

Locked down and online: A critical discussion into the practices and potential impacts of the Covid-19 lockdowns, on youth ministry, in the United Kingdom.

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Abstract: This research aims to answer the questions, what did youth ministry look like before the first Covid-19 national lockdown? What happened during the national lockdowns? And will Covid-19 have impacted Christian youth ministry within the UK. By first discussing the history of youth ministry and the causes of change over time, this essay draws upon key themes and potential trajectories predicted for youth ministry, over the last decade. This research then looks into youth ministry practices that emerged during the national lockdowns, through an online survey. This research concludes three things. The first that some youth ministry practitioners are open to changing their practices post-pandemic. But this change may not happen straight away, as many are prioritising the reconstruction of relationships. The second that some churches are more aware of their young people's mental health and wellbeing, especially where there are negative effects because of the pandemic. Finally, the internet and social media is connecting our young people to the social problems faced by many across the globe. This move towards social justice conversation may cause a change in certain church contexts into the future.

Contents:

Figures: - 4.

Introduction: - 5.

Methodology: - 6.

Study methodology – 7.

Ethical approval - 8.

Questionnaire development – 8.

Dropdown box/ check list questions – 8.

Multiple-choice/ matrix questions – 9.

Open textbox questions – 9.

The questionnaire pilot study – 9.

Data analysis – 10.

Youth ministry throughout history: - 10.

The Sunday school movement – 11.

A post-war Britain – 13.

The 1970s to 1990s- the age of music – 13.

The integration of technology – 15.

The last 10 years of youth ministry: - 16.

Towards a biblical focus – 17.

Action for social justice – 18.

Contextual ministry- finding joy – 19.

Intergenerational and multigenerational youth ministries – 21.

Results: - 22.

Basic information on participant churches – 22.

A comparison of youth activities before and during the Covid-19 lockdowns – 24.

The ‘post lockdown’ future and the potential effects of lockdown on youth ministry activities in participant churches – 29.

Long answer and interview qualitative data – 30.

Discussion: - 31.

What did youth ministry look like before Covid-19? – 31.

What did youth ministry look like during the lockdowns for Covid-19? – 34.

So what might happen to youth ministry as we leave the pandemic behind? – 39.

Theme one: Face-to-face importance. – 42.

Theme two: Technology has been helpful, but its not a miracle solution. – 43.

Theme three: A move towards social justice. – 43.

Conclusion: - 44.

Bibliography: - 46.

Appendices: - 53.

Appendix 1: The Questionnaire – 53.

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview questions. – 55.

Appendix 3: Open text responses to Question 16: In your own words please briefly describe your pre-Covid youth activities. – 56.

Appendix 4: Open text answers to question 24: Please briefly describe your youth ministry during the Covid-19 national lockdowns. – 60.

Appendix 5: Answers to the open text question 28: If you have answered yes to the above question, can you briefly explain the outcome of the conversation? – 63.

Appendix 6: Answers to the open text question 30: If you answered, all online or a combination approach to any of the above questions, please can you explain your answer. Which activities? and why are you debating keeping elements online? – 65.

Appendix 7: Answers to the open text question 32: How do you think the national lockdowns have affected your youth ministry? – 68.

Appendix 8: Answers to the open text question 33: Have you learnt anything new because you adapted your youth ministry during the Covid-19 national lockdowns? - 72.

Appendix 9: Answers to the open text question 34: Do you think the national lockdowns have affected your young people's mental health? - 75.

Appendix 10: Answers to the open text question 35: Do you think the national lockdown has affected your young people's faith in God? – 78.

Appendix 11: Interview 1 transcription- Monty: - 81.

Appendix 12: Interview 2 transcription- Lottie: - 86.

Appendix 13: Interview 3 transcription- Bonnie: - 90.

Figures:

Figure Number	Figure Title	Page
1	County distribution of participant churches.	23
2	Denomination of participant churches.	23
3	Number of participant churches with/without a paid youth worker (or equivalent).	24
4	Role of survey participants within their churches.	24
5	Participant churches that have specific youth activities (y7 to y11) before the first Covid-19 national lockdown. AND Did participant churches have specific youth activities during the Covid-19 national lockdowns.	25
6	Participant churches who had whole family activities that encouraged youth engagement before the first Covid-19 national lockdown. AND Did participant churches have whole family activities that encouraged youth engagement during the Covid-19 national lockdowns?	25
7	Specific youth activities offered by participant churches before the first Covid-19 national lockdown. AND Youth activities offered by participant churches during Covid-19 national lockdowns.	26
8	Participant churches target audience for each youth activity before the first Covid-19 national lockdown. AND Participant churches target audience for youth activities offered during the Covid-19 national lockdowns.	27
9	Participant church youth activity delivery methods before the first Covid-19 National Lockdown. AND Participant delivery method for their youth activities during the Covid-19 national lockdowns	28
10	Participant church chosen method or platform for continuing youth activities online during the Covid-19 national lockdowns.	29
11	Participant churches responses to the question 'Do you believe that the Covid-19 lockdowns changed the way you delivered your youth ministry?'	29
12	Do you believe the pandemic will have had an effect on the way your youth ministry is run in the future?	30
13	Do you think the easing of restrictions will have an impact on how you deliver your youth ministry?	30
14	Has your church had a conversation about the effects of the national lockdowns on your future delivery of youth ministry?	30
15	Are you personally, the youth ministry team, or the church leadership looking to keep any aspects of your youth ministry online?	31
16	Do you think your youth ministry will go back to exactly how it was pre-Covid lockdowns?	31

Introduction:

On December 31st 2019 the Chinese government informed the World Health Organisation (WHO) of a novel coronavirus outbreak.¹ WHO quickly declared the outbreak as a public health emergency, elevating that status to a global pandemic on March 11th 2020.² Due to rapidly increasing community cases, the government of the United Kingdom (UK) declared a national lockdown, telling the public to 'stay at home', on the 23rd March 2020.³ This lockdown closed the doors of businesses, non-profit organisations and churches alike, forcing communities to move activities online for the foreseeable future.⁴ The first lockdown lasted 74 days, with restrictions easing on the 10th May, however two more national lockdowns followed as infection fluctuated and pressure on the National Health Service (NHS) substantially increased.⁵

Since its emergence, the virus has spread to every continent except Antarctica,⁶ and the UK death toll now surpasses 130,000 individuals.⁷ However with a prolonged period of case decline and the Prime Minister's announcement of a conditional 'roadmap' out of restrictions on the 22nd February 2021,⁸ churches are beginning to examine both their pre-Covid and online lockdown-driven practices and the potential impacts both may have on the future of church activities.⁹

This dissertation aims to answer the questions, what did youth ministry look like before the first Covid-19 national lockdown? What happened during the national lockdowns? And will Covid-19 have impacted Christian youth ministry within the UK. By briefly discussing the history of youth ministry and the causes of significant changes over time, this essay will draw upon the key themes and potential trajectories predicted for youth ministry, over the last decade. Although these predictions may still be true, this research will look into the practices that emerged during the national lockdowns, through an online survey distributed to church leaders. The observations and findings of this questionnaire help draw conclusions as to the possible effects of the national lockdowns on youth ministries across the UK. This essay then discusses the future of youth ministry and help draws together

¹ Naff, Clay Farris. 'What a tiny virus can teach us: Deep truths unearthed by a pandemic.' *Humanist*, 80:4 (2020), 10-13, [11].

² Cucinotta, Domenico and Vanelli, Maurizio. 'WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic.' *Acta Biomed*, 91:1 (2020), 157-160, [157].

³ Institute for government. 'Timeline of UK coronavirus lockdowns, March 2020 to March 2021.' Available from <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/timeline-lockdown-web.pdf>

⁴ White, Michael. 'Finding positives in a crisis: Will online broadcasts introduce new people to mass.' *The Priest*, 76:6 (2020), 33, [33].

⁵ Institute for government. 'Timeline of UK coronavirus lockdowns.' Available from <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/timeline-lockdown-web.pdf>

⁶ United Nations Populations division, 'Covid-19 pandemic'. Available from <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus.html>

⁷ UK Covid-19 Statistics. 'UK Covid-19 statistics.' Available from <https://coronavstats.co.uk/uk/overview>

⁸ BBC News. 'Lockdown: Boris Johnson unveils plan to end England restrictions by 21 June.' Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56158405>

⁹ Cressman, Lisa S Kraske. 'B.C and A.C: Preaching and worship before Covid and after Covid.' *Journal of Preachers*, 44:2 (2021), 46-52, [46].

conclusions about the effects Covid-19 may have had on the trends and themes previously explored as well as discussing specific churches responses to the question 'How do you think the national lockdowns have affected your youth ministry?'¹⁰

Overall, this research concludes that those who participated in this study are open to changing their youth ministry post-pandemic, especially because they have learnt new skills and tried new things. But this change may not happen straight away. Leaders and youth are fatigued with online provision and the restoration of the relationships is more important than a big upheaval of pre-pandemic methods. Some churches are also more aware of their young people's mental health and wellbeing, especially where there has been a negative effect because of the pandemic. Finally, with the connectivity of the internet and social media, our young people have become increasingly aware of the social problems faced by many across the globe. This move towards social justice conversation may cause a change in certain church contexts into the future.

Methodology:

This dissertation aims to answer the questions, what did youth ministry look like before the first Covid-19 national lockdown? What happened to youth ministry during the national lockdowns? Before drawing together themes about the overall impact of Covid-19 on Christian youth ministry within the UK.

To effectively answer these questions, I used a mixed-method approach to the research, using both an online questionnaire and semi-structured informal interviews to achieve both quantitative and qualitative data respectively.

Quantitative data has helped to create a broad and general picture¹¹ of youth ministry, over the past 18 months. Whereas qualitative data has allowed me to explore a deeper understanding and first-person narratives.¹² Both data types work together to help create a richer discussion¹³ into the practical impacts of the Covid-19 national lockdowns on youth ministry within churches, both in the present and the future. This approach has proven itself beneficial to many social scientists, across a variety of research fields,¹⁴ helping them draw together measured conclusions and deeper understanding in their research.¹⁵

¹⁰ Appendix 1

¹¹ Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and R. Burke Johnson. *The Oxford handbook of multimethod and mixed methods research enquiry*. (Oxford: Oxford university press incorporated, 2009), 5.

¹² Paul J. Gertler, Sebastian Martinez, Patrick Premand, Laura B. Rawlings and Christel M. J. Vermeersch. *'Impact evaluation in practice'* (Washington: World Bank, 2011), 16.

¹³ Nagy Hesse-Biber and Burke Johnson. *The Oxford handbook...*, 6.

¹⁴ Charles Teddlie and Abbas Tashakkori. *Foundations of mixed method research: Integrating quantitate and qualitative approaches to the social and behavioural sciences*. (Newbury park: SAGE publications, 2009), 78.

¹⁵ Teddlie and Tashakkori. *Foundations for mixed method research*. 78.

Study methodology:

The project used an online questionnaire to collect statistically analysable quantitative data to answer the questions, what did youth ministry look like before the first Covid-19 national lockdown? And what happened to youth ministry during the national lockdowns? This data was collected through multiple choice questions; allowing for measurable, numerical and comparable conclusions to be drawn together.

This questionnaire aimed to collect data from a representative group,¹⁶ church leaders or those involved in youth ministry, within a wider population,¹⁷ the Christian community within the UK. Correlated information from this sample population was then examined and used to help highlight arising themes and trends.¹⁸

Facebook and emails, were used, by myself and volunteers, to distribute the questionnaire around the UK. These online methods of communication, especially Facebook, allowed for 'word of mouth' distribution to a greater number of people.¹⁹

This research has been cautious when drawing broad conclusions to represent the entire Christian population within the UK, from the responses of a few individuals.²⁰ Each church has a context, location and denomination to take into account. Johnson discusses that there are many different social and theological opinions within the church, including individualism and 'communal identity'.²¹ These two different belief systems impact upon the ministry within those congregations. Although Johnson is writing about the American church, elements of his argument reflect the UK church too. He discusses how churches located in urban areas are moving towards social justice action and are inviting people to engage with theological thinking through these actions.²² These churches enact youth ministry in a different way to churches who focus their communal gatherings on solely encountering God through corporate acts of worship.²³

Because each answered questionnaire was contextual, qualitative data was gathered through free text answers and semi-structured informal interviews. If an answer provided in a free text box question was particularly insightful or provided evidence for a specific theme or argument, then the participant was invited to engage in a semi-structured interview.

These interviews help to answer the question how has Covid-19 impacted Christian youth ministry within the UK? Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to

¹⁶ Judith Bell and Stephen Waters. *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers*. (London: Open University Press, 2018), 30.

¹⁷ Bell and Waters. *Doing your research project*, 31.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Bell and Waters. *Doing your research project*, 184.

²⁰ Ibid, 31.

²¹ Johnson, Richard. A, 'Characteristics of churches that do justice', *The covenant quarterly*, 66:3 (2008), 25-43, [27].

²² Johnson, 'Characteristics of churches that do justice', 30.

²³ Ibid, 31.

suggest topics for discussion, while providing space for the interviewee to reflect and expand on their opinions or experiences.²⁴ The more 'natural' approach to these interviews helped questionnaire answers to be discussed in greater depth. In comparison a structured interview would have relied upon interviewees giving prescribed responses to the pre-determined questions, so they can be coded and statistically analysed.²⁵

The creation of case studies, has allowed for aspects of this research to be studied in greater depth.²⁶ They allow for more human interaction with the research questions; focusing on the personal responses of interviewees.²⁷ I have been actively aware of the context of each individual case study, so their place within existing knowledge and this research projects data set can be established, rather than using them to draw broad conclusions.²⁸

These interviews have been transcribed and quoted throughout this research's discussion.

Ethical approval:

Ethical approval for this dissertation was sought out, to ensure informed consent and participant safety, before the research started. Approval from the ethics board at Cliff College was received on 7th May 2021.

Questionnaire development:

This studies questionnaire was based around Cressman's research structure: B.C. "Before Covid", D.C. "During Covid" and A.C. "After Covid",²⁹ because of the researches similar approach to their research project. Cressman focuses on how preaching and worship were enacted in each period, before the potential impacts of Covid-19 are examined.³⁰

The selection of different question types was important, so that participants fully understood the meaning of each question. This questionnaire used four main question types: Drop down box/ checklist questions, Multiple-choice questions, Matrix questions and Open text box questions. Each had a specific purpose.

Dropdown box/ checklist questions:

These questions provide a specific range of answers and participants are asked to select the appropriate response.³¹ These questions are best suited to simple, easy

²⁴ Alan Bryman. *Social Research methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 467.

²⁵ Bryman. *Social Research methods*, 467.

²⁶ Bell and Waters. *Doing your research project*, 28.

²⁷ Ibid, 24.

²⁸ Bassey, M. 'Pedagogic research: on the relative merits of the search for generalisation and study of single events.' *Oxford review of Education*, 7:1 (1981), 73-93, [86].

²⁹ Cressman. 'B.C and A.C', 46.

³⁰ Ibid, 47-48.

³¹ Janet Holmes and Kirk Hazen. *Research methods in sociolinguistics: A practical guide.* (Chichester: John Wiley and sons incorporated, 2013), 45.

responses, like yes or no.³² As there are limited anticipated responses, these questions are easy to statistically analysis.³³ Graphs or pie charts can visually represent the collected information. This question type was used to gather basic contextual information, like church location, and for questions such as 'Did your church have specific youth activities (year 7 to year 11) before the first Covid-19 lockdown on 23rd March 2020?'³⁴

Multiple-choice/ Matrix questions:

Similarly, to dropdown box questions, multiple choice or matrix questions have a list of responses.³⁵ Matrix questions encourage the participant to respond to more than one topic, subject or statement at the same time. For instance, this research asked the question 'How was each activity delivered?'³⁶ which required participants to select answers across multiple activities, within one table.

In each of the multiple-choice questions in this research project, an 'other' box was provided,³⁷ with a text box, so that participants could answer outside of the parameters set by the researcher.

Open text box questions:

At the end of each section of the questionnaire there was an open text box question asking the participant to describe their youth ministry within this specific time period.³⁸ These answers added context and understanding to the previously answered questions in that section.

The questionnaire pilot study:

The questionnaire pilot study was completed on 11th May 2021, by two church leaders associated with my own personal youth ministry.

Through a pilot study it became evident that question wording needed to be curated with greater care and attention to receive the same, and desired, responses from all participants. This was especially important because this questionnaire hosted through an online platform,³⁹ where people were creating their own meaning behind questions, without my clarification.

Both church leaders agreed that the age parameters associated with youth ministry, stated within the questionnaire, needed to change from a specific age bracket (11-18 years) to school years (year 7 to year 11). The initial decision to use numerical age rather than academic years, mirrored literature used within church documentation.⁴⁰

³² Holmes and Hazen. *Research methods in sociolinguistics*, 46.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Appendix 1.

³⁵ Holmes and Hazen. *Research methods in sociolinguistics*, 47.

³⁶ Appendix 1.

³⁷ Holmes and Hazen. *Research methods in sociolinguistics*, 47.

³⁸ Appendix 1.

³⁹ Bell and Waters. *Doing your research project*, 32.

⁴⁰ The Church of England youth evangelism fund states that 'anyone under the age of 18 can apply'.

However, this small change moved terminology in line with youth group categorisation in real life, making the questionnaire easier to read and follow for participants.

This pilot study also showed that there needed to be more open text questions for people to discuss or justify a response, if they are willing. Open questions allow for longer responses, where respondents can discuss their own experiences.⁴¹ These questions were not made mandatory, but were incorporated for those who wished to discuss their answers further, and provide the study with qualitative data and depth.

Data Analysis:

The quantitative data was correlated into comparable graphs and pie charts, to help answer the questions what happened during the national lockdowns? and how that will impact the future of youth ministry in the future.

Pie Charts have been used, where possible, to represent the data because they demonstrate the proportion of each answer, in comparison to the other answers within each question.

Qualitative data collected from long answer questions and the semi-structured interviews, has been drawn together or transcribed and can be found in appendices section. During the interview transcription process, the decision was made to omit errors of speech that did not add to the thought or context. For example, minor speaking errors where the interviewee mis-started a sentence 'We were well. It started as an idea...'. The interviewee's have been given a pseudonym name to ensure anonymity.

Long answer question answers were analysed for recurring themes and commonality, which helped direct the wider discussion. Alongside these, anomalies were also sort out and identified. These have helped to deepen the discussion by adding another narrative or a contradictory voice. Appendices have been quoted to contextualise the quantitative data collected about future of youth ministry within the UK.

Youth ministry throughout history:

In 1951 H. Richard Niebuhr published his book, *Christ and Culture*, which asked the question what relationships are there between the church and wider culture?⁴² Although, this publication has been dubbed as one of the 'most influential Christian

The Church of England. 'Youth evangelism fund' Retrieved from www.churchofengland.org/about/children-and-young-people/youth-evangelism-fund

The Methodist church offers age restrictions of 8-23 for it's 3generate conference, demonstrating a use of numerical age.

The Methodist Church of Great Britain. 'Read this before you begin.' Retrieved from <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/365/365-toolbox-for-group-leaders/read-this-before-you-begin/>

⁴¹ Bell and Waters. *Doing your research project*, 192.

⁴² H. Richard Niebuhr. *Christ and Culture*. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco).

books of the last century',⁴³ time has passed and culture changed,⁴⁴ awarding Niebuhr's work many critiques.⁴⁵ In the sixty years since this initial publication, the modern contemporary culture to which Niebuhr refers, has changed.⁴⁶ As part of this adapting society, we find ourselves in a period of increased diversity and celebrated differences.⁴⁷ With global access to the internet; culture no longer represents society as a whole, more culture is adapted by individual peer groups and demographic populations.⁴⁸ Doerksen discusses that as Christians we should no longer be asking 'should we participate in our culture?', but should be asking, 'how do we participate in culture?'⁴⁹

In recent years the wider church has attempted to incorporate elements of the changing cultural definition by championing schemes like 'Fresh Expressions'. These ecclesial communities share the common vision of participating in the enactment of the gospel, with people, where they are in the world.⁵⁰ Speaking into their individual cultures. Seeking to follow Christ's interaction with 1st Century culture, being active in a specific setting but not becoming a product of that culture's practices.⁵¹

However, in its brief history, youth ministry has been more proactive in embracing cultural changes,⁵² as they happen. Seeming to find a more coherent balance between accommodation and opposition to the changing cultural.⁵³ This means that the events influencing the nation as a whole have also influenced youth ministry.

In the following section, this research looks at some of the events and changes within society during the 19th, 20th and early 21st century and the reactions of the youth ministry community. Concluding that as society adapted or changed, youth culture and a young person's identity have also changed.

The Sunday school movement:

Although there were other ministries being established during this period, the Sunday school movement, emerged in response to the changing socio-economic climate and thus is the starting point to this section because it, like the Covid-19 national lockdowns, effected large portions of the population.

⁴³ Leonard Sweet (Eds.) *The church in emerging culture: Five perspectives*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 15.

⁴⁴ Sweet (Eds.) *The church in emerging culture*, 15.

⁴⁵ Doerksen, Paul. G. 'The gospel as prisoner and liberator of culture', *Direction*, 44:2 (2015), 138-143, [140].: Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon. *Resident Aliens*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 40-41.

⁴⁶ Sweet (Eds.) *The church in emerging culture*, 13.

⁴⁷ Sweet (Eds.) *The church in emerging culture*, 14.

⁴⁸ Foltz, Bruce. V. 'A God's-eye perspective after onto-theology: notes toward a post-modern culture', *Christian bioethics*, 23:2 (2017), 100-118, [104].

⁴⁹ Doerksen, 'The gospel as prisoner and liberator of culture', 140

⁵⁰ Rolph. Paul, Rolph. Jenny and Cole. John. 'Methodist fresh expressions: Listening to leaders of specific rural initiatives in England.' *Rural Theology*, 9:2 (2011), 129-142, [131].

⁵¹ Sweet (Eds.) *The church in emerging culture*, 15.

⁵² Mike Brake. *Comparative youth culture: The sociology of youth culture and youth subcultures in America, Britain and Canada*. (Germantown: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 7-8.

⁵³ Kathryn Tanner. *Theories of culture*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 119.

