

# **FREE THE MUSIC**

A Focus Group Analysis on the Need of Youth Contemporary Christian Station

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## ABSTRACT

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This study discusses the importance of providing youth with the knowledge of local or international contemporary Christian music and the importance of working ecumenically to encourage the youth. Seeking conviviality within the Christian communities, locally and international, to promote and encourage the well-being of all youth in our society.

The qualitative analysis that was conducted in a focus group discussion will be presented in this thesis work. The focus group allowed youth to talk freely and discuss the questions that I presented to them while providing the adequate information to move forward pertaining to the subject of 'if youth need and want a Christian music station?' This will hopefully prompt some interest by others within the church communities in anticipation of a future youth information site or a music station. A qualitative questionnaire was also prepared in mere precaution if youth would not attend the focus group.

The findings of this research indicate that the majority of young adults own a portable device and are connecting to the social media sources daily, but the churches or youth groups are not informing them of the most popular Christian songs available. Lack of collaboration, locally and internationally, leads to the insufficient amount of information for youth, concerning Christian music, even with the current technology. More research in the future is needed concerning this subject of Christian music towards youth and their needs to have a substantial amount of evidence since my findings only consisted of two focus groups.

In conclusion, youth desire to be informed and to be able to access the most popular Christian music instantly. They would like to have an information site with links, apps or possibly a music station on the internet, to be accessible through their church youth group sites. Youth expressed that the information of music would be useful and beneficial to them. The church community must now try to supply them with this demand and

work in conviviality to provide them with music that is relevant and current towards the next generation.

Keywords: CCM, Collaboration, Conviviality, Current, Ecumenical, Instantaneous, Solidarity, Unity, Vision Generation.

## CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION .....	6
2 PURPOSE FOR THIS THESIS.....	7
2.1 Youth and Social Media.....	8
2.1.1 Disconnected .....	8
2.2 Music Uniting Churches.....	9
3 YOUTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA .....	10
3.1 Social Media among the Youth.....	10
3.2 Connecting the Youth to the Church through Music .....	12
3.3 Role Models for Adolescents & Youth .....	13
3.4 Staying Current .....	14
4 CONVIVIALITY BETWEEN YOUTH & CHURCH .....	17
4.1 Church Ceremonies.....	17
4.2 Youth Presence .....	20
4.3 Well-Being of Everyone .....	22
4.4 Conviviality among all the Churches.....	25
4.5 Definitions to CCM & Current .....	28
5 THEOLOGY OF MUSIC .....	29
5.1 Music Combined with the Word of God .....	29
5.2 Music within the Church .....	30
5.3 Delight, Joy & Pleasure .....	31
5.4 The Power of Music.....	33
6 AIM OF THE STUDY .....	35
6.1 Qualitative Analysis .....	35
6.2 Focus Group Analysis .....	36
6.3 Focus Group Questions and Data Collection .....	36
7 ANALYSIS OF TWO FOCUS GROUPS & DATA COLLECTED .....	37
7.1 Brief Contextual Background of both Churches.....	38
7.2 Background of Participants.....	38
7.2.1 Resources Youth Used .....	38
7.3 Collaboration with other Churches .....	40
7.4 Music .....	40

7.4.1 Genre & Language .....	41
7.4.2 Lyrics .....	41
7.5 Awareness of CCM.....	42
7.5.1 Youth at the Lutheran Parish .....	42
7.5.2 Youth at the Baptist Church .....	42
7.6 Music Station or Information Site.....	43
7.6.1 Youth at the Lutheran Parish .....	43
7.6.2 Youth at the Baptist Church .....	43
7.6.3 Could Music be an Outreach .....	44
8 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	44
CONCLUSION .....	46
REFERENCES .....	47
APPENDICES 1. MUSIC SAMPLES .....	51
APPENDICES 2. QUESTIONS.....	51

## 1 INTRODUCTION

With technology advancing at a rapid pace, adolescents are able to access information and music on their phones everywhere they go. Churches need to use this to their advantage, by communicating and informing the youth more frequently, using all available sources including music on the internet.

Faith communities may be in the best position to lead efforts for social renewal because of their inherent characteristics and commitments, enabling them to be community conveners in broad-based efforts involving many different kinds of organizations (Wallis 2002, 127).

With faith communities having such an influence on their surroundings, they could be leading the effort with an internet music site or a station to encourage and empower the youth. Whatever the genre, rock, hip-hop, country or rap, youth enjoy listening to music frequently. With all the information and music that is available to the youth, there is a lack of current contemporary Christian music information available to the local youth. Contemporary Christian music is also known as CCM. Faith communities need to be providing; internet links, apps or a site where all music information can be visible concerning the youth. This type of low threshold work could be considered missionary work, but provided to the local young people.

The mission of God's people is far too big to be left only to missionaries (Houston 2015, 50).

Ecumenically churches need to work in conviviality towards influencing and encouraging the well-being of all the youth, those attending church or not attending, and provide hope through music during these economical difficult times. Youth should have easy access to current Christian music to encourage their faith and their everyday well-being. Words are what should differentiate the secular from Christian music, and this is a crucial step towards an opportunity of communication between the faith communities and all youth, a low threshold approach.

My analysis will hopefully stimulate some interest pertaining to this subject of youth and current Christian music, so that there will be future research in this area.

I will analyse two separate focus groups with youth from the age of 13-21, in two Christian denomination churches in the Uusimaa region, a Lutheran parish and a Baptist church. Discussing several questions including my main question, 'Is there a need for a youth Christian music station'? I decided to have two different types of churches involved in the discussions to observe and study how knowledgeable they are on international Christian music and how they access all of their music.

## 2 PURPOSE FOR THIS THESIS

A community is not fabricated by one individual alone, but with a vast amount of people, socializing, connecting and interacting with one another. We must bridge the gap, between secular music and Christian music, in a low threshold method, since the style of music is similar and only the lyrics differentiate the two. Christian music could be just as influential as secular music, for the reason that it is similar in style and it is intended is towards all youth, those attending & not attending. Music moves human hearts and is considered sweet music, advancing our faith and morality, without coercion or persuasion and is sweet all on its own, according to Anttila (2011, 139). Let's share the most current music with the youth of this nation. This could create a bridge, for the vision generation towards the church, in anticipations that youth would continue attending church to enrich the entire community since there is a need for all three generations within the church. Youth have access to an immense amount of information through the simple technology of their phones, but are the Christian communities that surround them providing them with what they desire and need? The collaboration work of all Christian entities is implementing unity towards the

world, but is there a music approach towards the youth? All the Christian entities could be working in solidarity and conviviality towards the youth through a music station or at the very least an information site.

## 2.1 Youth and Social Media

Youth today are bombarded with technology like no other generation before them. Globalization has allowed them to access everything on the phones that they carry everywhere with them. Youth, between the ages of 18–29 are the highest social networking users, using their smartphones to access social media sites, watching videos and listening to music more than any other generation, according to the Pew (2014) survey.

Both boys and girls watch for example through the Youtube a lot of music videos or generally listening to music ((Suoninen 2013, 118-120)(Eu kids 2013, 18))(Iskanius translation).

With the boys and girls in Finland accessing music through the various sites, such as Youtube or Spotify, how aware are Christian youth of all current Christian music and not just local bands? There is a vast amount of current Christian music that is accessible online, but if nobody is informing the youth of the other stations or songs, then how will they know? They will merely continue to play the local songs that they are aware of and rapidly become bored of the only Christian songs that they know.

### 2.1.1 Disconnected

With the visible decline of attendance and resignation of many church members within locally, Christian churches must convey towards the youth that they care for them, by standing in solidarity, so that churches would have an increase in attendance in the years to come. Adolescents are clearly joining the church during the ages of 12-17 due to confirmation, but the adults are resigning at a rate 5-8 times more according to the Sakasti Evl pages on membership (2011, 59).



With the resignation occurring constantly, there must be an effort or a method used towards these numbers decreasing and individuals joining yet again.

With the youth in Finland becoming lonelier and more connected to social media than the generations before, there needs to be a method of contacting them through social media, to encouraging them within their homes. Whatever the format, net station or information site, the churches need another method to communicate and connect the youth more profoundly within their communities. In the Eu kids research (2013, 67) Oranen (2008) emphasizes the right and opportunity that youth should have to information, to influence or express their opinion, on subjects about them. Is there conviviality throughout the churches about the youth and current music? Is anyone asking the vision generations opinion on music, such as the most popular song of the week, or is it perceived as unimportant to the adults? If there is not any effort put forth to acquiring most popular Christian music among the youth in Finland, then are we listening to the vision generation at all?

