





Chapter 2

Describing township congregations through a quantitative empirical lens

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1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to assess the congregational ministry within a township context through a quantitative empirical lens. The context of congregations was described in more detail in the previous chapter. The focus is now to provide an empirical description of township congregations in the Mangaung context. An empirical analysis of the congregation is not the complete picture of the congregation but provides a perspective on congregational life. A theological and theoretical analysis would provide a more comprehensive description of congregational life but the focus in this regard is on a quantitative empirical lens.

2. The selection of the congregations

The objective of the selection of congregations is to select through convenience sampling (Bryman, 2012:201) between twenty and thirty township congregations from the Mangaung metro from the following religious traditions or denominations: Mainline, Pentecostal or Charismatic and African independent or initiated churches. A short description of the three traditions would assist in understanding the religious diversity



within the township context and enrich the quantitative discussion on the congregational ministry in the township.

Mainline congregations have a more formal and structured belief system, doctrinal documents, and church order. They have a well-defined hierarchy and bureaucratic system with their historical roots in Western Christianity and most probably a missionary background. Mainline congregations are mainly from the following traditions: Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Reformed, Catholic, and Anglican.

Charismatic or Pentecostal congregations are an important part of congregational life in the township because of its growth in South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. “The Pentecostal churches are centred on the workings of the Holy Spirit as a powerful force among believers. It is frequently said that while the broader evangelical revival movement emphasises Jesus as the focus of faith, the Pentecostal movement emphasises the Holy Spirit. At its core is usually a re-conversion experience called ‘baptism in or with the Holy Spirit’, harking back to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the first Christians in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, or Shavuot (Acts of the Apostles 2–4).” (Schlemmer, 2008:10). These congregations include the Assemblies of God, Born Again Church of God in Christ, Rhema Church, and Apostolic Faith Mission.

African independent or initiated churches (AIC) have congregations with a very specific focus on the interaction between the Christian and traditional African religion. “All churches that are rooted in the local context and that explicitly seek to bring Christianity in conversation with African realities of whatever kind might be considered indigenous.” (Müller, 2018). Knoetze (2016) gives the following description of AICs: “The African independent churches include a wide variety of churches, from very close to the African traditional religion (ATR) and therefore very syncretistic to, at the other end, very Biblical and Reformed churches.” Some of the more well-known AICs include the Zion Christian Church; Apostolic Church; African Nazareth Baptist Church/Shembe.

The following township congregations were selected through convenience sampling and participated in the research project:

Township congregations	N	%
AIC	4	15,4
Mainline	12	46,1
Charismatic/Pentecostal	10	38,5
Total	26	100,0

It is important to note that this is not a representative sample or voice from township congregations in the Mangaung metro. The aim is to listen to the different voices of congregations from different traditions within a specific township context. This could assist in the evaluation of the relevance of quantitative research in understanding the congregational ministry in this context.

3. The empirical methodology of the township research project

The research project is undertaken by using the following two surveys:¹

3.1 Congregational survey

The congregational surveys (called Church Mirror surveys) used a quantitative empirical methodology to describe the ministry of the congregation (see Hermans & Schoeman, 2015) and give a comprehensive description of the functioning of congregations. The original surveys included congregations from the DRC (Dutch Reformed Church) family (DRC², DRCA³, and URCSA). The township project used a shortened format of the Church Mirror surveys but still enquired about the functioning and ministry of the local congregation. The questionnaire asked about different aspects of the congregation and was completed by

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- 1 See Hermans, C. and Schoeman, W. J., 2015. Survey research in practical theology and congregational studies, *Acta Theologica*, Supplementum 22(2015), 45–63.
 - 2 See Schoeman, W. J., 2011. Kerkspieël – ñ kritiese bestekopname, *NGTT*, 52(3&4), 472–488.
 - 3 See the doctoral dissertation of Dr Pali: Leadership and transformation in the African church: A practical theological study of one denomination.

the leadership and administrative staff of the congregation. All twenty-six congregations that are part of the township project completed the congregational survey.

