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Youth ministry: A system of support for responsible citizenry for South African youths

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South Africa is both politically and demographically a young nation, presenting unique opportunities and challenges for youth engagement in civic life. With over 60% of the population under the age of 35 years, young people hold significant potential to shape the country's future. However, lingering socio-economic inequalities from the apartheid era – such as extreme poverty, high unemployment, and limited access to quality education – continue to hinder youth participation in meaningful civic action. This article argues that youth ministry, when framed within the paradigm of public practical theology (PPT), can serve as a transformative agent for civic responsibility and social change.

Contribution: This article explored the role of youth ministry in fostering moral and civic formation among young South Africans. The discussion examined how youth ministry can move beyond traditional spiritual development to actively engage with issues of civic engagement and social responsibility. Key themes include the role of hope and morality in shaping responsible citizens, the intersection of faith and civic engagement, and the potential for youth ministry to serve as an empowering force for young people navigating socio-economic challenges.

Keywords: youth ministry; public practical theology; civic engagement; South Africa; hope and morality.

Introduction

South Africa is a young nation, both politically and demographically. Politically, the country has recently transitioned into what could be considered the young adult stage, having passed the 30-year mark since the end of apartheid. In theological and youth ministry discourse, this period signifies a phase of consolidation – one in which a nation moves beyond its formative years and establishes a more mature identity. Various theoretical frameworks, such as Erik Erikson's concept of moratorium, highlight the significance of this transitional phase. When young people struggle to reconcile their identity with their independence, beliefs, and sense of belonging, they risk stagnation in their personal and social development. However, the theory of identity from an Eriksonian perspective allows that 'social contexts can be places where personal fulfilment and development can be nurtured or carved out' (Coté 2020:1). That being said, the relationship between identity and the environment is constant and that the psychosocial tensions, the eight stages of development, should be meaningful and coherent, which helps shape the person (Coté 2020:2). One can argue that the young person is ideally a contextual product as the context in which youth find themselves is therefore crucial, as it can either facilitate or hinder their growth and participation in civic life. Most societies allow for some opportunities, or experimentation, according to Eriksonian language (Cuzzocrea 2019), for the youth to resolve crises. These opportunities or experimentation can be prolonged periods or moratoriums. However, through some form of social and even cultural structures, societies can help guide the youth to accept responsibilities in society and become active citizens (Coté 2020:4; Cuzzocrea 2019). Hope, according to Cuzzocrea (2019), plays a significant role in moratorium among the youth. In this regard, post-apartheid South Africa presents both challenges and opportunities for youth engagement in shaping the nation's future.

In addition to its political youthfulness, South Africa is demographically young. With more than 60% of the population comprising young people (RSA 2024; STATS SA 2024:7), and a median age of just 18 years (STATS SA 2024:7), the country is experiencing a pronounced 'youth bulge' in the 25–39 year age group (STATS SA 2024:12). The implications of this demographic reality cannot be ignored. For sustainable national development, there must be a deliberate and sustained effort by both public and private sectors to invest in youth well-being and development. Failure to do so will have long-term detrimental effects on the country's stability and progress.

The intersection of these two dimensions of youthfulness – political and demographic – creates an ideal space for youth ministry to play a pivotal role in shaping the South African experience. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that despite being a post-apartheid nation, the lingering effects of systemic injustice continue to impact young people disproportionately. Challenges such as extreme poverty, limited access to socio-economic resources, inadequate housing, disparities in education, and limited employment opportunities remain deeply entrenched. These structural inequities hinder the ability of young South Africans to fully participate in civic life and national development.

This article will engage with these challenges while also identifying opportunities for youth to contribute meaningfully to South African society. It will argue that youth ministry, beyond its traditional functions of proselytisation and discipleship, has a civic responsibility to empower young people as change agents. Grounded in theological principles and guided by a public practical theology (PPT), youth ministry can serve as a vehicle for equipping young South Africans to engage in meaningful civic action and provide the necessary support and direction for young people to shape a more just and flourishing society.