## 2.2 Music Uniting Churches

Although it is visible that the churches are communicating with the youth through forms of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter and that the youth are using these sites, but there still could be another social media source, such as music, to communicate with them. Are churches providing the youth with dialogue concerning music, so that they are communicating with other Christian churches across the globe or with other local entities. With information such as; the latest artists, top 10 favorite songs, most played songs from around the world or even locally? The church could be providing the youth with the appropriate type of information about music, different links or online stations. They could also be providing an online music station, which they could be accessing to enhance their positive view towards Christ. Radio was the main source of communication used by the past generations, but is it applicable to the youth the vision generation? The current radio station, the only available station for all

Christians in the region, is located online as well, but it is not providing the youth with music for more than a few hours daily/weekly. Is this enough among the youth?

### 3 YOUTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Music is the preferred leisure time activity among adolescents. Adolescents are very active at listening to music, since it is accessible on their phones and taken everywhere they go; some even listen all day long. They enjoy sharing new songs and video's with their friends, but are the local Christian communities informing them of the current artists or international youth music stations so that they can continuously be encouraged and their walk with Christ? Adolescents need other role models in their lives as well to demonstrate what walking with the Lord is truly about. Conviviality is now needed among all the Christian communities to have a youthful Christian station geared just towards the youth so that they can access Christian music at any time of the day.

Future research concerning the subject of contemporary Christian music should be in consideration for the youth that attend church and a deeper analysis of Christian youth, their needs and the music information that churches are providing for them.

#### 3.1 Social Media among the Youth

Instantaneous transmitted information is global, and the youth can view the entire world's information on their phones. This is quite a new phenomenon compared to the generations before, where everything took days if not weeks to access.

Sharing the same living space should not be seen as mere physical presence together. Associative spaces are sites for an ongoing dialogue and learning together, with many different perspectives available (Fowley & Leverett 2011, 136).

With the ability to listen to music, being less costly, on smartphones is the easiest method for youth. Adolescents are more frequently chatting with their friends on social media sites daily, unlike in the past generations. They are even capable of accessing even the latest news from around the world instantaneously. In an online research conducted by Eu kids, Kupiainen (2013, 8) expresses that 9-16-year-olds have a lot of internet use. In 25 European countries, they placed Finland in the third category among those that use the internet a lot and have some risks associated with such high use. According to Lenhart (2015) 24% of teens are almost constantly going online, and 92% of teens reported going online daily with mobile devices. They are sharing information such as music on the social network sites. According to Suoninen ((2013, 58-65)(Eu kids 2013, 18)) boys frequently used the internet for; video clips, social media, games, search sites and the radio or listening to music most commonly. The girls expressed the importance of the frequent use of the social media sites over the boys; 60% of girls versus 40% of boys. Interesting to note that adolescents are also using various internet sites all alone, with 69% of 7-9-year-olds and 90% of 10-12-year-olds. More information was what youth desired in a discussion, according to Haltia-Nurmi & Af Ursin, in the Eu kids research (2013, 69). With the vast information provided to the youth through the social media, how much information are the Christian communities locally providing the youth, especially about music and the word of God? Internationally there are countless sites providing youth with music and radio stations, but if the local churches are unaware of them or are hindering the use of these sites, for whatever reason, then the youth will easily locate them. They are not like adults and will not browse around on the internet searching for sites for a long period, they want instant access. According to Collins (2011) adolescent decision-making and problem solving is very different. They act on impulse, misread or misinterpret social

cues and emotions, get into accidents of all kinds, etc. due to their brains functioning differently from adults.

### 3.2 Connecting the Youth to the Church through Music

Individuals are isolating themselves and disconnecting from communities, resulting in loneliness and depression, even amongst the youth. This is becoming more evident among the people in Finland every day. According to Tarja Halonen on Yle news in 2011; a sense of belonging needs to be felt even by the youth. To help create their sense of learning, to cope with everyday life and being a part of a community, by having friends and building on personality will strengthen them and all those involved. Failure or rejection could be reasons for experiencing loneliness. Saarikallio states that adolescents work through trials and tasks, consciously or unconsciously, from childhood to adulthood with the use of music.

Therefore, Hip-Hop culture can offer a unique way for the music to be used as a communication device in a way that helps an adolescent express and understand difficult feelings, thoughts, experiences, and emotions that are consistently flooding them as they grow and develop (Handley & Yancy, 2012, 67).

Christian songs can deter feelings of sadness, loneliness or other negative emotions. Who else can help us against sin, the Devil and all evil except God, though thanksgiving, explains Anttila (2011, 129). With the vision generation attendance diminishing in activities and volunteering, there needs to be another method for the church to communicate God's unfailing love towards the youth in their favorite activity format, which is music on their phones, in a low threshold method.

If all teens are thought of as assets in the making, rather than problems waiting to happen, then not only our own families but also society as a whole, could be transformed ((Richard Lerner 2007, p. 213)(Bers 2012, 15)).

Community development work through music can bring social change and provide a sense of belonging towards the youth in the surrounding area. Community development work could help in the direction of improving and sustaining the well-being of the youth if CCM is known and listened to and they could access it immediately.

Laiho (2004) identifies various ways in which music acts as a resource during adolescence. These include improving coping and mental health, the ability to influence moods and psychological functioning (Norton 2011, 78).

The Youth are the future of our society, and they have a substantial amount to offer if we will merely include them and give them music that they can enjoy. This will support them and promote positive behavior towards them, and the youth will in response show admirable behavior back.

### 3.3 Role Models for Adolescents & Youth

Christian adolescents in Finland lack additional young positive role models or music role models to encourage and influence their everyday lives. The role models that youth observe are secular and might mislead the youth into a discouraging direction. If society is to flourish then, there needs to be stronger moral motivation, according to Harvey (2001, 156), expressing love towards your neighbor and the obedience to the laws of God. Youth need role models, especially for the youth that are attending church, and Christian music artists have the capability to be great role models for them. Adolescents are somewhat like children, in the fact that they mirror the individuals that they respect, such as parents, teachers, priests etc. Consequently there is a continuous change of role models, but there should be Christian role models also for the youth in Finland. Musicians can be very strong role models towards young adults, and Christian musicians need to have the opportunity to be encouraging towards those even outside of the Christian community.

Adolescents have the urge to rebel against their parents and choose music that is not always permitted by them, in order to find their social status. Moments of feeling upset, discouraged, happy or loved, they will play a song that helps to express or suppress their emotion. Music is very influential.

This suggests that adolescents, whether consciously or unconsciously, use music to work through trials and tasks that come with the difficulty in transitioning from childhood to adulthood (Handley & Yancy 2012, 69).

If adolescents are using music to assist them through their troublesome times, then CCM could be the music to encourage them through those times. Artists are using the Bible in their lyrics to preach or proclaim the Gospel through their songs and thus the word of God naturally belongs to music, according to Anttila (2011, 9). Therefore singing the word is not merely understanding or explaining it, but rather experiencing and becoming explained by it, expresses Anttila (2011, 11). CCM style of music is very similar to secular music and might be sensed by the youth as rebellious music, but with the twist of encouraging words.

The right use of music is therefore to sing and enjoy it simply and with joy. To say that this kind of human activity, which affords sensuous pleasure, is something that deserves to be called 'the best gift of God' is a remarkable statement (Anttila 2011, 164).

English Christian music could help spread the word and find a different approach to speak to the vision generation so that all the churches will flourish for many generations to come.

### 3.4 Staying Current

All humanity needs constant reminding, of God's love and grace and His ability to be present like nobody else can, during the times of feeling alone even while surrounded by many. We cannot expect youth, the vision generation, to listen to hymns outside of the church, or to music that was for the other generations be-

fore them. We must provide the youth with the style of music that they will understand, are accustomed to and can relate to easily.

‘Nor is new wine put into old wineskins [that have lost their elasticity]; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the [fermenting] wine spills and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, so both are preserved.’ (Matt. 9:17).