The industrial revolution was the start of a period of great economic growth in Britain.⁵⁴ The invention of new, faster machinery, allowed for mass production.⁵⁵ And as a consequence working class families were offered a more stable source of income. Their children were now performing easy, in small the spaces in the factories.⁵⁶ These children worked long hours and paid an essential wage that helped maintain the family as a whole;⁵⁷ This, increased family living standards.⁵⁸

Beginning in the late 1700's, in direct response to six-day working weeks for children and their lack of a formal education; the Sunday school movement capitalised societies need for basic education in children.⁵⁹ Invented by Robert Raikes and Hannah More,⁶⁰ 'Sunday school' was essentially that, schooling on a Sunday. During age-segregated tailored sessions, young people were taught religion and literacy.⁶¹ However in 1899 the education act made midweek schooling compulsory for children aged between 5 and 12.⁶²

By the early 19th Century Sunday schools began to solely provide religious teaching for children and young adults.⁶³ Due to the omission of the educational draw, Sunday school numbers dropped uniformed organisations such as Boys brigade, Girlguiding and Scouts helped to provide church-based youth services, encouraging moral behaviour traits, while forging relationships between the church and young people.⁶⁴ As well as these parachurch organisations such Scripture Union formed.⁶⁵ The society for Christian Endeavour created personal relationships with and between young people by providing a mid-day gathering, where food and bible study were shared.⁶⁶

⁵⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica. 'Industrial revolution', Available from <https://www.britannica.com/event/industrial-revolution>

⁵⁵ Britannica. 'Industrial revolution', Available from <https://www.britannica.com/event/industrial-revolution>

⁵⁶ Emma Griffin. 'Child labour'. Emma Griffin. 'Child labour'. Available from <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/child-labour#>

⁵⁷ Jane Humphries. *Childhood and child labour in the British industrial revolution*. (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2010), 3.

⁵⁸ Humphries. *Childhood and child labour*, 3.

⁵⁹ Naomi Thompson. *Young people in church since 1900*, (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routeledge, 2017), 182.

⁶⁰ Paul Cloke, Justin Beaumont and Andrew Williams. *Working Faith: Faith-based communities involved in justice*. (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2013), 111.

⁶¹ Tim Gough. Does Youth Ministry have a future: Lessons learned and lost from youth ministry past and present. (Cambridge: Grove books limited, 2020), 7.

⁶² UK Parliament. 'The 1870 education act.' Retrieved from <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact/>

⁶³ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future*. 7.

⁶⁴ Cloke, Beaumont and Williams. *Working Faith*, 111-112.

⁶⁵ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future*. 7.

⁶⁶ Mark DeVires. 'Family-Based youth ministry: Revised and extended' (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 21.

A post-war Britain:

The post-war Britain was filled with austerity. The entire population was effected by rationing and the UK was close to bankruptcy.⁶⁷ Men and boys were freed from active service and discussions into the value of childhood led psychologist Stanley Hall to explore the concept of adolescence.⁶⁸ However, as society changed to accommodate this new youthfulness, church attendance dropped dramatically.⁶⁹ Between 1930 and 1950, the Church of England saw regular Sunday morning attendance drop from 3,650,000 to under 3,000,000.⁷⁰ Arguably this decline could be a product of the loss of war, but Gough discusses how this decline was because many in the population dissociated themselves from religion as the period of conflict ended.⁷¹

Although the society for Christian Endeavour impacted youth ministry before the war,⁷² it was soon eclipsed by the more culturally-relevant, charismatic teaching offered by Youth for Christ and the contextual relationship-based ministry of Young Life.⁷³ Youth for Christ's events were large-scale and high-energy.⁷⁴ Whereas Young Life favoured personal relationships; earning the respect and friendship of young people.⁷⁵ Witnessing the success of these parachurch organisations, larger churches, like those in California,⁷⁶ and the more resourced congregations in the UK, started to professionalise youth ministry by appointing specific 'youth leaders'.⁷⁷

Alongside these new activities the Salvation Army started to write choruses that were catchy and easy to sing, capitalising on the popular growing music scene in America, opening the way for a whole new style of Christian worship.⁷⁸

The 1970s to the 1990s- the age of music

To fully understand youth ministry in the 1970s to the 1990s, one must first understand the influence of music on secular culture. In the late 1970's American

⁶⁷ Kathryn Delderfield. 'A history of innovation.' Available from <https://yfc.co.uk/a-history-of-innovation/>

⁶⁸ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future.* 8.

⁶⁹ Delderfield. 'A history of innovation.' Available from <https://yfc.co.uk/a-history-of-innovation/>

⁷⁰ Christian Research. 'Anglican UK.' Available from <https://www.christian-research.org/reports/archives-and-statistics/anglican-uk/>

⁷¹ Gough. 'A reader's digest history of youth ministry'. Available from <https://youthworkhacks.com/a-readers-digest-history-of-youth-ministry/>

⁷² DeVries. *'Family-Based youth ministry,* 21.

⁷³ Mark Oestreicher. 'Youth Ministry 3.0: A manifesto of where we've been, where we are and where we need to go.' (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 46.

⁷⁴ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future.* 9.

⁷⁵ Gough. 'A reader's digest history...'. Available from <https://youthworkhacks.com/a-readers-digest-history-of-youth-ministry/>

⁷⁶ Andrew Root. *Faith formation in a secular age.* (Grand Rapids: Baker academic, 2017), 86.

⁷⁷ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future.* 9.

⁷⁸ Gough. 'A reader's digest history...'. Available from <https://youthworkhacks.com/a-readers-digest-history-of-youth-ministry/>

media had taken hold across the world.⁷⁹ The United States monopolised the film, television, publishing and music industries.⁸⁰ But by the late 1980s Japanese and European companies started making headway in reclaiming the music industry.⁸¹ This competition meant that more songs were bought and sold by music production companies in the 1980s than in any other decade.⁸² The youth market, as the largest consumer of popular music, determined what received the most radio airplay.⁸³ On 1st January 1990, radio 1 DJ's Alan Freeman and Mark Goodier counted down the top eighty singles of the 1980s; these included names such as ABBA, Kylie Minogue, Madonna and Elton John.⁸⁴

With music providing the foundation of youth culture within society, it is unsurprising that also had an impact with youth ministry. As the 1970s charismatic movement made way for the 1980's restoration movement, the Christian song book *Songs of Fellowship* brought the new form of Christian music into churches across the country.⁸⁵ By the late 1980s the rise of large Christian festivals in the UK, such as New Wine and Soul Survivor, brought these different traditions together, united in this new music style.⁸⁶ The role of 'worship leader' and Christian bands such as Delirious became the 'celebrities' of Christian youth ministry,⁸⁷ just as secular music artists like Madonna impacted a young people's lives.⁸⁸

As time progressed, the role of the worship leader and Christian band became even more influential. People like Tim Hughes and Matt Redman started recording their worship songs professionally.⁸⁹ Forbes and Mahan argue that including this 'new' form of media, was the catalyst for change, and as long as we continue to integrate new media, change will also happen.⁹⁰ However Ward argues that the integration of any media should be contextual,⁹¹ like these new music styles in the 1980s. When media integration is contextual, we positively reshape our religion,⁹² and this then causes change.

With youth groups full, churches in the 1990s turned to those traditionally unchurched; planting missional churches into these communities.⁹³ These were

⁷⁹ Robert Burnett. *The global jukebox: The international music industry*. (Germantown: Taylor and Francis group, 1996), 5.

⁸⁰ Burnett. *The global jukebox*, 5.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid, 86.

⁸³ Ibid, 36.

⁸⁴ Radio Times. *Radio Times issue 3446*. (London: BBC Magazines, 1989), 134.

⁸⁵ Gough. 'A reader's digest history...'. Available from <https://youthworkhacks.com/a-readers-digest-history-of-youth-ministry/>

⁸⁶ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future*. 10.

⁸⁷ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future*. 10.

⁸⁸ David Gauntlett. *Madonna's drowned worlds*. (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2004), 34.

⁸⁹ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future*. 10.

⁹⁰ Bruce Forbes and Jeffrey Mahan eds. *Religion and Popular Culture in America*. (Berkley, CA: California University Press 2017), 33–118.

⁹¹ Pete Ward. *Selling Worship*. (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005).

⁹² Pete Ward. *Selling Worship*.

⁹³ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future*. 10.

often run by those with previous youth ministry experience. These communities were culturally sensitive to their location and not always linked to a church.⁹⁴ As participant numbers surged, the gap between culture and the wider church grew, and the idea of an intergenerational church started to be discussed.⁹⁵

The integration of technology:

The 21st Century is characterised by the dramatic expansion and availability of technologies.⁹⁶ 38 million adults in the UK access the internet at least once a day, a figure that has doubled since 2006.⁹⁷ In a survey conducted in 2013, it was estimated that 57% of all those aged 16 and over now use social media platforms on a regular basis.⁹⁸ However, despite being a comparatively new communication phenomenon, social media has quickly established itself as the primary mode of communication amongst young people.⁹⁹

Generation Z,¹⁰⁰ defined by Morgan as any young person born after 1996,¹⁰¹ are adapting mentally to this ever-changing landscape. A gen Z child can now screen through information in eight seconds; quickly establishing whether something is of value or interest to them.¹⁰² Young people are becoming natural '*media multitaskers*' because they have media and technology at their fingertips where ever they go.

Alongside this 72%¹⁰³ of children are spending up to 6.5 hours a day watching video online.¹⁰⁴ Despite these statistics, Dumain argues that our young people's attention spans are decreasing because of their constant, instant connectivity and the sensory stimulation that the digital world provides.¹⁰⁵

Media and technological advancements have unknown potential and consequently offer the church a genuine opportunity to integrate culture into their practices.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Gough. *Does Youth Ministry have a future*. 10.

⁹⁶ Holland, Peter and Bardoel Anne. 'The impact of technology on work in the twenty-first century: exploring the smart and dark side.' *The international journal of human resource management*, 27:21 (2016), 2579-2581, [2579].

⁹⁷ Liz Dumain. '*Youth ministry in a digital age: Understanding and reaching a generation of digital natives.*' (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2016), 6.

⁹⁸ Boulianne, Shelley. 'Social media use and participation: a meta-analysis of current research.' *Information, communication & society*. 18:5 (2015), 524-538, [530].

⁹⁹ Kelly, Yvonne., Zilanawala, Afshin., Booker, Cara. And Sacker, Amanda. 'Social media use and adolescent mental health: Finding from the UK millennium cohort study,' *EClinical Medicine*, 6:1 (2018), 59-68, [59].

¹⁰⁰ Children born after 1993. Though there is some argument to that bottom boundary and where it should lie.

Anthony Turner. Generation Z: Technology and Social Interest. *The journal of individual Psychology* 71:2 (2015), 103-113 [103]; Karen Malone. The bubble-wrap generation: children growing up in gardens. *Environmental Education Research* 13:4 (2007), 513- 527 [514] .

¹⁰¹ Morgan, Lee. 'My selfie for Christ: Gen Z shows off missions conference on social media.' *Christianity today*, 63:2 (2019), 21-22, [21].

¹⁰² Jeff Fromm and Angie Read. *Marketing to Gen Z: The rules for reaching this vast and very different generation of influencers* (New York: American Management Association, 2018), 10.

¹⁰³ Diana D. Coyl. Kids really are different these days. *Phi Delta Kappan* 90:6 (2009) 404-407 [405].

¹⁰⁴ Anthony (eds.). *Perspectives on children's spirituality*. 229.

¹⁰⁵ Dumain. '*Youth ministry in a digital age*', 6.

Technology changes everything about a young person's life, their identity, friendships and their links to current affairs.¹⁰⁶ In 2010, 50 million people stated that they rely on the internet to provide them with 'faith-based' experiences.¹⁰⁷ The internet holds an open invitation for anyone to ask and answer any question, and over the last decade young people have gained eloquence in both practices.¹⁰⁸

Ward discusses that when religion allows itself to engage with social media, people can have significant impact and influence upon their chosen platform.¹⁰⁹ These religious influencers then have the opportunity to be the voice of the personal narratives and religious content that people are seeking out.¹¹⁰ Helping to facilitate this cultural shift within the church.

Culture helps to build a young person's personal identity,¹¹¹ and throughout history there have been many different societal changes that have driven churches to adapt. This ever-changing culture has affected the way young people have thought and acted.¹¹² With many factors influencing wider culture, including media and socio-economic need, it could be argued that the Covid-19 pandemic may present itself as another of these historical moments; requiring change within the youth ministry community.

The last 10 years of youth ministry:

Over the last ten years churches have noticed a decline in the attendance of young people on a Sunday morning. Between 2009 and 2019, the Church of England recorded a 27% decrease in Sunday morning attendance for children (those under 16).¹¹³ Similarly, the Baptist Union of Great Britain has seen more than 11,000 young people leave the church since the year 2000.¹¹⁴ Although many comment that the number of young people in church on a Sunday morning does not reflect the numbers of young people attending weekly activities, Ross predicts that between 40-50% of all youth who graduate high-school will not return to a religious community once they leave.¹¹⁵ Over the last 10 years this decline has sparked a debate within literature as to the most appropriate and successful methods to grow a sustainable youth ministry.

In this section, this research looks at the four proposed models for growing youth ministries within churches, since 2009. These modes include: A biblical focus,

¹⁰⁶ Dumain. 'Youth ministry in a digital age', 6-7.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 12.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Pete Ward. *Celebrity worship: Media, religion and culture*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 23.

¹¹⁰ Pete Ward. *Celebrity worship*, 23.

¹¹¹ Eade, Tony. 'The role of culture and traditions in how young children's identities are constructed.' *International journal of children's spirituality*, 24:1 (2019), 5-19, [6].

¹¹² Eade. 'The role of culture and traditions in how young children's identities are constructed'. 9.

¹¹³ The Church of England Research and Statistics. 'Statistics for mission 2019'. Available from <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/2019StatisticsForMission.pdf>, 16.

¹¹⁴ Baptists Together. 'BUGB Statistics since 2000.' Available from <https://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=176040>, 1.

¹¹⁵ Ross, Richard. 'Youth ministry in thirds: to accelerate the development of lifetime faith.' *The journal of youth ministry*, 16:2 (2017), 90-104, [91].

building a youth ministry that champions action for social justice, a regeneration of contextual incarnational ministry and the intergenerational ministry debate. Each sub-section will summarise the key thinking and applications of these modes.

Towards a biblical focus:

Crosby summarises this specific movement as: '*Knowledge transforms thinking, thinking transforms the heart and the heart translates into action.*'¹¹⁶

Those within literature advocate this movement believe that the bible is where youth groups will find the space to grow from within.¹¹⁷ When the Bible is the focus of a Christian youth ministry, then the actions and beliefs of the group can, and should, be separated from the culture it finds itself in.¹¹⁸ The World around any ministry is important, but the curators of this movement believe that only one thing that has the potential bring lasting change to lives of young people is the gospel of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁹

Often youth workers are asked how many young people attended an event, but Crosby argues that numbers shouldn't be the concern but creating a Christ-centred, faith filled youth ministry is the priority.¹²⁰ This movement towards finding a numerical value to faith formation, Root argues, stems from the anxieties of previous periods of church decline.¹²¹

Adolescence can be a period of turbulent development, especially of individuality and self-expression. This unpredictable time can, cause loneliness in many teenagers.¹²² As practitioners of youth ministry, we recognise this emotional turmoil and teach about healing and hope to our young people.¹²³ But, the biblical focus stress' the importance of teaching the whole bible,¹²⁴ because youth want to be challenged. When everything is taught young people have a better understanding of God's relationship with humanity and can build their personal relationship with Him on a foundation of knowledge.¹²⁵

This biblical approach finds community through faith rather than a social activities or shared interest or concern.¹²⁶ Crosby does clarify that communities formed through 'socialising' are not necessarily 'bad', because research does show that teenagers require peer relationships to combat loneliness,¹²⁷ and Gough argues the importance

¹¹⁶ Brian H. Crosby. *Giving up the gimmicks: Reclaiming youth ministry from an entertainment culture*, (Philipsburg: P&R Publishing company, 2012), 129..

¹¹⁷ Tim Gough. '*Rebooted: Reclaiming youth ministry for the long haul. A biblical framework.*' (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2018), xv.

¹¹⁸ Gough. *Rebooted*, xv.

¹¹⁹ Cameron Cole and Jon Nielson (Eds.) *Gospel centred youth ministry: A practical guide*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 24.

¹²⁰ Crosby. *Giving up the gimmicks*, 13.

¹²¹ Root. *Faith formation in a secular age*, 101.

¹²² Cole and Nielson. *Gospel centred youth ministry*, Blurb.

¹²³ Ibid, 25.

¹²⁴ Gough. *Rebooted*, 34.

¹²⁵ Gough. *Rebooted*, 13.

¹²⁶ Crosby. *Giving up the gimmicks*, 21.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 19.

of ‘particulars’, a term he uses to refer to matters of youth culture and social activities.¹²⁸ This word over entertainment approach nurtures teenagers through the grace of God.¹²⁹ And those who focus their ministry on the Bible believe it is the message of the gospel and of God’s grace that must appear repeated in our youth ministry as it the place that God can bring about immeasurable freedom and hope into the lives of our young people.¹³⁰

Action for social justice:

‘There is good reason for young people’s disillusionment with church. We must listen to their criticisms of the Christian community. Why are we so cautious? ... Why do we so often resist change? Why are we so apathetic, so uncommitted?’¹³¹

Although Ashton and Moon initially published their book twenty-six years ago these questions are still being asked within youth ministry community today. Technology connects our young people in more ways than ever before,¹³² their exposure to the living conditions and situations of others around the globe has increased.¹³³ We are also teaching our young people to love others and show everyone compassion, as the gospel states.¹³⁴ Those who argue for more social justice action believe that it is a natural extension to this key message.¹³⁵ This thinking finds foundation in the discussion of church mission, a topic widely discussed throughout literature. This is the idea that we, as God’s chosen people, have a part to play in His plan for Earth.¹³⁶ Historically missionaries went out and preached the gospel to newly discovered communities around the world.¹³⁷ However, Stott argues that we must move from this image towards a ‘gospel in practice’ approach.¹³⁸ For him, social justice is the gospel being proclaimed into a situation,¹³⁹ following the example of Jesus’ life and teaching in 1st Century Jerusalem, where spoken words and physical actions worked in harmony throughout communities.¹⁴⁰

In 2011 Powell, Griffin and Crawford published ‘Sticky Faith: youth worker addition’, a follow on from their seminal work ‘Sticky Faith’. In this publication the authors asked a group of graduating high school students what they would miss about youth group, and their second and third highest responses were missional trips and service projects, respectively.¹⁴¹ Although this publication’s study was based in the United States, the sentiment of the young people can be transferred to young people in the UK too. Since that publication, in partnership, Tearfund and Youthscape have

¹²⁸ Gough. *Rebooted*, xv.

¹²⁹ Crosby. *Giving up the gimmicks*, 13.

¹³⁰ Cole and Nielson. *Gospel centred youth ministry*, 36.

¹³¹ Ashton and Moon. *Christian youth work*, 107.

¹³² Canales, A.D. ad D. Min. ‘Transforming teenagers: Integrating social justice into Catholic youth ministry or Catholic education.’ *Race, Religion and Social Justice*, (2010), 70.

¹³³ Canales and Min. ‘*Transforming Teenagers*’, 71.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 72.

¹³⁶ John Stott. *Christian Mission in the modern world*. (London: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 19.

¹³⁷ Stott. *Christian Mission in the modern world*, 16.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 26.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Dr Kara E. Powell, Brad M. Griffin and Dr Cheryl A. Crawford. ‘*Sticky Faith youth worker addition: Practical ideas to nurture long-term faith in teenagers*.’ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 101.

undertaken research they have named 'Burning down the house'.¹⁴² This research found that 86% of surveyed Christian young people believed that their faith taught them to care about social injustices.¹⁴³ 84% believe it is important for Christians to respond to the changing climate,¹⁴⁴ 72% are concerned about discrimination, including racism and sexism, and 61% of young people surveyed were concerned about poverty both in the UK and abroad.¹⁴⁵ With these statistics, those who believe that the church should be encouraging its youth groups to engage in social justice action are asking why missional trips and activities are merely common place in American youth groups.

Contextual ministry- finding Joy:

A contextual youth ministry is often referred to as incarnational.

This ministry stresses the importance of building personal relationships that are culturally appropriate to the young person, before proclaiming the gospel.¹⁴⁶ This ministry champions sharing the young person's place with them.¹⁴⁷ The JSAW extreme skate park in Minnesota is a successful example of incarnational ministry.¹⁴⁸ This church community has been built around young people who have been turned away or deterred from traditional church communities.¹⁴⁹ Relationships were first built between the young people and Jonny Nelson through their shared love for skateboarding and have since expanded into daily bible studies, on the slopes of the skate park.¹⁵⁰

With three significant waves throughout history:¹⁵¹ Post-WWII,¹⁵² the mid 1990s and then into the 2000s.¹⁵³ This model has had significant impact youth ministry for a very long time.¹⁵⁴ Hirsch describes incarnational ministry as having four stages:¹⁵⁵

¹⁴² Lucie Shuker. 'Burning down the house: How the church could lose young people.' Available from <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/research/burning-down-the-house>

¹⁴³ Lucie Shuker. 'Burning down the house.' Available from <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/research/burning-down-the-house>

¹⁴⁴ Lucie Shuker. 'Burning down the house.' Available from <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/research/burning-down-the-house>

¹⁴⁵ We are TearFund. 'Burning down the house: How the church could lose young people.' Available from <https://www.wearetearfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/burning-down-the-house-youthscape-and-tearfund-pdf>

¹⁴⁶ Andrew Root. 'Revisiting relational youth ministry: From a strategy of influence to the theology of incarnation.' (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 164.

¹⁴⁷ Andrew Root. The incarnation, place-sharing, and youth ministry: Experiencing the transcendence of God. *The journal of youth ministry*, 12:1 (2013), 21-36, [21].

¹⁴⁸ Mike Bryant. Sharing Hope on the Half Pipe, *Campus Life* 64:5 (2005), 30 [30].

¹⁴⁹ Mike Bryant. Sharing Hope on the Half Pipe, 30.

¹⁵⁰ Stott. *Christian Mission in the modern world*, 16.

¹⁵¹ Gough. 'Does youth ministry have a future?', 9-11.

¹⁵² Andrew Root. 'The incarnation, place-sharing, and youth ministry: Experiencing the transcendence of God.' *The journal of youth ministry*, 12:1 (2013), 21-36, [21].

¹⁵³ Tim Gough. 'A reader's digest history of youth ministry.' Available from <https://youthworkhacks.com/a-readers-digest-history-of-youth-ministry/>.

¹⁵⁴ Tim Gough. 'Has 'the incarnational model' been a theologically helpful influence on modern youth ministry?' *Journal of youth ministry*, 18:2 (2019), 135-163 [135].

¹⁵⁵ Alan Hirsch. 'The forgotten ways' (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 133-134.

