be used in the church and Sunday schools in Swaziland. Both incorporate multiple ways of evangelising the world. The two methods include traditional and modern methods. In the traditional way, the approach includes Sunday school expansion through open-air preaching, personal work, door-to-door witnessing and through one-week camping experiences for targeted communities. In the modern approach, the Sunday school could increase both in number and in finance through a combination of all the above-mentioned traditional approaches. The Sunday school could also use electronic media - radio and television announcements, as well as printed materials like newspapers, magazines, tracts, friendly letters, facebook, emailing or tweeting.

The Sunday school should grow if a church holds special times of teaching and seminars. When people attend such seminars they will be encouraged to continue to fellowship with the church. It is also true that if high-quality teaching and preaching produce healthy and vibrant Christian character and attitudes, the result will be that people outside will be naturally attracted to the church.

The use of personal testimony was an important method the apostles used in their time. The testimony has the potential to present an appealing image of the church to the masses. People's curiosity will be aroused to go to church and investigate for themselves whether what they heard about the church is true or false. For example, after Andrew, the brother of Peter, had met the Lord, he decided to encourage Peter to follow Jesus. According to the account in John 1:36-42, he used his testimony to convince Peter.

Another person who used his testimony was Philip who, when he spoke to his friend Nathaniel, convincingly told him about his new-found faith (John 1:44-50). The woman of Samaria was another person who, notwithstanding her poor moral reputation in society, was able to convince the entire community about Jesus. She succeeded by using the method of testimony (John 4:39).

In Swaziland many people are still respectful to others and do not mind giving strangers a few minutes of their time to hear what they have to say, even if it is on the streets. The church would do well to take advantage of this opportunity and share the gospel with those willing to listen. The Jehovah's Witness church is doing this by deploying their followers all over the streets of Manzini to witness for their faith every Saturday morning.

In the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20, the Lord told his followers to make disciples "to the end of the world". In Acts 1:8, he outlined more specifically where his disciples should go. He commanded that after the Holy Spirit's descent on believers, they should neither evangelise only Jerusalem (their own community) nor only go to the ends of the earth. Instead, in their evangelism, they should also reach Judea (their nation) and Samaria (their neighbouring nations) as well as going to the ends of the earth.

The Sunday schools in Manzini should implement this strategy as they do the work of God. They should avoid the mistake of only concentrating on their own environment (community); neither should they ignore our own community and rush to those who are far off. The author suggests that the following should be implemented by Sunday schools to ensure that evangelism is taken everywhere, locally and to the ends of the earth.

1. Setting evangelism as a priority and goal. Those involved in the Sunday school must not be content with just offering a good programme to the attendees, but they must also encourage the Sunday school members to practise what they are being taught in class. There are still many people who never attempt to enter Sunday school classes.

2. Helping members to know the Sunday school strategy. There is no other way this can be achieved except by training them to be acquainted with the Sunday school's outreach tools. When considering the syllabus for training, four areas should be included; these are (a) How each can use the Bible to explain what salvation is all about?; (b) Planning to reach the unreached areas of his country; (c) Teaching cross-cultural systems of evangelism in Sunday school seminars and workshops and (d) Knowing the methods of memorising scripture.

3. Making the home a meeting centre. There are many men and women who would rather not associate themselves with the church, although they might agree to meet in a home. In view of this, it is advisable for a local church Sunday school to plan to have a home meeting during the week in various parts of the city or village. In such home meetings, there should be a teacher and a few members of the Sunday school, along with many unsaved invitees from that neighbourhood. The teacher and the members of the Sunday school can use this forum to reach the unsaved invitees.

4. Home-to-home witnessing. In every race, tribe, or ethnic group there are some unsaved people who will not like to attend any Christian gathering or meeting, even in a home. They are not interested in associating with any church programme because they are spiritually blind. They have not seen the light of the gospel; neither are they ready to seek salvation.

The Sunday school teacher should plan how to reach these types of people in their own homes with the gospel. The best way to do this is to divide the members of the Sunday school into groups, or divide the nearest community into segment areas. Once this has been done, every group should be assigned to visit all the homes in the area allocated to them.

This may be hard in the beginning because of poor reception on the part of the people who might not like to welcome Christians into their homes. However, if the Sunday school members will take it as a challenge, shake off any frustrations they might experience, they will succeed. They should allow Zechariah to encourage them: "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord of Host. What are you O Great Mountain? Before Zerubabel you will become a plain" (Zechariah 4:6,7).

5. Making Christ the subject of gossip. The problem the church of God is facing these days is that men and women are gossiping about others more than they are about Christ. Some members of the church have become experts in backbiting one other. But men who understand what it takes a church to be an evangelistic church have this to say: "the kind of church that does well in evangelism is one in which the members talk about Jesus everywhere they go". When they visit a friend in hospital they take time to speak to other patients about Jesus. At the market place they say something about Jesus to the people from whom they buy things. They also

find opportunities to mention Jesus to the people they work with and to their neighbours.

What kind of church does poorly in evangelism? It is a church in which the members love to stand up and testify inside the church building, but outside the church building they seldom say the word “Jesus saves” (Tan 2002:67).. The Sunday school teacher should encourage the students to share their faith, especially to those who are lost. Acts 4:20 says, “We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard”.

6. Discipling a convert. The duty of the Sunday school member is to see that when a person gets saved he or she is brought into the church to become a Sunday school member. This is done through teaching. It is the duty of the person who helps him get converted, if he is not a Sunday school teacher, to take the person to his teacher or ask the teacher to visit the one with him. The new convert should be encouraged to join the Sunday school work immediately after he has studied the rudiments of the Christian faith and is baptised in water.

7. Making the Sunday school multinational. The church and Sunday school must make intentional efforts to reach out to those who are not Swazis. The number of foreigners in the city of Manzini is increasing, but many of these do not find their way into our local churches. It is the duty of the Sunday school to plan how to evangelise the people of other cultures and races and bring them into the church. Though this might be difficult to achieve, they have the love of God which drew Jesus to the earth, they can succeed it. The Master died for people of all cultures and races.

Perhaps the problem of many believers in the church today is that there is more of talking about other people’s problems than there is sharing of the good news of Christ our Saviour. Pastors are criticising other pastors and members criticise their fellow members destructively. According to Nduka one reason that causes our Sunday school and churches not to grow, remaining dormant is because believers have not lived in a way that makes the unbeliever want to come to Christ (2004:17).

If this is the case, it will be difficult for an unbeliever to respond to the invitation to attend our Sunday school. Every member therefore must learn how to use the power of a good testimony to reach his or her neighbours, friends, and

relatives. The testimony should include the good things God is doing in their local church or Sunday school.

7.14 The author recommends continuity in the adult Sunday school

In order to ensure the continued existence of the Sunday school, the church must continually enlist, train, and retain teachers. The church must develop strategies to address these issues. The teaching staff of most churches is largely composed of faithful volunteer workers. The leadership must be aware that even the faithful worker needs time to rest and recuperate.

One way of ensuring continuity is to increase creativity in the way Sunday school operates without compromising its purpose. One such way is the introduction of a special Sunday school Sunday. The author recommends that the Sunday school should adopt one Sunday in the year and make it a special day for the Sunday school. This could be any Sunday in the year and will be the day that the church will promote the Sunday school to the whole church. During this day special testimonies from the students could be shared on how they have benefitted from the programme.

The programme should make provision for an expression of appreciation to the Sunday school staff. During this day the pastor of the church could preach a motivational sermon that will encourage those who are not attending to begin to attend, and those who are attending to keep at it. It would be good also to elaborate on the aims and objectives of the Sunday school programme.

According to Allan Taylor, “How we view our Sunday school will have everything to do with how much effort we put to make it work” (2003: 9). While methodologies can and should be adapted to settings, tried and true principles cannot be ignored if growth is desired. The data from these nine Protestant churches in this project show that their Sunday schools are alive and are working. The programme is not the same in each location, but has been tailored according to each church context. The conclusion is that the basic Sunday school principles work in all contexts, whether in a city church or a village church.

Taylor encourages church leaders not to quickly abandon the Sunday school programme. He states that “to leave the fundamentals of Sunday school is to leave the Sunday school. So let us not relinquish the fundamentals of a sound Sunday

school ministry and then make a declaration that Sunday school does not work! Nothing works if it is not worked” (Taylor 2003:97). This truth is gleaned from the comments made by the pastors of the growing churches. They are convinced that Sunday school is not just a programme, but that it represents an arm of the local church through which the church can accomplish many things.

The leader at Divine Healing church believes that Sunday school should not be made a weekend event, but should be seen as a strategy that the local church uses throughout the week. Brown and Johnson agree when they write, “Sunday school is the foundational strategy in a local church for leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and building Great Commission Christians through Bible study groups that engage people in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry and worship” (2000:51).

The pastors and churches need to view their Sunday schools as a strategy to reach people with the gospel and then to disciple them. Most of the churches are utilising the Sunday school to teach and disciple, but there is a pressings need to add the aspect of aggressive evangelism. Sunday school is able to reach people for Christ, teach them the Word of God, and minister to their needs. The work of Sunday school must be a priority in every church. The Sunday school programme must not be allowed to be just another programme attached to an already overcrowded church schedule.

Sunday school must be seen as a way to do the work of the Great Commission. It should not be a one-day-a-week meeting. As some pastors have suggested, the participants must be equipped to do the work of Sunday school every day of the week. It is a seven-day-a-week strategy to make disciples, baptise them, and to teach them everything Jesus has commanded. The pastor at Fairview FEA Church believes strongly that Sunday school is such a priority that he himself teaches a class.

SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the conclusions that have come through this study the author has made fifteen recommendations. These are:

- 7.1 The author recommends that churches develop and strengthen their adult Sunday schools
- 7.2 The author recommends that adult training in Swaziland be improved by organising Sunday school for growth
- 7.3 The author recommends that all Sunday school teachers and leaders be trained
- 7.4 The author recommends that teachers be helped to master the components of lesson planning
- 7.5 The author recommends that teachers aim for effectiveness in their teaching
- 7.6 The author recommends that teachers plan ahead
- 7.7 The author that teacher selection be more stringent
- 7.8 The author recommends that the curriculum that is to be used in Sunday school be relevant to the current needs of the African Christian
- 7.9 The author recommends that the purpose of instruction in adult Sunday school be to help believers fulfil God's will in their lives
- 7.10 The author recommends that there be an understanding of the mindsets and worldviews of students
- 7.11 The author recommends that the pastor must be the primary one supporter of Sunday school
- 7.12 The author recommends that the African church take strides to overcome the lack of infrastructure
- 7.13 The author recommends that adult Sunday school strengthen its evangelism
- 7.14 The author recommends continuity in the adult Sunday school

CONCLUSION

The researcher is convinced that the church must return to the Great Commission. There must be an intentional thrust into evangelism that will bring people into the kingdom of God. Sunday school for adults is key to this. After these have been brought into the kingdom there must then be systematic teaching provided to enable believers to mature in their faith and perform works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:11-16). Sunday school for adults is also key to this.

The growth of Sunday school is not automatic. There is a need for those in church to realise that God wants to partner with them to accomplish his will on earth. Believers must not be discouraged by the enormous task because it does not depend entirely on their own efforts. Although God clearly has His part to play, our service is a joint partnership of the divine and the human elements.

Progress is a mark of fruitfulness and ability. The Sunday school should be expected to make definite plans for expansion. Adequate plans towards the increase in attendance, improvement of organisation and administration and acquisition of more facilities will contribute to the physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual progress of the students.

Commenting on the condition of adult education in the church Mbiti states that one cannot fill granaries with borrowed grain. By this he was warning the church about “living on borrowed or inherited Christianity” (Mbiti 1986:7). Although early missionaries arrived on the continent and established churches and schools, education was already an integral part of African life (Makulu 1971:2).

Makulu quoted Kaunda, the former President of Zambia, who wrote that the European approaches to education were based on a principle of giving to the African what was considered to be best for him and not necessarily an educational system which was in accordance with his cultural heritage and sociological environment (1971:8).

There is a need for a radical mindset shift in the perception of the African believer. The church must not be content with just evangelising the African student. Efforts must be made to ensure that the mind of these believers is captured for Christ. This will reduce the rate of African believers who know the Word but still revert back to traditional rituals that do not glorify God or at best mix their cultural practices with Christianity.

There is a great challenge for the leaders of the African church. If the church is to have an impact in the Swaziland of the twenty-first century, the church needs thinking men and women who are well trained spiritually and academically, and who are equipped not only to lead the church, but also teach others to lead. The church needs men and women who can engage in culturally-relevant praxis.

An old African proverb says, “give a man a fish and he will eat for a day, teach a man to fish, and he will eat for many days”. According to the teachings of the Apostle Paul, God gave the church teachers and preachers so that men and women could be equipped for works of service in the church. May the work of Sunday schools for adults within the African context be blessed.

Appendix 1

Dear Participant

Thank you for taking time to be part of this research, done under the auspices of South African Theological Seminary. Let me briefly share with you the importance of this research and what it is all about. Your participation in this study will be a great investment in the body of Christ, both in Swaziland and outside Swaziland.

The purpose of this study is to search for principles or causes that encourage the church to grow. My belief is that a vibrant Bible-based and carefully planned Sunday school programme will positively influence the growth of the church. My primary objective in this study is to look at vibrancy and growth of nine key churches in Manzini and then explore the correlation between an effective Sunday school programme and the growth of the church.

We believe that the church should grow. However, there are churches that are growing quickly, while others seem to be struggling.

It appears to me that the churches that are growing numerically and spiritually have effective discipleship programmes. One of the best ways to disciple people is through the Sunday school, where people of every age and stage in life are effectively taught biblical principles and godly living. Sunday school is not like other recognised education institutions that offer grades and transcripts. It is a ministry of small groups within a local church where the shepherds provide the sheep with meaningful instruction concerning Christian doctrine.

For this study an effective Sunday school programme is a programme that brings systematic teaching to the attendee and prepares them to mature in their faith in Christ. This should result in producing lasting fruits for God, such as being able to share one's faith with others.

I plan to study nine Protestant churches or ministries that are in Manzini, the hub of Swaziland. The study will focus on three churches belonging to the League of Swaziland Churches, three churches belonging to the Conference of Swaziland

Churches and the last three churches will be from the Council of Swaziland Churches.

I have done extensive reading in the theory and practice of church growth with special reference to the Sunday school movement. However, the core of this study will come from interpreting data that will be collected through field research. Data will be collected by means of surveys and through personal interviews and questionnaires. It is at this stage that your input will be needed. Know that your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for taking time to participate in this study. I am hoping through this study to find better ways for us to do church to God's glory. I am willing to share the results of my research with you when I finish. I hope you will find it enriching.

Yours sincerely

Nkosenhle Z. Nxumalo

Appendix 2

Section 1

Name of Church:

Date of response:

Person responding:

Role in Church (categories: pastor, SS teacher, lay leadership, attendee)

What is the average attendance:	Less than 50	50 to 100	100 to 300	More than 300
Of your church: adults				
: children (2 to 18)				
Of your church 5 years ago:				
:adults				
: children (2 to 18)				

What is the average attendance:	Less than 10	10 to 50	50 to 150	More than 150
Of your Sunday school: adults				
: children (2 to 18)				
Of your Sunday school 5 years ago				
: children (2 to 18)				

In your opinion, why is your church growing/ shrinking/ staying the same?

	Absolutely	Sort of	Not really
--	------------	---------	------------

It is a healthy church with good facilities.			
The church has an abundance of good leadership			
People like the worship and preaching			
Those who attend enjoy each other's fellowship			
The church is involved in evangelical outreach			
The church has a good Sunday school programme			
People are being equipped for ministry			

Other reasons:

In your opinion, how strong is your Sunday school programme strong or weak?

	Strong	Fair	Weak
The programme is well-organised with classes for all ages			
There are an adequate number of well-trained teachers			
There is adequate space for the classes in good facilities			
People know each other and pray for one another			
Classes follow a well-designed curriculum			
Participants receive practical equipping for ministry			

What challenges exist for your Sunday school?