3.2 Attender survey

The attender survey is a quantitative research instrument that contributes towards the understanding and evaluation of congregational vitality and was developed by the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) in Australia. The NCLS is an international survey focusing on denominations and congregations with the intention to give a voice to congregational members. An SA-CLS Pilot Project was conducted in 2014-2015 to evaluate the suitability of NCLS in the South African congregational context by using the NCLS attender survey to take a snapshot of the health and vitality of congregations.⁴ The survey was completed by worship attenders during a worship service of a specific congregation. This is not a representative voice of all the members of a congregation, but the voice of key informants to listen to as it provides reliable information about congregational life from an attender perspective (Hermans & Schoeman, 2015:60). The pilot project provided valuable information for congregations and denominations and the NCLS attender survey was repeated in 2018-2019, also amongst township congregations.

Denomination	N (attenders)
Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)	6985
Nederduits Hervormde Kerk in Afrika (HKA)	1823
Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA)	169
Township Congregations (TPC)	568
Total	9545

4 Schoeman, W. J., 2010. The Congregational Life Survey in the Dutch Reformed Church: Identifying strong and weak connections, *NGTT*, 51(3 & 4), 114–124. Schoeman, W. J., 2020a. The South African Church Life Survey 2014: An exploration of congregational health. In: W. J. Schoeman (ed.) 2020b, *Churches in the mirror: Developing contemporary ecclesiologies*, 141–159. Sun Media.

4. Township congregations: Findings from the congregational survey

This section gives a description of the 26 congregations from the Mangaung Metro that completed the congregational survey (see also Schoeman, 2020a:110). The aim is to look at the functioning of the congregational ministry and leadership during the lockdown in 2020-2021.

Most of the congregations report that they see their congregational vitality (Table 4.1) as stable (38,5%), but a majority of mainline congregations (58,3%) are struggling but were still viable; and 50% of the AIC congregations are thriving and growing.

Table 4.1: Congregational vitality

Describe the overall vitality of this congregation	AIC	Car/Pen	ML	Total
This congregation will not survive much longer	0	0	0	0
	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
We are struggling but are still viable	0	1	7	8
	0,0%	10,0%	58,3%	30,8%
We are stable	2	5	3	10
	50,0%	50,0%	25,0%	38,5%
We are strong and steady	0	1	1	2
	0,0%	10,0%	8,3%	7,7%
We are thriving and growing	2	3	1	6
	50,0%	30,0%	8,3%	23,1%
Total	4	10	12	26
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The majority of the congregations in the township (Table 4.2) have a team of leaders that include both ordained and lay leaders. The mainline congregations seem to make more use of lay leaders in their congregational ministry.

Table 4.2: Leadership of the congregation

Which of the following best describes the leadership of this congregation?	AIC	Car/Pen	ML	Total
Single ordained leader (minister, pastor, priest)	0	1	1	2
	0,0%	11,1%	8,3%	8,0%
Single lay or non-ordained leader	0	0	1	1
	0,0%	0,0%	8,3%	4,0%
Team of ordained leaders	2	1	0	3
	50,0%	11,1%	0,0%	12,0%
Team including both ordained and lay leaders	2	6	7	15
	50,0%	66,7%	58,3%	60,0%
Team of lay leaders	0	1	3	4
	0,0%	11,1%	25,0%	16,0%
Total	4	9	12	25
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

During the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic lockdown in 2020, most congregations (72%) conducted outreach activities in the local community. This was achieved by all Charismatic/Pentecostal and 75% of the AIC congregations (Table 4.3). The congregations demonstrate an openness towards the needs of the community that they are part off.

Table 4.3: Outreach activities in the local community

During the lockdown in 2020, has this congregation conducted any outreach or support activities in your local community?	AIC	Car/Pen	ML	Total
Yes	3	9	6	18
	75,0%	100,0%	50,0%	72,0%
No	1	0	6	7
	25,0%	0,0%	50,0%	28,0%
Total	4	9	12	25
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

A digital ministry became an important aspect of the congregational ministry during the pandemic. The findings (Table 4.4) indicate that the congregations struggled to have a digital ministry; 23,1% started during lockdown and are continuing it, but 23,1% started but stopped their digital ministry again. Most of the AIC congregations (75%) don't have a digital ministry. A critical question would be about the post-pandemic role of a digital ministry in the congregation?