1. *Having a Presence*: Being a part of the young people's community and building relationships where they are.¹⁵⁶
2. *Proximity*: Following Jesus example. An incarnational ministry requires leaders to be an active part of the community; accessible to all those they may come into contact with.¹⁵⁷
3. *Powerless*: By enacting a Christ-like servanthood, leaders must put aside agendas, ambitions and plans for the relationships they form with young people and accept that the Holy Spirit is working beyond their control.¹⁵⁸
4. *Proclamation*: It is then, when they young people feel included and accepted, that, when approached, a leader may share the gospel in its entirety with the young people.¹⁵⁹

These four steps describe the process of incarnational ministry succinctly and are in line with Black's definition of incarnational ministry, '*we're doing mission and ministry as Jesus did mission and ministry*'.¹⁶⁰

Those who believe in incarnational ministry believe that the bible will always speaks across societal barriers,¹⁶¹ and the relationships formed through a contextually appropriate ministry are the location of God's presence in the world.¹⁶² There has been a call for another wave of incarnational youth ministry to combat the declining numbers of young people in church and the breakdown of traditional family structure within society.¹⁶³ This new movement centres itself around the idea of 'Joy'. A joy that comes from being in a relationship that shares burdens, with a saviour that calls us 'Friend', rather than superficial joy that comes from games and fun activities.¹⁶⁴ This friendship should stem out of the relationships formed in the community, a community that finds this spiritual joy together, sharing in life's experiences as one group, this is where context is found.¹⁶⁵ These communities tell stories of Jesus love and work across all generations; helping leaders and young people identify with aspects of each other's lives without necessarily understanding the situation or cultural context.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁶ Hirsch. 'The forgotten ways', 133.

¹⁵⁷ Hirsch. 'The forgotten ways', 134.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Wesley Black. '*An Introduction to youth ministry*'. (Brentwood: Boardman Press, 1991), 209.

¹⁶¹ Pete Ward. '*Youthwork and the mission of God*.' (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1997), 25.

¹⁶² Root. 'The incarnation, place-sharing, and youth ministry', 27.

¹⁶³ Root. '*The incarnation, place-sharing, and youth ministry*', 22.

¹⁶⁴ Andrew Root. '*The end of youth ministry: Why parents don't really care about youth groups and what youth workers should do about it*.' (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 220.

¹⁶⁵ Root. '*The end of youth ministry* ', 222.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

Intergenerational and multigenerational youth ministries:

With secular society discovering the importance of cross generation interactions on personality development for children and young people,¹⁶⁷ Christian congregations are rediscovering the importance of intergenerational faith formation and some churches are moving towards ministries that prioritise these cross-generation relationships.¹⁶⁸ The intergenerational approach educates everyone together.¹⁶⁹ Since 2008 some within literature have started to discuss the importance of an intergenerational youth ministry. It must be noted here, that there are many different names, strands and theologies for ministries that incorporate all members of the community. Each is unique. These different approaches include: family-based ministry, multigenerational and intergenerational ministries. This essay will look at all of these ministries as one approach, but acknowledges their differences, because they all have similar biblical foundations and applications for youth ministry.

Within western society, congregations can have up to six or seven generations present at an act of corporate worship.¹⁷⁰ A truly intergenerational congregation allows for all ages to give and receive equally, to and from those around them.¹⁷¹ Those who favour an intergenerational approach argue that these interactions mirror those seen within biblical texts, in both Jewish and Christian Tradition.¹⁷² The Bible offers insight into the importance of cross-generation interactions in faith formation and the development of an understanding of God. Through stories such as Samuel and Eli (1 Samuel 1-3), Ruth and Naomi (Ruth), and Paul and Timothy (Acts 16 and the Timothy 1&2),¹⁷³ we gain a deeper understanding into the benefits and wisdom of an older mentor figure. Ross observed that the inclusion of all ages within worship and benefitted all present, including the adults and especially the oldest adults.¹⁷⁴ She witnessed whole communities gaining a 'we/us' mentality, and finding a unity within the whole congregation.¹⁷⁵

Bird acknowledges that for many years, segregated ministries for different age groups has served churches well.¹⁷⁶ But she also discusses the idea that, to achieve a 'blended' approach to worship, compromise must be made.¹⁷⁷ This compromise encourages all ages, to worship together as a community, using resources all groups recognise, such as a list of songs everyone is familiar with.¹⁷⁸ Using familiar resources allows everyone to feel comfortable, recognised and empowered as part

¹⁶⁷ Harkness, Allan. G. 'Intergenerationality: Biblical and theological foundations.' *Christian Education Journal*, 9:1 (2012), 121-135, [121].

¹⁶⁸ Holly Catterton Allen (Eds.). *Intergenerate: Transforming churches through intergenerational ministry*. (Abilene: Abilene University Press, 2018), 99.

¹⁶⁹ Allen (Eds.), 'Intergenerate', 99.

¹⁷⁰ Harkness. 'Intergenerationality,' 122.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Allen (Eds.), 'Intergenerate', 99.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ross, Christine. M. 'Four Congregations that practice intergenerationality', *Christian Education Journal*, 9:1 (2012), 135-147, [142].

¹⁷⁵ Ross. 'Four Congregations that practice intergenerationality', 142.

¹⁷⁶ Eleanor Bird. 'Blended: A call to reimagine our church family.' (Abingdon: The Bible reading fellowship, 2015), 54.

¹⁷⁷ Bird. 'Blended', 55.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

of the wider church family, not just a part of their age group.¹⁷⁹ To Bird, being a part of a multigenerational community is about being treated equally.¹⁸⁰

With many books offering practical applications of the integrational approach, it is understandable that there has since been an upsurge in literature that applies this approach to youth ministries. These publications tend to favour an integrated approach to youth ministry, allowing for a cohesive balance with age-specific ministries. Panelist D in Snailum's research describes this balance well, by explaining that being intergenerational, for them, it is not about getting rid of age specific activities altogether, because youth need the space to be young people, but it is more about re-discovering what it means to be an ecclesial community.¹⁸¹ This understanding is mirrored throughout other integrational youth ministry publications. DeVries discusses the churches need to remember that young people are still a part of the body of Christ, and to develop fully into Christian adulthood, they must be involved in the whole Christian body, not isolated from them.¹⁸² In a later publication, Snailum follows the discussion of her previous study further, outlining the benefits and downfalls of a fully intergenerational youth ministry. This second study finds that although intergenerational ministry is good at creating and maintaining healthy relationships between Christian adults and young people; this model does not directly accommodate for peer relationships to form and for contextualization to youth circumstance.¹⁸³

Results:

Basic information on participant churches

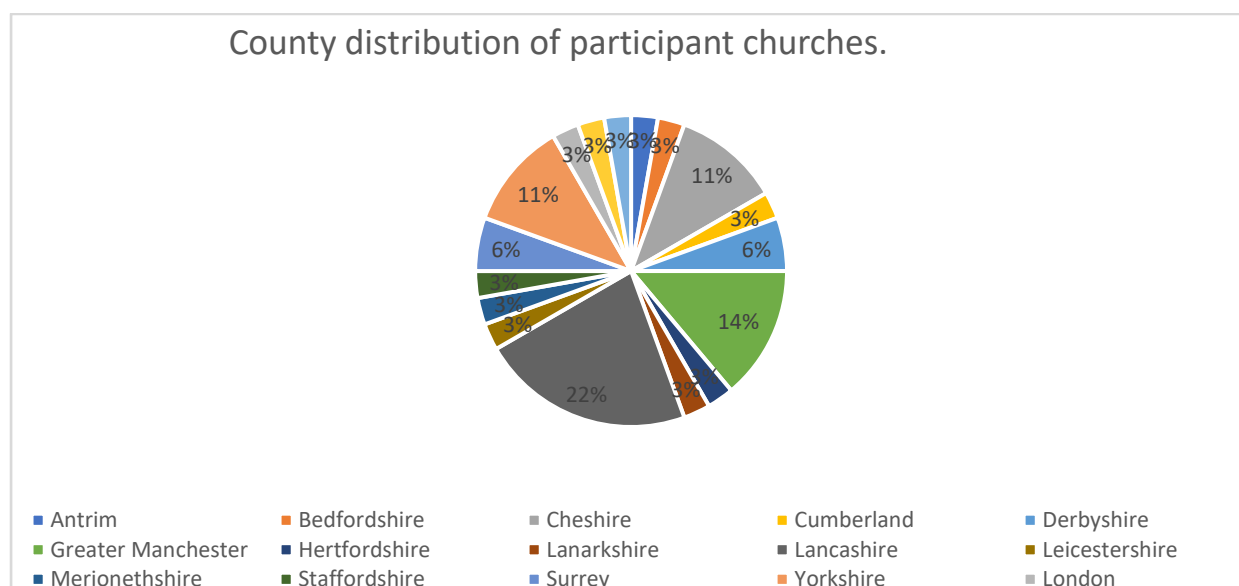


Figure 1

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 53.

¹⁸¹ Snailum, Brenda. 'Implementing intergenerational youth ministry within existing evangelical church congregations: what have we learned?.' *The journal of youth ministry*, 9:1 (2012), 165-181, [169].

¹⁸² DeVries. 'Family-based youth', 44.

¹⁸³ Snailum, Brenda. 'Integrating intergenerational ministry strategies into existing youth ministries: what can a hybrid approach be expected to accomplish?' *The journal of youth ministry*, 11:2 (2013), 7-28, [9].

41 churches participated in this study, distributed across seventeen counties within the UK. Lancashire accounted for 22% of surveyed churches and Greater Manchester 14%. Out of the 41 churches surveyed, 50% of participants came from the North West region of England.

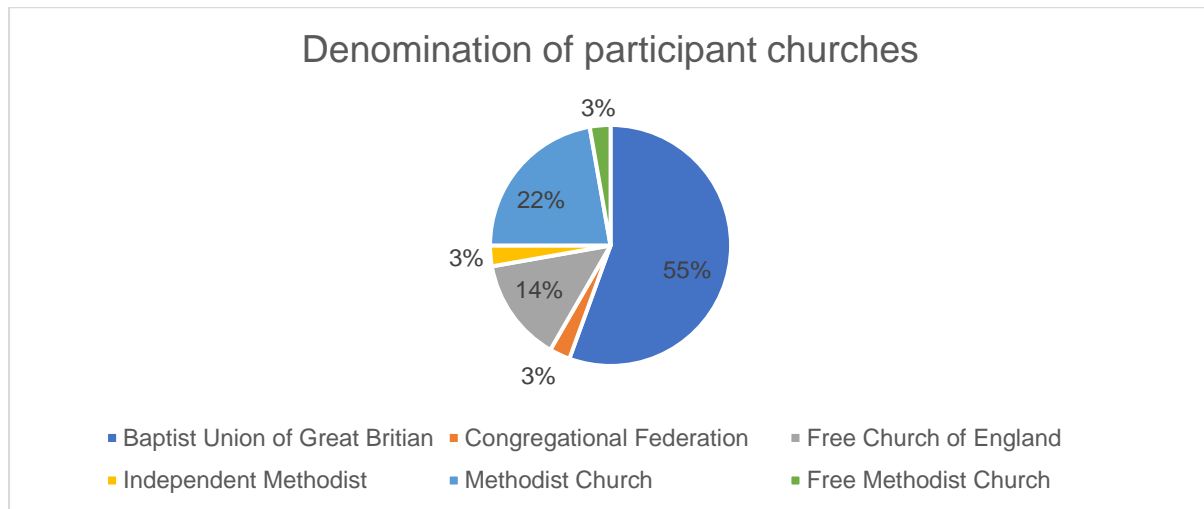


Figure 2

Participant churches came from six UK church denominations. 55% were members of the Baptist Union in the United Kingdom. All churches that participated are classified as protestant denominations rather than members of the Catholic or Orthodox traditions.

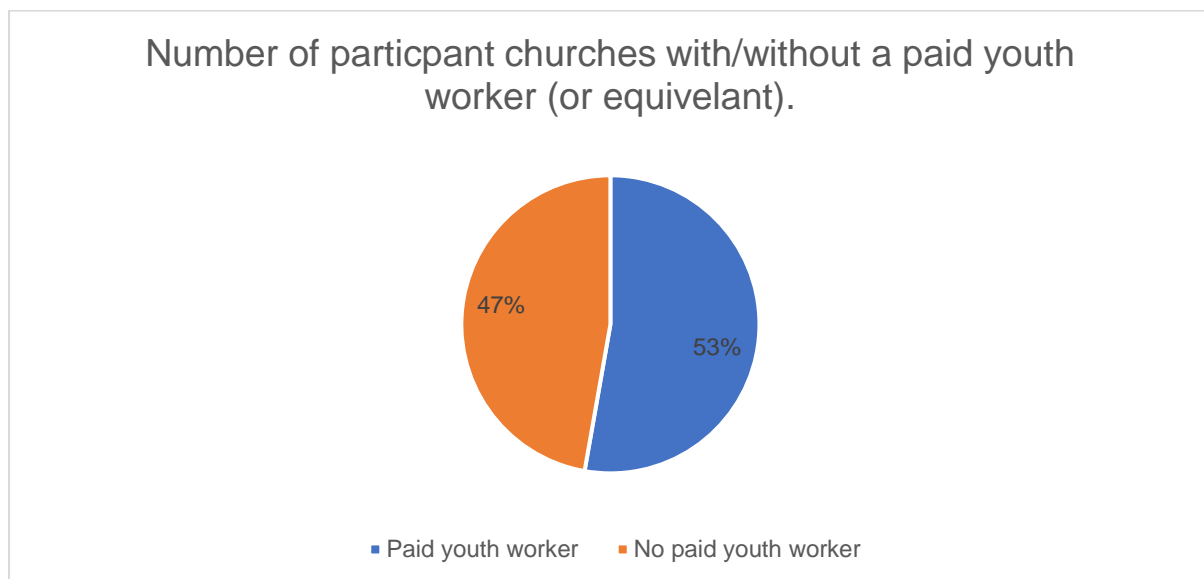


Figure 3

Role of survey participant's within their churches.

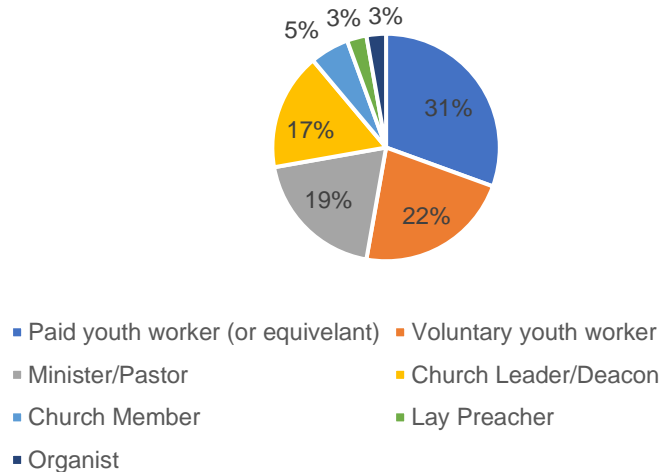


Figure 4

53% of participants were youth workers, both paid and voluntary. 39% were in leadership roles within churches, this includes ministers and pastors, lay preachers and members of church leadership and deacons. The remaining 8% were members of the church, with one person specifying their role as organist.

A comparison of youth activities before and during the Covid-19 lockdowns:

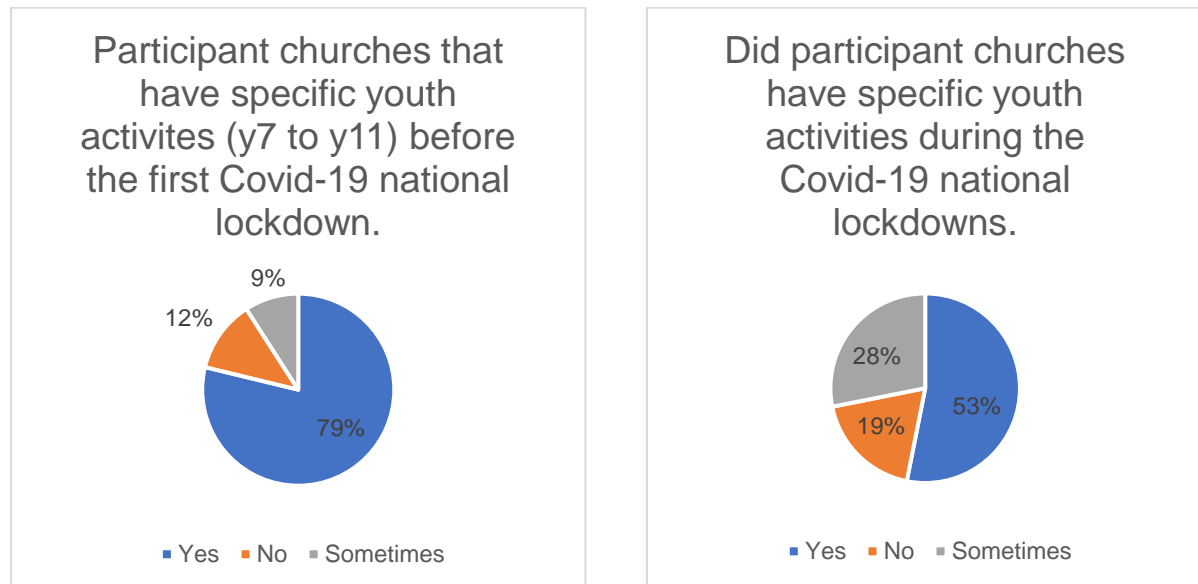


Figure 5

Before the Covid-19 lockdowns nearly 80% of churches surveyed had specific youth activities, with a further 9% offering these activities 'sometimes.' During the lockdowns, the number of churches offering youth activities dropped by over 25%, offering these activities on a regular basis. In contrast the number of churches not offering youth activities 'sometimes' rose by nearly 20%.

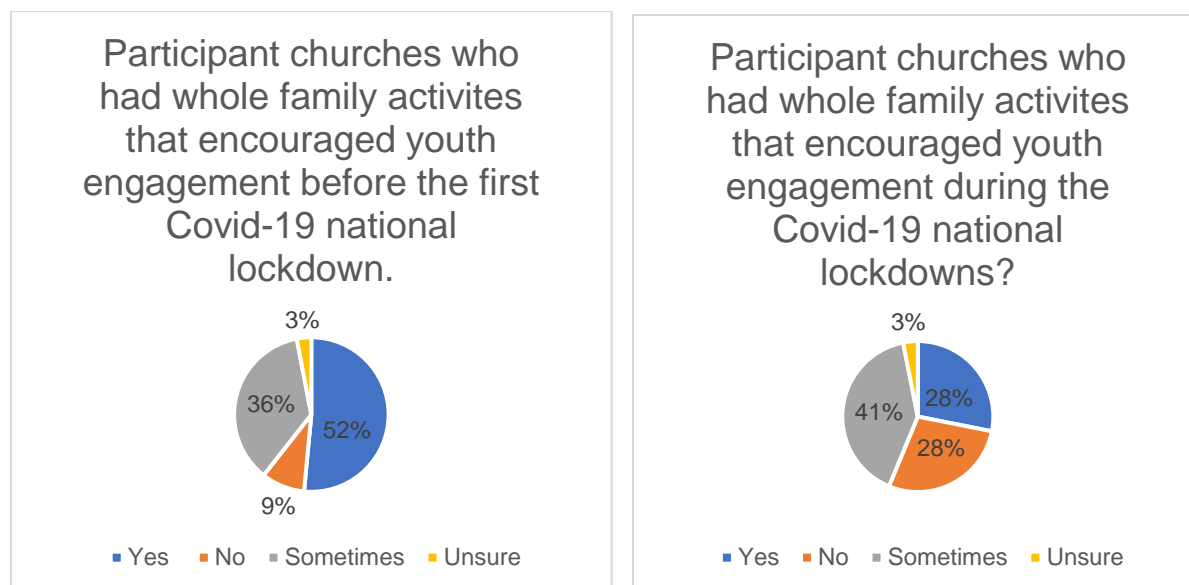


Figure 6

Before the Covid-19 lockdowns, just over half of participant churches held regular activities for the whole family, that encouraged young people to participate. However, during the lockdowns, this number nearly halved. The number of churches who did not offer whole family activities rose from 9% to 28%. The number of churches only offering whole family activities 'sometimes' increased by 5% during the lockdowns.

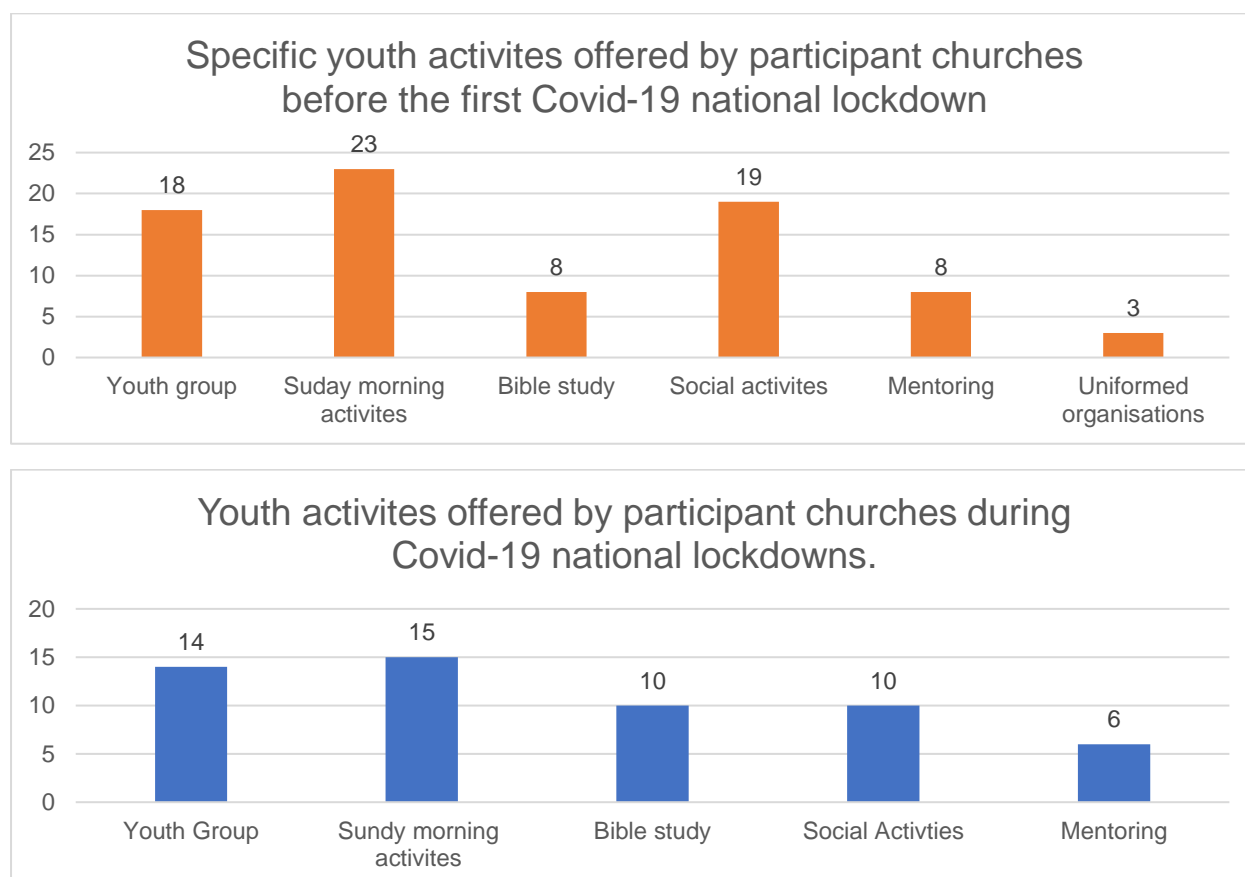


Figure 7

Before the Covid-19 lockdowns, less than half the churches surveyed had a youth group, youth bible study, social activities or mentoring and only 56% of churches offering youth specific Sunday morning activities. All activities saw a decrease in availability during the Covid-19 lockdowns. No churches offered meetings for uniformed organisations. 4 fewer churches offered a youth group and 2 fewer offered a youth Bible study and mentoring. 8 less churches offered youth specific Sunday morning activities and 9 less offered social activities for their young people.