	True	Sort of	Not true

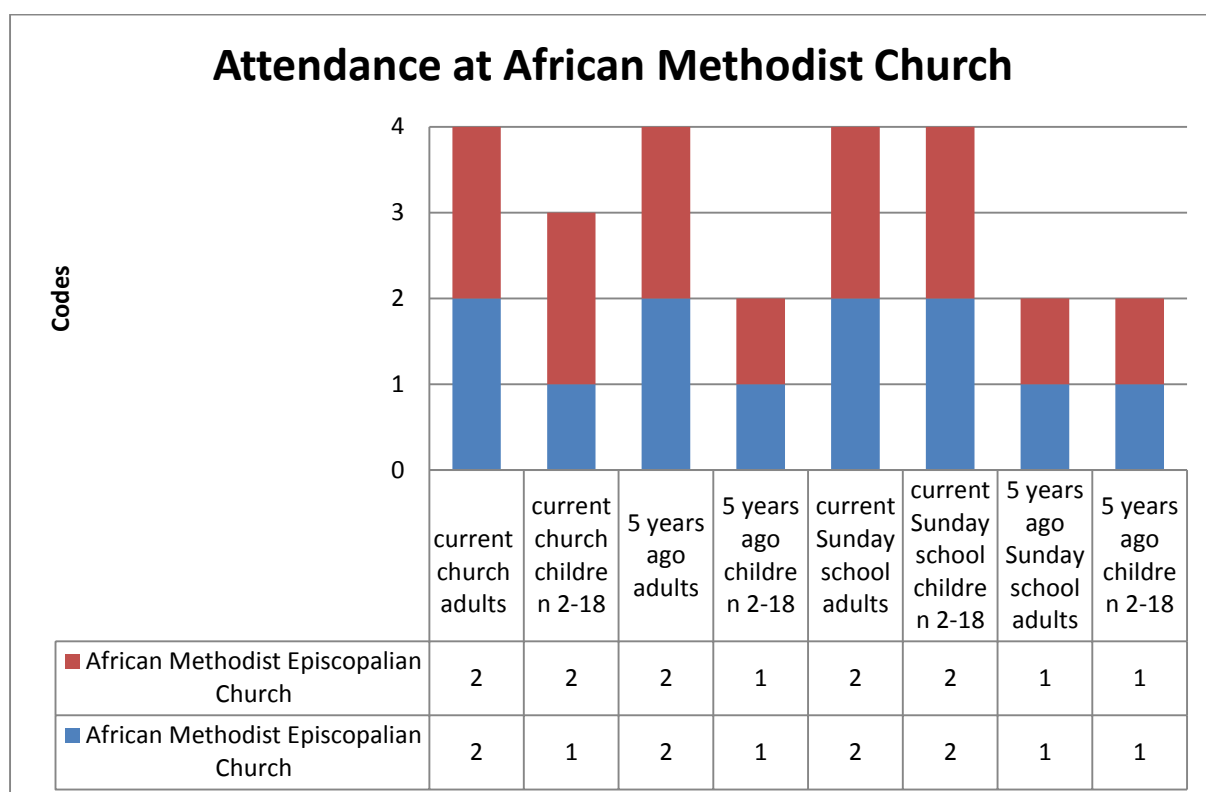
The teachers are not very creative in their methodology			
There are strong personalities that clash in the classes			
There are spiritual battles going on			
There is very little discussion as the teacher only lectures			
There is study of lots of things other than the Bible			
The pastor or leadership is not supportive of the programme			

Section 2

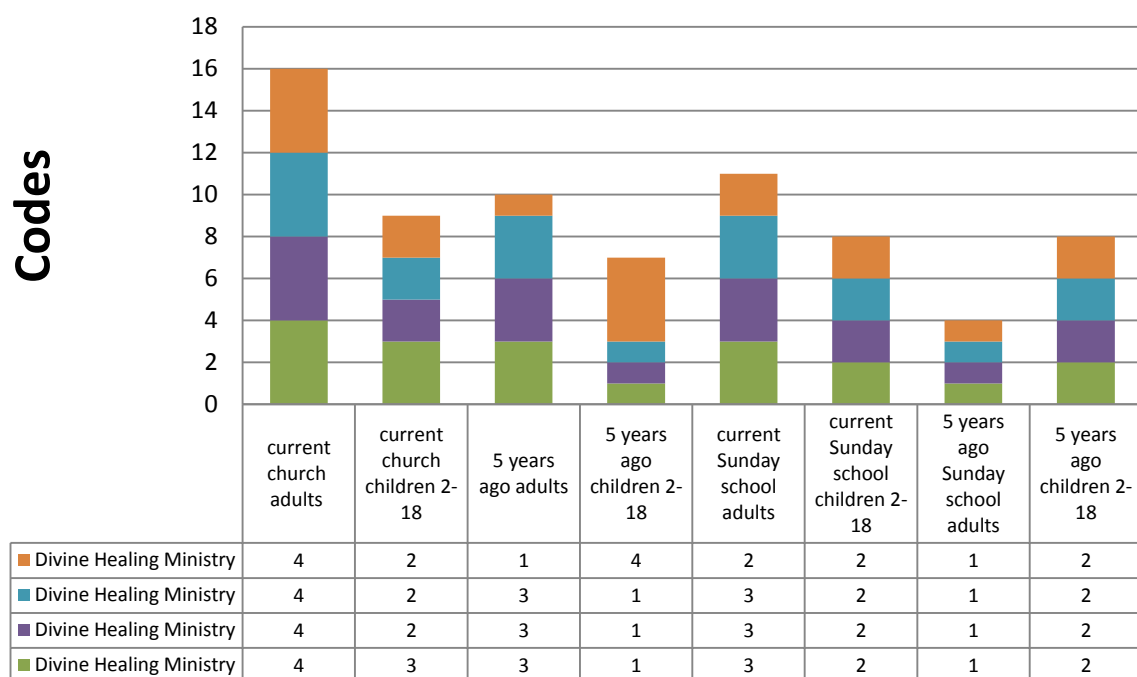
During a follow-up interview with at least one person from each of the churches that provided the basic data, I asked the following open-ended questions:

- (1) What is the role of Sunday school in your church?
- (2) (If they have an adult programme...) Have you always had Sunday school training for adults? Why is this important for the church? What do you hope to accomplish by having regular training programmes for adults?
- (3) How is the Sunday school programme organised? (E.g. classes for different ages; who is in charge? Who is allowed to teach? Etc.)
- (4) What curriculum do you used, and who determines what is to be taught?
- (5) In your opinion, how vibrant is your Sunday school programme?
- (6) In what ways has the Sunday school programme helped your church to be strong and/or to grow?
- (7) What are some of the problems that you have encountered in the implementation of your Sunday school programme? What plans do you have to avoid these problems in the future?

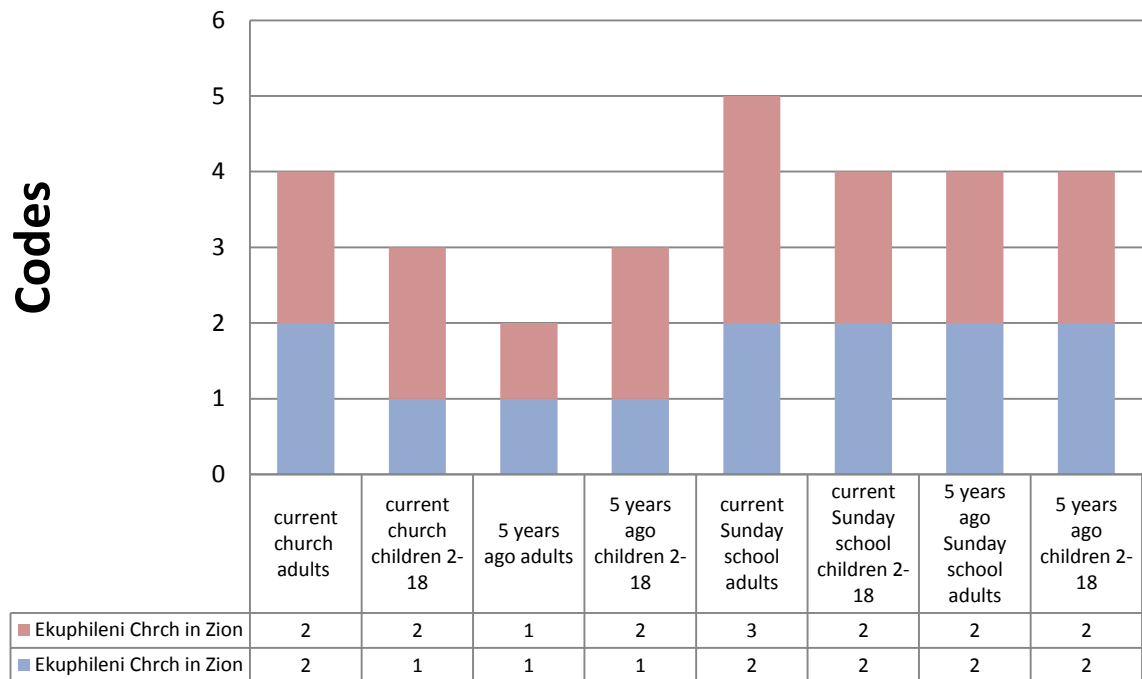
Appendix 3



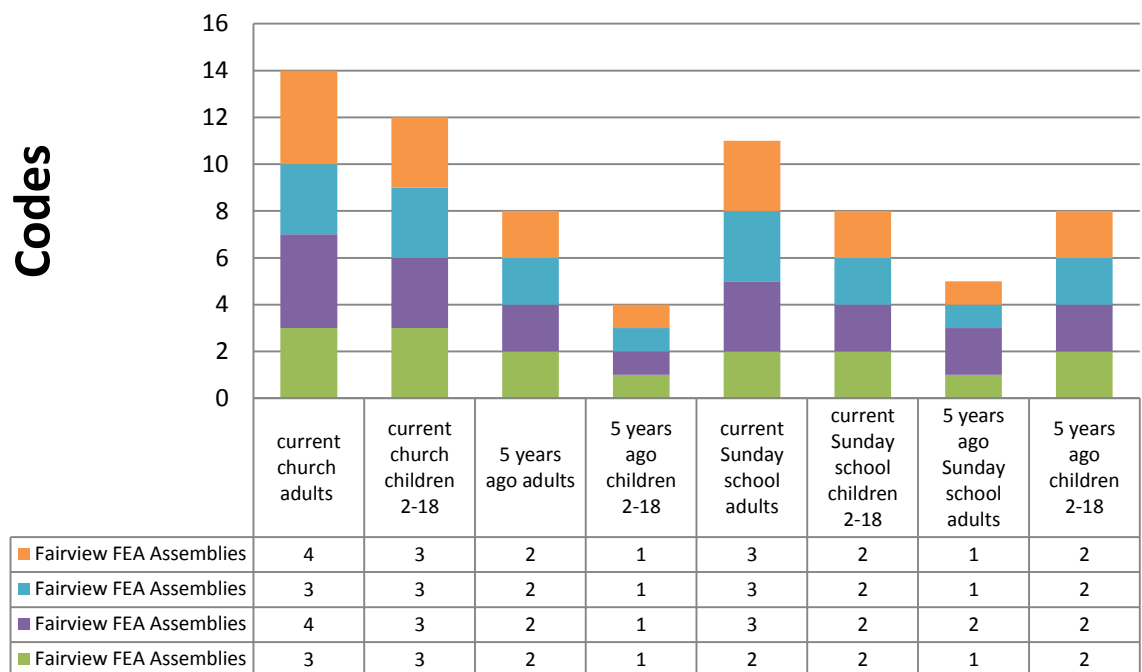
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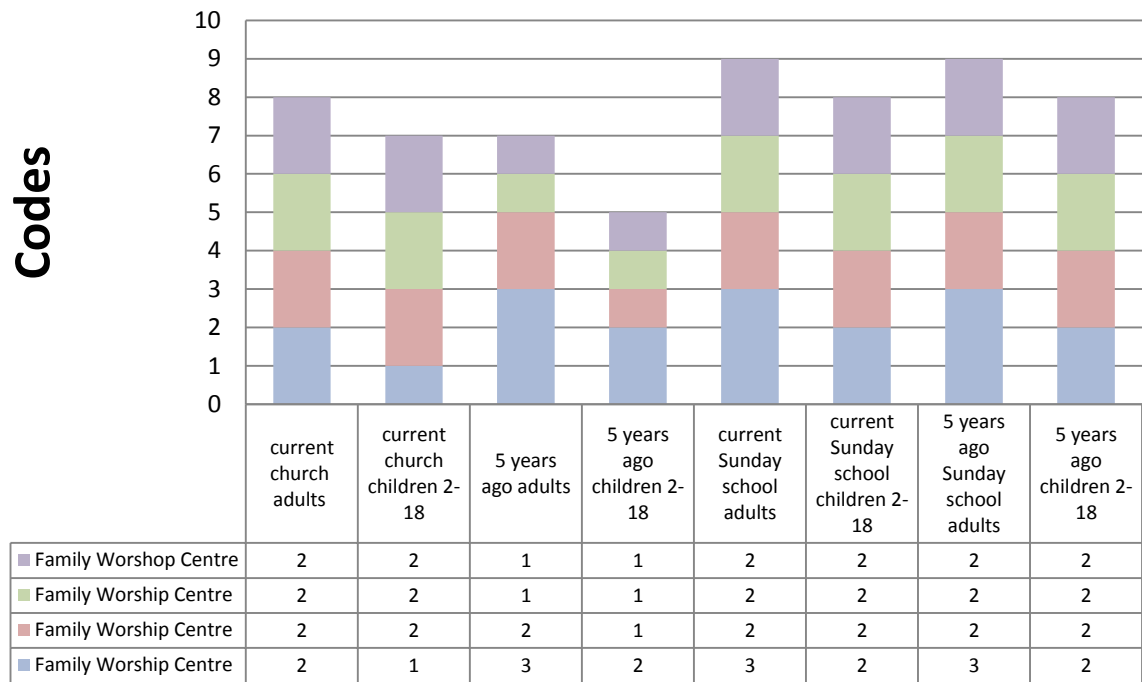
Attendance at Ekuphileni Church in Zion