Table 4.4: Digital ministry of the congregation

The digital ministry of the congregation	AIC	Car/Pen	ML	Total
We don't have a digital ministry	3	4	3	10
	75,0%	40,0%	25,0%	38,5%
We started with a digital ministry during the lockdown and continued with it	0	4	2	6
	0,0%	40,0%	16,7%	23,1%
We started with a digital ministry during the lockdown and stopped with it again	1	0	5	6
	25,0%	0,0%	41,7%	23,1%

The digital ministry of the congregation	AIC	Car/Pen	ML	Total
We intensified our digital ministry during the lockdown and continued with it	0	1	2	3
	0,0%	10,0%	16,7%	11,5%
We intensified our digital ministry during the lockdown, but reduced it now as previously	0	1	0	1
	0,0%	10,0%	0,0%	3,8%
Total	4	10	12	26
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Most of the congregations (61,5%) don't post their sermons weekly on social media, while half of the Charismatic/Pentecostal congregations do this on a weekly basis (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Sermons on social media

Do you post the weekly sermons on social media?	AIC	Car/Pen	ML	Total
Yes	1	5	4	10
	25,0%	50,0%	33,3%	38,5%
No	3	5	8	16
	75,0%	50,0%	66,7%	61,5%
Total	4	10	12	26
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Coming out of the lockdown, most of the township congregations (36%) have a declining financial basis, and 24% experience their financial situation to be a serious threat to their ability to continue as a viable congregation (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Financial situation of the congregation

Which of the following best describes this congregation's financial situation?	AIC	Car/Pen	ML	Total
We have an increasing financial base	0	1	2	3
	0,0%	10,0%	16,7%	12,0%
We have an essentially stable financial base	1	3	3	7
	33,3%	30,0%	25,0%	28,0%
We have a declining financial base	1	3	5	9
	33,3%	30,0%	41,7%	36,0%
Our financial situation is a serious threat to our ability to continue as a viable congregation	1	3	2	6
	33,3%	30,0%	16,7%	24,0%
Total	3	10	12	25
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The following may be stated as a conclusion reflecting on the findings from the congregational survey regarding the township congregations:

- In terms of vitality or growth, many of the congregations see themselves in a stable position after the lockdown and pandemic.
- Most of the township congregations have a team of leaders that include both ordained and lay leaders.
- Township congregations remained in contact with the community during lockdown.
- The digital ministry during and after the lockdown were problematic; most of the congregations do not have a digital ministry or post their sermons on social media.
- Most of the congregations struggle post-COVID-19 with their financial position. They are situated in poorer context in society and this would also have an influence on the financial position of the congregation.

5. Township congregations: Findings from the attender survey

Congregational vitality is a complex concept and the focus in this regard is on the internal and outward core qualities of the congregation life of the membership. The internal core qualities refer to the relationship between the membership and God and the outward core qualities to the interaction between the membership and the community.⁵

5.1 Inward core qualities

The inward core qualities reflect on the faith, worship and belonging of the attenders.

5.1.1 Alive and growing faith

5.1.1.1 Growth in faith

Attendees were asked about the growth in their faith over the last year (Table 5.1.1.1). All the attenders experienced much growth in their faith (42,6%) through the activities of the local church (congregation). The attenders in township congregations (TPC) experienced it in 59,0% of the cases. Growth through their own private activities played a more significant role in DRC, NHKA and URCSA congregations, while the congregation played a more significant role in the case of township congregations.

Table 5.1.1.1: Growing faith

Over the last year, do you believe you have grown in your Christian faith?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
No real growth	373	88	16	28	505
	5,5%	5,0%	9,5%	5,1%	5,5%

5 For a more comprehensive discussion of the core qualities, see Powell et.al., 2012.

Over the last year, do you believe you have grown in your Christian faith?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Some growth	1530	267	53	78	1928
	22,6%	15,1%	31,5%	14,1%	20,8%
Much growth, mainly through this local church	2660	909	51	327	3947
	39,3%	51,4%	30,4%	59,0%	42,6%
Much growth, mainly through other groups or churches	677	126	19	65	887
	10,0%	7,1%	11,3%	11,7%	9,6%
Much growth, mainly through my own private activity	1534	378	29	56	1997
	22,6%	21,4%	17,3%	10,1%	21,6%
Total	6774	1768	168	554	9264
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

5.1.1.2 Private devotional activity

Private devotional activities, time spent in private prayer, Bible reading and meditation, play a significant role in the daily spiritual lives of DRC and NHKA attenders. This is valid to a lesser extent for the TPC attenders, where a few days a week will be allocated for private devotional activities (Table 5.1.1.2).