We cannot expect the vision generation to listen to the same music that the other generations enjoyed, just as fashion has changed so has the music style. Not a song of law or works, but a new song. This is my understanding of this verse. ‘Canticum vetus’ is defined; as a fully developed position on the new song. The cheerful message of the New Testament is the source of a new song, and it generates one to sing out loud because the heart is glad according to Anttila (2011, 129-130). Having a musical ability to express God’s love to the youth is a talent & a gift from God, and it should be shared with those locally & internationally, to improve the well-being of more Christians everywhere. Even Bers (2012, 17) expresses that we must encourage and promote this type of music for the youth, as a society or as parents, even if it is not for the present or memory generation because it promotes positive and healthy behavior in the youth. Churches need to promote Christian artists that are local or abroad because they are encouraging the youth and showing them with direction to hope.

CCM songs have only positive lyrics and influence the youth positively, unlike some secular songs, keeping in mind that not all secular music is negative or damaging, but rather some are beautiful and peaceful as well. Since there are so many options of secular music for youth, on the radio and internet locally, then at the very least there should be one CCM station for the youth alongside the radio station ‘Radio Dei’. Anttila (2011, 128-129) when researching Luther’s third psalm commentary (1532-1535) he emphasizes that all pagans, people, water, and forests are invited to join in a song of praise, in ps.96. When listening to CCM music it is very comparable to secular music, and youth will be attracted to sing along with the songs, whether they are Christian or unbelievers. Music can generate pleasure according to the superficial reading of Luther’s texts in

Anttila's writings (2011, 12) then this is one of the greatest advantages of music, and it will create delight in the human heart. Joy, being attentive and devotion consists of three characteristics that can explain what good music is.

A hidden affinity in music influences the singer as well as the hearer, according to Anttila (2011, 42-43), that when singing even if the words are not comprehended the hearers can benefit from singing. Youth can sing, even if they are not fluent in the English language because they will still be benefiting while listening or attempting to sing along. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, singing has many physical, mental and spiritual benefits, especially when accomplished with singing along to positive uplifting songs. If there are physical benefits to singing when you are younger, then there must also be benefits when singing along with lyrics that encourage and uplift an individual even when you are older.

Since music somehow issuing forth from the most secret sanctuaries leaves traces in our very senses or in things sensed by us, must not we follow through these trances to reach without fail, if we can, those very places I have called sanctuaries (Anttila 2011, 27).

If music leaves traces in our most secret sanctuaries, then the Christian community must put more effort into providing continuous music for the vision generation, so that secular music is not filling those secret sanctuary places. If words are more influential than we occasionally consider, then it should be clear that positive lyrics will provide our minds and our bodies to be healthier. According to Handley & Yancy (2012, 95) music or Hip-Hop music is a consistent presence that is within the youth culture that is an emotional outlet or a learning tool that is bigger than the culture. Adolescents listen to music profusely either while on the move, while waiting and also when hanging around with their friends. It is adolescents most preferred leisure activity. The genres of music vary with all youth, but the musical presence brings a very similar emotion and approach, which is expressing their feelings and emotions, through the music. Music means to convey emotions and not ideas, according to Anttila (2011, 2).



## 4 CONVIVIALITY BETWEEN YOUTH & CHURCH

Conviviality refers to the art and practice of living together. It has also been used as an alternative to multicultural living as it refers to the everyday interactions and practices of living together without domination ((Illich 2001)(Porkka & Pentikäinen 2013, 64).

The church must try every avenue to reach the vision generation to have a higher attendance within the churches, not only for the benefit of the churches but the well-being of everyone. The vision generation, are young individuals, the present generation is currently attending church, and then there is the memory generation that are the elderly, but they are the ones with all the knowledge and experience, and the church needs all three generations to function properly. Music could be a method or at least a low threshold doorway towards the church communities, for the youth to sense inclusion in the society around them.

### 4.1 Church Ceremonies

Church ceremonies deepen the sense of membership for followers, such as baptisms, weddings, funerals and confirmations, but this should not be the only time for the attendance of the vision and other generations. Diaconal work presently has very few contacts with those under the age of 18 and even fewer volunteers within the church under the age of 30, according to the Church Research Institute (2013, 110-111). Through frequent contacts and maintaining a sustainable relationship is a way to strengthen the church membership and hopefully, slow or stop the resignation of other members.

I remain convinced that the next generation may have faith but only if the present generation in the church is faithful in living that life of faith with them (Westerhoff III 1976, 143).

The present generation cannot merely speak about how they have attended the church functions and services in the past, but they must be willing to attend

themselves. For young people to become active and attend church on a regular basis, the present generation must be willing to demonstrate their activeness by example. Teaching our children with words is not enough because our actions speak louder than the words we speak. Sakasti Evi (2011, 60) explains that the age group of 18-29 year-olds are for the church a great challenge to reach and include in activities that they prefer. Adolescents and youths favorite activity is listening to music. The age group that CCM tries to reach are the adolescents and young people, between 10-30 years of age. This does not exclude younger or older from this age group because CCM is suitable for those even below or above this age group outside of the church ceremonies. Music that is presentable outside of the church ceremonies must apply to all youth within or outside of the church, a low threshold approach. It should be similar in style to all other genres of music, but with the words to encourage and express God's love towards them. The songs have to be relevant, for moments such as; times of disappointment, love issues, sorrow and good moments in life, so that youth can comprehend the lyrics within the music.

Worship therefore, is at the center of the church's life; indeed, the word orthodoxy means 'right praise' – as well as 'right belief' (Westerhoff III 1976, 54).

Individuals should always be doing everything for the glory to God, according to 1Cor. 10:31, in the everyday things even listening to music. The artists that are also writing the songs are expressing glory to God, and the listeners should be sensing this. Music can be very influential and lyrics can bring feelings forward and Christian music is no exception. Anttila (2011,1) expresses that artists are more than a mere artist, they are visionaries, prophets or like priests. According to Jeremy Begbie a theologian of music, our wisdom about God and His relation to the world concerning theology can be enriched and advanced through music, expressed by Anttila (2011, 2). If the Church wants more involvement from the youth, then music could be a low threshold method to encourage them back. Through CCM youth hear about the love of God through the musician's words, the struggles they had and how they overcame them, which is through the love and grace of God that He has for us all humanity.

The youth that are attending are in a constant battle since they are in the world but not of it, as Graham & Rowlands (2003, 4) expresses. The youth that attend church are unlike others, school or other friends, and the peer pressure from them to conform or take part of activities that they are not comfortable doing is strong. CCM music is in a language that youth understand, and according to Graham & Rowlands (2003, 56) that is the method that must be used towards those outside of the church. Music and the lyrics spoken, deepen their relationship with Christ. Singing can provide a first rate cognitive workout such as elevating moods and increasing immunity. Are the churches providing youth with positive, encouraging music to uplift their souls geared only for the youth when outside of the church facilities? The church has to initiate young people in a different way, a new concept, that the youth enjoys doing the most, and that is listening to music. If there are songs that discuss the relevance of God today and that theology is still possible, in a method that the youth will accept easily, then the churches should unite and attempt a mission towards the youth.

To cease worshipping is to lose faith. To transmit faith to the next generation is to include them as participants in all the community's rituals (Westerhoff III 1976, 55).

This CCM style of music is a low threshold style of music, but with lyrics that are positive and encouraging. Similarly in the style of music that the youth are familiar listening on stations currently in the Helsinki region and they are relatable to them. The lyrics will allow the listeners to reflect on their current relationship with Christ and possibly encourage them. God can reach everyone, including the lost who do not have to continue to remain lost. Perhaps a method of communicating with them could be in giving and receiving music.

For example, when I give a gift to someone, I expect something in return. This is not necessarily a material reward, but perhaps it is gratitude or a rise in the social status of the giver. In this sense then, there are no 'free' gifts, and a gift includes the acts of giving and receiving (Anttila 2011, 82).

Just as the church works towards empowering the weak, they need to focus on empowering youth that need constant encouragement before becoming ena-

bling strong individuals. Let's give them a gift of music, because we know that many will be on the other end receiving.

#### 4.2 Youth Presence

The Church wants individuals to belong, be involved in the activities, according to the Church strategy, and having all three generations intermingling during activities will allow the community to maintain its balance and possibly exceed the current volume. The churches need to be in unity, not only with all three generations but with all the surrounding churches, while addressing the love and grace of God towards the youth, with music that is towards the generation of vision. Music is just like public theology, and it must aim towards a broader audience than merely those attending the church. Remind them of God's love, if they have forgotten or are unaware of how much He truly loves all of them, whatever race or creed or mistakes made, everybody has made mistakes throughout their lives.

Let's exclude for the moment the possibility that we no longer have anything to say, that we are like empty wineskins or, even worse, full of hot air. Would we have simply lost our ancestors' touch? If it's the case, is it possible not to try to retrieve it, but to invent a new touch, which is better suited for today? (Graham & Rowlands 2003, 12).