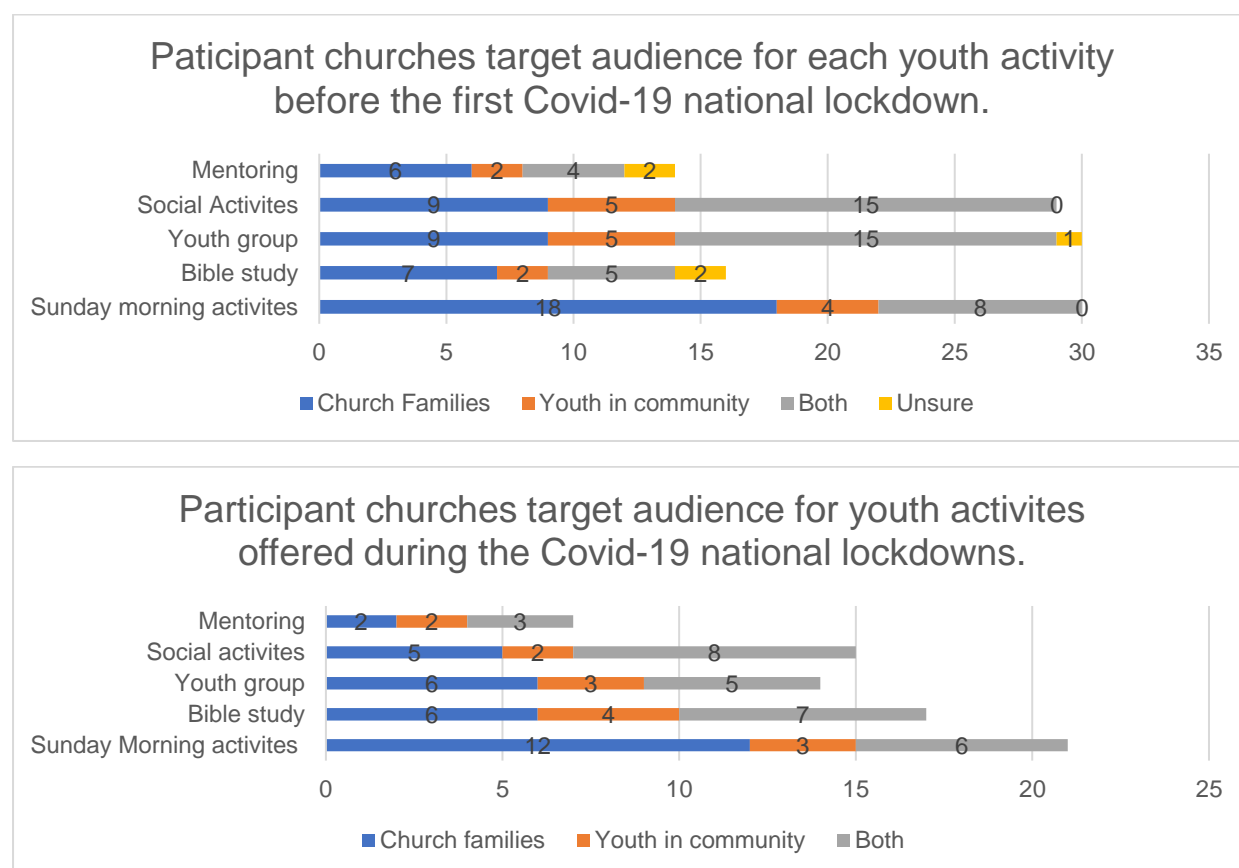


Figure 8

The questionnaire asked who the target audience of the above youth activities was before and during the Covid-19 national lockdowns.

Mentoring was offered in half the number of churches than before Covid-19. This decrease was seen most in mentoring offered to youth from church families with 4 less churches offering mentoring during the lockdowns. However, churches offering mentoring to youth from the wider community did not see a decrease.

Youth social activities were offered in 28 churches before the lockdowns. This dropped by 15 churches during these periods. This decrease effected both church families and youth in the community alike as all three answer options saw decline.

Similarly, youth group was offered by 15 less churches during the lockdowns. All three answer options saw a decrease. Churches who offered their youth group to both young people from church families and youth from the community saw the

largest decrease, with 2/3 of churches no longer offering this group during the lockdowns.

Unlike all other activities, youth bible study was offered by more churches during the lockdowns. 17 churches offered this activity, rather than the 14 before. Bible study specifically for young people from church families did see a decrease, but both bible study for just youth in the community and a combination of both audiences increased by at least two churches.

Sunday morning youth activities were the most popular activity both before and during lockdown. 30 churches offered some sort of Sunday morning activity for young people before and 21 offered them during the lockdowns. Youth specific Sunday morning activities dropped most for young people from church families, with 6 churches stopping these sessions during the lockdowns.

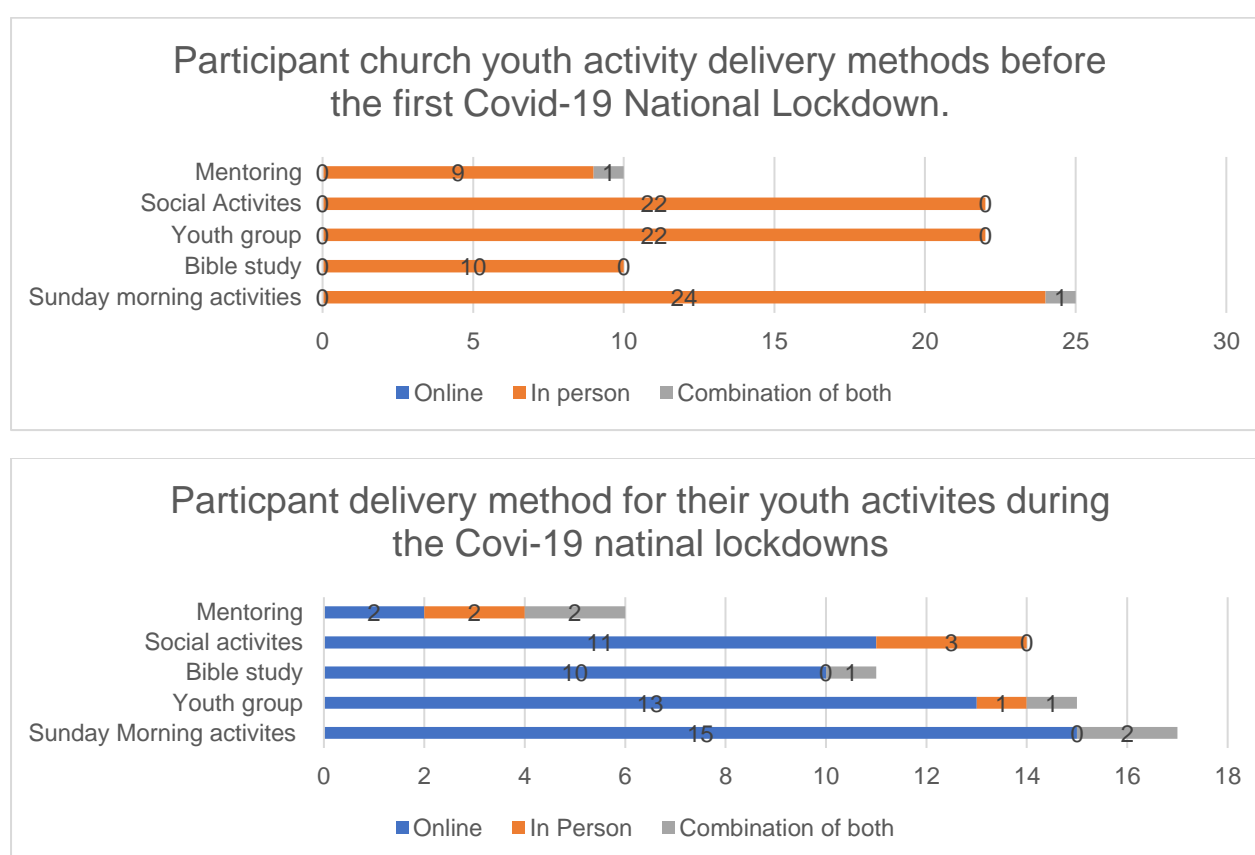


Figure 9

Before the Covid-19 lockdowns all activities offered in churches were primarily in person. However, one church offered both mentoring and Sunday morning activities both in a combination approach.

As expected, the majority of churches changed their delivery approach to solely online during the lockdowns. 2 churches still offered mentoring in person and a further 2 churches offered a combination approach. As well as this, 3 churches still offered youth social activities as in-person events, rather than online, and 1 church continued with an in-person youth group.

Participant church chosen method or platform for youth activities online during the Covid-19 national lockdowns.

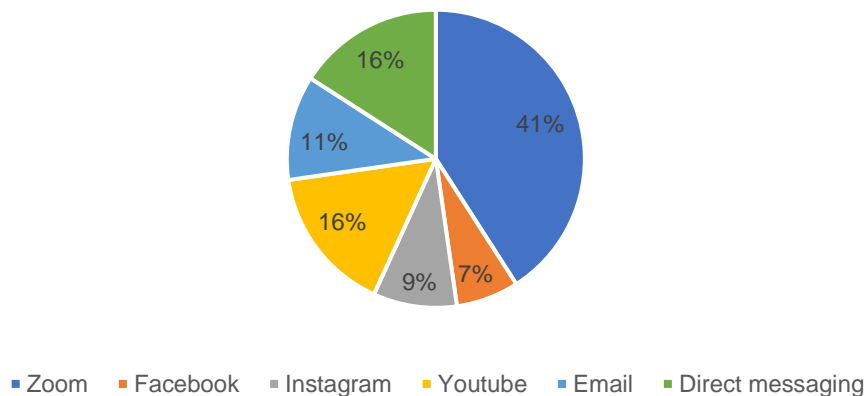


Figure 10

Those churches who stated that they chose to move their activities online during the lockdowns were asked to select all the platforms they chose to use during this time. 57% of churches chose to use a video platform such as YouTube or Zoom. 16% of churches used social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram and 27% of churches used direct messaging or email services.

Participant churches responses to the question 'Do you believe that the Covid-19 lockdowns changed the way you delivered your youth ministry?'

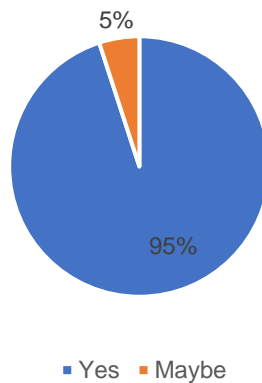


Figure 11

No participant who responded to this question believed that the national lockdowns had not changed the way they delivered their youth ministry activities. 95% were certain it had changed their delivery and the remaining 5% believed that maybe it had.

The 'post lockdown' future and the potential effects of lockdown on youth ministry activities in participant churches:

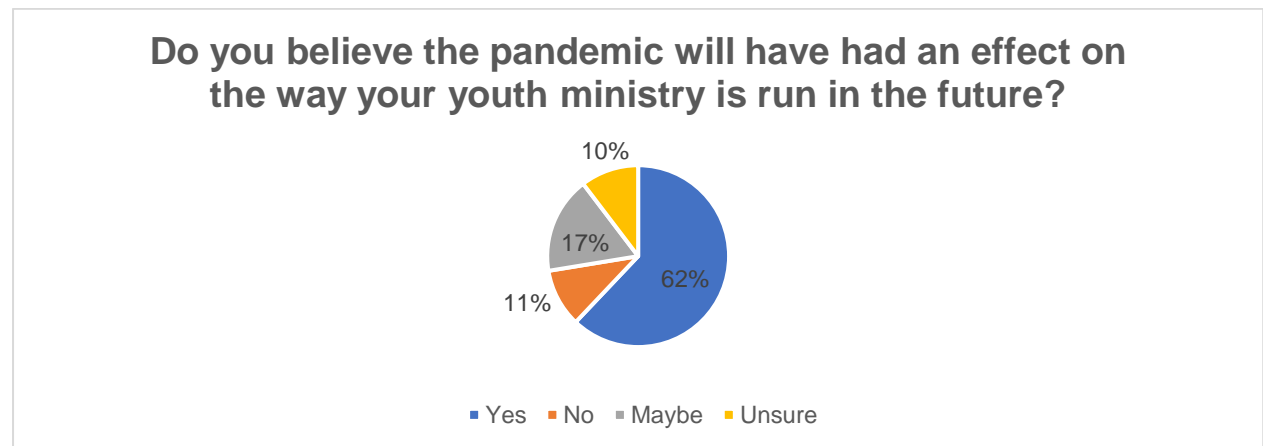


Figure 12

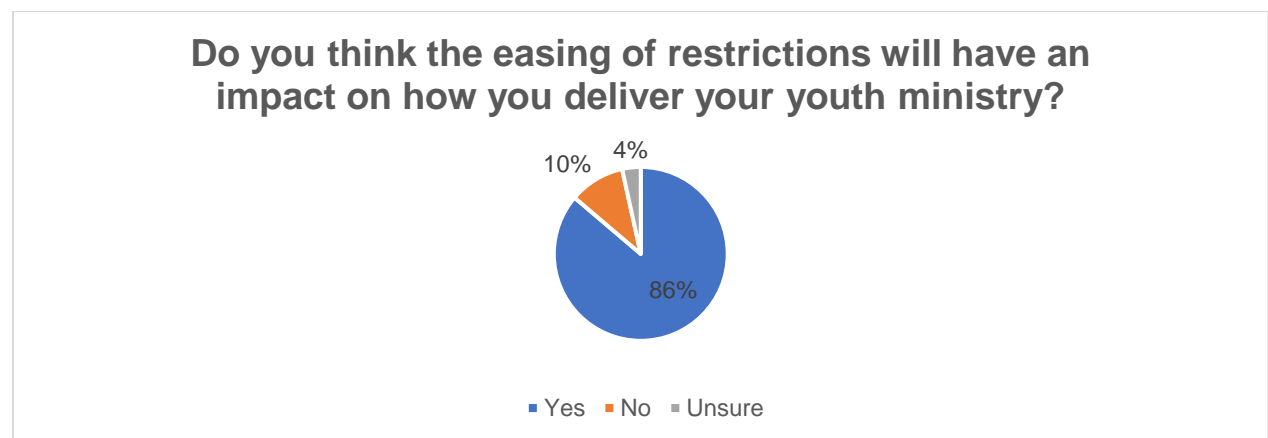


Figure 13

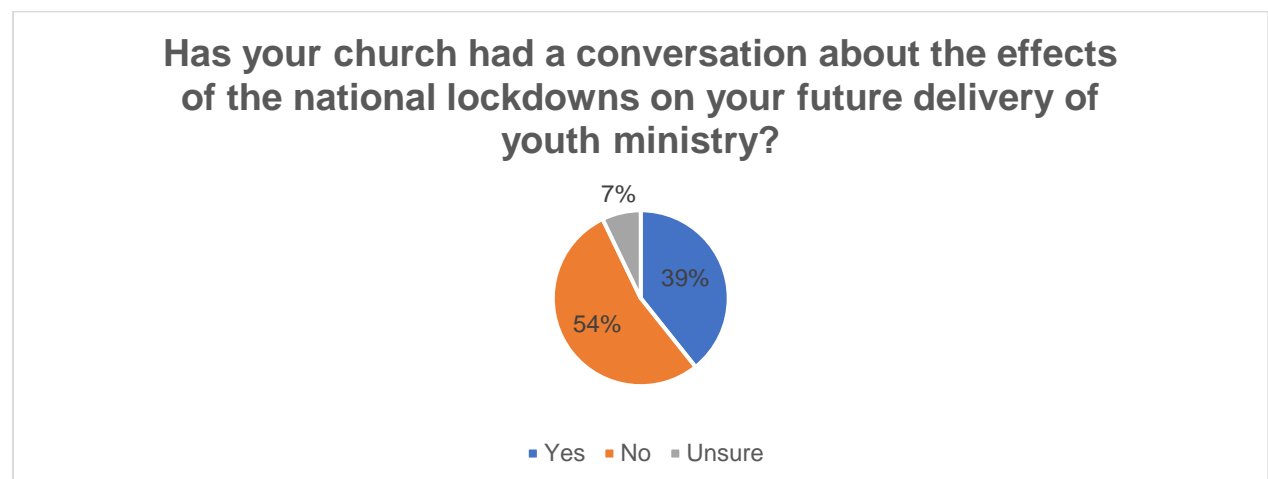


Figure 14

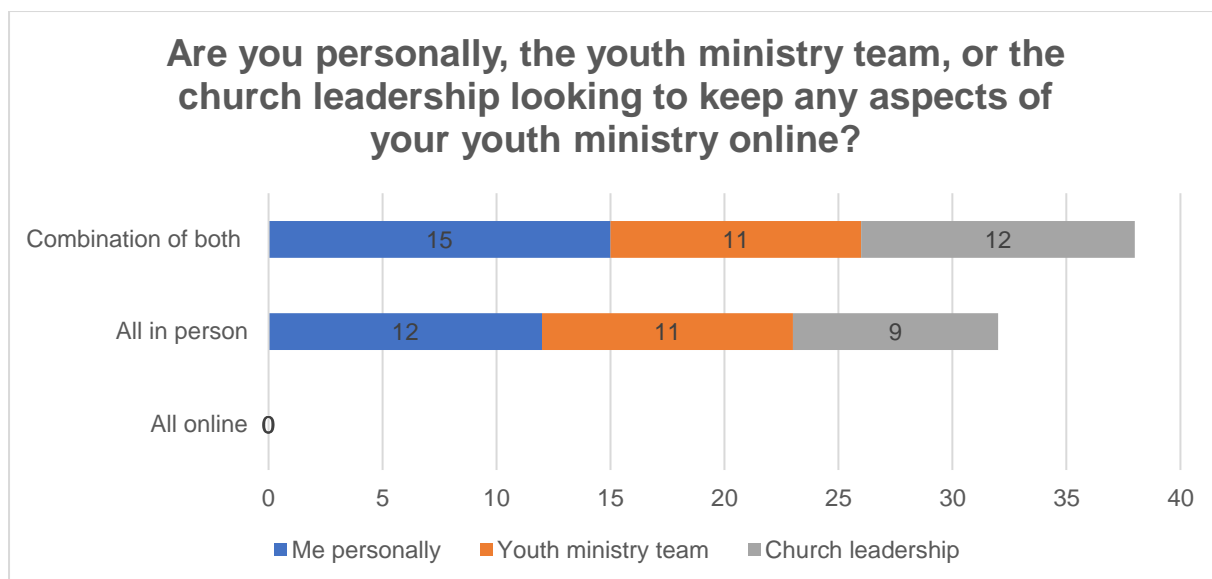


Figure 15

No one surveyed believed that their youth ministry should stay solely online. Approximately 1/3 of those who answered personally believed that their youth ministry will go back to all in person provision, with the other 66% believing a combination approach is best for them. Similarly church leadership favour a combination approach looking forward to the future. However, when looking at the youth ministry team data is evenly split between all in person and a combination approach.

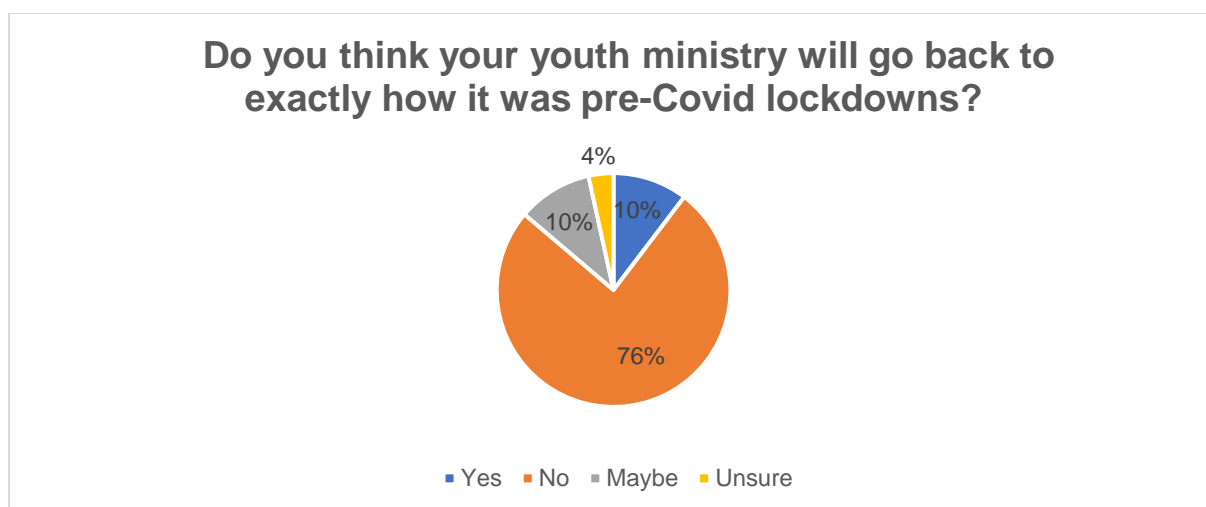


Figure 16

Long answer and interview qualitative data:

As previously stated, the qualitative data collected from long answer questions and the semi-structured interviews, has been drawn together and transcribed into appendices. These transcriptions have been quoted throughout the discussion; adding a deeper, more personal look into the conclusions drawn together in the quantitative data.

Discussion:

What did youth ministry look like before Covid?

Participant churches provided information about their youth ministry practices before the Covid-19 national lockdowns. Literature provides a detailed theoretical knowledge of what was happening in UK; however, this study aimed to practically explore the past, present and future of youth ministry and impacts that lockdown may have had on participant churches. This section, looking at pre-Covid youth ministries, aims to provide context and a base line for comparison in later sections of this discussion. This section will provide an overview of pre-lockdown youth ministry in surveyed churches.

Of the 41 participant churches, 79% of them had established weekly youth activities before the Covid-19 lockdowns and a further 9% sometimes had similar activities. These activities were split across 6 categories, with an 'other' box being provided and not used in this question. These six weekly activities were: Youth groups, Sunday morning youth activities, Bible study, social activities, mentoring and uniformed organisations.