The imperative of responsible citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa

South Africa, a young democracy, continues to grapple with the enduring consequences of its apartheid past. While the oppressive apartheid regime officially ended in 1994, its ideologies and systemic inequalities persist, shaping the lived realities of many citizens. Generations who directly experienced human rights violations – particularly within the education system – still carry the trauma of these injustices (Amoateng & Biney 2024:28–31). However, apartheid's legacy extends beyond memory; its tangible effects are evident in contemporary South African society. Structural violence remains entrenched, manifesting in widespread poverty, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to essential services such as sanitation, electricity, and clean water, as well as escalating social crises, including gender-based violence (GBV) and gang-related crime (Amoateng & Biney 2024:28; Bowers Du Toit 2014:4).

In addition to these historical challenges, contemporary global and local socio-political dynamics significantly influence South African society, including the role of churches and faith-based institutions in national transformation (Van Wyk 2017). Persistent socio-economic issues – such as unemployment, crime, human trafficking, drug abuse, and corruption – continue to undermine social cohesion. Alarmingly high road fatality rates and systemic failures in governance further exacerbate these conditions, intensifying social anxieties and diminishing public trust in institutions (Van Wyk 2017). These crises particularly impact the youth, who struggle to find stability and hope in an environment of uncertainty (Vaughn et al. 2022:2).

Given this context, the need for responsible and engaged citizenship is both urgent and essential. Responsible citizenship is not merely about legal or civic engagement, but involves an active commitment to the well-being of society. It is the duty of every individual to uphold the principles enshrined in the Constitution, including democracy, social justice, equality, non-racism, non-sexism, and accountability (Freeks 2022:4). Le Bruyns (2012:60–62) further underscores that responsible citizenship fosters social justice, unity in diversity, a human rights culture, and an improved quality of life for all. While government agencies play a crucial role, the responsibility for societal well-being cannot rest solely on the state; it requires collective participation and shared responsibility (Freeks 2022:3; Le Bruyns 2012:63).

Moreover, responsible citizenship extends beyond civic duty to encompass a moral and theological dimension. At its core, it is an act of love and care for others, as seen in the biblical mandate to care for the marginalised, including foreigners (Ex 23:9; Lv 19:34; Dt 10:9), the poor (Lk 12:33), and the vulnerable, such as widows and orphans (Lv 25:35; Pr 19:17; Zch 7:10; Jn 1 3:17). From a theological perspective, even environmental stewardship is an act of love – both for creation and for fellow human beings (Aziz 2021a:3-4). Responsible citizenship, therefore, is not optional for the Christian; it is a biblical mandate that requires active participation in society for the common good.

Furthermore, responsible citizenry should ultimately strive towards the realisation of the abundant life, a concept central to Christian theology. The socio-political landscape of South Africa – marked by an ongoing energy crisis, inflation, and unemployment – has intensified social distress, contrasting sharply with the theological assertion that Christ came to offer abundant life (Jn 10:10). This principle, often framed within theological discourse as 'human flourishing', is deeply rooted in Pauline theology, where salvation is integrally linked to moral character, communal relationships, and social responsibility (Smith 2020). The New Testament presents human flourishing as the ideal state of existence (Wright 2012), not as an individual pursuit of pleasure, but as a communal reality that necessitates active care and responsibility for others (Gl 6:2). True flourishing is only possible when citizens engage in their communities with love, justice, and service.

Ultimately, responsible citizenship must be understood as theocentric rooted in God as the source and sustainer of human flourishing (Ps 92; Ja 1; Is 35). A theological framework for citizenship must recognise this divine mandate as both a present reality and a missional imperative. Responsible citizenship, therefore, is more than legal compliance or civic participation; it is a moral and theological commitment to building a just society where all individuals can thrive. By actively engaging with the country's laws, advocating for justice, and demonstrating love for one another, citizens contribute to a society where opportunities and resources are equitably distributed, ensuring a sustainable and abundant life for all.

Youth ministry praxis in the South African context

Religious leaders play a crucial role in addressing societal crises by providing spiritual guidance, fostering resilience, and building communities that offer comfort and empowerment amid ongoing social and moral challenges (Bowers Du Toit 2014:7; Van Wyk 2017). Hope, as Le Bruyns (2012:63–66) argues, is an indispensable element of responsible citizenship. This virtue, alongside resilience and empowerment, is cultivated within faith communities and religious institutions, yet finds its fullest expression in broader society (Le Bruyns 2012:66). The integration of these virtues in both theological and sociological contexts underscores the transformative potential of faith-based engagement.