Invent new ways to include the youth, more ways to feel needed and excepted, because we do not comprehend how much they have to teach us. We need to discuss and share how the present generation and the memory generation have overcome the mistakes or difficult times, so that the vision and other generations still to come, will know that they are not alone, and many have walked through trials.

'Be in solidarity with the people whose lives have been shaken' (Porkka & Pentikäinen 2013, 168).

Listening, sharing and comforting, those that have been through difficult times are the only ways that we can begin to grow and heal as a nation and as humanity. But if the members are not attending services and are not participating in the activities that the churches are providing then the youth will not participate either. Yes, there are diaconia workers present, but they also need volunteers to discuss everyday issues with that do not necessarily need the assistance of diaconia workers. If the present generation of adults that are attending church and the third memory generation is not willing to take some risks and give the vision generation, some inclusion then soon the vision generation may feel excluded and not attend services in the future. Natural kinships with those who can demonstrate with consistency or lack thereof with those who can walk the walk because kids on the street have a sixth sense with anyone like this according to Wallis (2002, 73). The youth attending church are feeling a sense of exclusion from their society, due to their beliefs and their ways because they do not attend similar events such as all the other youth.

The lack of the youth's presence within the churches today will have a detrimental effect on the church in the future if not rectified quickly. There are disadvantages when church communities are not involving the youth, but also the lack of their presence within the churches means also a lack of vision within the church. The youth provides the present generation and the memory generation with vision, and the church needs all three generations to interact properly.

While the first generation is potentially the generation of vision, it is not possible to have visions without a memory, and memory is supplied by the third generation. The second generation is the generation of the present. When it is combined with the generations of memory and vision, it functions to confront the community with reality, but left to itself and the present, life becomes intolerable and meaningless. Without interaction between and among the generations, each making its own unique contribution, Christian community is difficult to maintain (Westerhoff III 1976, 53).

Life currently is intolerable and meaningless According to Westerhoff III (1976, 53), and if all three generations are not interacting then, we cannot confront the community with reality. When all three generations discuss and share their opin-

ions on current matters then, and only then, will there be understanding and tolerance towards one another.

### 4.3 Well-Being of Everyone

Lyrics of the artists are an expression or interpretation of how they or dealt with a challenging situation or moment in their lives. For those that are listening, it can support or challenge their views on a similar situation, and the lyrics may be very influential.

Wyatt (2002) and Zimpfer (1992) place emphasis on the unique relationship between adolescents and music and suggested specifically that juvenile treatment programmes integrate music as a means to aid offenders in working through their issues (Norton 2011, 78).

If adolescents have a relationship with music to aid them through issues, then the church needs to attempt using their kind of music as a tool towards the youth. Music from divine love can push away cares and can sooth weariness, according to Anttila (2011, 48). Houston (2015, 89) expresses that our soul supporter during our worst days is always God. Then even CCM could be doing the same for the youth, reminding them that God is always by their side through the divine music of CCM artists. In Ephesians (6:12) it clearly expresses that we are fighting against evil spiritual forces and not against flesh and blood, so music is another method to battle against them so that we can drive them away.

Adolescents are always wanting to stay current, knowing the most popular fashion or music, and since Norton (2011, 77) explained according to Laiho (2004) how the strongest passion and relevance in adolescence is through knowing the most popular music, the Christian community needs to provide the youth with this information. Considering music to be a resource towards the youth, then all the churches must collaborate and bring their efforts together to provide the youth with a Christian music source to help improve their well-being. The churches want to be able to influence their surrounding communities inside and

outside the church even if it is through youthful music. Music can be refreshing towards individual's spirits and minds while reminding them to focus their eyes on God because then they will not focus on their problems.

Teenagers of past generations had issues of identifying themselves and their sense of purpose in life, as do the teenagers of this generation. Even though the current generation can meet online simultaneously anywhere, they still lack with the 'meaning of life' and their purpose within it. God is the only one that can express the meaning of life and the plans that He has for everyone. He speaks to all humanity through; the word of God, prayer, dreams, visions and even through music if we will only listen. Anttila (2011, 130) expresses how theologically valuable music is and that it has two advantages. The first can move human emotions, which is affectivity and the second is through the hearing that occurs. He continues to say (2011, 134) that reading the Word aloud is not as effective as singing the Word out loud.

'Except for theology there is no art that could be put on the same level with music, since except for theology it alone produces a calm and joyful disposition (Luther)(Anttila 2011, 135)).

If music produces calmness and joy when placed together with the Word of God, then all the churches must collaborate and bring their efforts together to provide the youth with music as a source to help improve their well-being. Norton (2011, 78) also refers to Laiho's (2004) writings and expresses how music for adolescence acts as a support and helps their mental health, improving coping, the ability to influence moods and psychological functioning. If music has the influence to improve moods and mental stability, then there needs to be more effort placed in music that is playing towards the youth by the churches. We need to connect with the youth for everybody's well-being.

The health and well-being of our souls is of utmost importance. Can they ever be independent of the health of the world or the well-being of our neighbor? All our religious traditions say they cannot. Spiritual principles teach us that the best things we do for others are also the best things we do for ourselves, and that we are connected to one another whether we like it or not (Wallis 2002, 45).

If music is a method that the churches are doing for the youth, then this will also be the best thing that the churches are doing for themselves.

Singing to the Lord does not always mean to be happy and to rejoice. On the contrary, the new song is song of the cross, which is, praising and carrying God in the midst of afflictions and up to death (Anttila 2011, 128).

There is a need to have a mission towards the youth in every method, possibly through community development work, which brings social change and improves the quality of their everyday well-being, since this is an activity that they do more than several hours a day. Mannion (2008, 278) discusses the need to educate the laity, and that is for all ages from vision to the memory generation. Comparing our physical bodies and exercise with our faith, Houston (2015, 199) says that daily we should be exercising our faith, or we cannot stand trials and temptations, since they are inevitable, and we become too weak to stand up. Having a word of the day, a Bible verse, on the internet site or music station site, could be a low threshold method, of educating the youth while they are enjoying the activity that they apparently enjoy the most so that they too will exercise their faith. The most passionate advocates for learning need to be the leaders, they should be promoting; learning, by modelling it and encouraging a culture of critical thinking while providing; motive; the means, and the opportunity for learning, according to Ronalds ((2010, 139)(Britton 2005, 14)). Jakes (2014, 156) also emphasizes to succeed, to unite the various departments there needs to be a team approach. Ecumenically we must unite and educate the youth about difficult situations more freely, but in a manner that they are comfortable in doing which is through an internet site or radio station.

There is no other name that provides salvation that liberates the captives, that forgives the condemnation of sin (Houston 2015, 98).

Christian artist's express what significant methods helped them to overcome the difficulties and to whom they turned to with the art of their music. Luther writes in 1530 to Hieronymus Weller he suggests to seek company, play cards and have fun, as a piece of pastoral advice against the spirit of sadness, because



sadness does not come from God, writes Anttila (2011, 159). Adolescents are the future of this world, inside and outside the church, and we must learn to see them as assets that are learning from the present and memory generations by playing and having fun because they will most likely surpass the generations before them.

#### 4.4 Conviviality among all the Churches

Adults and young people are becoming more spiritually hungry due to the economic situations that are occurring around them, such as unemployment and rising expenses, and they will be looking towards the church to fill in that hunger. The churches need to turn from their divisions and create resources for renewal, according to Wallis (2002, 122) to be able to respond to the spiritual hunger that is occurring. Jakes (2014, 212) also speaks concerning achieving amazing goals with unlikely people, in a family or a church, if we build on what unites us rather than focus on what divides us. Mannion (2008, 257-258) expresses that frequently the all or nothing approach is used ecumenically, but currently not having communion whatsoever, is the approach that has been typically chosen.

I believe your success and effectiveness in life, love, and leadership hinges on your ability to partner with the strategically placed people alongside you for the adventure – people who are willing and able to carry the vision, run the race, and serve Jesus together (Houston 2015, 182).

Unity and diversity have not been maintained properly for a balanced relationship with the churches. Mannion (2008, 257) also interprets that to realize what community is, simply what is sufficient and what is not necessary, are the distinctions between the two. If we can find common ground, that has been hidden and divided the Christians for years, in missions or similar causes, it can then be possible to find unity or conviviality in the twenty first-century. Houston (2015, 112) articulates that with transparency and authenticity if people are aware of your current situation then they will positively respond and want to rally

behind you. It is the simultaneous social interaction between people being involved in other states and between states and international bodies, that is considered 'the greater integration and interdependence' between two bodies expressed by Ronalds (2010, 17).