Table 5.1.1.2: Private devotional activity

How often do you spend time in private devotional activities (e.g. prayer, meditation, Bible reading alone)?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Every/most days	4916	1328	67	292	6603
	70,4%	72,8%	39,6%	51,4%	69,2%
Few days a week	1026	264	29	165	1484
	14,7%	14,5%	17,2%	29,0%	15,5%
Weekly	136	39	28	44	247
	1,9%	2,1%	16,6%	7,7%	2,6%
Occasionally	681	153	37	49	920
	9,7%	8,4%	21,9%	8,6%	9,6%
Hardly ever	157	30	7	10	204
	2,2%	1,6%	4,1%	1,8%	2,1%
Never	69	9	1	8	87
	1,0%	0,5%	0,6%	1,4%	0,9%
Total	6985	1823	169	568	9545
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

5.1.1.3 The importance of God

God is the most important reality in the lives of NHKA and DRC attenders and to a lesser extent, in the lives of the TPC attenders (Table 5.1.1.3).

Table 5.1.1.3: The importance of God

How important is God in your life?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
God does not matter at all	20	3	1	10	34
	0,3%	0,2%	0,6%	1,8%	0,4%
Fairly important, but many other things are more important	200	29	7	5	241
	2,9%	1,6%	4,1%	0,9%	2,5%
God is more important to me than almost most anything else	1484	359	66	180	2089
	21,3%	19,9%	38,8%	32,2%	22,0%
God is the most important reality in my life	5256	1412	96	364	7128
	75,5%	78,3%	56,5%	65,1%	75,1%
Total	6960	1803	170	559	9492
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

5.1.2 *Worship service experience.*

Attendees from different denominations report different experiences during the worship service. They were asked about their experience of the presence of God (Table 5.1.2.1), a growing understanding of God (Table 5.1.2.2) and if they are challenged to take action during the worship service (Table 5.1.2.3):

- Attendees from TPC always (80,6%) experience a sense of God's presence;
- they also have a growing understanding of God (81,2%) during a worship service, and
- they are also challenged during a worship service to take action; 51,2% indicated that this is always the case.

The responses from TPC attendees indicates a different worship experience than that of the other denominations.

Tables 5.1.2.1: Experience of God's presence

Experience during the worship services of the local church - sense of God's presence	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Always	4280	1239	107	444	6070
	62,8%	70,8%	64,8%	80,6%	65,4%
Usually	1882	424	38	70	2414
	27,6%	24,2%	23,0%	12,7%	26,0%
Sometimes	559	77	18	33	687
	8,2%	4,4%	10,9%	6,0%	7,4%
Rarely/Never	95	9	2	4	110
	1,4%	0,5%	1,2%	0,7%	1,2%
Total	6816	1749	165	551	9281
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 5.1.2.2: Understanding of God

Experience during the worship services of the local church - growth understanding of God	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Always	3233	976	98	441	4748
	48,0%	56,4%	58,3%	81,2%	51,7%
Usually	2754	639	49	75	3517
	40,8%	36,9%	29,2%	13,8%	38,3%

Experience during the worship services of the local church - growth understanding of God	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Sometimes	665	107	18	23	813
	9,9%	6,2%	10,7%	4,2%	8,9%
Rarely/Never	90	10	3	4	107
	1,3%	0,6%	1,8%	0,7%	1,2%
Total	6742	1732	168	543	9185
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 5.1.2.3: Challenged to take action

Experience during the worship services of the local church – being challenged to take action	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Always	1606	517	59	274	2456
	24,4%	31,1%	35,3%	51,2%	27,5%
Usually	2524	682	59	96	3361
	38,4%	41,0%	35,3%	17,9%	37,6%
Sometimes	2030	390	39	127	2586
	30,9%	23,4%	23,4%	23,7%	28,9%
Rarely/Never	409	76	10	38	533
	6,2%	4,6%	6,0%	7,1%	6,0%
Total	6569	1665	167	535	8936
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

5.1.3 *Belonging – strong and growing*

The third inward core quality focuses on the involvement of the attenders within their faith community, asking about their sense of belonging to the congregation and about their frequency of attendance of the worship services.