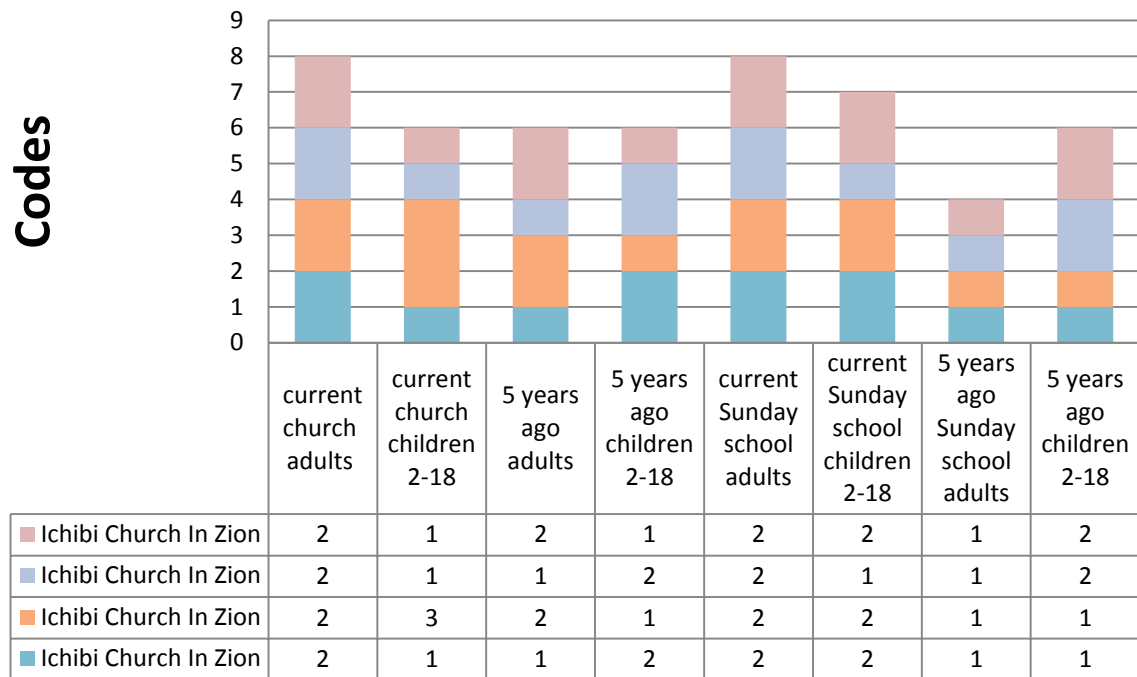
Attendance at Fairview FEA Assemblies



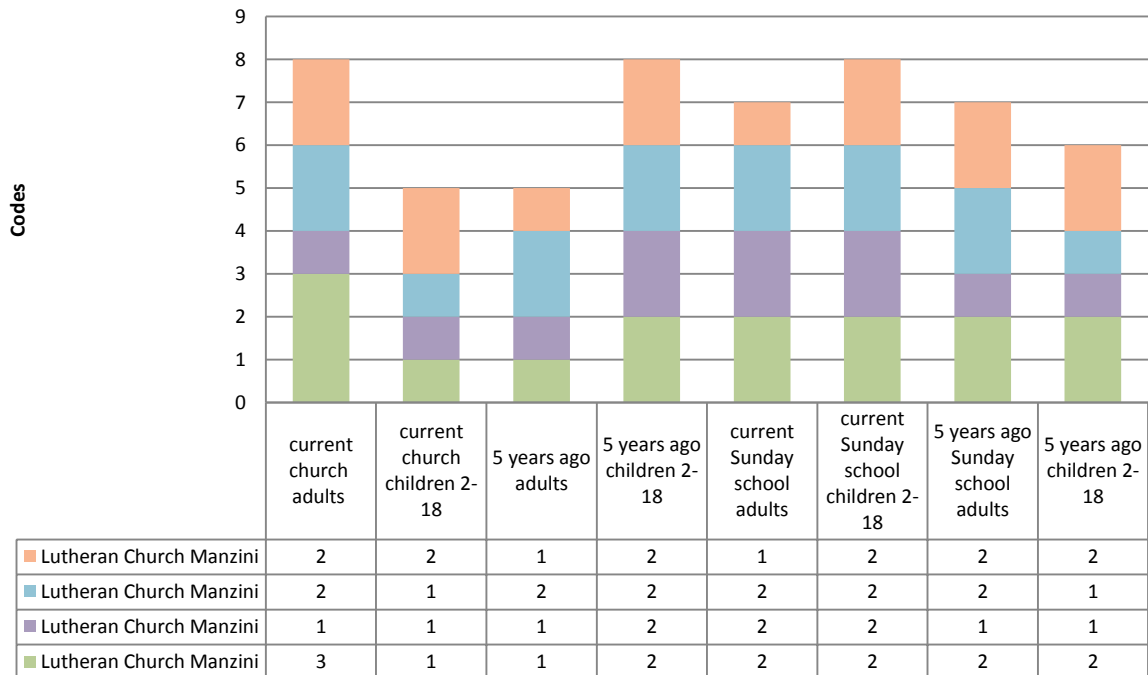
Attendance at Family Worship Centre



Attendance at Ichibi Church in Zion

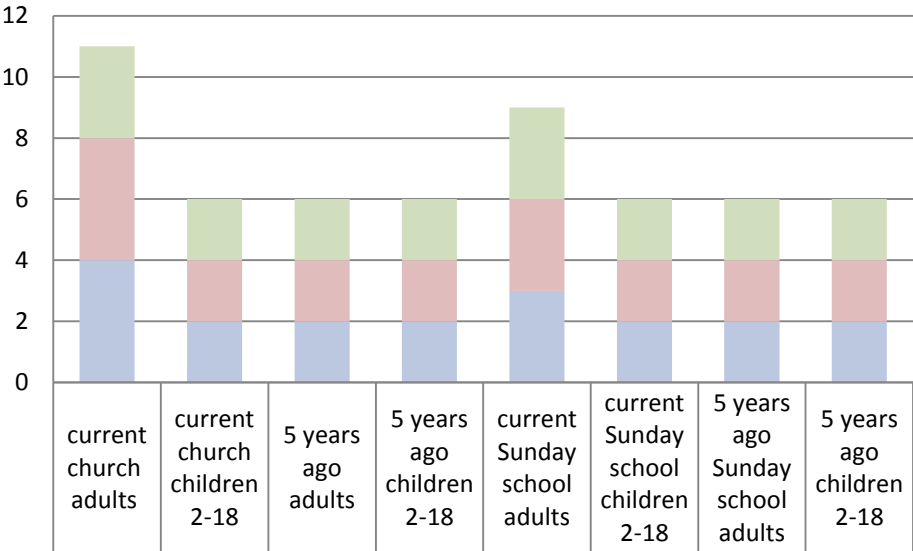


Attendance at Lutheran Church Manzini



Attendance at Matsapha Evangelical

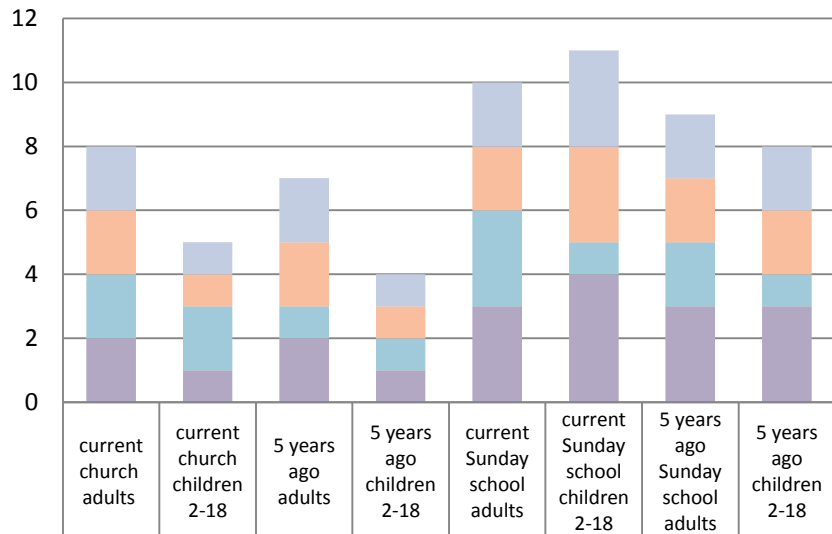
Codes



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Matsapha Evangelical	4	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
Matsapha Evangelical	4	2	2	2	3	2	2	2

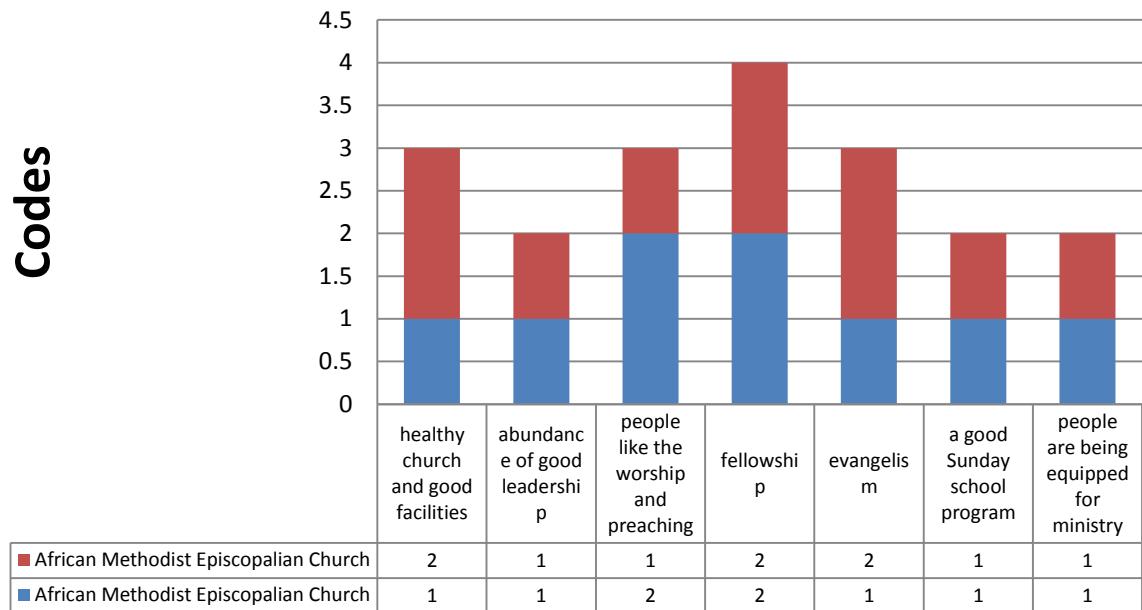
Attendance at The Christian Apostolic Church

Codes

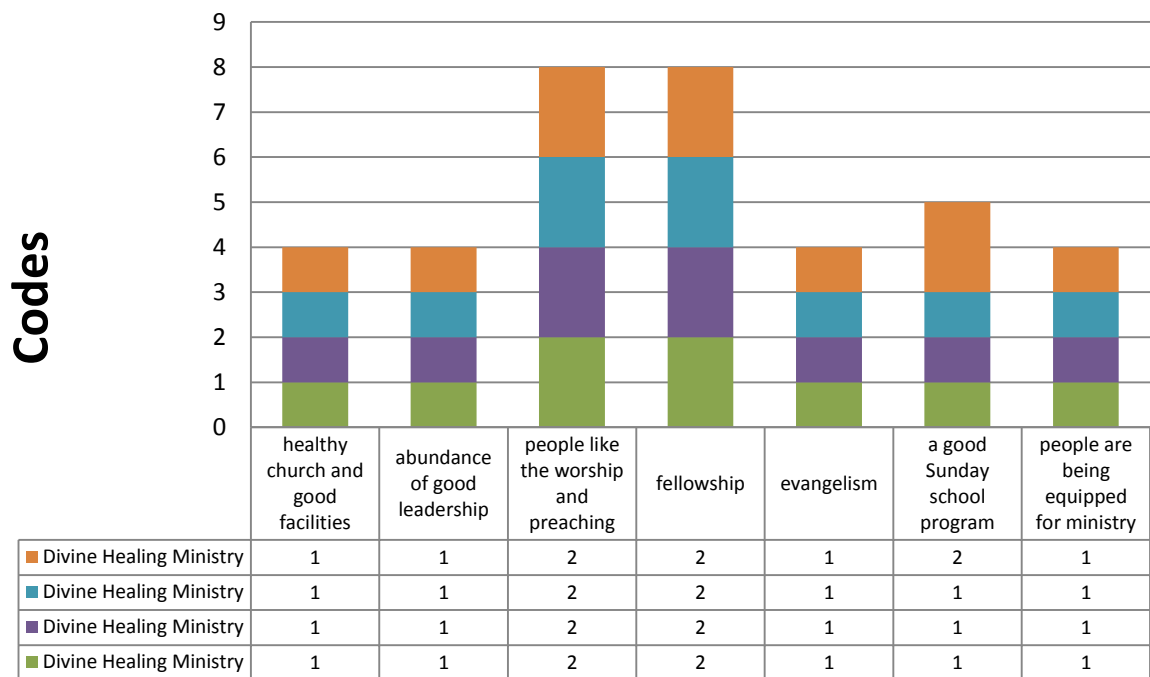


■ The Christian Apostolic Church in Zion	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	2
■ The Christian Apostolic Church in Zion	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	2
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■ The Christian Apostolic Church in Zion	2	1	2	1	3	4	3	3

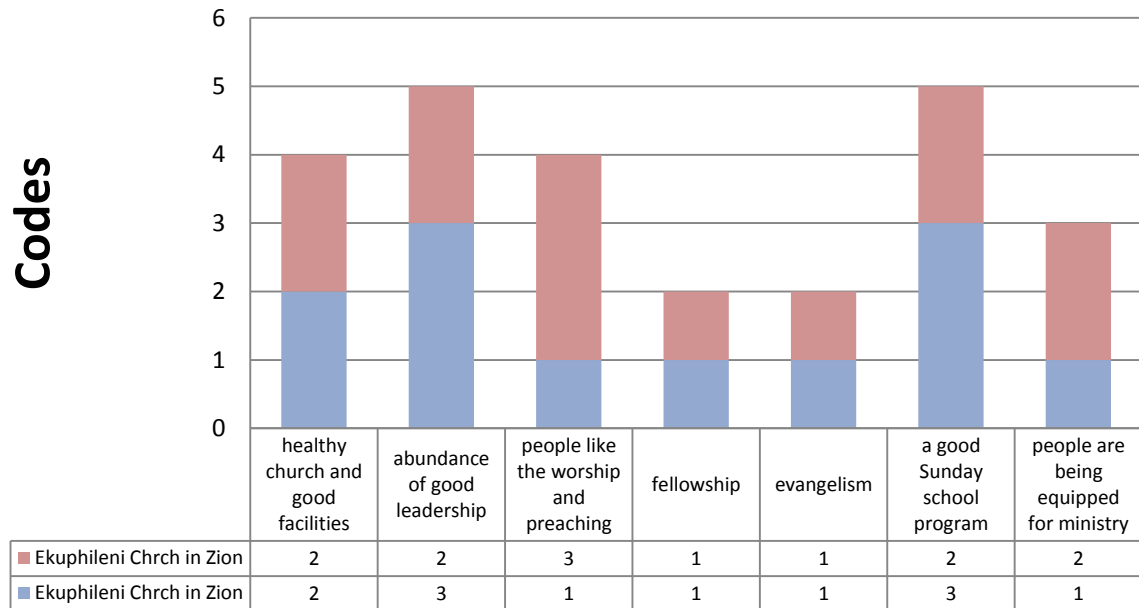
Church Growth at African Methodist Church



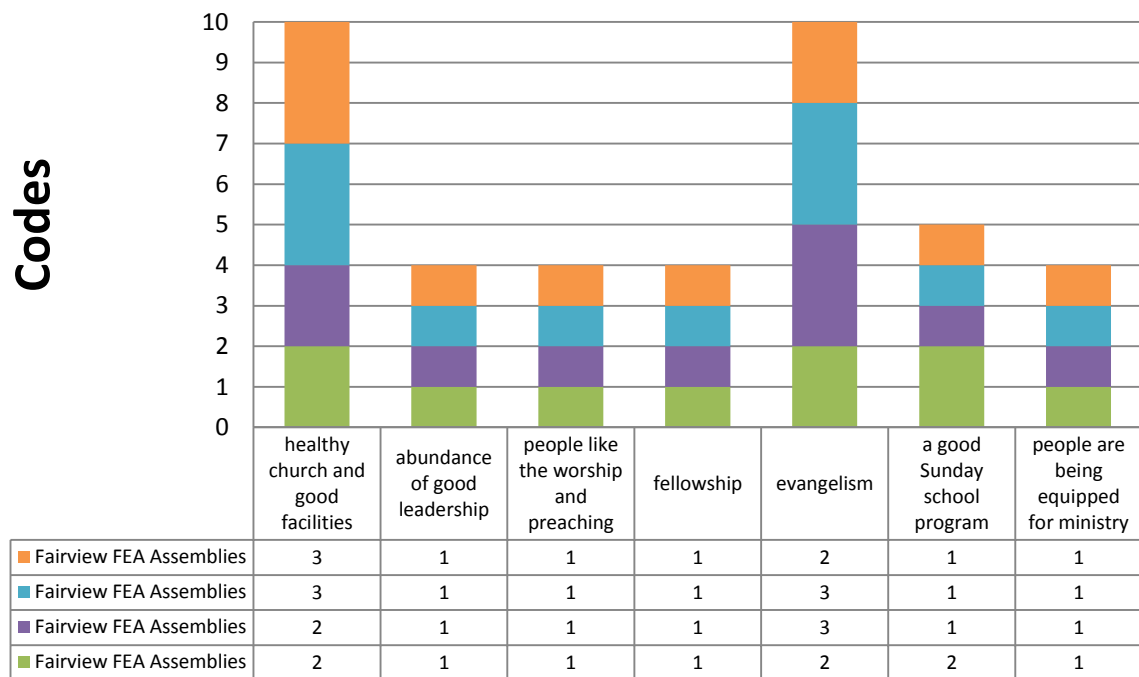
Church growth at Divine Healing Ministry