The collaboration of all Christian churches through a Christian youth station could be expressing conviviality while working towards empowering the vision generation. Conviviality work is not to be prolonged any more, increased involvement locally and internationally, through development work with Christian churches will create change through a positive transformation.

In order to work for change, the virtues of trust, respect and openness to change are critical. We are therefore engaged with double learning processes. It is by engaging in work for change we also participate in our own transformation (Porkka & Pentikäinen 2013, 61).

As Ronalds (2010, 129) expresses the effectiveness and advantages of 'partnering' rather than attempting a similar goal alone, an organization could not achieve or have such an impact as when partnering with others. The reduction of cost or the technical skills are a few of the benefits, but the networking availability is the highest advantage. Keeping in mind that the church is to be visible, ecumenism is not an internal activity, to be an effective sign of unity in the world, according to Mannion (2008, 263).

There can only be one church since there is only one God. Mannion (2008, 258) articulates that God's will for and calling to his people is the anchor for unity and that a crucial part of the church's mission is also to be in unity. Co-existence should not be confused with a general ecumenical goal. Members should fulfil the law of Christ by bearing each other's burdens and by also serving the body of Christ, which is living a common life in love, solidarity and mutual accountability. Unity does not mean uniformity; rather diversity that is welcomed and embraced is needed in the church life and will demonstrate generosity and openness.

It does not take much to see that such signs are desperately needed today. For our world is marked by divisions and strife on virtually every level – between rich and poor, men and women, young and old, etc. Human relations are frequently and seriously threatened. And there is a deep yearning for institutions and persons that can demonstrate, through visible evidence and concrete deeds that healing and reconciliation can still be achieved (Mannion 2008, 263-264).

The several impulses that unite all churches are; spreading the gospel, reaching-out to the marginalized and the excluded, and stimulating new people groups outside the Church, by expressing God's love towards all. Wallis (2002, 57) discusses the concern of who will be included in our circle and how can we distinguish who is in and who is not? All denominations need to be offering the inclusion within a mission and then it is their decision to stay included or not. Conviviality, rather than trying to reach a goal alone, will unite the churches, and they will achieve a higher outcome in the end.

Therefore seeking conviviality in diverse communities may be one of the most important tasks in working towards the welfare of the whole city (Porkka & Pentikäinen 2013, 230).

This is the reason for collaboration among the churches, even towards a youth outreach such as a music station, that the results will be greater when working united. While Basil expresses in Anttila's text (2011, 25) that a bond of unity is present when singing psalms. We need to express to the vision generation that collaboration work among all the Christian churches is possible on various levels and can be an example for the future generations. This is the time for unity among all the churches regardless of our differences and past problems. If we do not try to unite and show advocacy to the society around us, that we are willing to work together for the greater cause, then what example are we displaying towards them?

#### 4.5 Definitions to CCM & Current

The definition of Christian music is an expression or reflection of Christianity. It can be considered as a form of entertainment or as a way of praising God for Christians or all humanity, for instance through worship music, music preaching the gospel or merely listening to the gospel through music. There are several understandings of what Christian music is, such as the musician expressing their values or another musician reflecting Christian values, but not labelled as a Christian artist. Whichever they are, they express love, grace and peace that only God can give. In the Bible (Phil 4:8-9), it states that whatever is lovely, pure and brings peace to do these things and our God of peace and well-being will be with us. All aspects of Christian music must be understood and expressed in this way, and usually are, regardless of the genre or style and then God uses that music to speak to those that are listening.

CCM is shortened for the words contemporary Christian music.

A dictionary definition to the word current;

: Happening or existing now; belonging to or existing in the present time. : Aware of what is happening in a particular area of activity (Merriam-Webster dictionary 2015).

One can articulate the most current things with items such as fashion, food, vacation sites and music and these are changing constantly and might be slightly different in every country. These items might be the most popular items one day or one month, and then they are not anymore. Who determines the popularity of any of these items? I believe that it is the consumers, the listeners that determine this. Computer technology has provided this information easily to the producers of these items, and in return try their best to deliver to their consumers what they desire.

## 5 THEOLOGY OF MUSIC

Martin Luther cannot be bypassed on any account of the topic of the theology of music, even though the topic of music is continuously & profoundly in discussions. Martin Luther (1483-1546) thought that many features were in common between theology and music, according to Anttila (2011, 3). Many seminary papers and short articles have been written on the topic of 'Luther and music' and also on the topic of word and music. Two sole survivors from the disaster of the Fall, are music and theology, according to Horne (1985), on studying Luther's theology of music and the order of creation, according to Anttila (2011, 8). In a shifting and unstable world, music also presents the divine order and is an indication of the stability of God. I will briefly discuss the theology of music through the written work of Anttila and his book titled 'The innocent Pleasure', the study on Luther's theology of music. I also perceive that CCM can be understood within each of these subjects connected to Luther's theology of music. Above words, music is a spiritual power, says Anttila (2011, 30). Even Luther, according to Anttila (2011, 122) was concerned about youth's desire for more exceptional or improved music with spiritual words.

### 5.1 Music Combined with the Word of God

Music conveys emotions and not ideas is an approach to the meaning in music, according to Anttila (2011, 2). He also questions the fact, if it is the composers, musician or listeners that are the ones that bring emotions perceived in music or is it the music itself? I believe that God is the one that gives ideas to individuals when writing music and so when the musicians are playing and singing God is speaking through the words as well as the through the song itself. In the same way that if a young individual were listening to a Christian station, they would have all kinds of emotions, such as excitement, happiness and joy. Anttila (2011, 2) continues to mention Jeremy Begbie, a theologian of the music of our time, his opinion was that theology can be advanced and enriched through the

aid of music and that it can have us rethink our relation to time and space, just as theology as well. Individuals remember certain times in their lives when a song helped them through a happy, difficult or fun moment in time and the minute that they hear that song again, they remember. Singing positive songs enhance our well-being, and they are remembered even during silent moments in the day.

God needs to give us something that attracts us in order to make us hear his actual message (Anttila 2011, 156).

If we are not attracted to the song then will anyone listen or remember the songs? Christian music should always be current and continuously attract the next generation towards God. Söhngen (1967, 259) explains that music can preach the Gospel, in Anttila's (2011, 9) text. CCM music will do the same. Not all the lyrics will be directly from the Bible, but they are always encouraging, uplifting and reminding the individual to pray or seek God first.

Music therefore somehow naturally belongs to the word of God ((Söhngen 1967, 259)(Anttila 2011, 9).

There are also different effects when singing and reading a text, explains Anttila (2011, 10). He continues saying that intellect is solely spoken to when reading, but the emotional side of a person when singing with the Word is more engaging. Johannes Block (2002, 219) in Anttila's (2011, 11) text continues to express that when singing the word or a psalm one experiences it and becomes explained by it, not merely understanding it. For this reason, there needs to be a station for the youth so that they will be listening and singing to the style of music that they prefer and the words will fill them with emotion since it also has occasionally the Word within the songs as well.

## 5.2 Music within the Church

Singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs have always been an essential part of the early church liturgy, Anttila (2011, 23) mentions, and they are the three

words used in the New Testament. Jerome Cotton (2009) makes a distinction between the three;

- A hymn usually contains the word alleluia and declares the power and majesty of the Lord.
- A psalm is directed to the human person on their ethical side.
- A spiritual song is created to examine the order and concord of all creatures and the harmony within the world.

Anttila continues to discuss singing, but among the monks, explaining that they must, without ceasing, have prayer and psalmody, which means continuously.

Therefore Christian churches are not houses of wailing or mourning  
(Anttila 2011, 126)

Although the music that is suggested in this thesis is not to be mistaken with the music sung within churches, explained above, I found it profoundly important to include this in brief, since this is where CCM was derived from Christians. Youth could be singing or listening to CCM continuously and since the music clearly wants individuals to mirror Christ, and he is the creator of delight, joy and pleasure not of mourning, then CCM would be delightful even to God's ears.

### 5.3 Delight, Joy & Pleasure

Luther wrote the following in 1519, according to Anttila (2011, 128), a version of 'canticum novum' in the light of 'theologia crucis';

Singing to the Lord does not always mean to be happy and to rejoice. On the contrary, the new song is song of the cross, which is, praising and carrying God in the midst of afflictions and up to death (Anttila 2011, 128).