18 churches, the equivalent of 2/3 of participant churches, had an established youth group. Within the Methodist church, 3710 churches offered youth groups in 2011,¹⁸⁴ however this was 10 years ago and no newer statistics could not be acquired. With 4004 active churches in 2021,¹⁸⁵ that should mean 92.7% of Methodist churches in the UK have a youth group, higher than the average collected in this data. However, the Church of England statistical report for 2019 suggests that below 20% of their churches have some form of youth specific work.¹⁸⁶ This figure may have been growing nationally as one church stated that they were just starting their youth group as the national lockdowns hit.¹⁸⁷ Monty also discussed their churches new youth group: 'as a church we had recently started doing a monthly Friday evening get together with our year 6's and up.'¹⁸⁸

23 churches provided provision for young people on a Sunday morning. Lottie stated that although she was not youth worker pre-covid and cannot give first-hand account the young people have since told her 'They met once a week ... and they tell me they never really got anything out of it. They'd just sit out of the service, and that was it.'¹⁸⁹ With 'Sunday schools' or 'Junior church's' no longer looking like the classroom of yesteryear, Tovell argues these spaces can be seen as a place to 'deal' with the children during a service rather than to educate and grow faith.¹⁹⁰ However, Francis,

¹⁸⁴ The Methodist Church. 'Methodist statistics: young people and youth groups.' Available from <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/10007/stats-youth-2011.pdf>, 5.

¹⁸⁵ The Methodist Church. 'Methodism in Numbers – Statistics at a Glance (2021 edition)', Available from https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/22021/methodism_in_numbers_2021.pdf, 1.

¹⁸⁶ The Church of England. 'Statistics for mission 2019.' Available from <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/2019StatisticsForMission.pdf>, 22.

¹⁸⁷ Appendix 3, 1.

¹⁸⁸ Appendix 11.

¹⁸⁹ Appendix 12

¹⁹⁰ Tovell, Catherine. 'The Christian formation of Children and youth'. *Touchstone*, 19:2 (2001), 32-45, [38].

Gibson and Lankshear found that Sunday morning provision not only promoted positive attitudes towards a young person's Christian faith, but that the longer a young person was part of these communities the greater this impact would be.¹⁹¹

8 churches had a youth specific bible study. This figure may be incorrect, as no specific definition was provided. Different people may interpret 'bible study' differently,¹⁹² some may consider this as a 'God-slot'¹⁹³ as part of youth group, rather than the specific activity this question intended. However, some participants did mention that they had separate youth bible study.¹⁹⁴

Social activities were the second most offered youth provision behind Sunday morning activities. One participant explained that 'Anything more bible based had less engagement than the social activities.'¹⁹⁵ This insight offered by participant 6 mirrors Gough's statement that 'We don't ever want to hear 'this feels like school' from a young person. Our mission has been to make everything fun, unique and distinct.'¹⁹⁶ However Gough adds caution by discussing that as youth workers we must provide these activities to make sure our youth work is engaging and relevant, but must not lose focus of our spiritual responsibilities.¹⁹⁷

8 churches provided some form of Christian mentoring for their young people. Mentoring is used widely in secular society, and is defined as a relationship with an 'experienced or trusted advisor.'¹⁹⁸ So within a Christian setting, these mentoring relationships can have a positive impact on the spiritual development of our young people.

3 churches had different uniformed organisation, all of whom mentioned these in their long answer questions.¹⁹⁹ This figure seems like it may be statistically lower than average. In my personal experiences many churches offer some form of uniformed organisation such as Scouting or Girlguiding. However, finding national statistics to provide evidence to this statement has proven difficult. I believe one reason this statistic could seem lower than previously expected is that these activities may be run by volunteers outside of the church community and so may not be seen as an affiliate church activity.

¹⁹¹ Francis, Leslie. J., Gibson, Harry. M. and Lankshear, David, W. 'The influence of Protestant Sunday schools on attitudes towards Christianity among 11-15 year olds in Scotland.' *British journal of religious education*, 14:1 (1991), 35-42, [35].

¹⁹² Belsterling, Ron. 'Adolescent attachment Christian youth workers, and frequency of Bible Study,' *Christian Education Journal*, 6:2 (2009), 337-352, [339].

¹⁹³ Appendix 3, 5.

¹⁹⁴ Appendix 3, 7 and 12.

¹⁹⁵ Appendix 3, 6.

¹⁹⁶ Tim Gough. 'When youth work is supposed to be difficult.' Available from <https://youthworkhacks.com/when-youth-work-is-supposed-to-be-difficult/>

¹⁹⁷ Tim Gough. 'When youth work is supposed to be difficult.' Available from <https://youthworkhacks.com/when-youth-work-is-supposed-to-be-difficult/>

¹⁹⁸ Wakeman, Brian. E. 'A Christian perspective on mentoring.' *Transformation: An international journal of holistic mission studies*. 29:4 (2012), 277-292, [277].

¹⁹⁹ Appendix 3: 4, 26, 22.

This question allowed participants to tick all boxes that applied, meaning there were churches who have extremely busy youth schedules.²⁰⁰ While others were honest in stating that they had very little youth provision before the national lockdowns.²⁰¹ Interestingly participant 19 explains that the reason they did not have many youth activities before Covid was because they did not have a youth worker.²⁰² By asking question 8,²⁰³ the results seen in figure 3, this research has established that 47% of all participant churches did not have a paid youth worker. This figure may be statistically lower than the national average, with one study concluding that two thirds of Anglican churches did not have a paid youth worker.²⁰⁴ Howell also discusses a decrease, by almost half, of new youth work recruits over the last 10 years.²⁰⁵ This decrease in youth workers may be the reason, as discussed by participant 19,²⁰⁶ that some churches felt that their pre-lockdown youth ministries were 'not great'.²⁰⁷ However Antoinette suggest that a paid youth worker should not be the only member of a church who participates in leading youth ministries, more, that for youth ministry to be effective, there should be a varied team of adults.²⁰⁸ Through personal ministry experience this may be theoretically easier than the reality, with Gough discussing how some models or youth ministry rely heavily on one person and can cause a youth worker to 'burn out' mentally.²⁰⁹

Participant 21 discusses their encouragement of youth in church roles such as music group and tech. This is not something that is new, but an idea that is being renewed. Allen (Eds.) talks about a church who are intentionally giving young people roles that are traditionally reserved for adults, in order to create intergenerational relationships based around shared passions.²¹⁰ In these relationships true friendship can be formed in which both adult and young person truly care about the interests and lives of the other.²¹¹

Alongside these youth specific activities 52% of churches had whole family activities that encouraged the youth to participate and 36% more churches sometimes had these activities. Despite being the same combine percentage as youth specific

²⁰⁰ Appendix 3: 3, 7, 16, 27.

²⁰¹ Appendix 3, 9.

²⁰² Appendix 3, 19.

²⁰³ Appendix 1.

²⁰⁴ Francis, Leslie. J., Howell, David., Hill, Phoebe and McKenna, Ursula. 'Assessing the impact of a paid children, youth or family worker on Anglican congregations in England.' *Journal of research on Christian education*, 28:1 (2019), 43-50, [48].

²⁰⁵ Rev David Howell. 'Number of church youth and children's workers almost halves over past decade.' Available from <https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/youth-and-children-s-ministry-attracting-almost-half-as-many-trainees-as-a-decade-ago>

²⁰⁶ Appendix 3, 19.

²⁰⁷ Appendix 3, 9.

²⁰⁸ Vallrie, Antoinette. H. 'Strategies for a healthy youth ministry', *The journal of the interdenominational theological centre*. 40:1 (2014), 115-134, [120].

²⁰⁹ Gough. 'Rebooted', 18.

²¹⁰ Allen (Eds.), *Intergenerate*, 30.

²¹¹ Ibid.

activities, not many participants discussed these activities in their open answer text questions.

2 churches mentioned their monthly Messy Church's.²¹² Since its birth in 2004, Messy Church has grown almost exponentially across the country.²¹³ So it is not a surprise to have seen participants mention these activities. Messy church is advertised as an all-age church community.²¹⁴ Although from personal experience these activities are aimed at younger children than this study intends to discuss. Participant 13 confirms this suspicion by saying 'Most young people attending were in 5 to 11 age group'.²¹⁵ Other participants mentioned intergenerational services²¹⁶ and whole family events based around Christian festivals.²¹⁷ Though neither gave much more indication as to what these activities entailed.

In regards to target audience: Mentoring, Bible studies and Sunday morning activities were activities provided mainly for youth from church families. Whereas youth groups and social activities were mainly focused on combination of both church and community youth. Interestingly, 5 churches said they provided these activities for just youth in the community. Bonnie comments on how they structured different activities towards different groups:

'So on a Sunday morning we would gather the young people together during the service... this was your classic youth groups... They have run things like youth alpha on the Sunday evenings in the past or they have a more socially active stuff. Friday nights we have a group called the mix. It is more of an outreach group. We aim it at the local kids.'

Unsurprisingly the majority of all activities were delivered in person pre-covid. However, 1 church offered a combination approach to mentoring and another to Sunday morning activities.

What did youth ministry look like during the lockdowns for Covid-19?

Churches offering youth specific activities reduced to 53% during the lockdown periods. Alongside this only 28% of churches offered whole family activities regularly. These numbers were a decline from pre-Covid, but as participant 3 notes some churches 'did the same but online',²¹⁸ whereas others chose to answer the open text box answer honestly, simply describing their lockdown ministry as 'poor'.²¹⁹ Some

²¹² Appendix 3: 11 and 13.

²¹³ Watkins, Clare and Shepherd, Bridget. 'The challenge of 'fresh expressions' to ecclesiology: reflections from the practice of Messy Church', *Ecclesial practices*, 1:1 (2014), 92-110, [97].

²¹⁴ Watkins and Shepherd. 'The challenge of fresh expression...', 101.

²¹⁵ Appendix 3, 13.

²¹⁶ Appendix 3, 21.

²¹⁷ Appendix 3, 5.

²¹⁸ Appendix 4, 3.

²¹⁹ Appendix 2, 5.

churches had to scale back their options during lockdown, with participant 1 stating that they made this decision because it combatted disengagement.²²⁰

Although there may be a multitude of reasons for this decline in youth activities; Rahn describes how lockdown made us feel 'stunned' and 'uncertain', drawing a parallel to the disciples on Easter Saturday.²²¹ This panic turned into unprecedented haste to get things running safely. This turned into some level of confidence as things seemed to successfully reach at least some of our young people.²²² However, both practitioners and the youth soon started to feel 'zoom fatigue' because of the increased screen time.²²³ For youth workers, Ostreicher argues that this fatigue may have come as churches relied on their more technologically minded members to innovate and carry their churches into online provision for everyone.²²⁴

Another reason for the decline in youth activities, could be due to the pandemic accelerated decline in paid youth ministry roles.²²⁵ As previously discussed there had been a substantial decline in the number of people on youth ministry higher education courses.²²⁶ DeVries argues that we may even be training the few youth ministry practitioners in education for roles that may not exist in the next 20 years.²²⁷

As with the before Covid section churches were asked which of the six activities they provided over lockdown, with an 'other' box not being used. These activities were: Youth groups, Sunday morning youth activities, Bible study, social activities, mentoring and uniformed organisation.

No churches offered uniformed organisations over lockdown. This was unexpected as many organisations offered guidelines for online best practice.²²⁸ However as discussed, these units are mainly run as separate activities, so may not be directly counted as church activities, just a group that uses the church building.

With all other activities it is hard to draw parallels to literature, as this topic is still recent and national statistics for this year (2020/2021) have still not been released for many organisations. To make sure a discussion is formed this research will rely on the long-text answer and semi-structured interview questions, to help provide

²²⁰ Appendix 4, 1.

²²¹ Rahn, Dave. 'Be encouraged, even now.' *The journal of youth ministry*, 18:1 (2020), 6-7, [6].

²²² Oestreicher, Mark (Eds.). 'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.' (San Diego: The youth cartel, 2020), 7.

²²³ Long-Garcis, J.D. 'Less pizza, more phone calls...', 15.

²²⁴ Oestreicher (Eds.). 'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.' 6.

²²⁵ Ibid, 11.

²²⁶ David Howell. 'Training for Christian youth & children's ministry is in decline. Why?' Available from <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/research/news/training-decline-why>

²²⁷ DeVries, Mark. 'An interview with Mark DeVries about Family-Based youth ministry, twenty years later.' *The journal of discipleship & family ministry*, 4:2 (2014), 118-121, [120- 121].

²²⁸ Girlguiding offered online guidance for leaders to help keep units running and members safe online: Girlguiding UK. 'Meetings during Covid-19', Available from <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/coronavirus-keeping-safe/meetings-during-covid-19/>

Scouting offered leaders Covid-19 safe programme ready to run for their troops to use.

Scouts. 'Covid-19 safe programme ideas.' Available from <https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/scouts-at-home/covid-19-safe-programme-ideas/>

some depth and understanding as to why many churches saw a decrease in activities.

14 churches had a youth group. This is a decrease of nearly 25%. Participant 1 discusses how they condensed all their youth ministry into one weekly meeting, using their traditionally Sunday morning material, to help combat the growing disengagement from online activities.²²⁹ This disengagement was felt by other study participants,²³⁰ with 13 commenting lockdown online activities were 'hard work'.²³¹ This disengagement has not just been felt in the Christian youth work sector, secular education has noted that some secondary school aged pupils disconnected themselves from online schooling during the national lockdowns,²³² especially those who already had turbulent relationships with the schooling system.²³³

To combat this some churches tried new ways of delivering their youth groups to those who needed them. Some sent out activities via the post.²³⁴ While others tried pre-recorded material or direct messaging services to keep in contact with their young people.²³⁵ Bonnie discusses how their Friday night youth group did not work well online, but they took the primary need of their young people, a hot meal, and found an inventive way of maintaining that service: weekly meal packs delivered to the doors of the young people with enough food for the whole family.²³⁶

15 churches still provided youth specific Sunday morning activities. The announcement of the lockdown, in late March 2020, saw a 'mad dash' to get activities online,²³⁷ many churches quickly embraced technologies they had never used before.²³⁸ Some churches found it easier than others, and as a consequence a variety of solutions emerged. Some recorded their content and uploaded the videos to YouTube.²³⁹ Others carried on as they were, just online, keeping separate groups to their Sunday provision,²⁴⁰ and many integrated their youth into the Sunday services, providing an all-age experience.²⁴¹ Lottie commented on their provision saying: 'on a Sunday we would all go to zoom church together then afterwards ... I would ask them after like 'What did you think of the service?' and we would have like a half an hour text conversation after.'²⁴²

²²⁹ Appendix 4, 1.

²³⁰ Appendix 4: 9, 10, 18.

²³¹ Appendix 4, 13.

²³² Jones, Tiffany. M. et al. 'School mental health providers' perspectives on the impact of Covid-19 on racial inequities and school disengagement.' *Children and schools*, 43:1 (2021), 97-106, [98].

²³³ Seymour, Kathryn., Skattebol, Jennifer and Pook, Ben. 'Compounding education disengagement: Covid-19 lockdown, the digital divide and wrap-around services.' *Journal of child services*, 15:4 (2020), 243-251, [243].

²³⁴ Appendix 4, 15.

²³⁵ Appendix 4, 17.

²³⁶ Appendix 13.

²³⁷ Oestreicher (Eds.). 'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.' 7.

²³⁸ Cressman. 'B.C. and A.C.', 46.

²³⁹ Appendix 4: 1, 14, 17.

²⁴⁰ Appendix 4: 3, 18.

²⁴¹ Appendix 4: 12, 14.

²⁴² Appendix 12.

10 churches had a bible study for youth. Similarly, 10 churches still continued with social activities. With many people commenting on how these activities were more successful in an online than those with a biblical or content focus.²⁴³ However, for some it was their social activities that stopped during the lockdowns. Bonnie explained how their Friday night social group stopped over lockdown because zoom just didn't work for those specific young people and that specific group saying: 'it is very much a physical group. Its main components were eating the meal and playing sports together... Zoom just didn't work so they didn't really meet at all over lockdown.'²⁴⁴

6 churches continued mentoring for their young people. Due to the nature of mentoring, this continuation on 75% of churches who offered this pre-lockdown, may be because mentoring naturally lent itself to online easier than other activities. In fact, many mentoring relationships both in the church and secular education were already being forged on social media networks.²⁴⁵

Like activity availability, the target audiences of online activities changed or adapted into something new. Bible studies offered to both community and church youth combined increased. With 7 churches now offering in comparison to the previous 5. As Glanzer discusses, in a time of great upheaval, like the pandemic, in order to survive we had to change and adapt what we were doing.²⁴⁶ We did not want our presence in that online space to be half-hearted.²⁴⁷ This alongside our increased awareness of zoom-fatigue, as the lockdowns progressed,²⁴⁸ leads me to the conclusion that this increase may have been due to an amalgamation of resources or at least a change of purpose. Every other activity that was offered decreased in number, with youth groups that are targeted at both groups seeing the greatest decrease from 15 to 5 churches. Vidal discusses his personal need to ask the 'big questions' in search for a greater understanding in the doubt of quarantine,²⁴⁹ and he was not alone. Harrington found that throughout the pandemic, people in the UK also sought out meaning, and the church provided the space for spiritual conversation.²⁵⁰ Beamish furthers this thinking by exploring the idea that churches changed their material to help those participating explore their pandemic emotions.²⁵¹ Although these studies relate to adult ministry, Holmes' study concludes that these changes were also experienced by the children and family ministry community too;²⁵²

²⁴³ Appendix 4, 16.

²⁴⁴ Appendix 13.

²⁴⁵ Schwartz, Harriet. L. 'Facebook: The new classroom commons?' *Chronicle of higher education*, 56:6 (2009), B12-B13, [B-12].

²⁴⁶ Glanzer, Perry. L. 'Learning while the world is burning', *Christianity Today*, 64:4 (2020), 52-56, [56].

²⁴⁷ Glanzer. 'Learning while the world is burning', 56.

²⁴⁸ Long-Garcis, J.D. 'Less pizza, more phone calls...', 15.

²⁴⁹ Vidal, Junn. 'A question of quarantine', *America*, 222:11 (2020), 50-50, [50].

²⁵⁰ Harrington, Melanie. 'Towards a theology of Covid: providence and lament in past, present and future trauma narratives.' *Practical theology*, 14:1-2 (2021), 98-108.

²⁵¹ Beamish, Robert. 'Preaching in this time of COVID: finding the words to speak of God.' *Practical theology*, 14:1-2 (2021), 47-57.

²⁵² Holmes. 'The changing nature of ministry amongst children and families in the UK'. 4.

commenting that churches sometimes created hybrid activities to cater to the needs of different groups in one space.²⁵³ Something that this study can demonstrate may also have been happening in the youth ministry community too. Participant 2 comments that reaching the young people in the community was especially difficult as they may not have had access to the internet.²⁵⁴ This helps provide clarity as to one reason churches may have changed or adapted their pre-Covid ministries, to reach or cater for a different young people. 3 churches offered some social activities in person still, with distancing measures in place, in order to combat this inaccessibility. Monty comments that initially their youth work was none existent, with the youth ministry team opting for a safe face-to-face interaction:

*'We did a lot more door to door contact... Trying to just keep contact really... We had a WhatsApp group... But they weren't engaging with stuff online. So we set up a few zoom youth things. And because again of cultural issues, a lot of these families didn't have laptops or access to zoom. The only access was mum's smart phone. Well if somebody rings on that smart phone then that's it.'*²⁵⁵

Unlike the pre-Covid section an extra question was asked here. To try and establish a picture of which online platforms were used to deliver content to young people.

57% used a video service such as Zoom or YouTube. 41% of these chose a platform that allowed for interaction between participants such as Zoom. While 16% opted for a pre-recorded non-interactive option such as YouTube.

16% of participants used social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to engage and contact their young people. Whereas 27% preferred direct messaging or emailing their youth.

Every church who participated in this survey agreed that youth ministry had either defiantly or maybe changed the way they delivered their youth ministry.²⁵⁶

For some churches this period was one of growth within their youth ministry. Participant 7 states 'Our circuit group grew from 12 people to 27 people over lockdown, we get roughly 15-20 young people across the 2 parts of the session each week now.'²⁵⁷ But many agreed that this period was difficult and challenging, especially when asking young people to engage with online conversation.²⁵⁸ Oestreicher comments that this pandemic period has been one of innovation and a time to try new things for many within youth ministry,²⁵⁹ and with any innovation some things have worked in certain settings for some, and not for others.²⁶⁰

²⁵³ Holmes. 'The changing nature of ministry amongst children and families in the UK'. 6.

²⁵⁴ Appendix 4, 2.

²⁵⁵ Appendix 11.

²⁵⁶ See figure 11.

²⁵⁷ Appendix 4: 7 and 9.

²⁵⁸ Appendix 4: 9,10,13.

²⁵⁹ Oestreicher (Eds.). 'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.' 8.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 9.

So what might happen to youth ministry as we leave the pandemic behind?

There were only a few multiple choice or tick box questions in this section as I wanted to hear in peoples' own words what they thought was going to happen, through open text questions.

The first of these quantitative questions asked if those answering the survey thought the pandemic will have had an effect on their future youth ministry. 62% stated they did, 17% maybe and 10% unsure. 11% stated they did not think the pandemic would change their youth ministry at all. However, when asked 86% of those who answered agreed that the easing of restrictions will impact on the way they now deliver their youth ministry.

At the time of data collection (May 2021) only 39% of churches had discussed their youth ministry going forward. And when asked how youth ministry should be delivered, 15 individuals believed their youth ministry would take a combination approach, online and in-person, while 12 believed their ministry would work best solely in person. Similarly, too the participants of the survey themselves, Church leadership teams favour a combination approach going forward with 12 voting for this over 9 wanting all in person provision. However, when asked about the opinions of youth ministry teams and volunteers, there was a more even split with 11 churches aiming for a combination and 11 seeking an in-person approach.

The outcomes of these discussions will be circumstantial to the setting and ministries experiences over lockdown. One church stated its openness to only online activities in the future,²⁶¹ but the overriding conclusion, expressed by the majority of participants, is that some of their ministries will return face to face, but some have worked better online and so may stay in that setting.²⁶² For some this decision is due to convenience,²⁶³ others have discussed how online activities are accessible to those who may not have been able to attend in person²⁶⁴ and some participants have discussed their parents' enthusiasm for online activities.²⁶⁵

In contrast, there are participants who express their ministries need for in person provision.²⁶⁶ Bonnie says 'a lot of our conversation is getting things back to where they were.'²⁶⁷

When looking at post-lockdown ministry 76% believe their provision will not return to pre-lockdown and 10% think maybe it will but have that element of doubt. But, 10% think it will. Monty however states 'I'm pretty sure it will carry on in a similar way'.²⁶⁸

Holmes' study on the pandemic and children's ministry concludes that traditional pre-pandemic models of discipleship may no longer be adequate in catering to the needs

²⁶¹ Appendix 6, 14.

²⁶² Appendix 6: 2,3,5,6,9,10,11,13.

²⁶³ Appendix 6: 7 and 15.

²⁶⁴ Appendix 6: 5 and 12.

²⁶⁵ Appendix 6: 6 and 9

²⁶⁶ Appendix 6: 8 and 2.

²⁶⁷ Appendix 13.

