

ABSTRACT

Retention of youth in Church is becoming a great concern especially in the mainstream churches. Their migration from Church to Church and dropping out of the church has left a negative effect. In response to this, the Methodist Church in Kenya has come up with Church initiated programmes aimed at assisting the youth who are struggling with different issues in life. However, the problem continues to persist in Nyambene Synod, where the youth have kept on migrating from MCK to other churches, inspite of the significant role church initiated programmes play in church. The purpose of the study was to find out how Church initiated programmes influence youth retention in Methodist Church in Kenya, Nyambene Synod. The study was guided by the following objectives: to investigate youth's perception on church initiated programmes in Methodist Church in Kenya, Nyambene synod, to examine the level of youth involvement in Church initiated programmes in Methodist Church in Kenya, Nyambene synod, and to determine the influence of Church initiated programmes on youth retention in Methodist church in Kenya, Nyambene synod. Literature was reviewed on the: Church initiated programmes and youth retention in church. The theory employed was Functionalism Theory by Emile Durkheim which emphasize that religion creates the opportunities for social interaction and the formation of groups. The target population was 4279 members of the Methodist Church in Kenya, Nyambene Synod. This included 30 circuit ministers, 42 circuit leaders and 4207 youth from the Synod. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table (Appendix VI) was used in determining the sample size of study population. A sample size of 413 respondents was used. That comprised of 26 circuit ministers, 36 circuit leaders and 351 youth. Purposive and simple random sampling methods were used to get circuit ministers, circuit leaders, and the youth respondents respectively. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedule and focus group discussion. Descriptive survey design was used to analyze the data. The analyzed data was presented using tables. The findings were that church initiated programmes in Nyambene Synod influence youth retention in church. However, the way they are offered by the leadership of the church is not effective, making youth retention difficult. This was manifested when the majority of the respondents indicated that they seek for assistance from other places apart from their church ministers or church leaders. It was noted that not all youth participate in church initiated programmes. Also Church initiated programmes were not offered effectively, youth were attending services in other churches, Church ministers and leaders were not offering church initiated programmes effectively. The study made the following suggestions to ensure youth retention: Focus on church policy framework on Church initiated programmes to retain youth in church, find out why and where youth seek for assistance from other places apart from in the church and Find out factors that contribute to church initiated programmes not to be effective in MCK, Nyambene Synod. It is anticipated that the findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge in sociology of religion. The findings of this study may be used by religious bodies in their teachings in order to improve their methods of carrying out church initiated programmes to bring positive effects on youth ministry.