While acknowledging the broader role of religious leaders, this article specifically focuses on youth ministry and its practitioners, positioning youth ministry as both a theological and sociological endeavour (Shepherd 2014:2–8). Youth ministry should not only address the spiritual development of young people, but also engage with their lived realities (Aziz 2017:5). When youth ministries create spaces where young people can critically engage with their faith – guided by older and willing mentors – it fosters a more open and socially aware citizenry that recognises the dignity and rights of others (Bowers Du Toit 2014:6; Dreyer & Aziz 2020:58). This, in turn, contributes to societal transformation (Van Wyk 2017:7).

The role of youth ministry, therefore, extends beyond merely responding to the immediate needs and demands of young people. For it to be truly transformative, youth ministry must offer a message of hope that inspires young people to become engaged and responsible citizens. In the South African context, this necessitates a localised and contextually relevant approach. As Ntetha (2019:168) affirms, youth ministry at the local level – particularly in township communities – requires intentional adaptation to effectively address the realities faced by young people. The following section will explore the role of youth ministry in equipping young people to become active citizens.

Conceptualising youth ministry as practical theology

It is widely accepted that youth ministry falls within the discipline of practical theology (Jacober 2011:16; Nel 2003:73; Talbot 2022). As a practical theological discipline, youth ministry follows a methodological approach that encourages reflection on praxis, prioritises engagement with local contexts, and seeks the transformation of both theology and practice (Müller 2004:304).

Furthermore, youth ministry is not merely a pragmatic endeavour; it is fundamentally theological in both its existence and function (Root & Dean 2011). While the purpose and focus of youth ministry depend on the church tradition (Nel 2000:63), it, however, remains the responsibility of the church (Root 2012:22). Another important factor that shapes the purpose and focus of youth ministry is the youth leader's perspective (Greenway et al. 2021:2, Root & Bertrand 2011:218–236). However, one of its primary objectives should be the spiritual or faith formation of young people, enabling them to cultivate a meaningful relationship with God and having this faith lived out in their lives. Youth itself can be understood as a hermeneutical process, a stage in which young individuals encounter and interpret God in all aspects of their lives (Aziz 2019:6; Counted 2016:85). It is also a period of self-discovery in relation to their identity in Christ (Nel 2000:101). Stanton (2020:48), in trying to reimagine youth ministry, argues that leaders, in this case, youth leaders should not want to control the outcomes of the youth's journeys. Instead, they should create spaces where youths can 'be present to one another in the work of meaning-making and performing meaningful action' (Stanton 2020:48). This concept of being present aligns itself with Root's (2012:86) concept of 'place-sharing'. Stanton (2020:49) further argues that reflection and meaning can be found in various spaces and experiences and are not limited to the Bible, which helps facilitate making sense of their experiences.

While acknowledging the importance of programmes and pragmatic responses in youth ministry, these initiatives must remain aligned with its theological mandate (Root 2012:32). The theological foundation of youth ministry reflects God's engagement with humanity and seeks to reveal to young people the individuals they were created to be in God's design (Nel 2003:72). Consequently, youth ministry must extend beyond imported or imposed models that may not resonate within the South African context. Contextually disconnected ministries risk ineffectiveness, as youth experiences and lived realities are deeply rooted in specific sociocultural and historical contexts (Aziz 2024; Weber 2017).

Because youth ministry is practical theological, it is theological, it must holistically address the interconnectedness of the spirituality and lived realities of young people. These two dimensions are neither mutually exclusive, nor should one be prioritised at the expense of the other. Instead, youth ministry requires a delicate balance between the spiritual and the tangible, the immediate and the long-term.

As a practical theological discipline, youth ministry must critically reflect on both the theological frameworks it employs and the lived experiences of young people. Whether or not a young person actively participates in a faith community, they are theologians, continuously making sense of their lives and discerning God's presence within them (Aziz 2024; Root 2012:38). Given this reality, youth ministry must take seriously the contexts in which young people exist, as these settings provide the primary spaces for existential and theological reflection.

Considering this discussion, youth ministry must adopt a theological lens that not only integrates both the spiritual and the physical dimensions of young people's lives, but also ensures a holistic approach that nurtures faith while addressing real-world challenges.