Niceta of Remesiana suggests that music to be fully effective needs pleasure with the Word of God, in Anttila's (2011, 24) text and that the psalm will penetrate the soul when sung because it easily is more remaining in the memory due to it being sweet to the ear. Anttila continues to say that there is educational value with the delight of music while Ambrose points out in McKinnon (1987, 276) that stern discipline does not advance learning the same way as the play does. It has been expressed before that adolescent learns through play and this is the reason for a CCM station. To encourage the vision generation with cautious bits of the Bible, emplaced within the songs, but while mostly enjoying and having 'fun' with the music. The Holy Spirit within us gives us a gift and works within us to create joy, says Anttila (2011, 153). A source of ultimate happiness can only be from God since there is nothing inferior to God, Augustine mentions in the text of Anttila (2011, 31). Anttila continues to explain in the next page that particularly, in general, teaching, Christian teachings and in salvation, that delight are inseparably involved. If God is the ultimate source of happiness, then CCM can also be considered from God, because this music brings happiness and joy expressed by many individuals all over the world. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) expresses that music is fruitful with the Word, and it does not annul it, while Boethius also explains that there are intellectual and emotional advantages in music, in the text of Anttila's (2011, 38-39). Many individuals have come to know the Lord through CCM stations in North America and it can do the same here in Finland if it is given the opportunity. Emotional advantages to CCM songs are that individuals' listening initiate and reflect on their situation and lives. They want to better themselves due to the lyrics of the songs and gradually become filled with joy.

To encounter God is to experience pleasure (Anttila 2011, 158).

Luther claims that rejoicing in God is where the true joy is found and one must be discouraged by one's own works and run through the valley of despair to apprehend then God in Christ and believe in the Gospel and all His promises to understand true joy according to Anttila (2011, 141). He also refers to Gal 5:22 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience....' and how immediately after



the greatest of all - love – come the word joy. This is why contemporary Christian music and the lyrics within them are more consuming because the words move your soul. Artists express through their songs on how they overcame a negative situation, but not on by themselves but with God's Word. This is powerful for every generation to understand. Luther also in his preface (1522) in Anttila's (2011, 144) writings, expresses that an expression of our trust in God's philanthropic (Titus 3:4) is to laugh in God.

Pleasure is more directed to the present and is a more sensuous feeling than joy that is done willingly, according to Anttila (2011, 148). Youth could take pleasure in listening to CCM because it is current, energetic and brings joy. Anttila (2011, 151) then explains that love and pleasure flow out of faith to God and willingness to serve the neighbor. And it is inevitably beyond human decision that faith essentially involves pleasure in God's will. If a young person's will during listening to Christian music, places a desire in their hearts to please God and change their heinous ways, then CCM has done what it sought to do.

I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil-this is the gift of God (Eccl. 3:12-13).

Luther explains that Adam lived in the beginning when pleasure was not problematic and God created Adam in His own image. After the Fall, pleasure has become distorted, but we can acquire it through faith, in the writings of Anttila (2011, 155). Luther mentions later in Anttila's writings of his love for music and he expresses that he loves music due to the innocent joy that it creates (Anttila 2011, 163). Let's create innocent joy for the vision generation so that they too can experience pleasure through music.

#### 5.4 The Power of Music

In Luther's Christmas sermon in 1514, in Anttila's text (2011, 112-113), becoming one with God is discussed in depth and many Finnish Luther scholars have

analyzed this particular passage because it suggests that matter seeks for its form just as our desire is to search for God. Luther's theology:

human intellect and human affect are nothing without God as their object. Only in God do they find their being (Anttila 2011, 115).

Luther refers to Ps 51:10 'Create in me a clean heart, o God' and explains that there are several meanings to the word heart in Latin. It can mean soul, mind, will and emotion, but that the source of the soul's function is when the affect refers to the heart and is not a function of the soul, according to Anttila (2011, 113). In Christian worship, everything that can help the human affects, especially the weaker minded, such as various ways of melodies and sound, when moving towards God is useful, explains Anttila (2011, 41-42). CCM has many various sounds, such as rap, hip-hop and pop, and has assisted those with depression and other various symptoms, but the music is always directing to those listening towards God, so this too is can help the human affect.

No doubt, music also is a part of this divine affective therapy (Anttila 2011, 119).

Anttila (2011, 116-117) explains through Luther's writings that God alone can comprehend our heart and change the way it is directed, this is to state that affect rules our heart and the basic affect is either love/faith or hatred/unbelief.

The words chosen suggest that the effects of music are of utmost significance, something more than merely raising some sentiments. The power of music to move the affect is second only to the Word of God (Anttila 2011, 121).

All Christians must be aware of the music that is surrounding them because it is not mere clatter; the words are significant and affect our heart and soul. In Luther's 'Encomion musices' writings, Anttila (2011, 121) explains that the word spirit can only be referred to the Holy Spirit or the Devil and that the spiritual dimensions of emotions impact and affect us.

Luther writes in the *Operationes in Psalmos* that the divine origin of music is to ultimately praise its maker and that is God, in the text of Anttila (2011, 123). When listening to music of the current generation, it too should be giving all the glory to God, if it is considered Christian music. The music that is considered CCM does just this with words that are not always directly from the Bible, but they are continuously giving glory to the Lord, the Father of music.

## 6 AIM OF THE STUDY

In order to have adequate information on such issues as; how youth gain access to music and are they provided with Christian music information, I decided to do a semi-structured qualitative research, but in the atmosphere of a focus group method. A focus group method allows individuals to answer and discuss the questions presented, since it did not need ethical consideration. The discussion was arranged with qualitative method, open ended and some close ended semi-structured questions, for the youth to answer spontaneously. I also had an adequate amount of literature review on issues of music, therapy and social media amongst the youth.

### 6.1 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis was chosen to be able to observe the youth in their normal surrounding with open ended questions, to allow the individuals to answer the questions presented and for them to elaborate on the answers if desired. I chose 29 open ended and close ended questions, and also provided the youth with a questionnaire with the same information, if it was needed. It was possible to have a saturated point in the discussions, but it was never reached, since it was done in a focus group method and everyone heard what was being discussed. Most youth chose to take part in the focus group, but three came to the focus group late and decided to answer the questionnaire, to have a better un-

derstanding of the whole focus group. The style of analysis could be also considered a marketing approach, but this was not used.

## 6.2 Focus Group Analysis

I decided to conduct a focus group discussion, to be able to interact with several youth in the churches and to try to validate the need for a Christian station or information site for the youth. This was conducted in a group of approximately 8-12 young people, since this is not a sensitive subject, allowing the group to feel relaxed and speak freely in this type of setting. I wanted to have a variety of young people with diverse backgrounds and answers to the questions that I was presenting. I conducted two focus group sessions in order to have enough qualitative information to analyze and answer the question, 'Is there a need for a youth contemporary Christian station?' The focus groups were in two separate and very different churches and had approximately 8-12. They were conducted in a Lutheran parish in Espoo, and a Baptist church in Helsinki. I chose two churches with very different backgrounds to have diverse views on this subject and to be able to explore the familiarity or dissimilarities of the music listened to or located by the youth. The focus group durations were approximately forty five minutes with open ended and close ended questions. I was taking notes and recording the discussions with both youth groups. Some form of snack is usually necessary to have a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere while conducting a focus group, so I provided some candy to relax the youth. I would have had more drinks and snacks, but both churches expressed that the youth ate before the services, and they emphasized not to bring anything.

## 6.3 Focus Group Questions and Data Collection

The questions for the youth are all related to the thesis question and how they locate the music that they currently are listening to. A qualitative questionnaire was prepared as well, in case the youth did not feel comfortable participating in

the focus group, so that they were able to provide the information that was still needed to answer the thesis question. A total of twenty nine questions were prepared and three songs were to be played for the youth, providing them with the music style and diverse artists that exist in North America, in order to answer the last six questions and the most prominent question 'Would youth like to have a Christian music station?'

After the focus groups had answered and discussed all the relevant questions, I collected my written answers and questionnaire and began to analyze the information to determine if churches in the surrounding area should be aware of the research. It is clear to me that there could be more research done on this topic or to possibly have a test protégé page or station amongst the youth to see how successful it would be. With a protégé page or a test station that the churches could analyze the feedback among the youth in the Helsinki region to determine how successful it is or will be. If the results are positive then; if it was a protégé page, then we will begin using an outcome mapping method to decide what churches and NGO's would like to sponsor and be boundary partners for this station, if it was a test station then the churches could determine and see the outcome of the station from the youth. It will need conviviality amongst the Christian churches, a vision to understand the direction of the mission and it will need the guiding hand of our Father for it to succeed.