5.1.3.1 Sense of belonging to the local church (Table 4.1.3.1)

The attenders from TPC have a strong sense of belonging to the congregation and this is growing (80,4%). The other denominations have a lesser indication of a growing sense of belonging and indicates that it is about the same as the previous year.

Table 5.1.3.1: Sense of belonging

Do you have a strong sense of belonging to this local church/ congregation?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Yes, a strong sense of belonging, which is growing	3134	961	77	451	4623
	45,2%	52,7%	45,6%	80,4%	48,8%
Yes, a strong sense - about the same as last year	1863	456	28	36	2383
	26,9%	25,0%	16,6%	6,4%	25,1%
Yes, although perhaps not as strongly as in the past	789	164	36	44	1033
	11,4%	9,0%	21,3%	7,8%	10,9%
No, but I am new here	264	56	8	6	334
	3,8%	3,1%	4,7%	1,1%	3,5%
No, and I wish I did by now	292	55	11	5	363
	4,2%	3,0%	6,5%	0,9%	3,8%
No, but I am happy as I am	461	88	6	12	567
	6,7%	4,8%	3,6%	2,1%	6,0%

Do you have a strong sense of belonging to this local church/ congregation?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Don't know/ not applicable	127	43	3	7	180
	1,8%	2,4%	1,8%	1,2%	1,9%
Total	6930	1823	169	561	9483
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

5.1.3.2 Frequency of church service attendance (Table 4.1.3.2)

The attenders of all the denominations have a high frequency of church service attendance. It is usually every week, or at least two or three times a month, this account for more than 88% the worship attendance across all the denominations.

Table 5.1.3.2: Frequency of church service attendance

How often do you go to church services (worship services) at this local church?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
First time	75	11	5	17	108
	1,1%	0,6%	2,9%	3,0%	1,1%
Hardly ever/special occasions only	60	17	2	13	92
	0,9%	0,9%	1,2%	2,3%	1,0%
Less than once a month	167	27	11	4	209
	2,4%	1,5%	6,5%	0,7%	2,2%
Once a month	307	73	18	13	411
	4,4%	4,0%	10,6%	2,3%	4,3%

How often do you go to church services (worship services) at this local church?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
2 or 3 times a month	2271	555	46	133	3005
	32,4%	30,0%	27,1%	23,2%	31,3%
Usually every week	3938	1110	78	342	5468
	56,2%	60,1%	45,9%	59,6%	57,0%
More than once a week	188	55	10	52	305
	2,7%	3,0%	5,9%	9,1%	3,2%
Total	7006	1848	170	574	9598
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The following conclusions regarding the inward core qualities for township congregations may be noted:

- A growing faith is to a lesser extent a private activity for TPC attenders because they focus more on communal activities in their congregation.
- Worship services are experienced by TPC attenders in a more positive way as the experiencing of and understanding God.
- Belonging to the congregation plays an important role, and there is a sound involvement with the activities of the congregation, especially the worship services.

5.2 Outward core qualities

The outward core qualities pay attention to the interaction of the congregation with the community and wider society. The following aspects will be in the focus:

- Practical and diverse service
- Faith sharing – willing and effective
- Inclusion – intentional and welcoming

5.2.1 *Practical and diverse service*

Congregations from the township (TPC) have a stronger involvement that engage with the wider community (Table 5.2.1.1). The TPC attenders are involved in evangelistic or outreach activities (44,3%) and community service (35,5%). Attenders from the DRC indicated that they are not involved (65,3%) in activities that engage with the wider community.

Care for the environment is an important aspect of the congregational responsibility towards society (Table 5.2.1.2). Attenders from TPCs are very active to care for the environment (52,7%), while attenders from the DRC are less or little active (41,4%).