Youth ministry and the shift to public practical theology

Practical theology has long expanded beyond ecclesial spaces, yet the church congregation remains a central focus within its discourse. The emergence of PPT seeks to bridge the gap between ecclesial communities and broader society, ensuring that theological engagement is not confined to religious institutions but actively shapes and is shaped by the public sphere. In addition, a fundamental shift in a PPT questions the locus of theological authority solely to that of the Christian theologian (Graham 2017:9). This shift does not diminish the theological essence of practical theology; rather, it broadens its influence, fostering dialogue between ecclesial and societal structures while balancing their respective authority and impact.

While research on youth ministry as a form of PPT within South Africa remains limited, there are emerging voices advocating for this perspective (Aziz, 2022a, 2022b, 2024). Although practical theology inherently belongs in public spaces (Graham 2008), it has seldom been explicitly conceptualised as PPT. South African scholars have contributed to the broader discourse on PPT (Dreyer 2004, 2007; Dreyer & Pieterse 2010; Magezi 2018), yet their contributions remain relatively scarce.

Aziz (2022a, 2022b, 2024) identifies several key characteristics that define youth ministry as a form of PPT. These include the recognition that youth are theologians who experience and interpret God in their lives, that they contribute meaningfully to theological discourse, and that community plays a crucial role in their formation.

Firstly, youth ministry as a PPT acknowledges that all young people – whether within the church or broader society – engage in theological reflection. Youth are inherently hermeneutical beings, continuously experiencing and interpreting their encounters with God through the lens of their knowledge and beliefs. Consequently, a public practical theological approach must embrace the dynamic interaction between action, theory, and further action, allowing both theological frameworks and lived experiences to inform and transform each other. Youth ministry, therefore, has a vital role in facilitating this reflective process, walking alongside young people as they navigate their spiritual and existential journeys.

Secondly, PPT affirms the voice of young people in theological discourse. If youth are theologians seeking to understand divine interaction in their lives, their experiences and interpretations must be granted legitimacy and theological weight. No longer can youth ministry – or even trained theologians – serve as the sole arbiters of divine activity. Instead, a public practical theological approach positions young people as active participants in shaping theological narratives, rather than passive recipients of religious instruction.

Thirdly, the role of community extends beyond the faith community to encompass the broader social environment in which youth exist. The way young people experience and engage with their communities directly influences their ability to contribute meaningfully to those same communities. Community, therefore, is not merely a space where youth express their faith (or lack thereof); it is also a context that shapes their theological and moral formation.

At the core of a PPT lies the fundamental virtue of hope. As previously established, hope fosters resilience, equipping youth with the capacity to navigate the complexities of their lived realities. In this regard, youth ministry as a PPT must be a space that nurtures and sustains hope, empowering young people to engage meaningfully with both their faith and society.

The interconnection of hope, morality, and civic responsibility in youth development

Hope is a nuanced and dynamic concept that extends beyond simple optimism, encompassing both personal agency and external influences (Aziz 2021b:2). It can be understood as an internal drive that motivates individuals to pursue their aspirations while also being shaped by social, cultural, and environmental contexts (Vaughn et al. 2022:2). Religious organisations play a fundamental role in fostering hope among youth by offering spiritual guidance, moral support, and a sense of belonging. These institutions create spaces where young people can develop a deeper sense of purpose, receive mentorship, and establish meaningful relationships that contribute to their overall well-being (Vaughn et al. 2022:1–2). Steadfast hope, combined with faith and spirituality, has been linked to positive adolescent development, promoting mental resilience, emotional stability, and holistic flourishing.

Agentic hope is essential for young people navigating challenges, as it fosters confidence in their ability to overcome obstacles and envision a promising future (Vaughn et al. 2022:3). This type of hope encourages youth to be proactive in shaping their own lives, setting meaningful goals, and striving for success despite adversities. It also plays a crucial role in developing resilience, which is necessary for adapting to difficulties, making thoughtful decisions, and maintaining a positive outlook (Aziz 2021b:2). However, while agentic hope is often emphasised in religious settings, it can sometimes be self-focused, benefiting the individual without necessarily extending to the broader community (Vaughn et al. 2022:3).

When hope is cultivated within prosocial contexts, it transforms into a collective force that not only benefits the individual but also contributes to the well-being of others. In such settings, hope inspires young people to engage in acts of service, uplift their communities, and create positive social change. Families, peer groups, and religious organisations serve as vital platforms for instilling and sustaining this communal hope, reinforcing the idea that individual success should align with broader societal progress (Vaughn et al. 2022:3). By embedding hope in social structures, religious organisations empower young people to become agents of transformation in their communities.