Church growth at Ekuphileni Church In Zion



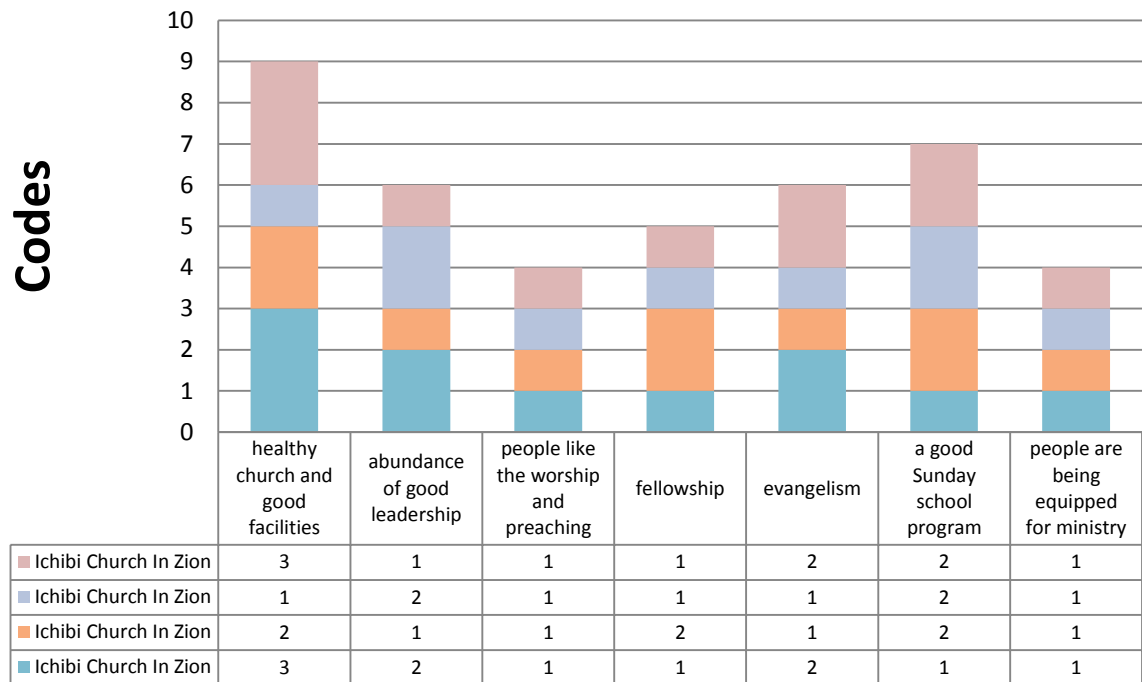
Church growth at Fairview FEA



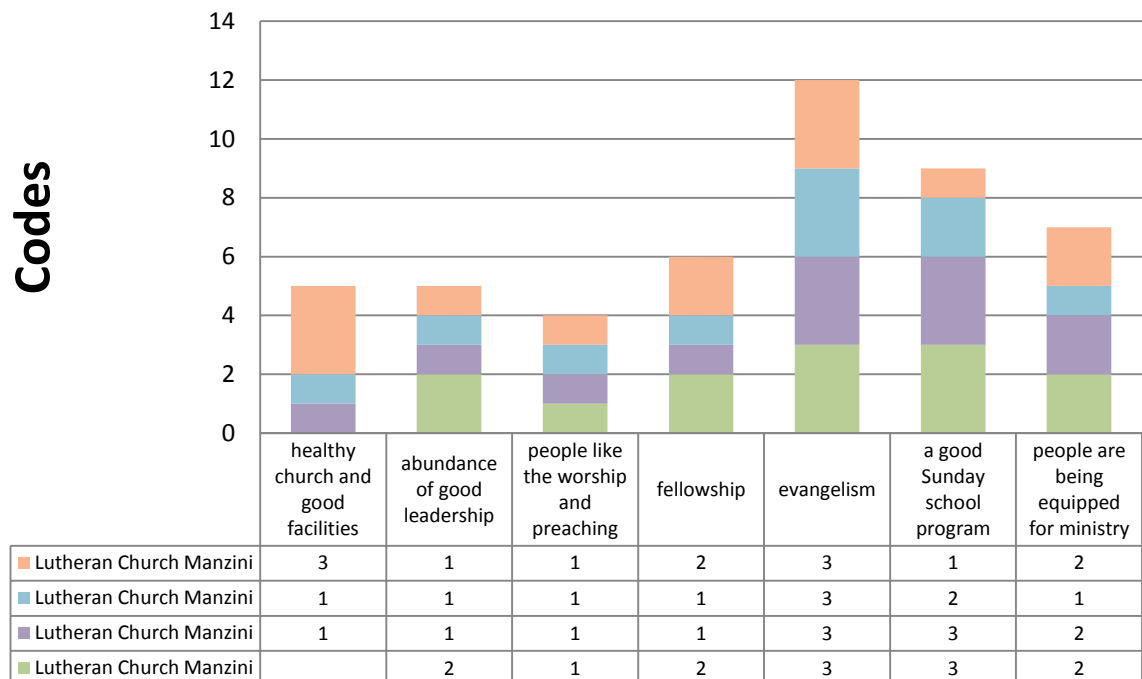
Church growth at Family Worship Centre



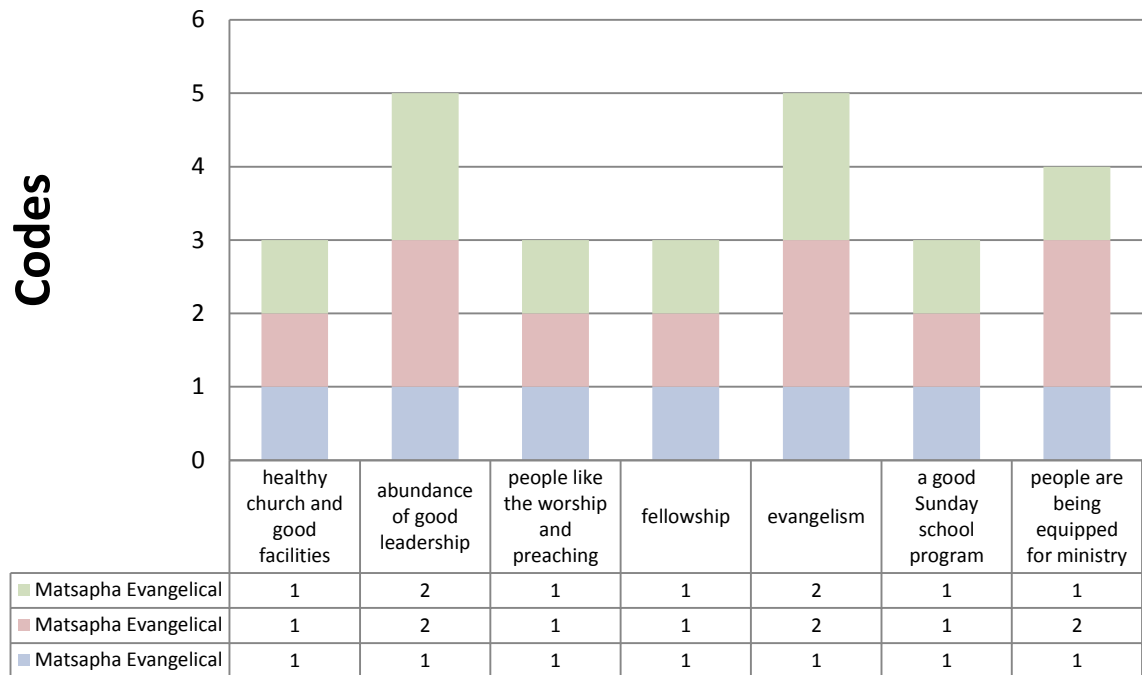
Church growth at Ichibi Church in Zion



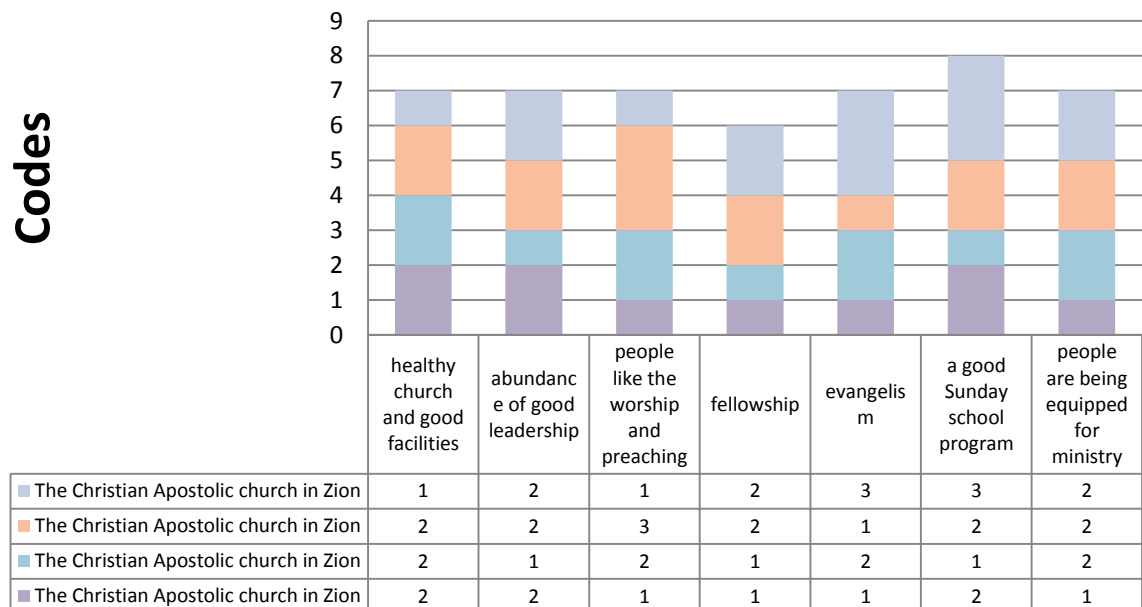
Church growth at Lutheran Church Manzini



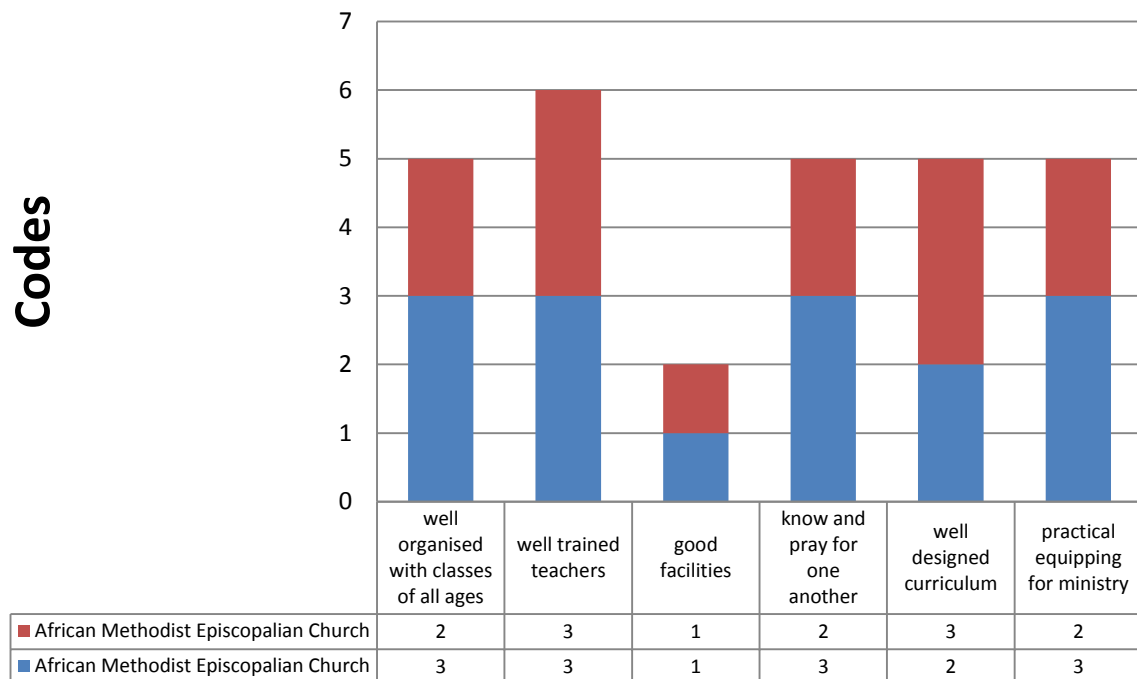
Church growth at Matsapha Evangelical



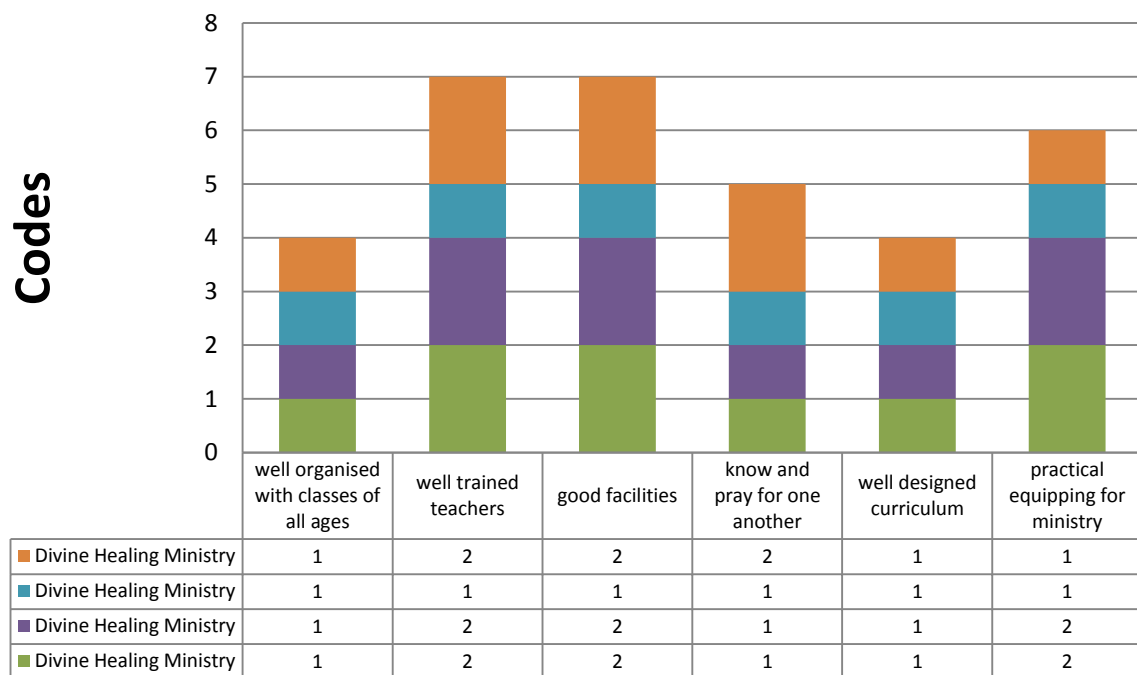
Church growth at The Christian Apostolic church in Zion