Table 5.2.1.1: Involvement in church-based service activities

Do you regularly take part in any activities of this local church that engage with the wider community?		Denomination				Total
		DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Evangelistic or outreach activities	No	6183	1678	142	309	8312
		91,2%	93,9%	86,6%	55,7%	89,5%
	Yes	598	109	22	246	975
		8,8%	6,1%	13,4%	44,3%	10,5%
	Total	6781	1787	164	555	9287
		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Do you regularly take part in any activities of this local church that engage with the wider community?		Denomination				Total
		DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Community service, social justice or welfare activities	No	5252	1306	118	358	7034
		77,5%	73,1%	72,0%	64,5%	75,7%
	Yes	1529	481	46	197	2253
		22,5%	26,9%	28,0%	35,5%	24,3%
	Total	6781	1787	164	555	9287
		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
No, we don't have such activities	No	6354	1685	124	525	8688
		93,7%	94,3%	75,6%	94,6%	93,6%
	Yes	427	102	40	30	599
		6,3%	5,7%	24,4%	5,4%	6,4%
	Total	6781	1787	164	555	9287
		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
No, I am not regularly involved	No	2350	645	103	417	3515
		34,7%	36,1%	62,8%	75,1%	37,8%
	Yes	4431	1142	61	138	5772
		65,3%	63,9%	37,2%	24,9%	62,2%
	Total	6781	1787	164	555	9287
		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 5.2.1.2: Care for the environment

Do you believe that Christians have a responsibility to actively care for the environment?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Yes, and I am very active	1288	326	47	294	1955
	18,6%	18,1%	27,6%	52,7%	20,7%
Yes, and I am a little active	2863	706	36	114	3719
	41,4%	39,2%	21,2%	20,4%	39,4%
Yes, but I am currently not active	2560	706	63	123	3452
	37,0%	39,2%	37,1%	22,0%	36,6%
No	51	16	13	6	86
	0,7%	0,9%	7,6%	1,1%	0,9%
Unsure	149	45	11	21	226
	2,2%	2,5%	6,5%	3,8%	2,4%
Total	6911	1799	170	558	9438
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

5.2.2 Faith sharing – willing and effective

Inviting others to the church and worship service here is an important outreach activity of congregational members (Table 5.2.2.1). Attenders from TPCs are actively involved in inviting (58,6%), while the other denominations have done less. The TPC attenders are at ease to share their faith (Table 5.2.2.2) and are looking for opportunities to do so.

Table 5.2.2.1: Invitation to worship service

Would you be prepared to invite any of your friends and relatives who do not currently attend a church to a church service here?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Yes, and I have done so in the past 12 months	2370	702	76	330	3478
	34,7%	39,5%	44,7%	58,6%	37,3%
Yes, but I haven't done so in the past 12 months	3308	790	63	179	4340
	48,5%	44,5%	37,1%	31,8%	46,5%
Don't know	749	186	25	31	991
	11,0%	10,5%	14,7%	5,5%	10,6%
No, probably not	351	92	6	17	466
	5,1%	5,2%	3,5%	3,0%	5,0%
No, definitely not	49	6	0	6	61
	0,7%	0,3%	0,0%	1,1%	0,7%
Total	6827	1776	170	563	9336
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 5.2.2.2: Readiness to share faith

Which of the following best describes your readiness to talk to others about your faith?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
I do not have faith, so the question is not applicable	26	1	5	5	37
	0,4%	0,1%	2,9%	0,9%	0,4%

Which of the following best describes your readiness to talk to others about your faith?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
I do not like to talk about my faith; my life and actions are sufficient	531	156	15	45	747
	7,8%	8,9%	8,8%	8,3%	8,1%
I find it hard to talk about my faith in ordinary language	718	140	35	45	938
	10,6%	7,9%	20,6%	8,3%	10,1%
I mostly feel at ease to talk about my faith if it comes up	4580	1209	74	253	6116
	67,6%	68,6%	43,5%	46,4%	66,1%
I feel at ease to talk about my faith and look for opportunities	918	256	41	197	1412
	13,6%	14,5%	24,1%	36,1%	15,3%
Total	6773	1762	170	545	9250
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

5.2.3 Inclusion – intentional and welcoming

Inclusion in this regard refers to the likelihood of attenders to follow up if someone is drifting away from the church (Table 5.2.3.1), and attenders welcoming new arrivals (Table 5.2.3.2). TPC attenders are certain to follow up on drifters (35,1%) and they always seek to welcome new arrivals (55,7%).