Religion plays a key role in shaping values and helping people find meaning in life. It not only provides clear moral guidelines but also helps individuals weave their beliefs into a bigger picture of purpose and connection. People with a strong religious identity often find direction and develop important virtues such as patience and self-control, especially when facing challenges. By offering a framework for making sense of life's ups and downs, religion helps people grow emotionally and morally (King, Schnitker & Houltberg 2020:599).

Morality and religion are interrelated (King et al. 2020:593). Morality cannot be separated from religion (King et al. 2020:593). Morality is deeply intertwined with hope; both are essential components of youth development and responsible citizenship. Moral values provide young people with ethical frameworks that guide their actions, helping them discern right from wrong and make decisions that align with their personal beliefs and societal expectations (King et al. 2020:593). Additionally:

> [T]he morals and worldview present in most religions are generally prosocial and encourage children, youth, and adults to make contributions to their society … morality moves beyond onetime acts of prosocial behavior [*sic*] for highly religious people and becomes inextricably tied to their sense of identity, faith, and meaning in the world. (King et al. 2020:593–596)

Morality from a Christian perspective is rooted in God's character and revelation and is expressed in the love for self and one's neighbour through acts of humility, honesty, integrity, and compassion.

Youth ministry, therefore, plays a vital role in instilling these moral principles, equipping young people with the necessary tools to navigate ethical dilemmas and contribute positively to society. Youth ministry, in particular, stands out as a place where moral values are clearly taught and actively reinforced to young people. It provides a structured way of thinking about right and wrong, helping youths shape their beliefs, decisions, and sense of purpose. Through supportive relationships and real-life applications, these beliefs guide individuals in understanding their values and making meaningful choices (King et al. 2020:599). Moral and civic identities are integral to healthy development, fostering engagement in institutions such as religious organisations, political systems, and community-based initiatives (Amoateng & Biney 2024:83).

The active participation of youth in civic life demonstrates their commitment to social responsibility. Young people contribute to the welfare of society through various means, including volunteerism, philanthropy, and social activism. Their involvement extends beyond traditional civic duties, such as voting, to include meaningful engagement in social justice movements, online advocacy, and grassroots initiatives (Amoateng & Biney 2024:83). By integrating moral values with civic engagement, young people play a crucial role in shaping and promoting social justice and strengthening democratic processes.

Civic responsibility and engagement are a necessity for the Christian, matters that spring from a particular moral lens (Peñaranda 2023:74). Moreover, morality within religious organisations serves as a foundation for cultivating hope, as this emphasises selflessness, compassion, and can demonstrate a commitment to others (Vaughn et al. 2022:4). Youth ministry must, therefore, adopt a holistic approach that nurtures not only spiritual and moral values (Ntetha 2019:157), but also fosters a broader concern for the well-being of others as a necessary and automatic response due to faith in God (Peñaranda 2023:74). By encouraging hope in both God and humanity (Aziz 2024:12), religious leaders can help young people develop a sense of purpose within a community that transcends individual aspirations and aligns with collective progress.

In this regard, the role of the youth ministry leader extends beyond spiritual mentorship to include advocacy, community engagement, and moral guidance. They serve as voices for their communities, shaping the consciousness of young people and guiding them towards responsible citizenship (Van Wyk 2017:7). By fostering both hope and morality, youth ministry creates a foundation for young people to develop into compassionate, engaged, and moral agents who contribute meaningfully to society.

Recommendations for youth ministry in South Africa

This section will provide recommendations on how youth ministry, especially in the South African context, can be instrumental in assisting youth to become active and responsible citizens and contribute to the well-being of society. The recommendations are as follows: Firstly, youth ministry must be contextual and local, grounded in its approaches to engaging with young people. Secondly, it must strengthen the focus and embrace a PPT in youth ministry. Thirdly, hope and morality should be intergrated holistically in youth ministry.

Contextualised and locally grounded youth ministry approaches

Youth ministry in South Africa must be contextually rooted rather than relying on imported or imposed models that do not resonate with local realities (Aziz 2024; Weber 2017). Youth ministry, through theological reflection, should engage with post-apartheid challenges, economic inequality, unemployment, and social justice issues, which directly affect young people. Churches and youth ministries should develop programmes that integrate local traditions, cultural values, and indigenous theological perspectives. In addition, youth leaders must be equipped with training in contextual theology, enabling them to address lived experiences rather than merely adopting Western-centric ministry models. A grassroots leadership approach should be encouraged, allowing young people to have agency in shaping their own spiritual and social engagement.