²⁶⁸ Appendix 11.

of children in a post-pandemic landscape.²⁶⁹ Alongside this Gough argued in 2019 that ministries needed to adapt and change to cater to the needs of their young people's changing spirituality and cultural context.²⁷⁰ This study and Holmes' study draw similar conclusions, despite being in different UK ministry settings, that local congregations must now assess their pre-covid provision and make sure the needs of their young people are listened too.²⁷¹ Over lockdown some people tried new things and they worked well. Potentially these new activities will be kept post-Covid. Bonnie's ministry is an example of this saying:

*'It's interesting... we ran the bible course on a Tuesday evening over zoom for the older youth. We didn't have many but there were a few that were keen and they join... going forward, we're looking at do we do a going deeper group on a Tuesday evening and keeping the Sunday evening social.'*²⁷²

This innovation and ability to try new things is not new, youth ministry over the last 50 years has fought hard to be contextual and cater to the needs of those participating.²⁷³ The pandemic however has forced many who may have used traditional ministry methods pre-covid to reimagine their provision. Oestreicher makes the conclusion that although zoom and online services have proven invaluable over the last 18 months, that this period of 'reopening' should be an opportunity build and incorporate the successful elements of pandemic ministry into our tried and tested systems.²⁷⁴ However he does not believe that solely online provision should continue, but should be there as a tool for practitioners to use when the time is right or incorporate into face-to-face activities.²⁷⁵

This study ended by asking the participants what affect the national lockdowns has had on their ministry,²⁷⁶ if they had learnt anything from their time in lockdown,²⁷⁷ and if these periods of time at home have affected their young people's mental health and faith in God.²⁷⁸ All four of these questions were designed so that participants could talk freely about their experiences and what they have seen happen within their youth ministry over this period.

Many replied that they felt that their provision needed changing up.²⁷⁹ For some this was as a result of youth leader exhaustion from the pressure of online ministry and a genuine concern for the young people they have completely lost contact with.²⁸⁰

²⁶⁹ Holmes. 'The changing nature of ministry amongst children and families in the UK'. 15.

²⁷⁰ Gough, Tim. 'Has the 'incarnational model' been a theologically helpful influence on modern youth ministry', *Journal of youth and theology*, 17:2 (2019), 135-163.

²⁷¹ Holmes. 'The changing nature of ministry amongst children and families in the UK'. 15.

²⁷² Appendix 13.

²⁷³ Gough. 'Does youth ministry have a future?', 14-15.

²⁷⁴ Oestreicher (Eds.). 'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.' 9.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 8.

²⁷⁶ Appendix 1.

²⁷⁷ Appendix 1.

²⁷⁸ Appendix 1.

²⁷⁹ Appendix 7: 6 and 8.

²⁸⁰ Appendix 7: 1,2,3,7,9,22,23,24,27.

This note towards both leader and youth mental health pre-empted the question on this topic.²⁸¹ Then when asked about young people's mental health, and when given the space to talk about it in more detail, every respondent commented that the pandemic had affected their young people's mental health in some way.²⁸² 7 replied with a simple 'yes',²⁸³ and although this provides no detail, other responses add descriptions as to the varying levels of disruption the lockdown has caused:

*'Yes, I think everyone has coped different. Some have thrived in just engaging online, some have found the lack of connection hard, and life online draining.'*²⁸⁴

*'Yes - they have been very anxious about the changing rules and the fact that schools went back when most businesses were still closed.'*²⁸⁵

*'Yes, greatly. Some of our young people have become more reclusive and reserved. Some have refused to attend school due to mental health.'*²⁸⁶

Lottie discusses how their young people were negatively affected, feeling increasingly lonely as the lockdowns persisted.²⁸⁷ Yet Bonnie comments that the effects were specific to the young person, those who were already anxious, were made more nervous, however some thrived in lockdown and have genuinely enjoyed the experience.²⁸⁸ Hoffman argues that over lockdown youth workers and those presenting online material have paid increased attention to the mental well-being and psychological state of their young people,²⁸⁹ becoming more aware of their loneliness or isolation of home.²⁹⁰ This has become especially evident in this study as many participants have expressed their concern for the young people they have lost contact with.²⁹¹

Similarly, many participants comment on the varying levels of disruption lockdown has caused to their young people's faith in God. For some this period has seen their young people's faith grow and develop,²⁹² while others comment that their young people have been spiritually knocked back due to the pandemic.²⁹³ Interestingly however many comment that this period has allowed for more open conversations

²⁸¹ See Appendix 1 for questionnaire question structure.

²⁸² Appendix 9.

²⁸³ Appendix 9: 2,3,5,6,9,10,11,13.

²⁸⁴ Appendix 9, 25.

²⁸⁵ Appendix 9: 21.

²⁸⁶ Appendix 9, 10.

²⁸⁷ Appendix 12.

²⁸⁸ Appendix 13.

²⁸⁹ Hoffman, Lyzette. 'The bible, faith formation and a virus- Exploring the influence of a pandemic on faith formation context and practices for children and teenagers.' *Hervormde teologiese studies*, 77:4 (2021), 1-6, [5].

²⁹⁰ Hoffman, 'The bible, faith formation and a virus.' 5.

²⁹¹ Appendix 7: 1,2,3,7,9,22,23,24 and 27.

²⁹² Appendix 10: 4 and 16.

²⁹³ Appendix 10: 6, 23 and 26.

about faith and big questions to be answered.²⁹⁴ A point previously discussed and explored.²⁹⁵

However, this studies main aim was to discover what lasting effect the lessons learnt over this lockdown period, will have on real life activities around the country and do they mirror the predictions made within literature for the future of youth ministry.

Participants have expressed a variety of different thoughts, and all should be taken into consideration. However, three themes have emerged. This section shall evaluate these against the trajectories for youth ministry discussed previously in this research.

Theme one: Face-to-face importance.

The first is that many have expressed the importance of face-to-face meetings.²⁹⁶ Especially because for many this is where the sense of community and relationships formed between both the young people and the leaders are best cultivated;²⁹⁷ the absence of these relationships has been noticed throughout the lockdown periods.²⁹⁸ Bonnie says that the pandemic has made them realise the ‘importance of one on one with the young people.’²⁹⁹ Many studies have shown that these relationships are essential and each concludes that these relationships are important for different reasons. McKoy’s book discusses how relationships can help form individual identity,³⁰⁰ especially through the language and stories shared between individuals.³⁰¹ Whereas those in the intergenerational community argue that the cross-generation relationships between leaders and young people are important for faith formation.³⁰² Similarly this emphasis on relationship could also draw in elements of incarnational youth ministry, which stresses the importance of building personal and culturally appropriate relationships.³⁰³ This new found relational focus could support Root’s pre-lockdown predication that youth ministry in the UK will head into another incarnational ministry phase.³⁰⁴ As previously discussed, Root argues that this new wave should centre itself around the idea of ‘Joy’; a joy that comes from relationships that carry burdens equally, rather than superficial joy that comes from

²⁹⁴ Appendix 10: 3,8,10,14 and 18.

²⁹⁵ See page 33.

²⁹⁶ Appendix 8: 4,11,13 and 26.

²⁹⁷ Appendix 8: 3 and 7.

²⁹⁸ Appendix 8: 2,4,5,12 and 21.

²⁹⁹ Appendix 13.

³⁰⁰ Brandon K. McKoy. *‘Youth ministries from the outside in: How relationships and stories shape identity.’* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013).

³⁰¹ McKoy *‘Youth ministry from the outside in’*, 26.

³⁰² Harkness. *‘Intergenerationality’*, 99.

³⁰³ Andrew Root. *‘Revisiting relational youth ministry: From a strategy of influence to the theology of incarnation.’* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 164.

³⁰⁴ Root. *‘The incarnation, place-sharing, and youth ministry’*, 22.

games.³⁰⁵ These friendships should grow from relationships formed as part of a spiritual community that experience life together, as one.³⁰⁶

Theme two: Technology has been helpful, but isn't a miracle solution.

The second theme is that many have found ministry in an online environment harder than they expected.³⁰⁷ But some admit that online ministry has benefits.³⁰⁸ This sentiment mirrors both Dumain³⁰⁹ and Oestreicher,³¹⁰ technologies offer us a genuine opportunity to move beyond our traditional ministries,³¹¹ but they should not be the end destination for most ministries.³¹² Although this movement towards a technological integration was not something discussed in depth during the youth ministry projections section, it is discussed as one of the points of change throughout history. When churches have a good social media presence, they impact on their chosen platform, and the people who choose to engage with their content.³¹³

The same goes for churches who choose to use different technologies post-pandemic. For some, they have found new life and intergenerationality amongst their congregations on video services like zoom,³¹⁴ whereas others have found that in these spaces their young people can be their 'authentic' self.³¹⁵ But technological integration must be circumstantial and done so with caution. We must see these technologies and skills learnt during the pandemic, something to add to our youth ministry arsenal, as we have seen how difficult it can be to maintain long-term.³¹⁶ Oestreicher puts this nicely 'Zoom and other online activities will not result in a massive reimagination of youth ministry... there is too much frustration with current approaches to call it a hinge point'.³¹⁷

Theme three: A move towards social justice.

The final theme, I think, is more a product of the last 18 months in general, not just the pandemic. The pandemic is one point of many that has accelerated the participants of this surveys to move into a new youth leadership style, one that focus' on the things that are important, not just in society but for our individual young people too.

Lottie says 'I don't think we talk to young people about the world enough. We need to stop treating them like children and treat them like the young adults they're

³⁰⁵ Andrew Root. *'The end of youth ministry: Why parents don't really care about youth groups and what youth workers should do about it.'* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 220.

³⁰⁶ Root. *'The end of youth ministry'*, 222.

³⁰⁷ Appendix 8: 14 and 24.

³⁰⁸ Appendix 6: 3,6,7,9,12 and 13 :Appendix 6, 5.

³⁰⁹ Dumain, *'Youth ministry in a digital age'*, 19.

³¹⁰ Oestreicher (Eds.). *'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.'* 8.

³¹¹ Dumain, *'Youth ministry in a digital age'*, 19.

³¹² Oestreicher (Eds.). *'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.'* 8.

³¹³ Pete Ward. *Celebrity worship: Media, religion and culture.* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 23.

³¹⁴ Oestreicher (Eds.). *'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.'* 124.

³¹⁵ Oestreicher (Eds.). *'Youth ministry in this season of disruption.'* 124.: Appendix 4, 10.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 8.

³¹⁷ Ibid, 9.

becoming,³¹⁸ and Monty seconds this adding 'what are their issues that they want to talk about more? And how are we going to speak to them about things they want to talk to about? Relevant issues about the environment, mental health, social media.'³¹⁹

Like the integration of technology, I do not think this sentiment will cause large changes in the youth ministry community right now. I do think this movement will result in many ministries at least talking more openly about social justice issues. As technology increases as do our connections to the wider world.³²⁰ On May 25th 2020, the arrest and murder of George Floyd,³²¹ sparked worldwide protests to support the Black Live Matter Movement,³²² and then on 2nd March 2021 Sarah Everard was murder in the UK, again causing a global outcry, this time against male violence towards women.³²³ With this instant exposure to global issues, many young people felt compelled to do something, even if that was only to share a post on social media. Those who are argue for more social justice action believe that we should be using this empowerment and compassion as a natural extension of the gospel.³²⁴

Conclusion:

This research set out to answer the questions what did youth ministry look like before the first Covid-19 national lockdown? What happened during the national lockdowns? And will Covid-19 have impacted Christian youth ministry within the UK.

After briefly discussing the history of youth ministry and the causes of significant changes over time, this essay turned to look at the key themes and potential trajectories for youth ministry, suggested over the last decade.

Although these predictions may still be true, this research looked into the practices and activities offered by youth ministry practitioners across the UK, during the national lockdowns and then asked them to describe how they think the pandemic will have affected their future youth ministry.

This study draws together a few conclusions. The first that although many churches are open to the integration of online provision, and have seen the benefits of these activities, many are currently focused on re-establishing face-to-face ministries and relationships between young people and leaders. This research also found that

³¹⁸ Appendix 12.

³¹⁹ Appendix 12.

³²⁰ Canales, A.D. ad D. Min. 'Transforming teenagers: Integrating social justice into Catholic youth ministry or Catholic education.' *Race, Religion and Social Justice*, (2010), 70.

³²¹ BBC News. 'George Floyd: What happened in the final moments of his life.' Available from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52861726>

³²² BBC News. 'George Floyd: What happened in the final moments of his life.' Available from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52861726>

³²³ Bethan Bell. 'Sarah Everard: Daughter, sister, friend and colleague.' Available from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-557740729>

³²⁴ Canales and Min. 'Transforming Teenagers', 72.

many churches are more aware of their youth people's mental health and well-being, and are concerned about the effects the pandemic may have had.

Over the last 18 months a lot has been hard and globally there has been key events that have highlighted prevalent social issues across the globe. As a consequence, some participants of this survey are now more open to changing their youth ministry content to allow for topics and issues of social action, that concern their young people, to be discussed.

Overall, this research concludes that those who participated in this study are open to changing their youth ministry post-pandemic, especially because they have learnt new skills and tried new things. But this change may not happen straight away. Leaders and youth are fatigued with online provision and the restoration of the relationships is more important than a big upheaval of pre-pandemic methods. What happens next will be different for each church's context and experiences.

This study was small and so further research may benefit from a larger sample size. Alongside this it may be interesting to include more questions that establish individual church context. Although asked during semi-structured interviews, it may have been helpful to clarify the socio-economic context and location of each church, for example city-centre, rural etc. It would have been interesting to spend more time exploring why churches chose certain media platforms to deliver their youth ministry.

This study helps build a picture of youth ministry in the UK during the pandemic and into the future. These findings could be amalgamated with other studies that are emerging about the effects of the pandemic on other forms of ministry within the UK and, when available, could be compared to census statistics across different denominations.

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Appendix 1: The Questionnaire

Section 1: Basic church information:

1. Which county of the UK is your church located: (Drop down options).
2. Which denomination is your church? (Drop down options).
3. Does your church have a paid youth worker (or equivalent)? (Yes, No)
4. Are you a (Paid youth worker, Voluntary youth worker, Minister/Pastor, Leadership team/Deacon, member, other)?

Section 2: Pre Covid 19 youth ministry:

1. Did your church have specific youth activities (12-16 years old) before the first Covid-19 lockdown on 23rd March 2020? (Yes, No, unsure boxes)
2. Did your church have activities for the whole family, that encouraged youth involvement, before the first Covid-19 lockdown on 23rd March 2020? (Yes, No, unsure boxes)

If the answer to the above two questions is no, then the participant will be directed to the next section.

3. What specific youth activities (12-16 years old) did your church offer (tick all that apply): Youth group, Sunday morning activities, Bible studies or small groups, Social activities, Mentoring, Other (please specify).
4. Who was each activity aimed at? church families (those who regularly attend Sunday morning worship) or youth from the community? **This question will be a matrix question** . An N/A and both box will be available.
5. How was each activity delivered? in person or as an online activity? **This question will be a matrix question** An N/A and both box will be available.
6. Please briefly describe your pre-Covid youth activities. (Open textbox with a 200 word limit)

Section 3: During Covid 19 lockdown youth ministry:

1. Did your church have specific youth activities (12-16 years old) during the Covid-19 lockdowns? (Yes, No, unsure boxes)
2. Did your church have activities for the whole family, that encouraged youth involvement, during the Covid-19 lockdowns? (Yes, No, unsure boxes)

If the answer to the above two questions is no, then the participant will be directed to the next section.

3. What specific youth activities (12-16 years old) did your church offer (tick all that apply): Youth group, Sunday morning activities, Bible studies or small groups, Social activities, Mentoring, Other (please specify).
4. Who was each activity aimed at? church families (those who regularly attend Sunday morning worship) or youth from the community? **This question will be a matrix question** . An N/A and both box will be available.
5. How was each activity delivered? in person (socially distanced) or as an online activity ? **This question will be a matrix question** An N/A and both box will be available.

6. If you continued activities online, what online platform did you use? Zoom, Microsoft teams, Skype, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Email, Direct messaging, Other (please specify), N/A.
7. Do you believe that the Covid-19 lockdowns changed the way you delivered your youth ministry? (Yes, No, Maybe, Unsure).
8. Please briefly describe your lockdown youth activities. (Open textbox with a 200 word limit)

Section 4: Looking towards the post Covid 19 youth ministry:

1. Do you believe Covid-19 will have had an effect on the way you do youth ministry in the future? (Yes, No, Maybe)
2. Do you think the easing of restrictions will cause you to change how deliver your youth ministry? (Yes no Maybe)
3. Are you personally or your youth team looking to keep some of your youth ministry online? (Yes, No)

If they have answered yes: Please explain which activities and why? (Open text box)

4. Has your church had a conversation about the effects of the national lockdowns on your future delivery of youth ministry? (Yes, No, Will have this discussion)

If they have answered yes: Please explain which activities and why? (Open text box)

5. Do you think your youth ministry will go back to exactly how it was pre-Covid lockdowns? (Yes, No, Maybe, Unsure).
6. How do you think Covid-19 will have effected your future youth ministry? (Open text box)
7. Have you learnt anything from adapting your youth ministry during Covid-19? (Open text box, And N/A box available)

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview questions.

1. Where is your church based?
2. What kind of church are you? Urban, rural, suburban?
3. What can you tell me about your congregation? How is it made up?

4. Before lockdown what did your youth ministry look like? What did you offer for high school age young people?

5. During lockdown what did your youth ministry look like or didn't look like? What did you offer for high school age young people?

6. So looking post-Covid what are the conversations being had about the future of your youth ministry?

7. Do you think Covid will have changed what your delivering?
 - Why/why not?
 - Why do you think that will/will not does/doesn't work that way?
8. Do you think Covid has had an effect on your young people's faith and their belief in God?
9. Do you think the lockdown will have had an effect on your young people's mental health?
10. So thinking about yourself personally, has lockdown made you think differently about youth ministry?

Appendix 3:

Open text responses to Question 16: In your own words please briefly describe your pre-Covid youth activities.

1. In addition to a Sunday School class we had begun a youth club aimed initially at young people from church families with the idea that they would invite their friends. Other activities (social/Bible study etc.) were planned but interrupted by lockdown.
2. Very busy church with lots of activities for all ages 0-18. Clubs on most nights and every Sunday.
3. Friday night open youth group for ages 10-14
2 Sunday morning youth groups (using Urban Saints Energise material)
'Whirlwind' for ages 11-14
'YP' for ages 14-18
We attended a regional annual youth weekend, and took young people on social trips and outward bound experiences.
We have also partnered with a local Christian youth charity, who have previously run evangelistic youth events, and weekly youth group, which many of our young people attended.
4. We had about 6 lads in the older BB sections. Meeting weekly before lockdown
5. Sunday morning Sunday school. Fortnightly activity based youth group with God slot. Occasional family events around Christian festivals and in the summer
6. Before lockdown we had a substantial amount of young people regularly attend all of the groups on offer.
Anything more bible based had less engagement than the social activities.
7. Monday - schools work
Tuesday - mentoring
Thursday - bible study
Friday - outreach youth group
Sunday - morning youth and evening older youth
Plus events, socials and trips
All aimed at community as well as church young people

8. We did weekly events! Connect groups on Tuesdays and then Sunday night connect groups as well as the main Friday connect group
9. Not great
10. I'm brand new to the post here so cannot say with absolute confidence but from my understanding there was more of a social element to the youth work than a Biblical or theological and discipleship emphasis.
11. Most of our activities were in Sunday school for our church families and we also sometimes held a messy church for the community families. We have done social activities at times to like quiz nights and film nights and book clubs to encourage our youth in their faith in the world
12. I work for a methodist Circuit, so we ran a circuit Youth group on Friday evenings for 3 hours, including games, cooking together, short bible studies or exploring what the Bible says about a topic, sometimes we would finish with worship, which parents were encouraged to join us for, sometimes we did purely social events, such as ice skating/escape rooms
We also support the volunteers in each church with their youth work, either by lending ourselves or other resources, or just offering advice. Most of the churches offered childrens/youth groups during Sunday morning worship. Some churches offered extra youth activities, such as a debate club.
13. Monthly Messy Church meeting on a Sunday afternoon for families but with an emphasis on young material. Most young people attending were in 5 to 11 age group
14. Social activities was a breakfast club drop in for local high school
15. After school clubs for children of all ages as well as a mother and baby session and a children's music club. All meeting in person.

16. There were midweek, daytime and evening groups plus Sunday mornings & evenings gatherings.
17. We had a big push for summer camps for various age ranges each year and a holiday club in the Easter holidays.
18. Monthly youth group with varied programme including weekend away. Weekly Sunday morning activities
19. Before Covid there was no youth worker, so the activities of the youth ministry were very limited. It would only be a regular activity of a youth group during the Sunday service with little follow up during the week. Because of no youth worker, there also was no opportunity for someone to mentor the youth in a 1-2-1 basis.
20. We had a thriving youth club, toddler group and Junior church
21. It was mainly Sunday morning sessions- some were specifically aimed at young people in years 7-11 on a fortnightly basis. The young people could then also attend the 'usual' ('Energize') Sunday sessions on other weeks or were encouraged to participate in other ways eg on the IT desk We also had some services that we led with the young people and had some intergenerational Sunday morning services.
22. Sunday morning activity for a small group of children, aged 3yrs up to 12. Scouting groups and brownies meeting once a week.
23. Regular, Consistent
24. We ran a weekly youth club for church kids and their friends, we also had a Sunday School class for them and occasional social activities.

25. Sunday morning groups.

Family evenings with a Bible focus and games

26. GB and BB met once a week to engage in a variety of activities such as games, crafts, Bible linked activities etc. Sunday morning - young people and children leave the service to engage in their own appropriate Bible Study. Young people were engaging with other churches and related activities.

27. We had a very busy church life for our young people. There were different opportunities for them to choose to engage, develop themselves and grow in their faith.

We would have a mid week youth group, mentoring was arranged on individual basis but would happen either once a month or bi weekly, dependant on the young persons needs.

We also have a Sunday morning group for school years 7-10 every week.

Appendix 4:

Open text answers to question 24: Please briefly describe your youth ministry during the Covid-19 national lockdowns.

1. the way we did our youth work during the lockdown by having more of a discipleship emphasis. We found that the young people were less engaged when we had several groups over zoom per week. To combat this we decided to only have one group over zoom and Sunday morning material was delivered over youtube.
2. Reaching our community kids was much harder especially at the beginning when we relied on online spaces. Many of them don't have the internet at home or access to laptops/phones.
Our online presence increased and our community presence decreased
3. We did the same as before but online
4. I just started my youth work role in lockdown so I can't speak massively into the time before. But the youth have not met together in over a year and now are on zoom once a week for youth group. We meet and either do a bible study or socialise
5. Poor
6. Again cannot say with complete confidence as I'm starting at the tail-end of the pandemic provisions. I know that what we provided had a focus on family discipleship - parents engaging with their children in faith conversations and so on. From what I am aware of, the provision was aimed mainly at junior school aged children with tailoring for senior school aged children as and when they were present with their family but any further than that there was no provision specifically for young people.
7. Our Friday evening Circuit Youth group moved to a weekly, 1 hour, Friday evening pattern, on zoom, and was purely social (games and chatting) until summer 2020. We kept going throughout the summer holiday, following the children's holiday club with activities suitable for 10-16's. In September 2020, we started meeting for 90 minutes, with the first 40 mins as social and the second 40 mins as discussion time, with a 10 minute crossover in between.