Table 5.2.3.1: Follow up on drifters

If you knew that someone was drifting away from church involvement, how likely is it that you would take the time to talk with them about it?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Certain	460	182	44	196	882
	6,8%	10,3%	26,0%	35,1%	9,5%
Very likely	386	132	23	157	698
	5,7%	7,5%	13,6%	28,1%	7,5%
Likely	1526	393	28	109	2056
	22,4%	22,2%	16,6%	19,5%	22,1%
Hard to say	2768	665	60	75	3568
	40,7%	37,6%	35,5%	13,4%	38,3%
Unlikely	1666	398	14	22	2100
	24,5%	22,5%	8,3%	3,9%	22,6%
Total	6806	1770	169	559	9304
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 5.2.3.2: Welcome new arrivals

If you know someone who is a new arrival here, do you personally seek to make them welcome?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Always	760	248	67	311	1386
	11,1%	13,9%	39,9%	55,7%	14,8%

If you know someone who is a new arrival here, do you personally seek to make them welcome?	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Mostly	1244	357	21	97	1719
	18,2%	20,0%	12,5%	17,4%	18,4%
Sometimes	1968	483	54	97	2602
	28,8%	27,1%	32,1%	17,4%	27,8%
Rarely or never	1560	353	18	36	1967
	22,8%	19,8%	10,7%	6,5%	21,0%
Not applicable (I don't meet new arrivals)	1303	343	8	17	1671
	19,1%	19,2%	4,8%	3,0%	17,9%
Total	6835	1784	168	558	9345
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The following conclusions regarding the TPC and the outward core qualities may be made:

- their involvement in the wider community is more profound.
- they are more prepared to be inclusive and talk about their faith, and
- they are more open and welcoming drifters and new attenders.

5.3 Church and society

Two more general aspects regarding the role the church and religion might play within society are investigated in the attender survey; the first regarding race relations (Table 5.3.1) and the second about reconciliation (Table 5.3.2). In both instances TPC attenders have a stronger attitude; they strongly agree that the churches should play an important role to improve race relations (48,8%) and they strongly agree that progress was made in reconciliation since the end of apartheid (19,7%) than the other denominations.

Table 5.3.1: Church and race relations

Churches play an important role to improve race relations in our country	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Strongly agree	2179	386	53	272	2890
	31,8%	22,1%	31,4%	48,8%	31,0%
Agree	3001	669	76	201	3947
	43,9%	38,4%	45,0%	36,1%	42,4%
Neutral/Unsure	1122	434	21	60	1637
	16,4%	24,9%	12,4%	10,8%	17,6%
Disagree	410	161	14	23	608
	6,0%	9,2%	8,3%	4,1%	6,5%
Strongly disagree	130	93	5	1	229
	1,9%	5,3%	3,0%	0,2%	2,5%
Total	6842	1743	169	557	9311
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 5.3.2: Reconciliation since the end of apartheid

We as citizens have made progress in reconciliation since the end of apartheid	Denomination				Total
	DRC	NHKA	URCSA	TPC	
Strongly agree	512	103	22	110	747
	7,6%	5,9%	12,9%	19,7%	8,1%
Agree	2223	365	58	197	2843
	32,8%	21,0%	34,1%	35,4%	30,7%
Neutral/Unsure	1623	452	35	134	2244
	23,9%	25,9%	20,6%	24,1%	24,3%
Disagree	1605	490	41	86	2222
	23,7%	28,1%	24,1%	15,4%	24,0%
Strongly disagree	817	332	14	30	1193
	12,1%	19,1%	8,2%	5,4%	12,9%
Total	6780	1742	170	557	9249
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

6. Conclusion

The empirical research focusing on congregations within a township context is an important development towards the formulation of a research framework within the enhancement of engaged scholarship. Both the congregational and attender surveys point towards differences from mainline congregations in a different context. The descriptive analysis should be developed further in doing an inferential statistical analysis to understand more about the different contexts that congregations find themselves in. There is also a need for a qualitative analysis for example in the form of

interviews and focus group discussions to enhance the understanding of the differences between congregations in different contexts and traditions.

In conclusion, the following empirical markers may be identified to map the road ahead:

- There is a need for the development of a relevant mixed methodology to understand congregations from different contexts.
 - The further development of an engaged scholarship framework is important with the focus on the leadership of the congregation.
 - An ecclesiology from below is an important starting point for an interaction with and interpretation of the empirical findings and the development of a contextual ecclesiology.
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