Strengthening public practical theology in youth ministry

A strong emphasis should also be placed on PPT, which highlights the need for youth ministry to extend beyond ecclesial spaces and actively engage with public life, politics, and social movements (Dreyer & Pieterse 2010; Graham 2008). Youth ministry should recognise that spiritual formation is a prerequisite to empower young people to be agents of change in their communities. It is therefore understandable that civic responsibility naturally flows from being a Christian, and that churches should play a role in equipping young people for leadership by providing training that incorporates civic education and social justice advocacy through diverse platforms and opportunities. Furthermore, church-community partnerships should be established to allow young people to participate in local governance, economic empowerment programmes, and social justice initiatives. Faith-based organisations must also play a role in policymaking that addresses youth-related issues, such as education, employment, and crime prevention.

Integrating hope and morality into holistic youth formation

Another essential component of youth development is the integration of hope and morality into holistic youth formation. Hope must move beyond personal aspirations towards communal well-being (Vaughn et al. 2022). Youth ministry must cultivate a moral vision that extends to responsible citizenship and social responsibility (Amoateng & Biney 2024). Programmes, which may be the means of developing and integrating hope and morality, should be designed to balance spiritual formation with moral responsibility, ensuring that young people are not just churchgoers but active contributors to society. Volunteerism, and service-learning opportunities should be promoted to encourage youth-led community transformation initiatives so that hope becomes a tangible reality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, youth ministry in South Africa must transcend traditional church-based models that may only focus on proselytisation and discipleship and engage practically, contextually, and publicly with the realities that shape young people's lives. Churches and youth ministry leaders, therefore, have a vital role in facilitating youth ministry to be rooted in local contexts and embracing PPT. Through fostering a hope-infused moral vision, youth ministry can become a transformative force and an incubator for action for both young people and society at large.

Youth ministry in South Africa stands at a critical juncture, where ecclesial models must be reimagined to respond effectively to the realities of contemporary youth. The challenges faced by young people today are complex and multi-layered. However, these challenges also present opportunities for youth ministry to become a dynamic, transformative force that not only nurtures the spiritual growth of youth but also equips them as responsible citizens.

A fundamental aspect of this transformation is the contextualisation of youth ministry. It is no longer sufficient to rely solely on imported models that do not resonate with the lived realities of South African youth. Instead, youth ministry must be deeply rooted in the socio-political and economic landscape of the nation. Theologies that address contemporary issues will be far more impactful in shaping young people's faith journeys than abstract doctrinal teachings alone.

Moreover, PPT represents an essential development in making youth ministry more impactful. Practical theology has long moved beyond ecclesial spaces, yet the primary focus has often remained within church congregations. A public practical theology, however, recognises that youth ministry must engage not only with those inside the faith community but also with those in broader society. This perspective acknowledges that all young people – regardless of their religious affiliations – are theologians who experience and interpret God in unique ways. By embracing a back-and-forth reflection between theory and action, youth ministry can facilitate critical engagement with social issues while remaining grounded in theological reflection.

One of the most pressing areas where youth ministry can effect change is in fostering responsible citizenry. The interplay between hope and morality is crucial in this regard. Hope, when understood as both an agentic and a socially oriented virtue, serves as the foundation for resilience and proactive engagement in society. However, for hope to lead to meaningful transformation, it must be tied to a strong moral compass – one that encourages civic engagement, and service to others. Religious organisations have a significant role in shaping these values, offering young people not just a sense of belonging but also a framework for moral reasoning and action.

To actualise this vision, youth ministry must adopt concrete action steps. This includes developing South African-centred models of youth engagement and training young people in civic responsibility. In addition, programmes promoting volunteerism, and leadership training must be prioritised to ensure that young people are equipped with both the knowledge and the opportunities to effect change. Through these initiatives, youth ministry can foster a generation of young South Africans who are not only spiritually grounded but also committed to social transformation. The future of the nation rests in the hands of its youth, and it is imperative that the church and faith communities rise to the challenge of equipping young people with the tools they need to navigate an ever-changing world. A youth ministry that is contextually relevant and publicly engaged will not only shape individual lives but also contribute to the broader transformation of South African society.

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