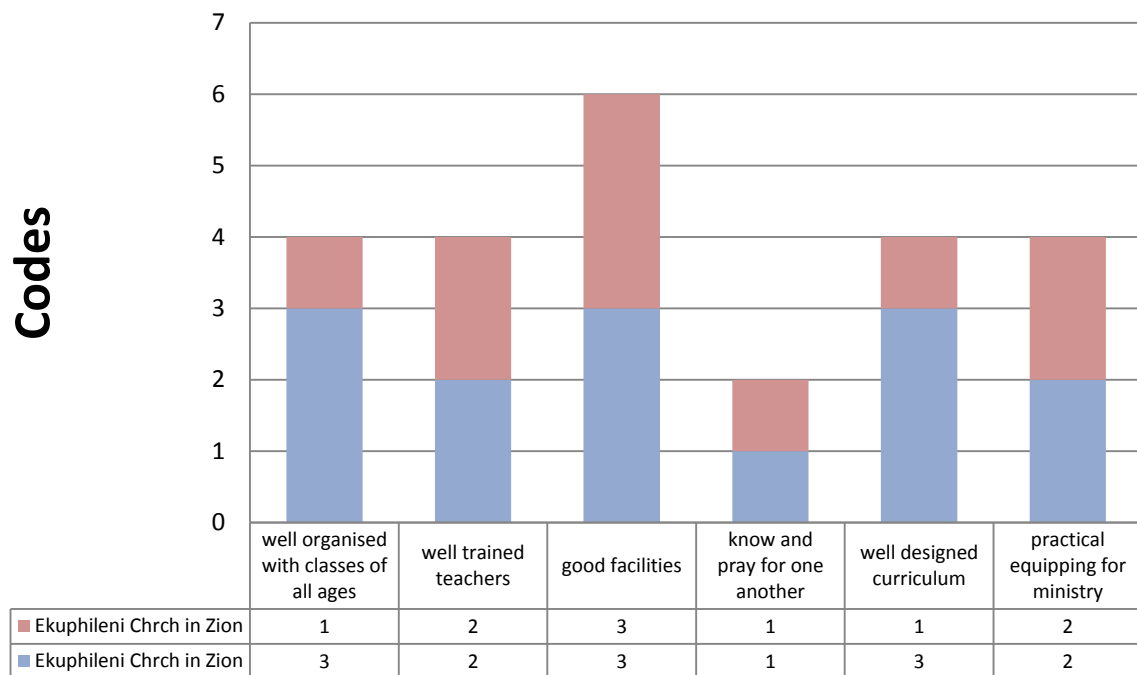
Strength of the Sunday school programme



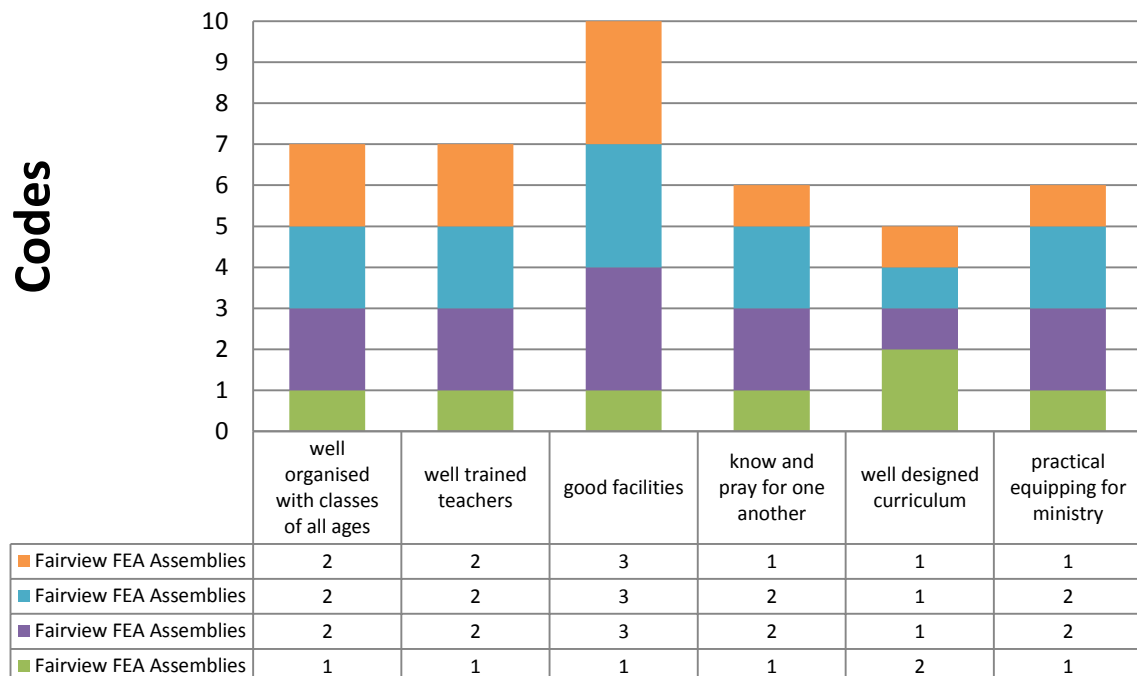
Strength of the Sunday school programme



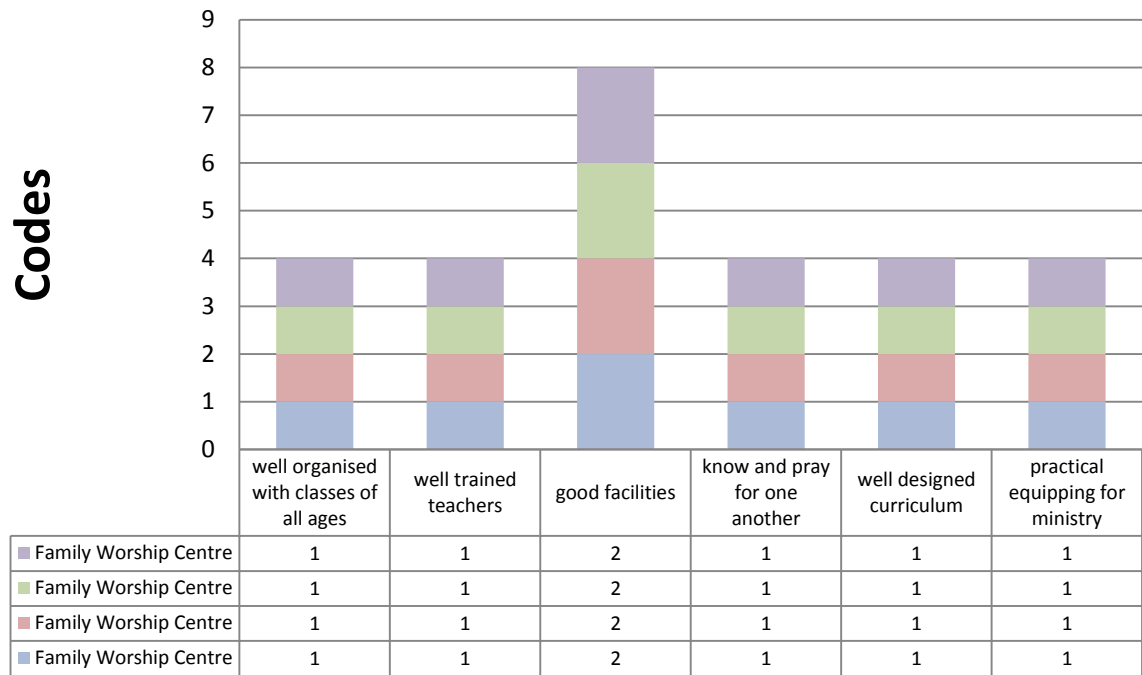
Strength of the Sunday school programme



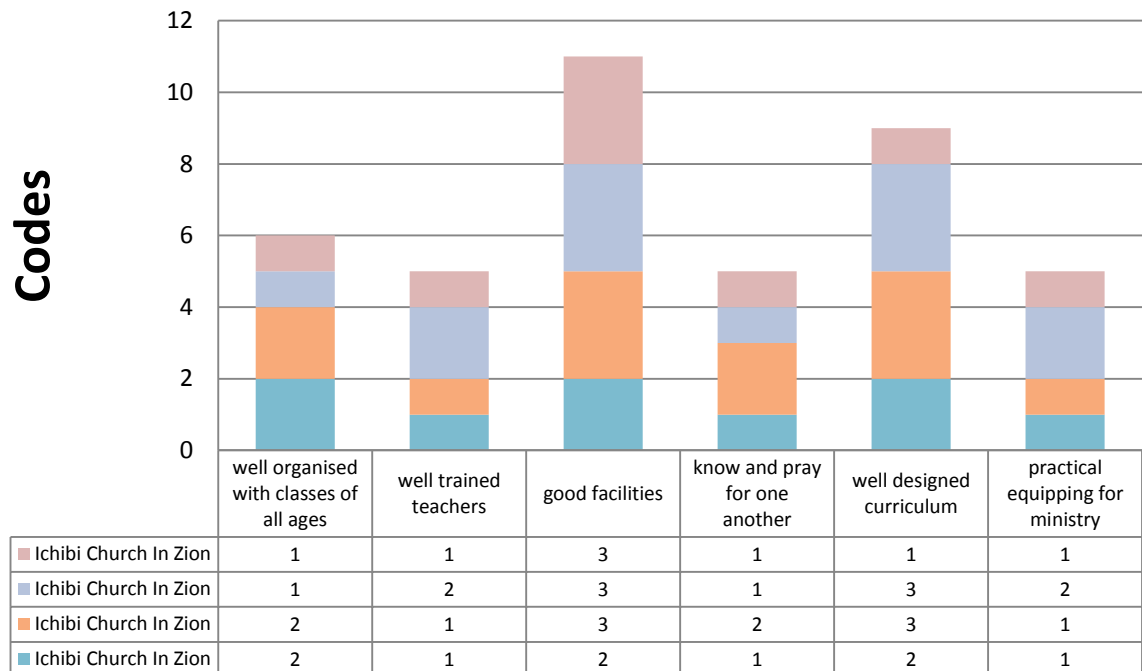
Strength of the Sunday school programme



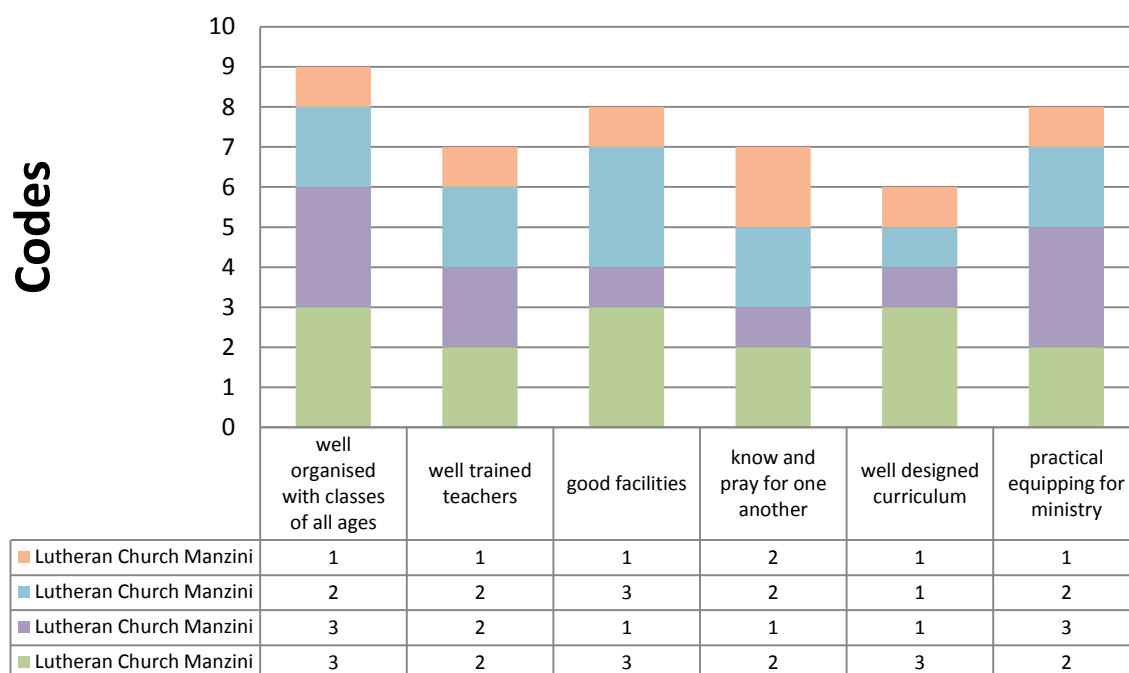
Strength of Sunday school programme



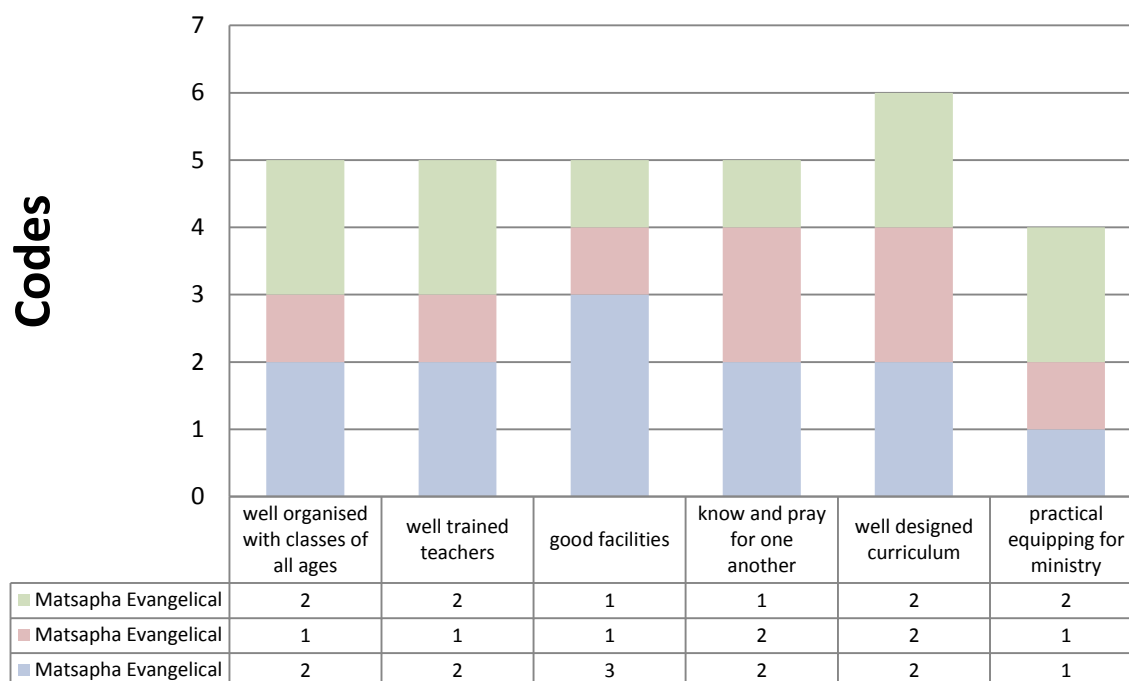
Strength of Sunday school programme



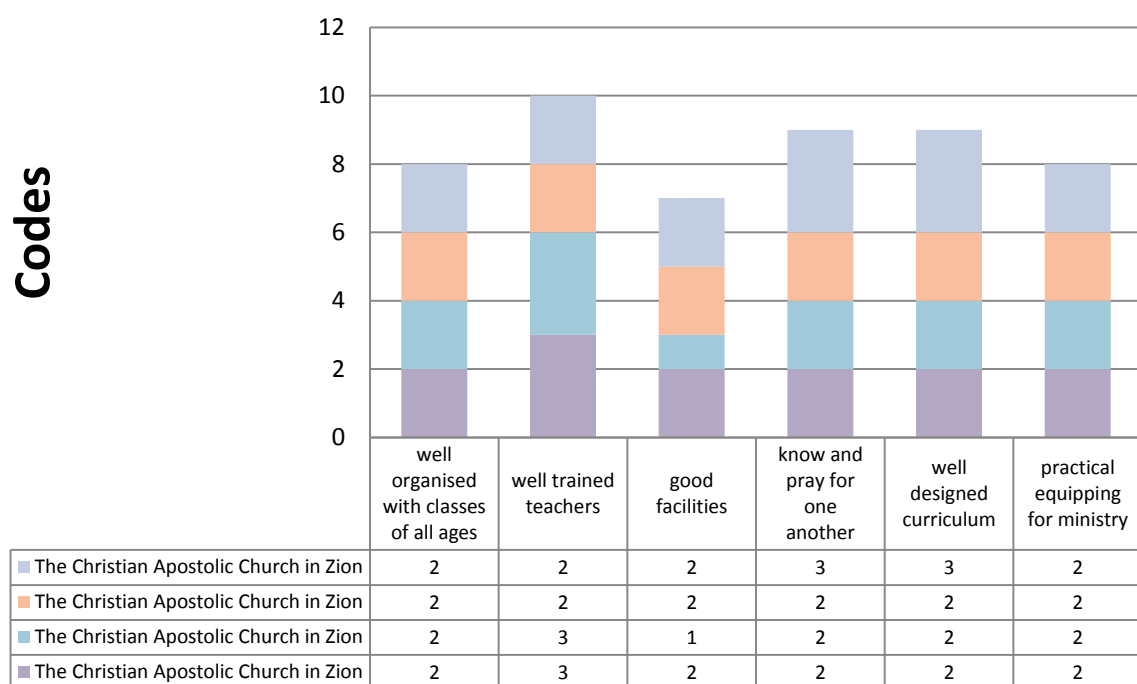
Strength of Sunday school programme



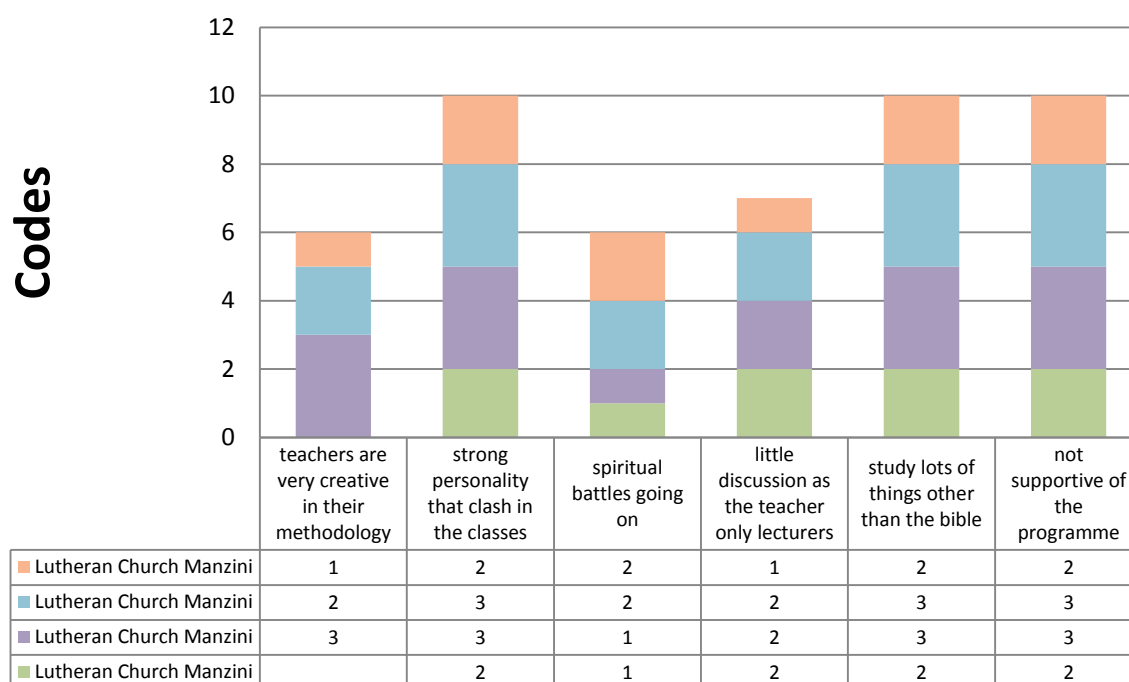
Strength of Sunday school programme



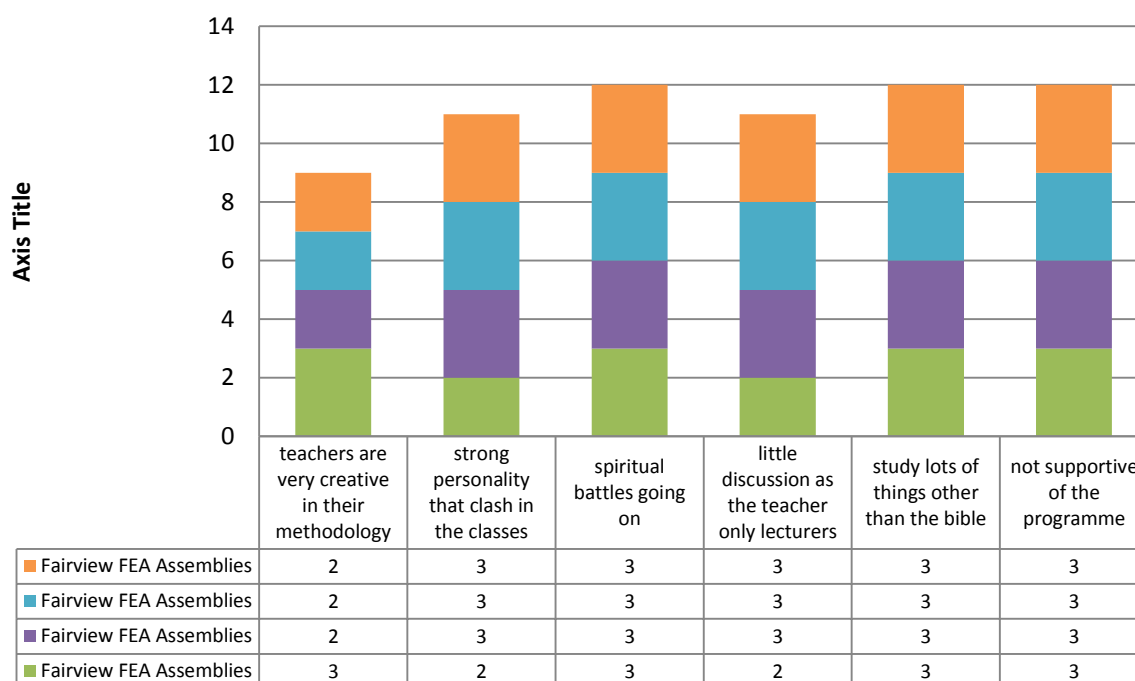
Strength of Sunday school programme



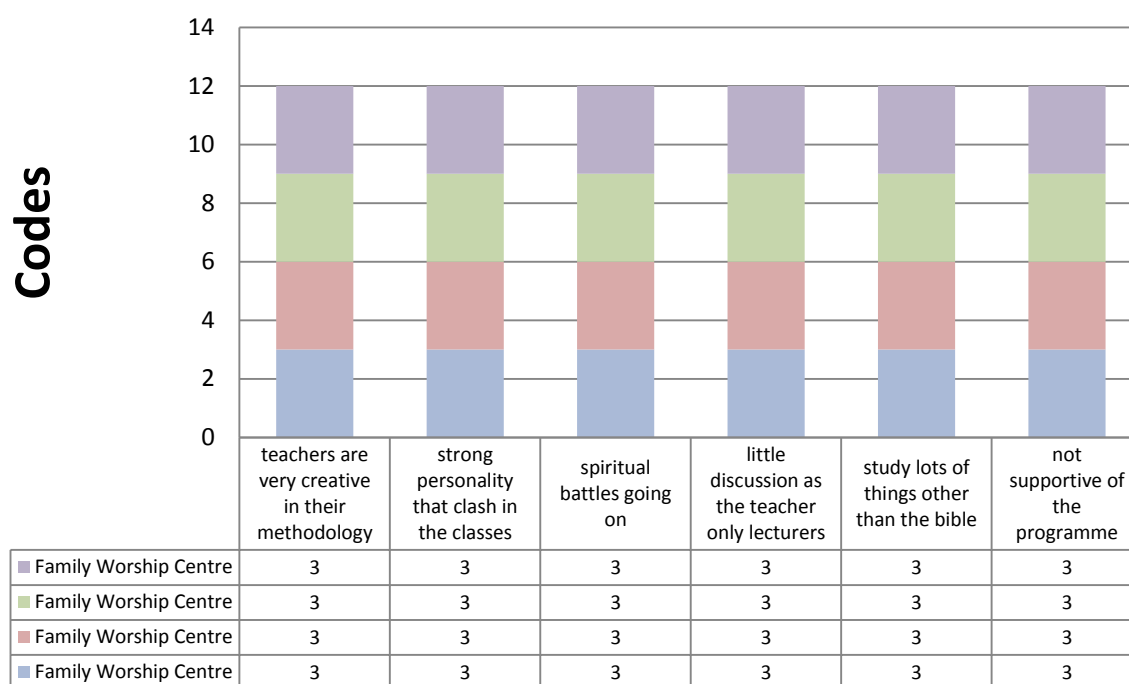
Challenges existing at Sunday school



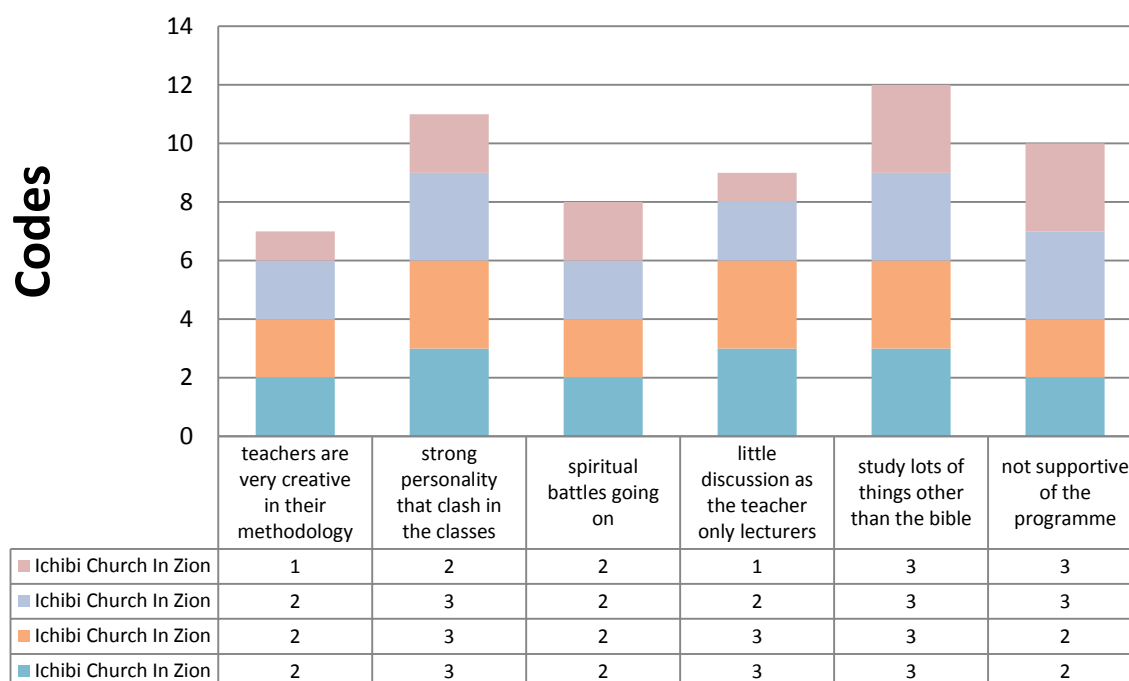
Challenges existing at Sunday school



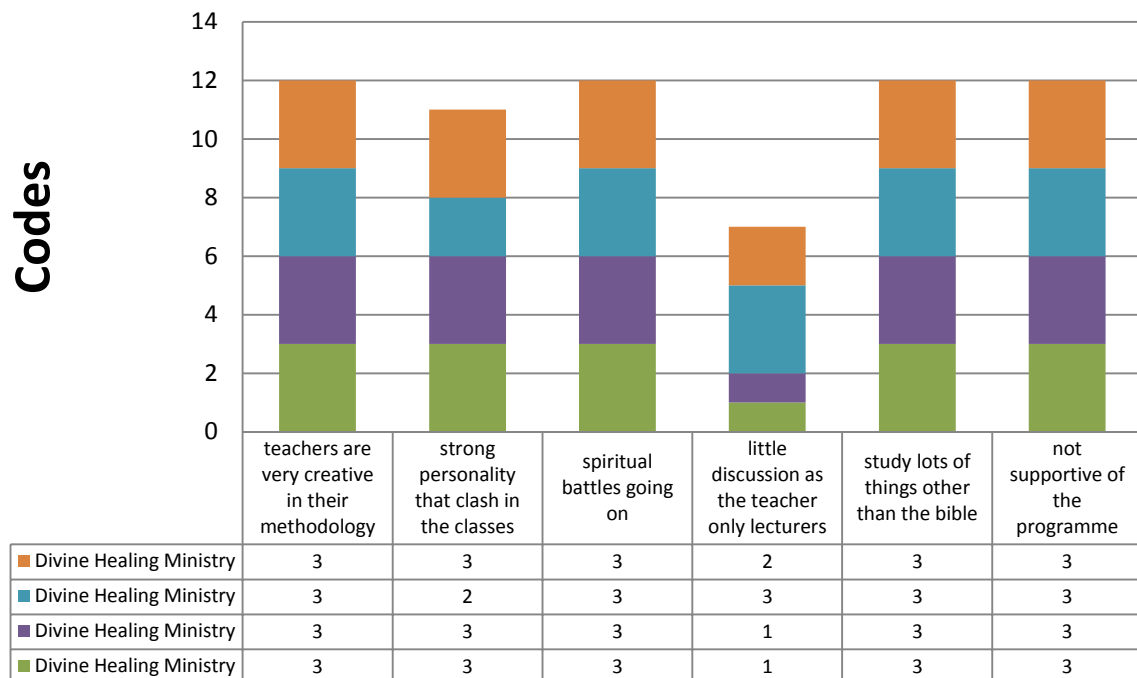
Challenges existing at Sunday school



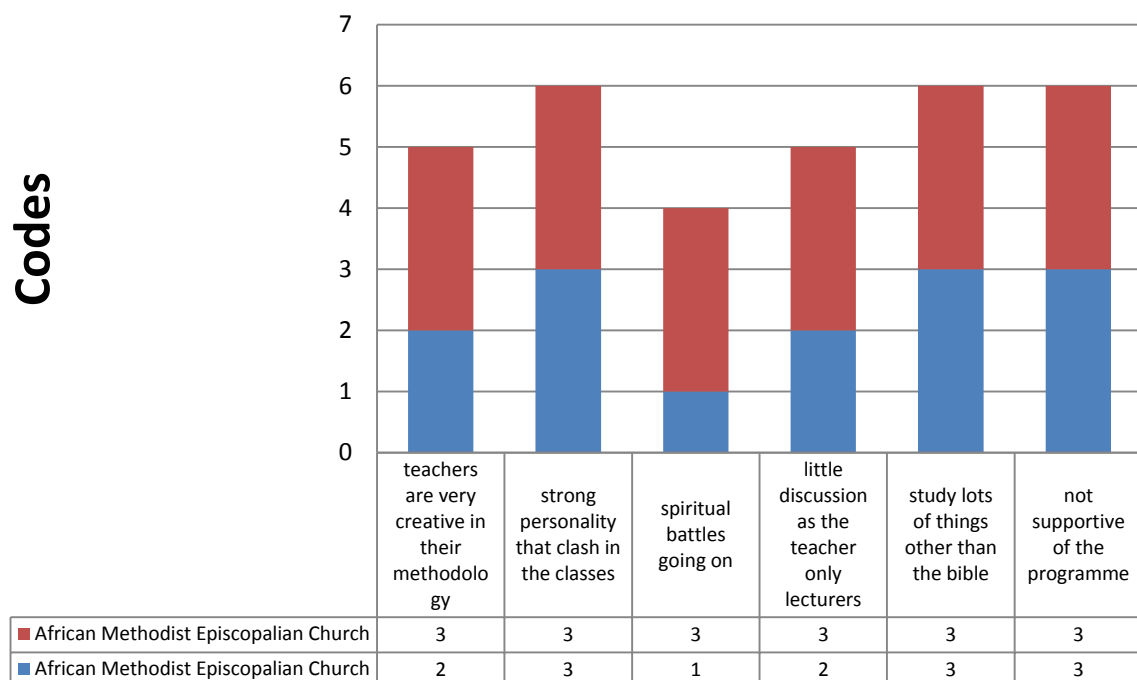
Challenges existing at Sunday school



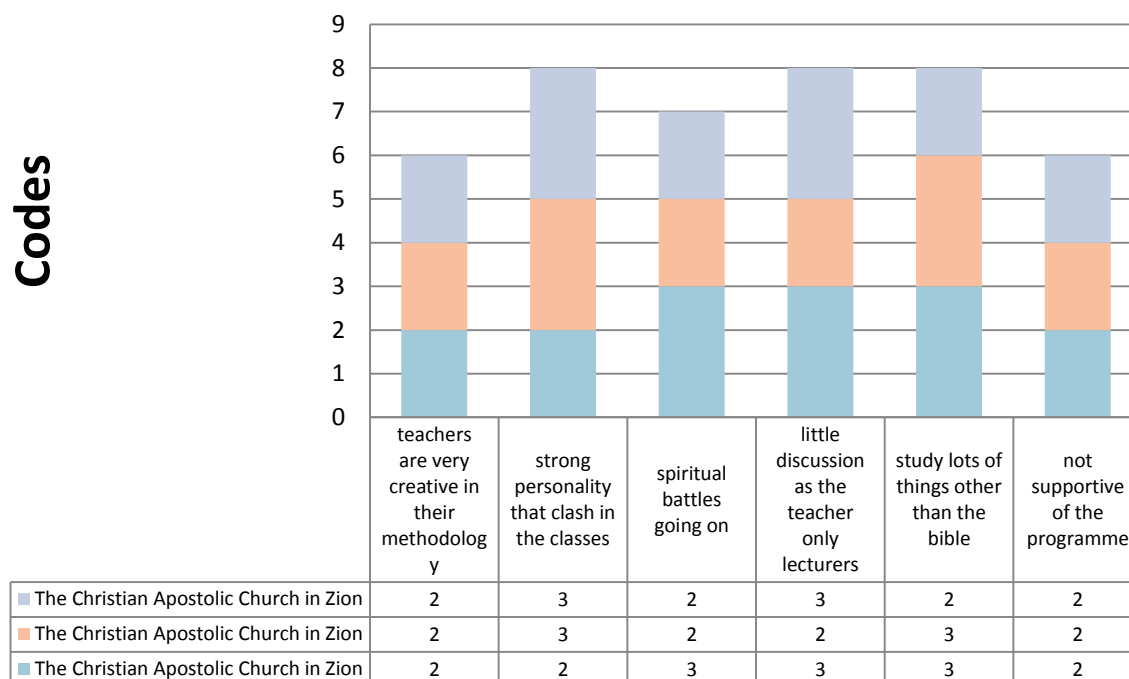
Challenges existing at Sunday school



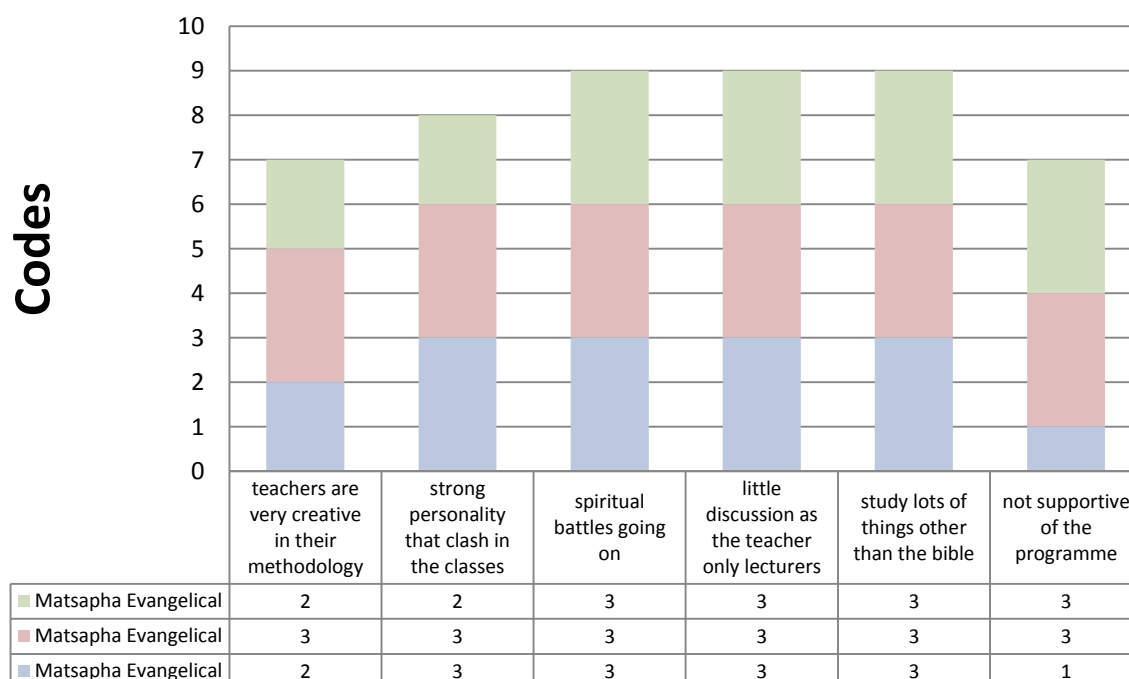
Challenges existing at Sunday school



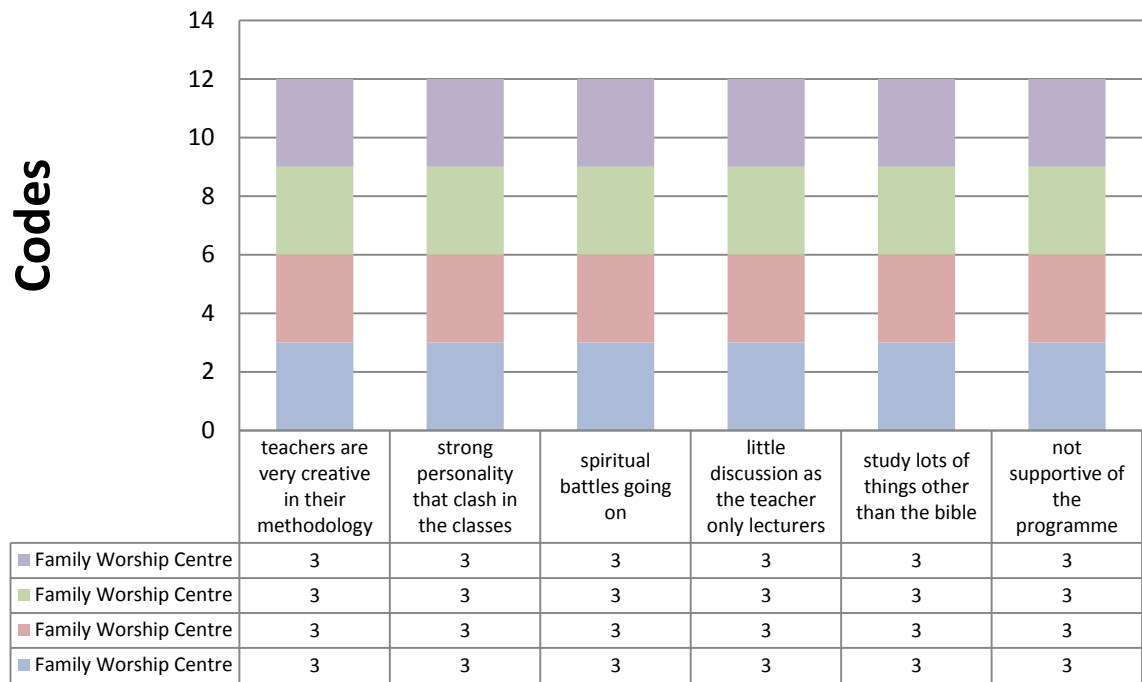
Challenges existing at Sunday school



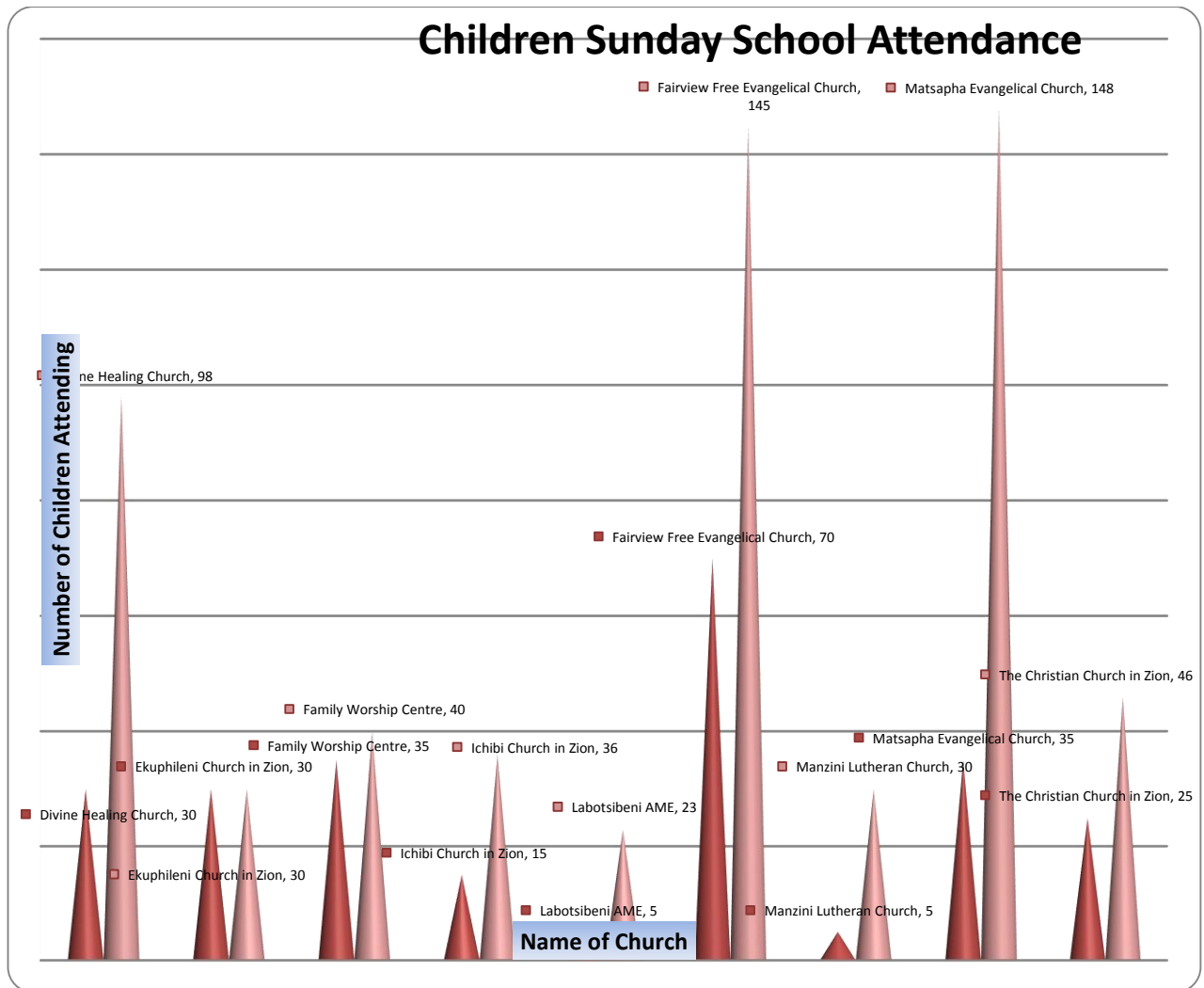
Challenges existing at Sunday school



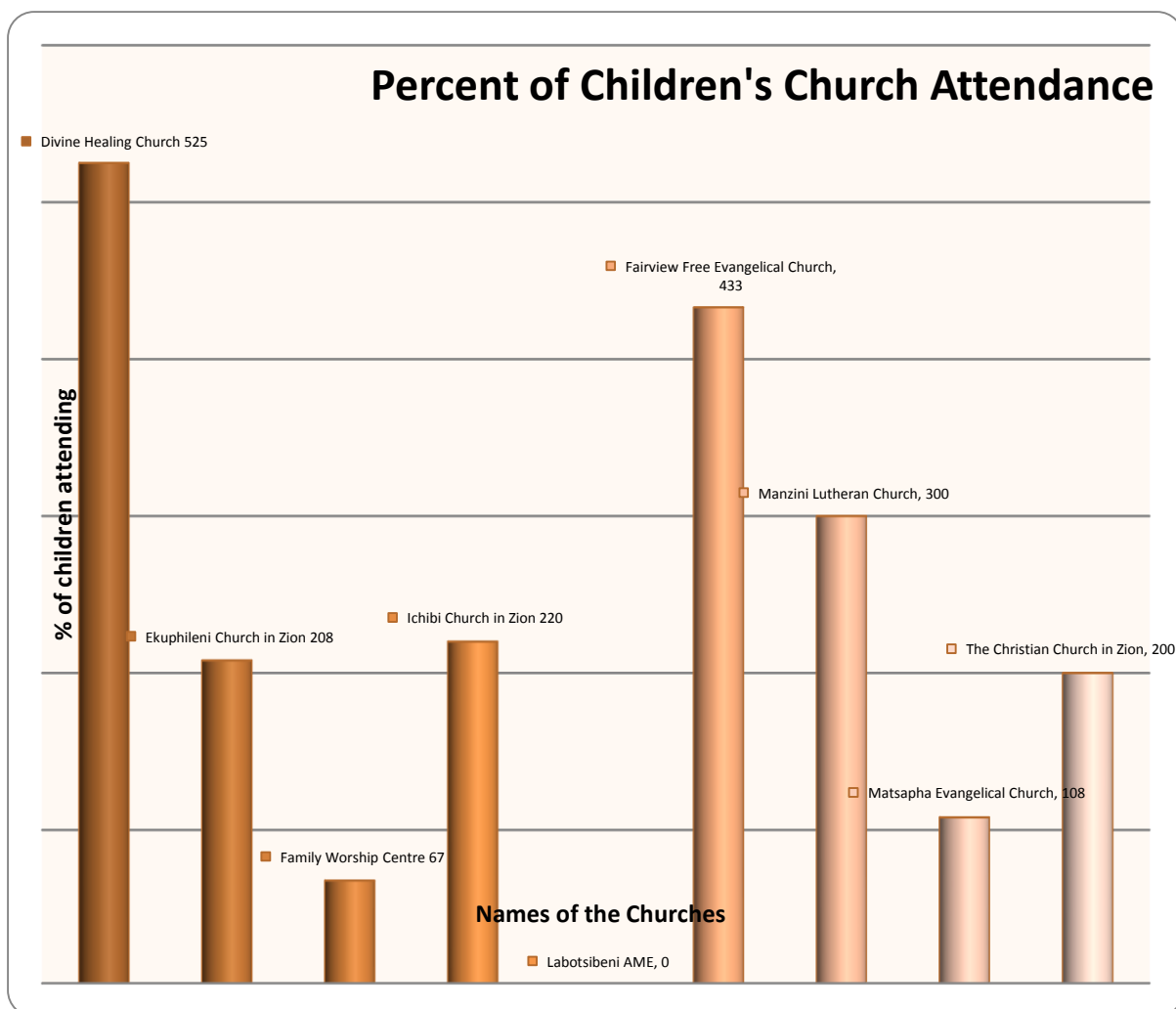
Challenges existing at Sunday school



Appendix 4



Appendix 5



Appendix 6

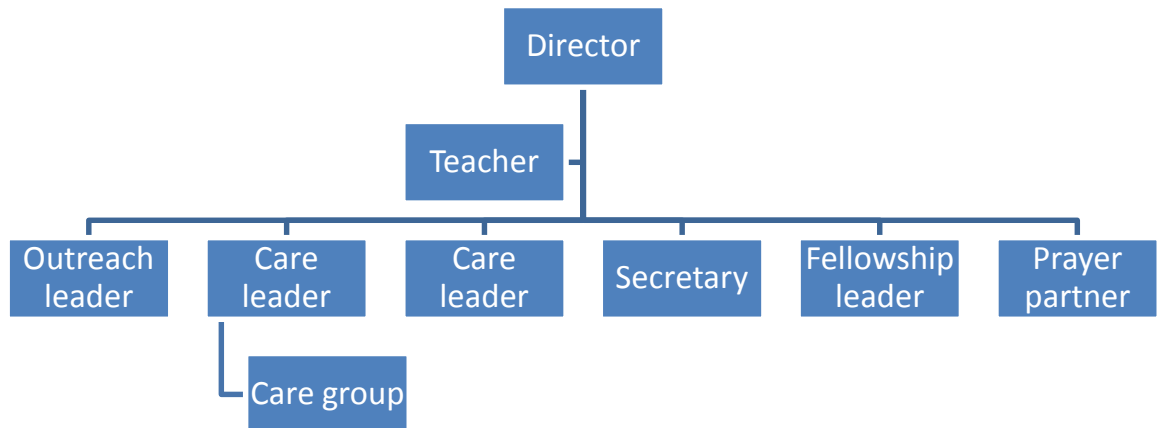
A sample job description for a Sunday school director

The Sunday school director will be involved in the following overall activities in planning, conducting, and evaluating the work of the Sunday school.

- Arrive about 30 minutes before the Sunday school begins each Sunday in order to survey the entire Sunday school facilities to ensure that everything is ready.
- Visit classes, oversee the arrival of members and visitors, and help solve problems and meet the needs of workers and pupils on Sunday morning.
- Regularly attend Sunday school workers' meetings, and participate as needed. Attend other Sunday school meetings and training sessions as needed.
- Support the overall work of the church as led by the pastor and staff, including regular attendance at services.
- Support any evangelistic efforts by the Sunday school.
- Serve on the Sunday school team.
- Advise the pastor and other relevant stakeholders of any particular needs relating to Sunday school.
- Train and help teachers to organise their classes.
- Discover and recommend new teachers to the pastor.

Appendix 7

Sample adult Sunday school organisation chart



Adult organisational structure - every adult class should have at least the following:

1. Teacher: responsible to lead in the studying of God's Word on Sunday morning. Serves as the class leader.
2. Outreach leader: leads the class to make specific plans to discover prospects and make contacts.
3. Care leader: organise the class into groups of approximately eight people each. Enlist group leaders to minister to their group and contact members when absent.
4. Secretary: keep accurate and up-to-date records.
5. Fellowship leader: plans fellowship to build community spirit.
6. Prayer leader: prays for the needs of the class and Sunday school.

Appendix 8

Sample purpose statement for Sunday school

The purpose of Sunday school is fourfold:

1. Win people to Christ
2. Teach people God's word
3. Build supportive relationships
4. Encourage Christian service

SAMPLE PURPOSE STATEMENT OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL

The purpose statement of Sunday school of the Mt. Pleasant Church is based upon scriptural references found in Deuteronomy 31:12-13.

It reads as such, "Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land which you crossed the Jordan to possess" (NKJV).

Reading, memorising, and meditating upon the Word of God are of no value without obedience to the Word of God. To obey the Word of God, you do what the Word of God indicates should be done in any situation. Obedience to the Word of God is the only way that the child of God can be pleasing to God in the new life of faith. Obedience to God's Word results in:

■ Discipleship and making disciples

■ Guidance for life

■ Promise of God's presence

■ Prayer

■ Safety and freedom from anxiety

■ Abiding in the love of God

■ Being treasured by God

■ Eternal life

■ Assurance of salvation

■ A Christ-centred life

■ God's blessing

■ A changed life

■ Witnessing

■ Greatness in the kingdom of heaven

■ Fellowship

■ Bible Study

■ Fruit-bearing

■ Entrance into heaven

■ Avoidance of evil

■ Manifesting love for God

■ Ministering to others

Appendix 9

Sample Sunday school teacher's covenant

Read the following covenant and tick the appropriate box for each statement. Please sign and date at the bottom if you wish to join yourself to a group of leaders committed to ministry.

1. I have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.	Yes	No
2. I feel called of God to serve him through Sunday school.		
3. I will strive to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.		
4. I will actively participate in training and growing opportunities.		
5. I will actively participate in reaching lost and unchurched persons.		
6. I will actively participate in planning meetings.		
7. I will do all I can to make Sunday school mornings a positive, uplifting, experience.		
8. I will be faithful in tithing (giving 10% of my gross earning).		