Most of the individual churches have struggled to keep momentum with their own Sunday morning groups.

Our circuit group grew from 12 people to 27 people over lockdown, we get roughly 15-20 young people across the 2 parts of the session each week now

8. Group met on zoom instead of at my house, was more focused on social and talking to each other
9. Difficult to engage with those who had been on the fringe of a deeper involvement.
Only the keen ones who had already been involved in church activities engaged online.
We kept in touch with all young people by posting them letters, cards, activity packs and lots of chocolate!
10. We did our best but this age group hate online stuff. They prefer to have cameras off and feel self conscious. They missed one to one interaction with each other
11. During Lockdown, I was hired as a youth worker and activities started to develop. We were able to connect more to the young people online and start up a few extra activities for the
12. We had weekly zoom sessions (Powerpoint/video and discussion) for the young people and also emailed out our sunday 'Energize' powerpoint session and activity sheets to families. We also had a New Year party on line. We led 2 church Sunday services on line. We delivered Christmas presents, New year Party bags and Easter craft packs to our young people . We also had a couple of trips to a local park when we were allowed to meet in groups of six outside. We also had Church quiz nights that families and young people were invited to.
13. Hard work

14. Our youth leader ran youth group on Zoom and kept in touch with them on Whatsapp. She also provided youth segments in our pre-recorded services and we ran a family quiz with youth participation.
15. Very limited. Activities sent through post.
Weekly delivery of booklet aimed at children/young people for Sunday morning service. Young people took one of our online Sunday morning services.
16. Everything moved online. I would meet with our young people 2/3 times a week on zoom. The 2/3 meeting varied in length. Some were evening, some were in their 'lunch hour' from home schooling. We felt it was important for us to keep the connection with as many young people as possible.
Our zoom calls mostly existed of chatting and playing games. To keep things light and engaging.
17. Our childrens and youth worker recorded talks for the pre-recorded Sunday service. She maintained contact with the young people via a Whatsapp group and ran Zoom youth group meetings.
18. It was very difficult to get youth involvement. Not as much interaction from young people. Meeting every week for bible study and games, Quiz night for families. Meeting most weeks for toddlers. This stopped as no one came.
19. We had to cancel our Friday night open youth club, and moved our Sunday morning youth groups online through Zoom.
We have encouraged our young people to create digital resources for church services, such as prayer videos, sketches, creative stories. and we have had occasional socials for our churchd young people in the park when restrictions have allowed.

Appendix 5:

Answers to the open text question 28: If you have answered yes to the above question, can you briefly explain the outcome of the conversation?

1. We were four churches, now moving to one. Will do more joint youth work. We also used to meet across a whole area with about 6 other churches, we've struggled to maintain this and wondered if it will continue to happen
2. Something needs to be done. September is when it will be done as people will want to experience freedom
3. We might use online activities at times as this is a good way to reach our youth. I also helps them to encourage each other in the week this is something we might continue for the whole church at times as some of our church family struggle at times to get to church we are open to explore this
4. We need some online and some in-person provision. The young people enjoy zoom sessions but have commented about how good it will be to have sessions in person again. Some of our young people have never met the others in person, only on zoom, so we need to be wary of the group dynamics as we introduce in-person sessions again
5. A conversation about resuming Messy Church is planned
6. We outlined the challenges but feel that closer to the autumn we would like to have a good 'lost & found' conversation ie ..what did we lose that we feel has now 'had its season'...'what did we lose that we would like to resume?' ...and 'what did we find?' ie what has worked well that should be continued in the future.
7. A transition period back to face to face
8. As the youth worker I have explored with my line manager the vicar, with the young people and with the staff team how we might emerge out of lockdown. The consensus is to have some events and activities in person but to keep a regular online delivery as well.

9. Relationships between the young people thrived online, so we are looking to keep some of the activities online as well as bringing it back face to face.
10. We have discussed in special 're-set' meetings the future of the whole church post covid- including young peoples work. We are considering having activities on different days eg a week night and different ways to encourage more families eg mid-week evening meal with family worship or youth activity. We are also keen to engage with other local churches and use online material more.
11. We initially have some relationship building to do, getting young people together socially in person will be key, but we anticipate that we will still continue some online activities and ways of communication. WhatsApp for our older youth has been a great help in keep interest and conversations alive.

Appendix 6:

Answers to the open text question 30: If you answered, all online or a combination approach to any of the above questions, please can you explain your answer. Which activities? and why are you debating keeping elements online?

1. We will keep an online presence as we did pre-COVID but make that more regular. We will always ask the yp what they' prefer (older youth prefer online!) but lots of it will be in person
2. We believe in person is best for youth - we may stream things in the future though!
3. I think the social events could be online such as Netflix parties and online games nights. But the spiritual stuff needs to be in person.
4. Still wondering
5. Using both opens church activities up to more people like young families taking part in house groups and our house bound members still being active church family we are still exploring which will continue/ work in the future
6. We are aiming to start a 3-week pattern, offering 2 youth group sessions and one family session per month, with some extra social events as well. Many of the parents have commented on how much they like the sessions being on Zoom, as have some of the young people, so we are going to have some online and some in-person sessions from September onwards.
7. Short Messy Church Whatsapp messages are a good way of keeping contact with families who are not able to attend in person meetings every month, May depend on stretched resources
8. As per the 'lost & found' answer reallywe will have discovered some things that have worked well and should be maintained but generally speaking we see that in-person gatherings with young people are by far and away the

better option as they contain space to talk, be spontaneous and the chance to 'grab the moment'.

9. Want to keep doing youth alpha online as we have got young people from further away to join us and they would have to travel quite far to join us in person every week.
Bible study and youth group will, for the next few months at least, be alternate weeks in person and online at the request of young people and parents who find the online medium very convenient.
Sunday groups will return to being in person every week from July!
10. Before COVID, the young people never talked to each other, and hardly participated, but since going online they have grown close together and even set up a WhatsApp Group between them. They also started to engage in the teaching and games more. As we start to transition, we can see the benefits of seeing the young people interact, but also see that they personally like the idea of keeping some of it online, because it suits them better. For us as a youth team, we have been able to see so much fruit from being online, especially with the young people feeling more confident to ask their friends to attend.
11. I think initially we will return to face to face activities with the young people, but we will consider on-line activities too as we feel appropriate, as the young people are used to using this format now.
12. We will continue to use the Whatsapp group to keep in touch through the week, we may also look at doing other activities like Bible studies online if this makes participation more widely available.
13. Our young people take part in services which are likely to continue in hybrid form at least for a while. It is also a convenient way to get together for specific things
14. Online activities may work for us

15. Our young people are pretty fed up with online meetings, but we expect that it will be appropriate to do somethings online. It has been particularly helpful when we've been engaging with mission partners who are abroad, or for some young people who live further away. Bible studies or watching video content work pretty well online, so we may continue these aspects online for some Sunday meetings. Content sharing through WhatsApp, as I have said, is also very helpful.

Appendix 7:

Answers to the open text question 32: How do you think the national lockdowns have affected your youth ministry?

1. Sadly we have lost 5 of the 6 lads we had in the older sections.
2. It's been much harder to engage the young people in online youth group. We have mostly asylum seekers families so don't turn up for zooms or not enough equipment for yp to be online. It's been really difficult. Went door to door when we could but hard to maintain relationship. Lot of work to build up relationships again.
3. Yes, it was more challenging to keep young people attending and engaged.
4. I think it's highlighted the importance of community over curriculum and I hope and pray that reshapes how we do everything in youth!
5. Helped more people come online!
6. I think it's made us re think what youth really need.
7. Lost contact
8. It's made it a lot harder to know who we are ministering to. I've found that the changing restrictions have made restarting anything a logistical nightmare and add to that the restrictions advised by the church denomination, getting anything up and running feels like a battle sometimes. I can foresee some issues with a group having to re-gel or to navigate social issues as the group changes upon return. I think however it has focused the church, or at least me, to the foundation building and discipleship elements of faith formation - helping young people own their faith so they can face whatever situation grounded in that faith.

9. Less youth engagement at the minute due to overload of online learning.
Impact on our children's youth team due to lockdown health mental wellbeing
10. The group has grown in number, from 12 to 27 young people on our register.
The dynamic of the group on zoom has changed and it is interesting to see how the young people respond to the leaders during a zoom session, compared to how they would respond at in-person sessions. It has certainly been challenging to moving completely online but overall, beneficial for both the leaders and the young people
11. I think we will be less dependent on face-to-face contact as the only method of reaching people
12. I think it will start to look more like a youth club with some discussion on faith (rather than bible study) which would enable a widening to more young people from the community,
13. I am hoping that things will get back to the way they are once these restrictions eventually go.
14. We have found it a real challenge to keep in touch with those who came to clubs but had not made any form of commitment to Jesus nor had sought any form of increased involvement in church family activities and gatherings.
15. It's made mental health of young people a huge priority.
16. Especially because I just started in the role I have no desire to move backwards. Whilst there were difficulties being online it has helped us all learn a lot and brought the youth so much closer together having this shared experience. I hope we can use this as we adapt to a mixed medium approach.
17. In some ways it has improved it as I already stated with it going online, however in a negative sense, it has restricted discussion and questions as it doesn't flow as well online (that is just from experience with other youth

groups before and during Covid). Which made us to create a Q&A evening every 4-5 weeks, which actually has also thrived.

18. We see a greater need to support our kids club kids after they go to secondary school. In uncertain times it's perhaps good to keep one aspect of their social life consistent with a more grown up version of kids club.

19. I think it has made us re-think everything and given an opportunity to think what works and what doesn't? and essentially what is our aim? Also it has opened up links to other activities and groups as other churches and youth ministries have developed online activities too- so widening our resources.

20. Not sure

21. The lockdowns have shown the value of community and face to face interaction and have shown that the social aspect of youth group is as important as the teaching aspect.

22. It has been really difficult to keep our young people involved

23. We have lost a lot of children and young people we may never get back

24. Devastated it. We work in a socially deprived area and have been unable to engage with a lot of our young people. They are desperate to get back to meeting again.

25. I think the nation has discovered the importance of face to face contact and therefore has more value on it than maybe previously.

A number of teenagers enjoyed the lockdowns in the sense that everything happened online, their human connection was online which isn't something particularly alien to many who are gamers.

The commitment we made to connect with our young people on zoom 2 or 3 times a week, developed my relationship with them in such a positive way.

We are all human and we were all in the same position, that bring connection.

Also for my young people, when I was zooming from my kitchen and my son is running around or talking to me, or coming on to say hi, there is more of an insight into my family life for my young people, deepening relationships.

26. I started the job in September 2020 so I had to adapt quickly and introduce new ways of working to all the families of church and our community. Found lots of fun new games!!

27. We lost some churched young people who didn't want to do the online thing, and we completely lost contact with our unchurched young people who attended other groups.

Appendix 8:

Answers to the open text question 33: Have you learnt anything new because you adapted your youth ministry during the Covid-19 national lockdowns?

1. Yes that prior to lockdown we were overstretched
2. Not positive things!
3. Actually getting to know your young people is super important when you're trying to keep them engaged over zoom.
4. That younger young people hate online and that all young people crave face to face interaction
5. Yes! Online is helpful and helps more people feel comfortable
6. I've learnt how to be a mentor without meeting people in person.
7. People are lonely
8. How to use zoom never too old to learn and God can use anything for his glory
9. Probably!
Personally I have been studying as well as working so it has been a huge learning curve for me with my time management (which was and still is quite poor). I also think my skills in mental health first aid and awareness and also safeguarding have developed because of the pandemic, I think I'm more vigilant for signs online now, hopefully this will still be a positive development when we return to some in-person sessions.
10. Continually question what we are doing. Is it the best use of limited resources?

11. Face to face is important. Some young people can't deal with online.
12. Value the time spent together.
13. Technologically we have improved.
We have discovered some new resources.
We've learnt that in-person works better across the whole spectrum.
14. I hate online stuff! You can't pick up pastoral issues properly. You can deliver content but it's not the same.
15. I have definitely been creatively challenged to think of games and teaching to be delivered online.
16. The use of video content has been able to be taken advantage of as it's so easy to flow into a video using Zoom, whereas face to face not as smooth. I just also think the facilities of zoom has been brilliant to use to its full potential, using polls for games and questions, using breakout rooms for discussion, using screen share for songs, videos and other things to display, using video filters for activities and of course the mute button works wonders!
17. Our children are predominantly primary school age, but through moving activities onto Zoom, we have developed much closer relationships with not just the kids but their families too.
18. I have learnt to use the various platforms eg Zoom and have seen the benefits of this. In some ways the young people sometimes opened up ;more; when on a zoom session and were less 'disruptive and distracted than in a live group! I have also had to really try and plan activities that work on line rather than face to face and are visually effective etc
19. No

20. Practical skills involved in running activities online.
We have also learned a lot about the individual youth group members.
Online interactions tend to be more difficult, people are less willing to engage than when face to face.
21. We can make films together and young people are very adept with technology!
22. How fragile our youth work is
23. No
24. I learnt doing youth work on zoom is really hard. You have to work harder at connection and engaging with each individual.
Also, being 'zoomed out' is a thing. The tiring nature of your life existing online.
I learnt that when a pandemic happens, and life for everyone becomes serious and smaller, fun, joking and laughing is harder to achieve but more rewarding.
25. Lots of fun new games. Listening to our young people is so important.
26. That young people don't want to live online as much as we might have expected, but that they need physical and social interaction.
we have found that we can share lots of digital and creative resources more easily and can imagine how we might encourage our young people to get involved in digital ministry going forward (e.g. creating digital content for evangelism, prayer, music, reflection, story telling...)

Appendix 9:

Answers to the open text question 34: Do you think the national lockdowns have affected your young people's mental health?

1. Yes they missed the face to face contact
2. Yes.
3. Yes
4. Yes hugely - some for the better and some for the worse
5. Yes yes yes
6. Massively! They have lost most of their interaction with each other.
7. Yes
8. I would say yes, again being a month into the job I'm a little in the dark about the pre-pandemic state but in amongst school pressures, parental/home life pressure and then the lockdown uncertainty etc I cannot imagine everyone is absolutely fine. If it has affected my mental health, how can I expect young people to be completely unaffected?
9. Yes and the leaders
10. Yes, greatly. Some of our young people have become more reclusive and reserved. Some have refused to attend school due to mental health.

11. Probably

12. Yes

13. I believe being isolated and not able to interact with friends will have impacted confidence and learning and development.

14. Quite possibly - when we have more time for deeper conversations we'll know for sure.

15. Yes!!

16. Yes. I think school has been tough and not being able to socialise has affected everyone, though in different ways. Some have become so comfortable online they don't want to return to in person (I feel this). And some really want to just be able to see each other and hug and be back to normal and have felt a loss at not being able to do this!

17. It seemed to come in different stages, the young people's mental health appears to be great when the government are starting to ease with restrictions, yet when they started to tighten unexpectedly in September and after Christmas, it was so evident to see how it affected them. Also for the older ones with the new guidelines of how GCSE's and A-Level's will be calculated, has caused a lot of anxiety for them. Yet throughout all of that, the youth groups seem to have been an anchor for them, because with all their school being online, their own friends didn't seem to want to message and call them anymore as they were all getting fed up of being online, so the youth group was their only form of having social time with friends.

18. Yes - some have really engaged with the on-line activities, others have disappeared completely.

19. Yes I'm sure the lockdowns have knocked a lot of young people's confidence and possibly affected social skills and increased isolation.. Some young people have had increased anxiety I know and mood changes.
20. Yes possibly, but if they have family members who have faith then surely they would speak to their children
21. yes - they have been very anxious about the changing rules and the fact that schools went back when most businesses were still closed.
22. Yes. They have really missed seeing their friends and being together. Fortunately our youngsters have not had major issues however.
23. Yes
24. Without a doubt.
25. Yes, I think everyone has coped different. Some have thrived in just engaging online, so have found the lack of connection hard, and life online draining.
26. Definitely, many have expressed concerns over friendships and mixing again. Many are very stressed about tests and exams.
27. Yes. Young people don't want to live online as much as we might have expected, but that they need physical and social interaction. Young people themselves have struggled mentally throughout without direct social contact with friends, as well as facing lots of challenges with being stuck at home and interruptions to education. That has been a great concern.

Appendix 10:

Answers to the open text question 35: Do you think the national lockdown has affected your young people's faith in God?

1. Unsure
2. Yes.
3. I think young people have had more chance to think about faith a lot more meaning they were more open to talk about it throughout lockdowns. The challenge now is to keep those conversations going back in person.
4. I think their faith has grown but I think that's to do with time rather than delivery. Although we currently don't have "festival christians" as all of them have stopped which we've seen the fruit of
5. Yes!
6. I think they have lost out on feeling God because they can't meet in church.
7. Yes
8. I think it has possibly set them even further back in terms of how much they engage with Him. However in light of the provision that has been happening, I can imagine there are more conversations about faith around the home which potentially means the opposite is true.
9. Yes
10. Hard to say, particularly over the first lockdown we didn't speak about God and faith much at all, but over the past few months, the young people have enjoyed the discussion part of the session and engaged sometimes on a

deeper level than the leaders were expecting. This is not always the case, many times the conversation will become sidetracked and we will discuss Minecraft or school for 20 minutes instead

11. Don't know

12. I don't know, I assume so, as some of my young people did not feel able to engage with zoom so we have only seen them when we were able to meet face to face for 6 weeks in September and October,

13. Not sure.

14. Possibly - again - space and time for conversations is needed ...zoom etc leaves very little opportunity for deeper chats and spontaneous questions. Youth sessions became very structured ...a little too 'lesson like' for our liking.

15. For some of them yes

16. From what I have seen young people have wanted to have something to hold on to and for my 15-18 group in particular they have found that God has been a constant they can rely on. They now are bringing friends who also just seem to want to fill this void and are finding God is there!

17. Yes it has either straightened it or collapsed it. You see when going online it caused a group of the young people to be regular online, but it also caused a few to fall away from all activities from the church, with trying to connect with them but not succeeding. Whereas the group who have stayed online, they have grown and it allowed me to set up another youth group that dived deeper into Bible Study.

18. Yes - we talk frequently about how God is with us in good times and bad, they seem to have a better understanding of this and are more thoughtful.

19. I think I have seen a growth in our young peoples faith in some ways- they have opened up a little more about their faith. One of our young people posted a short 'preach/message' relating to the pandemic that he would never have done previously and we used it in one of our services.
20. I hope not
21. Not sure - they haven't said that it has affected their faith but it is hard to be sure that they are being completely open about it.
22. Hard to say. I don't think the lock down itself has, but more as they approach adulthood they start to question
23. Yes, some have lost faith and drifted from church
24. Unsure about that but I think the older ones have perhaps done more Bible Study.
25. Hard to say. During lockdown, routines were broken, so people didn't just come to youth group because that is what you do, or just come to church on a Sunday because that is what you do as a family. All of a sudden, everyone had a choice to engage or not, because very few people would know either way. How has that affected their relationship with God, I think I am still working that out.
26. Yes. Some have fallen away from church altogether. Had to find new ways of getting people back to groups.
27. Faith development is also much harder from a distance. We are much less sure about where young people are in their faith commitment to Jesus than before. Some have thrived online, but the majority haven't had the chance to make their faith live, active and passionate.

Appendix 11:

Interview 1 transcription- Monty:

Interviewer: My first question is where is your church based?

Monty: We're in Bradford, in West Yorkshire. In the inner city.

Interviewer: So you're an Urban church?

Monty: Yes were very inner city. So high numbers of asylum seekers and the demographics of our parish is about 80% Pakistani Muslim.

Interviewer: What can you tell me about your congregation? How is it made up?

Monty: Well it is a-bit complicated because we're a multi-congregational parish. So there are 4 churches within the parish and they've have come together recently, in the last three years, two-three years. So the congregations of the churches vary really. The demographic is elderly white, and the families are mostly Congolese. A couple of white British families, but not many. Young adults, 20-30 years olds, are mostly male Iranian Converts. It is quite an interesting dynamic, really.

So one of the churches in particular, the younger people and the Iranian converts are mostly the asylum seeker congregations and attend one of the churches. But we also have joint worship and we support each others mission and ministry. We are very much one parish but four centres of worship at the minute. We are looking towards becoming one centre of worship after Covid. So it's all bit, erm scary at the moment.

Interviewer: So before lockdown what did your youth ministry look like? What did you offer for high school age young people?

Monty: Ok, so before lockdown, well again this is also bit complicated. Bradford has always had a history, it's not a diocese in it's own right anymore, it became a sort of super diocese with Wakefield and Ripon and Huddersfield and Leeds. So we are what's called an Episcopal area. But historically Bradford has had a highly lead, evangelical and collaborative outworking of ministry. Thats a-bit of the backdrop really.

So the youth work that I have been involved in and that happens. So quite a-bit across the episcopal area really is collaborative with other churches. So individual as a church we had recently started doing a monthly Friday evening get together with our year 6's and up. Well the end of year 6 as you like, after Easter. They would come along, and that would be, well because they're mostly young people from the Congo with culture issues that come along with that. It was very light touch. Games, Food, Film nights and God slot. Very easy accessible God slot stuff. And then in-between those we ran a 'this side of Bradford' thing called unite. Which would get 30-40 young people. Similarly this would have games, activities, a God sot and some food or a snack, that kind of thing. So that's what was going on really. A joint Bradford wide thing once a month and a Parish wide thing in-between. And then

the unite, bigger group, we did a weekend away in March at a Christian youth camp. We used to run it ourselves but we now use a specific youth camp, have done for the past 3 years really. And then we would do soul survivor or new wine in the summer. So that's what had really been happening.

Sunday morning work was sporadic and we did quite a lot of intergenerational, all-age worship. And then Sunday morning activities that spanned across broad age groups because of a lack of people to do Sunday-schooling. It was always very tricky to hold all that together.

Interviewer: So during lockdown what did your youth ministry look like, or didn't look like? What were you offering your high school age young people?

Monty: Virtually none existent to start off with. We did a lot more door to door contact. Just before Covid we employed a part time Youth worker, a very part time youth worker, I think she's employed as little as 7 hours a week or something. And she was actually meant to be doing some research for us so we could apply for some more funding for a youth worker. So she did a little bit of detached, knocking on the door. Trying to just keep contact really. And there was a few of us doing the same. We had a WhatsApp group. Tried to keep in touch on Whatsapp. But they weren't engaging with stuff online. So we set up a few zoom youth things. And because again of cultural issues, a lot of these families didn't have laptops or access to zoom. The only access was mum's smart phone. Well if somebody rings on that smart phone then that's it. So there was a drive at the beginning for us to find a few more laptops in order for them to even just do school work.