## 7 ANALYSIS OF TWO FOCUS GROUPS & DATA COLLECTED

After conducting both focus groups, at a Lutheran parish & at the Baptist church, it was evident that youth, regardless of the church that they attend, have a lot in common, and the results expressed it. In both churches, the youth were encouraged to participate in the focus groups by their youth leaders, and in both groups approximated ten youth attended, (a total of 20+ youth altogether) and contributed in that format. Three individuals filled out a qualitative sur-

vey that I had prepared in advance in case if youth would not or could not attend the focus group. Two different churches with similar and yet diverse answers to the questions that were presented around the main question, if there is a need for a youth contemporary Christian music station?

### 7.1 Brief Contextual Background of both Churches

The Lutheran parish in Espoo is a part of the dominant religion in Finland, and it was established in the 1800's. The second group was in a Baptist church, and it was the establishment in Helsinki in the late 70's by an American pastor, but is not as known by the surrounding society. Both churches do agree on the main basic beliefs of the Trinity of God and are both under of the Christian denomination, and this is the reason for having the focus groups done within these churches.

### 7.2 Background of Participants

The youth that attended the parish were approximately 15-19 years of age, somewhat younger in age than the youth that attended the Baptist church, which ranged between 18-25 years of age. The age may have been a factor in the results, but the youth groups were approximately similar in attendance and church attending youth was the emphasis of this research. The participants also had an equal amount of both males and females attending the discussions, so the research was not bias to a certain gender.

#### 7.2.1 Resources Youth Used

In both focus groups the youth expressed the main methods that they listened to music throughout the day; 'Spotify', 'YouTube' & radio stations that they accessed through their smartphones. Rarely did they listen to an actual radio station or cd, only if in the car, but would rather use the internet. Both groups expressed the simplicity when searching for songs or music and the fact if some-

thing were too time-consuming, then they would not reattempt searching again. Songs needed to be quick and easy to access on the phones whenever they desired or were permitted to listen.

#### 7.2.2 'Radio Dei' the Current Christian station

All of the participants in both focus groups were not listening to the one and only Christian station in the Helsinki region. The majority of the Lutheran participants were unaware of its existence, while the other group chose not to listen, for reasons such as uninteresting music. The Baptist participants were very aware of the station, but felt that it was boring for youth and that the station was trying to please too many individuals and the outcome was not effective for anyone. There was only a short time of music geared towards the youth, but how would non-religious youth know this? The only way to be aware of this was to look up the schedule online, but they expressed that youth would most likely not do this. Both groups commonly spoke about listening to secular music stations, and they all expressed that Christian music was the only type of music that differentiated them from other youth.

#### 7.2.3 Church Youth Group Internet Sites

Both youth groups articulated that they had a youth internet site and that they were active participants in their church site. They visited the sites weekly or several times a week to be aware of all the most current events occurring at their church, but none of their sites had music links or knowledge of the most popular songs locally or internationally. The Lutheran parish apparently had some music information on their youth group page, according to a priest that was passing by, but chose to take it off. What kind of music did they present on that page is unknown, was it current youthful music or only Finnish music this is all unknown, but something was attempted.

### 7.3 Collaboration with other Churches

The Lutheran youth expressed that they collaborated with several churches in the surrounding area sporadically and had joint youth meetings with the other church young people. Whereas the Baptist youth expressed that they did not have any collaboration with other churches in the surrounding area at all, only with their 'parent church' from the United States. Unsure of the reason any church would not want to try to collaborate with other local churches, but I am still unaware of it?

Although I was not surprised by the partnership that the Lutheran church had with other neighboring churches, since doing my placement, I noticed that they try to have partnerships with several other churches. I was disappointed to learn that the Baptist church youth group had no partnership with other churches in their surrounding area. They are benefitting from the relationship of their parent church in the United States, but they could be influential to the surrounding churches, as well as learning from the other youth as well. I did express my opinion on the matter to one of the workers afterwards, but it will be interesting to see if this changes.

Just as churches need to collaborate, locally and internationally, to be the most effective or successful, so too should the church youth groups. Individuals always have something to give and something to learn in every aspect of life.

### 7.4 Music

One of the questions presented to the youth was the amount of music listened to during the duration of the day, and they all had various answers in both youth groups. Half of the youth expressed that they spent predominately all their time listening to music, wherever they went if they were permitted, they were listening. The other youth conveyed that they listened several hours a day, if not more.



This information was very thought-provoking, that if these young people that are attending church frequently are listening to music predominately all the time, then other youth that are not attending church are possibly doing the same. If the churches are not providing youth with Christian music options with links or internet radio sites internationally, then this is something that should be addressed quickly, to give them variety and global information. Information is freedom and knowledge is power.

#### 7.4.1 Genre & Language

All of the youth articulated that they enjoyed many different genres of music, secular & Christian, and did not have one style of music preference. The songs mostly listened to by the participants in the Lutheran church were in Finnish, but English songs were also listened to quite frequently. The Baptist youth group predominantly listened to English music, but occasionally listened to local music and they were very aware of Finnish songs as well. When the Lutheran group was asked, 'if you listen to other songs, other than in Finnish, what is the language of the songs?', They all agreed that it was in English. Rarely did they listen to music in Swedish or any other language.

Radio stations in Helsinki play predominantly Finnish and English music, possibly 50/50 depending on the station, of course, but even adolescents are very familiar with both languages.

#### 7.4.2 Lyrics

All the youth in both focus groups expressed the importance of lyrics within the songs that they listen to. They do listen to a vast amount of different types of music, secular and Christian music, but they all expressed the significance of the words they are hearing and singing. Regardless of the genre, they stated that if the words are too crazy then they will turn the station and listen to something else. This was very positive to hear from both youth groups.

## 7.5 Awareness of CCM

The artists and the songs that I presented to the participants were three of the most popular artists currently on CCM in North America, and they are presented with a link in the appendices. The artists were TobyMac with his song 'T'll the day I die' that was just released in August 2015, LaCrae with his song 'Give in' & Press Play with the song '#Lito'. TobyMac is an artist with songs in the genre of rock and hip hop, LaCrae is a rap artist and Press Play is a pop or dance group. There were so many artists in the CCM that my family listens to, but these seemed to catch the attention of many stations and Christian news shows lately, and this was the reason for this choice.

### 7.5.1 Youth at the Lutheran Parish

The youth were very interested in the discussion and very intrigued to learn about some new artists. They seemed amazed that this music was Christian music, and they were unaware of this music altogether. They knew of several local Finnish bands or groups, such as KLS and Control, but these artists were unfamiliar to them. The only international group they expressed to have knowledge of was Hillsong from Australia. They were curious about the artist's names and expressed their interest in going on the internet later to find more music by these artists. When asked if they would share this information with friends, they expressed that they might, just as they would normally with other artists.

### 7.5.2 Youth at the Baptist Church

The youth were also interested in the discussion as well, but all three artists were very familiar to them. When I shared the songs that I would play for them they articulated to know all three artists, but were unaware of the newest release of TobyMac, so I played this particular song for them. They also said that when a new song would appear, via the internet radio station that they predominately listened to, that they would share with friends the information.

## 7.6 Music Station or Information Site

Music is an activity clearly loved by all the youth, and all the Christian youth expressed the need to have a Christian youth internet site to inform them of the most recent songs. A prospect on the site that the youth expressed could be; to have links to songs, station information, apps or maybe links to internet radio stations that already exist elsewhere.

### 7.6.1 Youth at the Lutheran Parish

Several of the youth that participated felt that youth want to find their own music and play it at their own will, rather than listen to an online station, not enjoy every song that is being played and with commercials. Very understandable, but then they have to have all the information otherwise they will not know about new artist's and songs. Only one participant listened to an international station, from Asia, but rarely. Everyone else listened to local stations or local Christian bands, and there aren't very many youth Christian bands. They clearly expressed that if a station were to exist that it would have to be advertised very well for it to be successful, but that it was possible. The majority felt that the internet site would be more successful for them. When asked if it could be used as a mission for other youth, they explained that it could be possible considering that the music was very similar to the current music.