9. I will completely refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages.		
10. I will attend Sunday morning worship services and any mid-week church services or activity		
11. I will be supportive to the pastor and Sunday school staff		
12. I have read and agree with all the above		

Before my Lord Jesus Christ, I commit myself to serve him and his church by faithfully ministering through the Sunday school.

Sign.....

Date

Appendix 10

How to write a lesson objective

In the process of planning a lesson, a well-written objective makes the task easier. A teacher needs to prioritise the content and know what to include and what may be left out. How should an objective be written? One must remember that an objective is a statement of the kind of learning a student should achieve and what will indicate that the learning has occurred.

- It should be written in terms of the student and not the teacher
- It should be attainable and relevant
- The use of action verbs makes objectives more measureable.

Example:

Goal: develop an understanding of God

Objective (what is to be learned): develop an understanding of the sovereignty of God (how?) by analysing the meaning of Galatians 4:4 in view of God's timing of Jesus' coming to earth.

Note: that the objective began with an action verb "develop", which is then connected with another action verb "analyse". The temptation is to use the verb "understand" by itself but that leaves the objective too vague, making it difficult to measure and to even attain. Be specific when stating the kind of learning intended. On Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning this objective requires the student to engage in learning near the uppermost level because it requires the student to analyse information.

Appendix 11

Teacher's guide

The Sunday school teacher is expected to provide leadership in the class, teach the students, enlist the team, lead the team planning meetings and attend workers' meetings.

The purpose of our Sunday school is to:

1. Reach people for Bible study and to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Every person who does not know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord is lost. Millions of people are on their way to hell, an eternal destiny without hope, without Christ, without God (John 14:6, Acts 4:12).

2. Teach them the Word of God

When a person studies the Word of God regularly, that person is far more likely to be saved. When a person attends Sunday school and studies the Word regularly, Christian growth occurs.

3. Minister to their needs

When a person's needs are being met by those in their Sunday school group, they feel loved. They see the love of Jesus demonstrated in a tangible way.

The goal for our Sunday school is for members to minister to other members.