So trying to do zoom stuff was really tricky. Time keeping has always been difficult generally. You know if we even do face-to-face youth ministry. They did a film night this Friday evening for the first time again. And I was laughing, because I was on holiday, and at ten past 7 somebody was Whatsapping the group going "Where is everybody? Is anyone coming? We were meant to start two minutes ago!" But I do know by the end of it 10 kids came, but that's just what it is like. Time-keeping is honestly a real issue, so trying to get them together for a zoom meeting at 7 o'clock has been real difficult. They don't want to do zoom much. They don't have access to zoom very easily and this time-keeping seems to be even more of an issue. They've tried to turn up the night before, the night after. Sometimes there has just been me and they youth worker sat there like "Hi". And that was it no-body else came. So it has been real tough actually, really tough.

And transport is an issue. If we don't hold things at this one church, when we try face to face, then they can't get to another church, because that's the one near where they live.

Interviewer: So looking post-Covid what are the conversation being had about the future of your youth ministry?

Monty: Well we have meeting on Monday actually. So I'm not sure. I think we really need to reassess. But I'm pretty sure it will carry on in a similar way. If we can, meeting on a Friday evening, being social with a God-slot. But I think we need to have a look at what we do on a Sunday morning. But that will be lead by what we are

doing in regards to meeting as one church. So that would mean a pooling. So instead of meeting as 4 Sunday schools we will be running one Sunday school. So less resources, which will mean we can run more bespoke material for all ages, especially the youth. Which will be good.

And my guess is, our conclusion will be that, like Friday with the film night, we will get back to that once a month or once a fortnight, meeting together and again that depends on what happens with unite, the wider group that hasn't been running, and how people feel with starting that back up with potentially 30-40-50 young people together. So, I'm sorry that is a really vague answer but I don't think we have a definitive answer yet. That's all the answers I have.

It's a very transitory population. We get quite a lot of movement. So relationships build and then a family moves on. So we have to keep things a bit more fluid.

Interviewer: Do you think Covid will have changed what you're delivering?

Monty: No. I don't think so actually. Because I think the thing that works is getting them together with some food and games. And that will still work post covid.

Interviewer: Why do you think that works?

Monty: Because hospitality. It is part of the culture. Food and hospitality is part of their culture. And I think it's a great way of doing youth ministry actually. We have always, or I have always had groups of teenagers in the house on a Friday evening for a meal and doing bible study, when we had more and a wider group of youth. Again, we have often done this older group of teenagers for a group of churches, bible study, proper bible study and a meal. That doesn't work with this group. Because their English isn't good enough, they aren't you average 'white middle class Christian young person', if you understand what I mean? Like my children would come along and sit in a bible study group and discuss it together. But this group isn't going to do that. That's just not how they function. It is what draws them and they want to have fun. They want to be together. When they are together they just enjoy being together as a group of young people. They build relationship very easily and they're in and out of each other's houses all the time anyway. I suppose the challenge going forward is the handful of other young people we've got. How do we integrate them well into that group?

My husband and I had a conversation about this last week. We have two or three teenage boys who we think are going to need more than that (referring to the social youth group). And we were discussing how are we going to meet their needs and what we might do for them.

Interviewer: Did you come to a conclusion?

Monty: Well I would still quite like to see, well especially with this wider group of churches we are involved in with our wider youth work, I don't want this to be an exclusive club for just these few. But they need, they defiantly do need, something a little more. So we need to decide whether to start the Friday night meal youth bible study again. My husband and I did discuss whether him and a youth worker stay at

the house with this group and then myself and the youth worker take this other group at church at the same time.

I think we probably do have the resources to do that. It is more a matter of capacity to sustain it in the future. Myself and my husband are retiring in a few years and we might move on. So two years isn't the longest time.

It's all bit fluid. But that isn't because of Covid. But what is because of Covid is the fact that the youth are 18 months older and do probably need something a little different now than what we might have needed all them months ago.

Interviewer: Do you think Covid has had an effect on their faith and their belief in God?

Monty: Erm... I think I can't quite quantify that at the moment. I think it might have done with these older teenage boys, our 15 year olds, if I am honest. At the time they needed more input, they got less. So I think it may have with that specific demographic.

But we have a group of Congolese girls are that quite strong. Life comes and it goes with them. They're quite strong. I think they will bounce back together quite easily. Just where we left if you like. And again I think some of that is the relationship thing. They have that strong relationship and relationally they will come along to stuff, because they are together. I'm not sure how deep their faith is, or even their understanding is to some extent. But they like to be together, to be in each others presence. They like to be in church space, and they like adults who give them attention. They like those relationships with other adults that aren't their parents. But I do think for some of our more 'churchy' families the time away, especially those boys, I think it will be difficult to get them back into the habit. And that will be at the detriment of their understanding and their belief and their desire for that.

I don't know how much it has changed their faith, but what it has changed is that ongoing presence in their lives of other christian adults in their lives, that they get on with, that isn't their parents. The people they can have robust discussions with about faith. A year away, because they're hasn't been that discussion and questions answered, or not answered, my youngest who is at uni, isn't bothered anymore. I think that's a very similar effect. Which is sad. And I think that will be where these teenage boys are from our group.

Lockdown hasn't changed their faith but their engagement with that faith, if you get what I mean.

Interviewer: Do you think lockdown has had an effect on their mental health?

Monty: (long pause). I probably haven't seen them enough truthfully to tell you that. Only recently, we've only been back worshipping in the building not long, and I have tried to engage with the young people who do come along. They haven't been as talkative, but they are teenage boys who are 18 months older than they were last time I saw them. So it may well be that they are less communicative than they were, they're now 15 rather than 13 and a half, you know.

I haven't heard from parent, or from them, that it has effected they mental health. So I couldn't say for sure. But I haven't heard that they have.

Interviewer: So thinking about yourself personally. Has lockdown made you think differently about youth ministry?

Monty: Erm... I think it has made me think, recently anyway, what are their issues that they want to talk about more? And how are we going to speak to them about things they want to talk to about? Relevant issues about the environment, mental health, social media. We were sort of doing that anyway, to be honest quite a lot. But we might not have been asking the right questions, or trying to get the right stuff out of them. In terms of how we do specifically youth ministry once we get back together again, I don't think Covid has made me think differently about how we do that.

I think because of what we are going through as a parish, I, and the team, will be thinking about how we do Sunday mornings. So I think in terms of mid-week youth ministry I don't think we will be thinking different, but in terms of Sunday mornings I think we will be thinking quite differently. I think there will be a lot of intergenerational worship and there will be more tailored Sunday school provision, especially for the youth. And initially that wasn't Covid related either, but actually I think Covid has accelerated us as a parish towards that one centre of worship on a Sunday. Because we went from four Sunday services to one over lockdown online. So as a leadership we were like, we aren't going back to four services, instead of one online we are just doing one in person, physically. So it's in a sense, covid has changed what we are doing with the young people, but that's because it has accelerated plans we already had as a parish. We will see. It is challenging though.

Appendix 12:

Interview 2 transcription- Lottie:

Interviewer: Where is your church based?

Lottie: I work for a church in Cumbernauld. I go to a different church to the one I work for.

Interviewer: What kind of church are you? Urban, rural, suburban?

Lottie: My mind goes to suburban, but I've never really thought about it to be honest. I suppose we just off the city center but nobody knows we're there. We are underneath a shopping center so nobody knows we're about. It used to be a bingo hall and it's been converted into a church.

Interviewer: What can you tell me about your congregation? How is it made up?

Lottie: It's not a particularly old congregation. Of course, there are people in their 70's but if you're looking for a rough age group you're looking at people in their 30's-40's. Which I think is great, the church I grew up on was mostly old people. But yeah there is loads of kids and stuff which is good.

Interviewer: Before lockdown what did your youth ministry look like? What did you offer for high school age young people?

Lottie: See I got my job during the pandemic so it's quite strange to think about what came before, so obviously I wasn't there so I can only speak from what people have told me. They only had two in the youth group. They met once a week and they weren't, and there still in youth group now, and they tell me they never really got anything out of it. They'd just sit out of the service, and that was it.

Interviewer: During lockdown what did your youth ministry look like or didn't look like? What did you offer for high school age young people?

Lottie: So we would meet on a Thursday night together and we would either do a bible study or just meet and have a social evening. We did more social evenings at the beginning because they were like 'there's this strange new women who's come to talk to us about Jesus'. We would do like games and stuff together, then occasionally we would do a bible study. So, I was doing a two hour session with them on a Thursday.

Then on a Sunday we would all go to zoom church together and then afterwards, I wouldn't get as many on a Sunday morning. I would ask them after like 'What did you think of the service?' and we would have like a half an hour text conversation after. It wasn't loads that I was doing.

Interviewer: So looking post-Covid what are the conversations being had about the future of your youth ministry?

Lottie: Just now it's a little bit strange because we are still adjusting, and they have never had a youth worker so I am still quite new. But we are looking at, well expanding. We were looking at turning one of the rooms in the building into a youth space. Which I am like yes please, I will work from there!

Things like going on retreat too, things they have never done before. My boss is great he's very much 'what you want you get!' We just trying to get them out to experiences things. Get them out to have the experiences that I think most youth have, but these just haven't. They are always like 'we have never been to a Christian gathering' and 'we've never been to youth camps or whatever' and I'm like I'll do that I'll take you, I'll do anything.

So yeah looking to build that but also to build abit of a social space as well. We live in quite a rough town with quite a lot of gang violence and drink problems. So I think its important we have a space where my youth kids can bring their friends and we maybe aren't talking about Jesus but we've got somewhere they can go and socialize.

Interviewer: Do you think Covid will have changed what your delivering?

Lottie: I don't think it its as deep as it would have been because we haven't been in church every Sunday. Like my youth aren't interested in talking to me about Jesus at the moment. We know he's there and we know he loves us which is cool, but they really aren't keen to talk about anything else. I think they've distanced themselves from church and that whole side of themselves, if you can call it that.

So yeah I think it has lost the depth, like when I got the job, I'm not having any of the deep discussions I thought I would have. I don't think we are at that point yet. I think Covid has played a part in that. Like it's not just Covid but it's had a big influence on it.

They're a very social group and their very chatty, but the second I mention faith they just go quiet. So I think it will be about building social skills and having the opportunity to spend time together and do that sort of thing.

I think just now we don't have enough numbers. But after summer I'll have a few coming up from Sunday school and hopefully a few more through the door, but we will be able to split them. I have 12-13 and then the next oldest is 16. And so with a few more numbers I will be able to split them. They aren't on the same wave length and so I think splitting them will be abit better. With covid we lost a couple so it isn't as easy to form that divide. Because realistically we can't ask our boss to heat the building for two of them, but hopefully that'll be something we look into more eventually.

Interviewer: Do you think Covid has had an effect on your young people's faith and their belief in God?

Lottie: I think so. I think because they're not getting the experience. A lot of my parents think that all the biblical teaching their kids get should come from me. And so all they get is 45 minutes on a Sunday, and that's it. They don't talk about faith at home. So they've gone 18 months without, well before I started the job in February they weren't even having online youth group, so they've gone for 12 months with no contact with other adults from church. No one was there, so they're all just abit like well we don't really know where God is at the moment. That breaks my heart. I always tell them he's there; you just haven't had anyone tell you about him! They just haven't been given the opportunity to have these discussions with themselves or a grown up that isn't their parents.

Interviewer: Do you think the lockdown will have had an effect on your young people's mental health?

Lottie: Yeah. We touched on it and how it's made them feel. We have quite an eclectic little bunch of kids, I have one who is a younger career, she tells me she hasn't been able to go to school and so she's spent the past year looking after her brother. I have one who having issues with gender identity, they think they may not be a girl. And their parents are really homophobic and so they aren't feeling safe at home and so a crisis plan has had to be written. I think a lot of them feel really lonely, and I'm like man I feel the same I miss people! But its defiantly effected them mentally. They don't know what's going on and it's almost like they don't know each other. They've grown up together and gone to the same church for forever, but they're still almost like, I don't know you!

I think it has had a negative impact on them defiantly.

Interviewer: So thinking about yourself personally, has lockdown made you think differently about youth ministry?

Lottie: I think so. I think part of it hasn't been lockdowns fault, when I got the job I don't think I realised how difficult youth ministry was. I had only done volunteer children's ministry and someone told me if I could do children's ministry I could do

youth ministry. And now I'm like no no, it is difficult. But that's because not everyone is like me and is willing to have discussions and it's sort of shaped the way we do things. Even in my own youth group we have been doing the stuff that they've been doing for 10-15 years and its asking the question, 'is that really working?'. 'What are youth looking for?' and 'what do they really need?'.

I think, and maybe that is just my experience, but when you start to talk about what's going on in the world. I didn't realise how smart 12 year old's were till I got this job. They know so much about so much. Like wow they actually know what is going on in the world. Stuff that's scary and for a while I presumed they didn't know about. I think everyone has been trying to shield them from it, almost like lets not talk about it their too young to understand. We wont talk about the Israel Palestine war and we wont talk about the Black lives matter movement because your all abit too young for that. Even things with sexuality and stuff like that. I think we pretend that they don't know what's happening and the reality is that they do. It's like when I was in youth we would be at youth group or church camp what about all the gay people in the room that we aren't talking about. I don't think we talk to young people about the world enough. We need to stop treating them like children and treat them like the young adults they're becoming.

Appendix 13:

Interview 3 transcription- Bonnie:

Interviewer: Where is your church based?

Bonnie: We are in Hartfordshire.

Interviewer: What kind of church are you? Urban, rural, suburban?

Bonnie: We are a Baptist church that is based in a town. So I would say urban. But we are based over two sites. One in the 'well off' side of town, which is defiantly more in the suburbs, and the other is in the 'poorer' area of the town, which is nearer the center. But overall, I think id probably say we are an urban church.

Interviewer: What can you tell me about your congregation? How is it made up?

Bonnie: We are quite varied actually. We are a very multicultural congregation, with a lot of families of African heritage. That spans across both sites really, they're both full of different cultures. It's quite nice. We have lots of families. Children, Parents and even grandparents. In the site at the 'poorer' end of town, there are a lot of single parent families. Of course we have older folks too. But I'd say the only generation missing is our, me and you, the early 20's. We don't have uni students near us so to be honest I think it's just because they're physically not with the families their at university.

Interviewer: Before lockdown what did your youth ministry look like? What did you offer for high school age young people?

Bonnie: So I got the job in December, so I can't tell you first hand what they were doing before lockdown. But I obviously have been told and have talked about it. So on a Sunday morning we would gather the young people together during the service. We would get between 15-30 young people at each site. It was your classic youth group kind of thing really.

On Sunday evenings we have a year 10+ it really is aimed at the older youth. That would vary. They have run things like youth alpha on the Sunday evenings in the past or they have a more socially active stuff.

Friday nights we have a group called the mix. It is more of an outreach group. We aim it at the local kids. When they're part of the group, they get a hot meal once a week. Which for some of them, they aren't getting fed that well at home and many are on the free school meals and that kind of thing. It was really taking off before lockdown. They were getting 30-40 every week as a maximum number. But obviously that looked very different over lockdown. It is a mixture of church kids and those who don't come to church at all, or their families aren't the kind that come to church. But the young people come along to youth group. It is very much a social evening, maybe with a little bit of a god slot or thought for the week but not much more. But it always involved a meal, games and activities ad things.

Interviewer: During lockdown what did your youth ministry look like or didn't look like? What did you offer for high school age young people?

Bonnie: So, we had our Sunday morning group. It became one combine group online for both sites. We were on zoom from the end of march to the beginning of April this year really. That was a mixture of games and teaching on zoom. The discussion and friendship stuff was just harder because if one person is talking on zoom that's kind of it. It still worked though. But we were seeing a lot less people than we would have across the two sites really.

The Sunday night group was similar. That was just moved online. There was a while when we came out of the first lockdown where they tried it out in person with restrictions but ultimately that went back online. So actually that worked fairly well online. We were exploring some really interesting topics actually and people were engaging well. The topics were great but it was the friendships part of the group again that suffered because of being online.

The Friday night group, well it didn't really happen that much over lockdown because it is very much a physical group. Its main components were eating the meal and playing sports together. It wasn't the same as the others in that sense. It was tricky online. And even looking at the brief time we could meet in person, you can do the Sunday groups sit in chairs distanced, and get away with it, but that didn't work for the Friday night group. Zoom just didn't work so they didn't really meet at all over lockdown.

What we did do though was something called 'Friday Night Dinners'. Because they would normally have a meal as part of a Friday night, we basically would do a recipe and make up the ingredients, with a recipe card or a how to make video, and we got families to sign up to it. And then they came and got an ingredients bag and they would take it home and make it that Friday evening, instead of coming along to the group. It was really good keeping in touch with some of the families, keeping them engaged, and it was good for the kids to learn some basic cooking skills. By the end we had like 15 families involved. It was a good way of getting to know the families. We had the kids come along on a Friday night and we didn't really know a lot about the family, but we got to know them, which was really cool. That ran every other week. They started then in August/September last year. It worked well for something different.

Interviewer: So looking post-Covid what are the conversations being had about the future of your youth ministry?

Bonnie: Well one of the things we have been discussing, we have the two sites, is do we do one combined youth group here at the bigger space. Or do families still want to go to a group in the church they live by. But then having got in touch with the families we think it will be worth doing both. We have enough to run both sites.

It's interesting, something else that came out of lockdown, we ran the bible course on a Tuesday evening over zoom for the older youth. We didn't have many but there were a few that were keen and they join, that was cool. So going forward, we're looking at do we do a going deeper group on a Tuesday evening and keeping the Sunday evening social. Like we have finished the bible course now, but we have been trying to keep something going. But it depends very much on availability, because it is a small group. So if a few can't come then we can't really run that week.

But the hope very much is that because the Friday night is currently being run in the carpark and we do a snack for the kids. The hope is by September, we can do it inside with a meal again, properly, every week. Like we have been going on walks and stuff with the young people but it isn't the same we want to be doing it consistently again in September.

It's interesting, a lot of our conversation is getting things back to where they were. What we were offering before, but back up and running properly. The issue is more the team and getting people to volunteer. It's having enough people to run stuff. Going back to two sites on a Sunday morning, rather than one online, we are going to need people to almost do double the amount they've been doing all lockdown and so yeah the issues is getting people to help. Actually yeah the other thing is engaging people who would have come to youth or the Sunday evening stuff and they were on zoom when they should've moved up and so actually they didn't engage and even now they just aren't interested. The people who haven't come back yet, who were regular before Covid, and still haven't come back or engaged with zoom, that's worrying and it's defiantly one of the challenges.

Interviewer: Do you think Covid will have changed what your delivering?

Bonnie: Erm... I think there is, well I guess it was already a big issue for young people, but more so with lockdown and isolation, but mental health in young people is a really serious issue. So, potentially that is always a thought, focusing in on that anxiety and things. I think we are now more likely to do a God slot or something based on not worrying and God being in control despite the uncertainty. That's been the classic line with anything we are delivering over the last year, 'despite all the uncertainty, God is always in control'. I guess we have had more thought about worry and allowing God to take our worries.

I am not sure it will have changed the content we are delivering too much. But mental health and it's awareness is the big one. As well as rebuilding that community and safe space to build up friendships and relationships. I think that will also have a bigger emphasis going forward.

Interviewer: Do you think Covid has had an effect on your young people's faith and their belief in God?

Bonnie: I think it will have impacted some of their faith and walk with God. Especially the fact that some have slipped off the radar, or the fact they haven't been

regularly coming to church or joining on zoom. I can't put my finger on any specific conversations, but I think there will be a few who it will have made think more about God. The whole 'is there anyone in control of all of this?' defiantly potentially made a few think and question a bit more. But defiantly a detrimental effect of the few who haven't engaged over Covid. But that isn't necessarily covid that's made them question or loose faith, it's down to the fact tat they have lost the pattern of going to church every week and being with other Christians. And now they aren't re engaging with that.

Interviewer: Do you think the lockdown will have had an effect on your young people's mental health?

Bonnie: For some it had a negative effect, where there was anxiety, increasing that. Especially social anxiety, that lack of contact over the last year has worsened that. Where they've already had a battle going on mentally, I think it's worsened that, having to isolate and being at home.

There has also been some who have anything enjoyed the lockdown. It's not been bad for everyone; some have been more comfortable doing school from home.

Some a probably struggling with comparison on social media. Being stuck at home looking at other people's lives through their phones and it's leading to more comparison.

I wouldn't say, and I don't think, among the young people, that there is that anxiety of getting sick so much. It is defiantly more centered around that comparison element and looking at other people's situations and where they differ from their own.

Interviewer: So, thinking about yourself personally, has lockdown made you think differently about youth ministry?

Bonnie: It's hard to know really, starting my job online. I hadn't done much youth work before this role. I started in December, so I didn't have an in-person session till the end of April. It's been weird and certainly hard, but I've enjoyed the last couple of months a lot more, and youth work is a lot more fun in person and you build better relationships. You can have fun and chat online yes, but it's hard to really build those deeper meaningful relationships, when your not in person.

It certainly made everyone rethink how you do things and normally want to do. The snacks you provide or games you play, because some don't really work online. But I've realised the importance of one on one with the young people. It was the thing I wish we could have started earlier, going for walks with a young person and things. That is really valuable time.

Certainly, one of the ways I want to improve the sessions is to spend more times at the extremes, more fun and more craziness and then more depth of discussion. Finding a way to open the bridge between the two. Because I have found that when there is more fun, then there is the platform for more depth too. It's easy to spend a

lot of time in the middle, not so fun and not so impactful for the young people. And I found that zoom was the place where it wasn't very fun and there wasn't much depth. So it's about being aware that now, when we plan sessions or think about the weekend away, how can we hit these extremes.

It's cool now, with the camp in August and the weekend away in September, to be able to offer these really fun opportunities to the young people when they haven't had them in so long. That it's about creating the space for the young people to enjoy spending time together, which we took for granted before, but we are thinking a lot more about how can we get them interacting more.

Actually, as well, the doorstep dinners idea isn't something we would normally think of doing but it offered the opportunity to see how a few of the families were doing and opening conversations up with the young people on their doorsteps each week, finding out honestly how they're doing. And because we wouldn't usually do it it's now about thinking how do we incorporate that or aspects of that. I was good because it wasn't purely the here's a meal charity idea it was actually here is something for you to do yourself. So how do we encourage more of that?

I suppose we should also be more aware that we can't just deliver youth work or sessions or bible study that isn't relevant to the young people. That's had to change and be so different over Covid, because everyone knew we were in a global pandemic. But it is good to be aware of the situations the young people are finding themselves in and delivering the session that they need in the moment for that. If you're just doing stuff as if Covid hadn't existed then that would have been really weird, but we need to be aware that that isn't the only thing going on in the world right now. How do we make everything we do a bit more relevant to them right now?