### 7.6.2 Youth at the Baptist Church

The majority of the participants felt that having a music station, geared towards only the youth, would be beneficial for all youth. They listened to stations from abroad and could see how the music could encourage and benefit all youth if they were to listen. An internet site could be beneficial as well, since Christian youth in Finland do not have such a page.

### 7.6.3 Could Music be an Outreach

Having a Christian music station could be considered as a mission towards all youth that do not attend church, was the view of many participants. If the church could have an online station where all youth could access the station on their phones, then they might reach those that have never listened previously. As some youth expressed during the focus group, if a station were to exist, it should have a station name that doesn't deter those that do not know Christ. It should have a hip name, but lacking the Christian words such as Christ or Christian station, to allow anyone to listen to the music first without having prior judgement. One of the participants expressed that the quality and production of Christian music has advanced to the level of secular music, and this is the reason for the popularity of this CCM music.

A few recommendations were; having links and apps for simplicity reasons. Adolescent do not want to look too long for songs or stations; quick access is needed or otherwise they will not engage in the station or song. The youth wanted to be aware of all church events easily, events, music concerts or resources daily, allowing them to stay connected to their churches and the Christian communities that surrounds them.

After the focus group discussions had concluded and the analysis of the results had been made, I will be presenting my findings to a few individuals, in hopes for an ecumenical informative website and possibly a youth music station.

## 8 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

I was inspired to start this research by the inability to listen to the radio with my children, while in the car or at home, due to vulgar language not being censored by stations and the inconsistency of good Christian music being played on the one and only station available in the area. Although our family was able to con-

nect finally, via the internet, with our home countries radio stations, I was very curious if others were accessing or knew of Christian stations or artists other than the local ones? I was especially curious if the youth knew of this hip music and these artists to whom this music is geared towards. While doing some exploration of my own prior to deciding on my topic and then format, the focus group discussions, I became more stimulated and concerned for the next generation in Finland. Churches have always worked towards the benefit of the youth, so I thought that I must be study this subject of music since it has fallen between the cracks.

During the planning stages for the focus group I decided to have a questionnaire for those that were too shy to participate. Although this was sufficient in both groups, I could have planned more for the youth that were familiar with the artists, as they were in the Baptist group. I also wish that I would have had the opportunity to conduct a more elaborate online questionnaire to provide a thorough conclusion, but I do believe that this was enough to move forward. I found the discussions with both youth groups went extremely well since they were interested in the subject of music and it was relevant to them.

After the discussions with the youth, I am more motivated to present to individuals that may be interested in this vision, within the churches, a radio station or an independent individual, and I am also interested in presenting information to 'Spotify' with a letter of concern for all the young Christian music listeners. 'Spotify' needs more information from the Christian community to satisfy the needs of the younger listeners and hopefully a letter of concern will put them into action.

Especially during my three and half years of education, I have become more enlightened and wanting to have ecumenical work amongst all the different denominations. I see the value and importance of all the denominations and wish for more collaboration work in the midst of all the churches. This is not a time to point fingers at each other, but rather work hand in hand towards a goal. My

hope is that a youth station will develop and that conviviality work will bring more hope for the future of our youth.

These are small steps, but they could have a great impact on all local youth.

## CONCLUSION

As Spencer (2007, 6) expresses that public truth concerns the whole human family and the knowledge of Christ is not only a private matter for ourselves, but for everyone. As Wallis (2002, 125) expressed that we need to strive and bring all church communities, our brothers and sisters, together on every project and endeavour. Churches need to collaborate ecumenically to empower the youth in a method or activity that they are comfortable in doing or using on a daily basis, which is through music on the internet. With music being a means in which youth are exploring their surroundings and their places within it, we need to share globally the most popular music information, to allow them to have the variety to do this. Since Norton (2011, 77) explained according to Laiho (2004) how the strongest passion and relevance in adolescence is through the knowledge of popular music, the Christian community needs to provide the youth with this information. If there is a countdown or top 10 of the most popular songs or groups within the Christian music industry in other countries, then there should be one in Finland for the Christian youth as well. The youth clearly felt that this was something that they desired to know and have on their church websites, and ecumenically this should be provided for them in the near future. If we begin to do this for the youth then we will be benefiting from the effects as well. Music benefits everybody's well-being in a positive manner.

The language the church speaks with the world is life, through His word and through His music, and God's word is life.

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## APPENDICES 1. MUSIC SAMPLES

Examples of Christian Contemporary Music played in the focus groups;

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWLZ\\_MrPplk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWLZ_MrPplk) TobyMac – T'll the day I die

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SXejZqpyA8> Press Play - #Lito

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkzIEVYP12Q> LeCrae – Give in

## APPENDICES 2. QUESTIONS

Qualitative questions for the youth focus groups & for those who could not participate, the English version.

### Questions; 'Is there a Need for a Youth Christian Station?'

1. Your age?
  - a. 13 – 15
  - b. 15 – 18
  - c. 18 – 21
  - d. 21 – 25
2. Gender?
  - a. M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you listen to music?
  - a. Yes, daily
  - b. Yes, occasionally
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Not at all
4. How many hours of music do you listen to at once?
  - a. Less than an hour
  - b. 1 – 2 hours
  - c. More than 2 hours
  - d. Music is playing almost always
5. What kind of music do you listen to? (You may choose more than one option)
  - a. Pop
  - b. Rap
  - c. Rock
  - d. Most popular songs

- e. Classical music
  - f. Something else, what?
6. Are the songs you listen to ..
    - a. Mostly in Finnish music
    - b. Foreign music
    - c. Both
  7. If you mainly listen to foreign music, what language is it?
    - a. English
    - b. Swedish
    - c. Some other language, what? \_\_\_\_\_
  8. Through what source do you find the latest music?
    - a. Friends
    - b. Social media
    - c. Paper
    - d. Radio
    - e. Accidentally
    - f. Through another source, what? \_\_\_\_\_
  9. Through what source do you listen to music?
    - a. Radio
    - b. Internet
    - c. Spotify
    - d. MP3 Player
    - e. CD
    - f. Another source, what? \_\_\_\_\_
  10. Are lyrics important to you?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
    - c. Occasionally yes and occasionally no
  11. Do you believe that lyrics can affect your thoughts?
    - a. Yes
    - b. Maybe
    - c. No
    - d. Not sure
  12. In your opinion, do youth that attend church listen to different music than other youth?
    - a. Yes
    - b. Some do, but some don't
    - c. No
  13. Do you know of any Christian stations?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  14. If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_
  15. Do you listen to that Christian station?
    - a. Yes, often
    - b. Yes, but not often
    - c. No, barely
    - d. No, not at all
  16. If you do not listen, then why not? \_\_\_\_\_
  17. If you are listening to the Christian station, are they playing the type of songs that you wish to hear?
    - a. Yes, all the time
    - b. Yes, but not often
    - c. I do not often hear my style of music
  18. What kind of music would you prefer to hear more often? \_\_\_\_\_
  19. Do you follow your youth internet site?

- a. Yes
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. No
  - d. I wasn't aware of their site
  - e. Our church does not have a youth page
20. If there was a link to a contemporary Christian site or the most popular songs of the month, would you visit the page?
- a. Yes
  - b. Maybe
  - c. Not sure
  - d. no
21. How would you like to find the site, if it existed?
- a. In your church pages
  - b. In the church youth pages
  - c. An advertisement in the church site, but the site should be separate from the church
  - d. Another place, where?
22. If there was a contemporary Christian station, which source would youth use the most?
- a. Radio
  - b. Internet
  - c. Another source, what?
23. Have you ever heard of 'Contemporary' Christian music?
- a. Yes, I have
  - b. I am somewhat aware of it
  - c. Not sure
  - d. No

**Listen to the songs; LaCrae – Give in, Press Play - #Lito & TobyMac – T'll the day I die**

24. What are your thoughts after listening? \_\_\_\_\_
25. Did these songs sound Christian?
- a. Yes
  - b. Maybe a little
  - c. Not really
  - d. No
26. Would you be interested in hearing more 'CCM' music?
- a. Yes
  - b. Maybe
  - c. No
27. Will you go to look up these songs or artists afterwards?
- a. Yes
  - b. Maybe
  - c. No
  - d. Not sure
28. Do you believe that you will share these songs with your friends?
- a. Yes
  - b. Maybe
  - c. No
  - d. Not sure
29. Would you like to have a Christian youth station?
- a. Yes
  - b. Maybe
  - c. No

d. Not sure

e.

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_