The purpose of the Sunday school is accomplished through (1) Bible study that meets spiritual needs, (2) outreach and active witnessing born out of concern for the unreached, (3) a caring ministry for members and new prospects, and (4) an active participation in total church life.

You have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of people. By committing yourself to the purpose of the Sunday school, you can help fulfil the Great Commission and be a faithful servant of the Lord.

There are people all around who need the witness and ministry of an excellent Bible study class. You can be a partner with God as he fulfils his plans for our community. You may think that you do not have the ability, but it is not your ability that God needs. God always gives to us the resources we need to carry out his work to which

he has called us. It is your availability that God needs. Will you not let him bless you as you serve him through Sunday school this year?

The task of the Sunday School:

1. Reach persons for Bible study
2. Teach the Bible
3. Witness to persons about Christ and lead them into church membership
4. Minister to persons in need
5. Lead them to worship
6. Explain and undergird the work of the church and denomination.

Appendix 12

How to be an effective Sunday school leader or worker

The guidelines for workers on this page are a standard of excellence for our Sunday school. They are not meant to produce guilt on the part of the worker, but they are goals that we need to work towards. If we strive for these goals we will reach more people for Jesus Christ and make disciples of them. This is our Commission as the Sunday school.

1. Be a Christian and an adult member of the church (John 15:8; 2 Timothy 5:22).
2. Attend all Sunday school training opportunities (2 Timothy 2:15; Philippians 2:2).
3. Organise the class with at least the following leaders:
 - a. Secretary
 - b. Outreach leader
 - c. Fellowship leader
 - d. Care group leader
 - e. Prayer leader
4. Contact absentees and new prospects each week (Matthew 28:19-20).
5. Support outreach ministry of the Sunday school by having at least one team with a representative from your class.
6. Support the total mission of the church. Be regular in attendance. All workers shall be present fifteen minutes before Sunday school begins (2 Peter 3:14).
7. Support the church faithfully with your tithe (Malachi 3:10).

Teacher

1. Provide leadership
2. Teach
3. Enlist the team (with outreach leader)
4. Lead the team planning meeting
5. Attend workers' meetings

Outreach leader

1. Assign members to groups
2. Assign prospects to groups
3. Maintain prospect file
4. Welcome visitors and enrol them
5. Lead class meeting
6. Enlist group leaders
7. Attend weekly workers' meeting

Fellowship leader

1. Assist outreach leader
2. Lead members in ministry to members and prospects
3. Lead planning fellowship activities
4. Attend the team meeting

Secretary

1. Maintain records
2. Enrol visitors
3. Provide a list of absentees to outreach leader

Group leader = key to success

1. Cultivate and enrol prospects
2. Contact prospects and members weekly
3. Minister to members and prospects
4. Attend the team meeting

Members

1. Attend Bible study
2. Seek and enrol prospects
3. Pray for, and witness to, the lost
4. Minister to members and prospects

Appendix 13

An example of a Sunday school lesson

Below is an example of a lesson that can be taught to adults that incorporates all the principles that have been mentioned above.

Title: Imitating the character of your divine friend (part one)

Central truth: Yielding to the works of the flesh is an indication of spiritual immaturity.

Memory verse: “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24).

Lesson objectives: At the end of this lesson the student should be able to:

1. Desire Christ-like character
2. Demonstrate Christ-like character in the way you treat other Christians
3. Teach Christ-like character

Lesson activity: the students will divide into small groups of four people each and discuss and record the dangers of having believers in the church who still manifest the works of the flesh. One member of the group will present the findings to the rest of the Sunday school class.

Lesson evaluation: five minutes before the end of class each student will be required to write a 3-5 sentence reflection paper on what they have learned today.

Lesson text

Gal 5:16-21.

The author offers this lesson as a sample that one can use to organise his/her content.

Lesson outline

- I. The foundation for Christ-like character. Galatians 5:16-18
 - a. Living by the Spirit vs.16-17
 - b. Being led by the Spirit vs.18

- II. The Hindrances to Christ-like character. Galatians 5:19-21
 - a. Sins of sexual pleasure vs.19
 - b. Sins of religiosity vs.20
 - c. Sins against social relationships vs.20b-21a

Introduction

The primary demand after one has become a believer in Christ is for that person to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2; 1 Peter 4:1; 2; Peter 3:18; Colossians 1:27). Spiritual growth is manifested by Christ-like living which is described as “fruit” by the apostle Paul.

Paul, having defended his apostleship and his right to preach the gospel, indicated to the Galatians that it was by grace alone that salvation is obtained and by this act, the believer is free from the law and brought into a right relationship with God. Paul indicated further that the liberty into which believers are called is not a liberty to live in sin but rather a liberty that leads to spiritual maturity, holiness before God and service to God and mankind.

This liberty also expresses itself in Christian virtues through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Paul explained that only through the Holy Spirit and by the Spirit’s power can believers live for God and not fulfil the desires of their sinful nature. He emphasised this point by contrasting the works of the sinful nature with the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:17-23.

Paul explained that there is continuous war taking place between the physical flesh and the spirit in the life of the believer (5:17). However, the believer submits to Christ through faith and not to the desires of the flesh by continually depending upon and yielding to the Holy Spirit. It is in this light that the apostle Paul challenges his listeners to bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is the manifestation of Christ-like character.

Therefore this lesson aims at helping the believer to appreciate the need for spiritual maturity and building a Christ-like character by yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Lesson Plan

- I. **The foundation for Christ-like character – Galatians 5:16-18**
 - a. Living by the Spirit. Gal 5:16-18

Paul indicated a need for a life that is controlled and empowered by the Spirit. This is because every believer has two natures - a sinful nature inherited from the fallen Adam, and a new nature received when one accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (2 Corinthians 5:17). Both natures have desires, the one for evil, the other for holiness. Thus they are in conflict with each other. The result can be that they keep the believer from what God wishes for them. It is the Spirit who makes victory possible.

To live by the Spirit implies living under the influence of the Holy Spirit and following his direction so as not to yield to sinful desires or give way to temptations to sin. It also implies remaining in communion with God, making decisions in the light of his holiness and being occupied with Christ in our daily walk. Believers should allow their whole lives to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. This command is important for our spiritual maturity because, as Paul indicated, the sinful nature strongly desires what the Holy Spirit forbids and likewise the Holy Spirit opposes the sinful desires of the flesh. Hence there is warfare within every person (Romans 7:15-25). When we live by (or “walk”) in the Spirit, the flesh or self is considered as dead to sin (Colossians 3:1-3).

b. Being led by the Spirit – Galatians 5:18

To be led by the Spirit in this context implies our submission to the leadership of the Spirit who grants us the ability to resist the desires of the flesh. Paul emphasised in this context that a godly life is not lived under the rules of the law, but is a life led by the Spirit. No one is delivered from the condemning power of the law or overcomes the corruptions of one’s heart except under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

As believers go through life they should depend on the indwelling Holy Spirit for guidance and power. When believers yield to the Spirit’s control they do not fulfil the desires of the sinful nature. Thus, while no believer will entirely be free in this life from the evil desires due to fallen human nature, they have the ability not to surrender to those desires when led by the Spirit

II. The hindrances to Christ-like character – Galatians 5:19-21

Sins of sexual pleasure (Gal 5:19)

- (i) Sexual immorality

Paul began the list of the works of the flesh with what was acknowledged to be the most shameless immoral habit of the Greek and Roman worlds, which is “sexual immorality” or “fornication” (Greek: *porneia*). Fornication (*porneia*), as used in the New Testament, has four different connotations. It is used as a reference to premarital sex (1 Corinthians 7:1-2); it is a synonym for adultery (Matthew 19:9); it is a generic term for all forms of sexual immorality; and in a specific sense it refers to harlotry or prostitution (Revelation 2:20-21). As in the broadest terms this act denotes any immoral sexual intercourse or illicit sexual relationship, it therefore includes any sort of sexual intercourse between the unmarried, homosexuals, lesbians, and sex between close relatives (incest) (1 Corinthians 6:13,18).

INSIGHT:

The word “pornography” is from the Greek “porneia”

(ii) Impurity

Impurity (Greek: *akatharsia*) literally means “uncleanness” and has both a medical and ceremonial connotation. It refers to a person who is either morally or ceremonially unclean. Under the Mosaic Law, ceremonial impurity or uncleanness barred one from participation in the worship rituals of the temple until the person was made ritually clean. In a broad sense, it refers to moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed (Ephesians 5:3-4). It also speaks of the filthiness of heart and mind that makes a person defiled (Titus 1:15). Uncleanness, then, speaks of the defilement of sexual sin and separation from God that it brings. Paul used it exclusively to imply moral impurity.

The remedy for such sins is confession and repentance. If we confess and repent, the promise of God’s Word is that God is faithful and just to forgive and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

(iii) Debauchery

“Debauchery” (Greek: *aselgeia*), also referred to as “lewdness”, describes acts such as usage of “filthy words”, “indecent bodily movements”, “unchaste handling of males and females” (Romans 13:11-14; Ephesians 4:17-19; 1 Peter 4:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:21). In this regard it is a term that is used to designate the worst forms of several sins. William Barclay defines this particular vice as a love of sin that

makes a person cease to care what God or people think of their actions (1993:16). Debauchery, then, speaks of total loss of limits, the lack of restraint, decency, and self-respect (Hosea 4:2, 8:11).

(iv) Lasciviousness

This is another word close to the meaning of the word “debauchery”. It also speaks of an excessive appetite that knows no shame. All those sins were rampant in the Roman Empire. Paul warns against disregard for standards of sexual purity and a liberal lifestyle that in the end will lead to destruction.

a. Sins of religiosity (Gal 5:20a)

Paul goes on to list two sins that relate to one’s religious practice. These are “idolatry” and “witchcraft”.

Idolatry (Greek *eidololatreia*) denotes image-worship or the worship of a creature rather than the creator (Romans 1:21-25). Idolatry may take the following forms:

1. Fetishism, which is the worship of trees, rivers hills, stones etc.
2. Nature worship, which includes the worship of the sun, the moon, stars, and other elements of nature
3. Hero worship, that is, the worship of deceased ancestors or people considered as heroes.

In the New Testament, the term idolatry is used to designate covetousness (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13; Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5). This means that any strong desire for material things that replaces our desire for God is a form of idolatry. Thus we can be idolaters when we make things other than God himself a priority in life. Believers who devote their time to their cars, houses, jobs, hobbies and other material things more than they do to serving Christ may be guilty of idolatry (Colossians 3:5; Matthew 6:21-24).

Therefore idolatry is not just the adoration or worship of images; it is putting things and other beings, dead or alive, ahead of God. Paul describes the origin of idolatry in Romans 1:21-25.

INSIGHT:

It is significant that the word “idolatry” is not found in the text of the classical writers, but belongs to the Christian vocabulary of the New Testament. Idolatry is found in the ancient fertility cult of Baal as well as in the prostitution at the temple of Aphrodite in Corinth where homage paid to these gods was often accompanied by shameful displays of sensuality. In our day, the form of idolatry has changed from worship of images to worship of material things. The reality is as pervasive now as in the time of Paul.

Witchcraft: the word witchcraft or sorcery is from the Greek word “*pharmakeia*”, which means the use of drugs with occult properties for a variety of purposes including abortion. The word also conveys the idea of black magic and demonic control or secret tampering with and the worship of the powers of evil.

Our English word “pharmacy” is derived from this word. In classical Greek “*pharmakeia*” refers to the use of drugs, whether for medical or sinister purposes, such as poisoning. Magicians in Paul’s day used drugs to bring about their evil effects. In the New Testament, however, it is often associated with the occult (Revelation 9:21; 18:23). Some practices related to witchcraft are:

- Magic - the use of secret incantations, charms, amulets, drugs, special exercises or other means to tap supernatural beings or non-physical forces to influence others (Genesis 41:8,16,24,25,28; Exodus 7:11;22,8: 7; 18-19; 2 Kings 9:22).
- Necromancy - consultation with the dead for purposes of receiving information (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:11; 1 Samuel 28:7)
- Astrology -“The pseudo-science which tells the influences of the stars upon human affairs, and of foretelling terrestrial events by their positions and aspects” (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary), (Deuteronomy 17:2-2; Isaiah 47:12-14; Jeremiah 10:2).
- Divination - the effort to tap some power or spirit so as to discover hidden knowledge, especially to be able to foretell the future, or to be able to obtain some special information (Deuteronomy 18:10-14; 1 Samuel 28:8; Isaiah 2:6; Jeremiah 27:9).

INSIGHT:

All activities of sorcery and the occult are forbidden in scripture (Deuteronomy 18:9-22).

b. Sins against social relationships (Gal 5:20b-21a).

This section lists vices considered social sins or sins against social stability which manifests in hostility and resentment against others.

(1) Hatred (Greek: *echthra*) is in the plural form, denoting primarily a feeling of hostility between groups. It means the intense feeling of hostility, which could prompt a person to dislike someone or something, or even seek revenge for having been wronged.

It is also the attitude of the mind that defies and challenges others. This attitude leads to disagreements, which result in strife, the outworking of enmity. The Scripture forbids us to hate others (Leviticus 19:17-18) because it leads to sin. Indeed, hatred itself is considered murder (1 John 3:15). We are called upon to let God avenge all wrongs (Proverbs 20:22), and we are commanded by Jesus to love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44). However, not all aspects of hatred are sinful. The Scripture tells us that God hates evil (Proverbs 6:16-19). Therefore we must also hate evil.

(2) Discord (Greek: *eris*) is the natural outcome of hatred, both in the world and in the church. Four out of six of Paul's usages of the word are connected with church life. In some Bible translations we find words such as strife, selfishness, selfish ambitions, intrigues, factions and rivalry. In the New Testament this word is unique to Paul, who used it nine times to characterise the strife and discord that beset so many of his congregations. It is the source of much wrangling and ill-will among Christians. It negatively affects the body of Christ when believers do not walk in the Spirit, but rather are in disunity.

The word also denotes a spirit of personal ambition and rivalry which sets the person apart from other Christians or personal ambition above service to Christ. Paul exhorted the Romans not to walk "in strife and envy" (Romans 13:13). William Barclay says, "The word denotes a state of things in which men are divided, in which feuds flourish, and in which unity is destroyed". He further states, "it literally means a standing apart, that is

a state in which all community, all fellowship, and all togetherness are gone” (Barclay 1993:54).

(3) Jealousy (Greek: “*zelos*”) refers not to the godly form of jealousy, but to the sinful and self-centered type. These two words, *eris* and *zelos* are listed in Romans 13:13. There is a godly jealousy or zeal (Galatians 4:17) as well as righteous anger. When either originates from selfish motives and hurt pride, however, it is evil and harms others. *Emulations* mean jealousies or rivalries. How tragic when Christians compete with one another, and try to make one another look bad in eyes of others.

“Jealousy” and “fits of rage” can denote both good and bad qualities.

(4) Fits of rage (Greek: “*thymoi*”) or outburst of temper, often comes as a final eruption of smouldering jealousy. Wrath means outburst of anger.

(5) Selfish ambition (Greek: “*eritheia*”) is an over-confident attitude which shows itself in working to get ahead at other’s expense (Philippians 2:3). Selfish ambition may be translated in many ways: contention, strife, selfishness rivalry or intrigues. Its basic meaning is selfish and self-ambition, which creates division in the church.

(6) Dissensions and factions (Greek: “*dichostasiai*”) and factions (Greek: “*haireseis*”) describes what happens when people quarrel over issues or personalities, causing hurtful divisions. They denote the state of affairs in which people are divided and feuds flourish. Sedition and heresies are similar terms. The first suggests division and the second suggests cliques caused by party spirit. Therefore “divisions and factions” would be a fair translation. These are the results of church leaders promoting themselves and insisting that people follow them, not the Lord.

(7) Envy (Greek: “*phthonoi*”) is an evil spirit of carrying grudges (Proverbs 14:30); a wrongful desire to possess what belongs to someone else. Envy is so closely related to jealousy that it is hard to tell the difference between them, except for the fact that this attitude is always bad. These attitudes show the sinful nature responsible for breakdown in interpersonal relationships in homes, churches and in public society.

(8) Drunkenness and orgies. The final grouping is concerned with sins of alcohol: “drunkenness and orgies”. Drunkenness (Greek: “methai”) refers to excessive use of strong drink by individuals, and orgies (Greek: “komi”) refers to the excessive drinking and noise-making commonly associated with such things as the worship of Bacchus, the god of wine. They denote pleasures that have degenerated into debauchery.

Conclusion

Finally, to show that this long list was only representative and not exhaustive. Paul added the word “and the like”. The apostle then solemnly warned the Galatians, as he had done when he was in their midst, that those who live like this, who habitually indulge in these fleshly sins, will not inherit the future kingdom of God.

This does not say that a Christian loses his salvation if he lapses into a sin of the flesh, but that a person who lives continually on such a level of moral corruption gives evidence of not being a child of God. Paul wrote in this manner because not all who profess to be saved are true children of God. Thus, throughout the New Testament the Holy Spirit often follows the presentation of spiritual truths with the most solemn warnings to all who profess the name of Christ.

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